

Call for Papers

Resilient Urban Development versus the Right to the City? Actors, Risks and Conflicts in the Light of International Agreements (SDG and NUA) – What can the academia contribute?

7th and 8th June 2018 in Dortmund (Germany) – Annual Conference of TRIALOG 2018

The two-day international conference is focusing on a critical review of international agreements for urban development, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG, 2015) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA, 2016), and aims at highlighting potentially conflicting goals in their implementation and application. The concepts of Good Governance, the goal of a Resilient Urban Development and claims for the Right to the City serve as normative frameworks for the conference.

The conference is structured along two main foci: The first day is titled “Resilient Urban Development Versus the Right to the City? Risks and Conflicts” and will set the scene with an analytical and theoretical part based on results of empirical research and conceptual and theoretical work on the topics of Good Governance, Resilient Cities and the Right to the City. The second day focuses on a critical review of the action-oriented international agreements of the SDG and the NUA titled “Risks, Conflicts and Contradictions in the Implementation of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda in the Global South. What Can the Academia Contribute?”

The conference language is English. The target groups are researchers and practitioners on urban development both from the Global North and Global South from a wide range of disciplines.

The international agreements mentioned above will shape urban development and the discussion for the next 15 (SDG) resp. 20 years (NUA), and thus influence the international research agenda and planning education. However, little is known so far on the operationalisation and unintended outcomes. Therefore, the conference will contribute to the discussion on risks and positive elements of the agendas and define further research topics. The comprehensive critical review of the agreements based on the concepts of Good Governance, the goal of a Resilient Urban Development and claims for the Right to the City will provide a solid theoretical ground.

Background

Rapid urban growth and increasing damage from natural and technological hazards are affecting a growing number of urban dwellers in the Global South. The experience of disasters and post-disaster recovery has produced some hard lessons in recent years, which have underlined the importance of urban planning and urban development control. At the same time, the concept of resilience is increasingly being put into the spotlight. Resilience in this context means "the ability to adapt to natural hazards and recover quickly from their effects" (Henstra et al. 2004: 5).

The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) defines resilience as "the ability of a system, community, or society exposed to natural hazards to resist, respond to, and recover from the negative effects of natural hazards - in a timely and efficient manner." (UNISDR 2009). Regarding cities, Godschalk characterizes the concept of resilience as follows: "Such [resilient] cities are capable of withstanding a strong shock event without the outbreak of chaos or permanent deformation or tearing. Resilient cities are based on principles derived from past catastrophic events in urban areas and are therefore designed to anticipate, endure and recover from the effects of natural or technological hazards in advance." (Godschalk 2003: 2).

That's why cities need to be “change proof”, they must be flexible enough to withstand extreme events without total collapse, and robust enough to recover quickly from the negative effects (see Henstra et al. 2004: 8). In the Global South, however, even if there is an institutionalised planning system in place, the reality is usually different: most of the victims of extreme events can be found in the unplanned 'informal' settlements that have developed beyond formal plans and are often located in danger zones, e.g. on steep slopes or in river valleys. These are the locations of low-income urban dwellers who cannot find affordable housing elsewhere (Greiving 2016). Resettlement projects have mostly failed in the past, because the new settlements were too far away from the inhabitants' sources of income in the centre or the layout of the new buildings did not offer the opportunity for income-generating activities to sustain their livelihood.

Since a risk is the product of the probability of an event and the vulnerability of a site, it follows that cities as the most densely inhabited areas are the places where risks are the highest. Thus, spatial planning, being responsible for decisions whether and how space is used, can create but also mitigate risk. Urban risk management requires successful co-ordination between different actors. First, horizontal co-ordination between comprehensive urban planning and the various sectoral planning must be ensured in order to create the necessary knowledge base for risk-taking decisions. In addition, vertical co-ordination between central government, regional and local authorities is required to build effective disaster risk management (Young 2010, Greiving et al. 2012). Finally, non-governmental actors must also be involved in order to integrate the perception and assessment of the risks of the affected city dwellers into the decision-making process. A successful disaster risk management can be seen as part of Good Governance. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states: "The risk governance concept provides a systematic approach to classifying disaster management, risk reduction and risk transfer assessments into a broader context" (IPCC 2012: 56).

Structure of the conference

The background above reflects the dilemma of the first day of the conference: the goals and interventions to achieve resilient urban planning can be in conflict with other goals, e.g. contradict the “right to (participate and live in) the city” and can lead to evictions from areas which may be unsafe but also vital for settlers in order to sustain their livelihoods. Similarly, the goal of the NUA to achieve compact cities can lead to the demolition of affordable single-floor neighbourhoods and development of high-rise apartment blocks which are normally unaffordable for the urban poor. This intentional sharpening of arguments promises lively multidisciplinary discussions at the conference. These discussions will be introduced by keynotes on resilient urban planning and the right to the city (see draft programme).

The second day is dedicated to discussions on the goals and programmes of the SDG and the NUA. The conference explores how these international agreements can be put into practice, what unintended consequences the implementation can have and which contradictions do exist. While the SDG set clear targets which still have to be operationalized, the NUA sets goals and commitments without a clear way to achieve them. The conference will address the role academic research can play in solving the above-mentioned risks, conflicts and contradictions. In a first part, the agreements are critically examined and in a second part the role of the academia to achieve these goals is examined in terms of research agendas, adaption in the curricular and policy advice. What can the academia contribute to address the mentioned conflicting goals and to make the SDG and the NUA successful? Where is more research needed to avoid negative outcomes and to strengthen the implementation? Where are current blind spots? Both parts will be introduced by keynotes (see draft programme).

Submission of abstracts

Participants are required to send an abstract of 150-250 words in .rtf or .doc by 15th April 2018 12:00 pm CET, to the conference e-mail address <dialog2018.rp@tu-dortmund.de>

Abstracts should:

- Indicate the topic for day 1 or day 2
- Indicate a title
- Explain the state of objectives, methods and results and the issue to be addressed, define the context, and highlight the main arguments.

Important dates

Abstract submission (**new deadline**): 15th April 2018

Abstract review and notification of selected abstracts for presentation: 30th April 2018

Best presentations will be selected for publication in the TRIALOG journal.

Conference: 7th and 8th June 2018 in Dortmund, Germany

Venue

The conference will take place at TU Dortmund University in Germany, Campus South, Rudolf-Chaudoire-Pavilion, building 41 on the map. The conference days are June 7th and 8th 2018.

Costs

The participation at the conference is free of charge. Tea, coffee, water and some bites will be served. However, lunch, the optional conference dinner, accommodation and transport costs are on your own expenses.

Updates you will find on the TRIALOG website: <http://www.trialog-journal.de/en/association/conferences-agm/> and on <http://www.ips.raumplanung.tu-dortmund.de/cms/de/home/Annual-Conference-of-TRIALOG-2018/index.html>

References

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