

Governance and participation

Chair: Jonas Bylund, Member of the JPI Urban Europe Management Board

Key note speakers: Dr. Olivier Coutard, Vice-chair of the JPI Urban Europe Scientific Advisory Board, LATTS; Prof. Diana Mangalagiu, Oxford University

Expert from the EC: Dionysia Lagiou, European Commission, DG for Research and Innovation

Organizer/Rapporteur: Jonas Bylund, Member of the JPI Urban Europe Management Board

Introduction

Jonas Bylund briefly introduced the session on the SRIA thematic priority on urban governance and participation (UGP). Three conceptual 'agenda-setting' points were made:

- 1) All roads lead to governance, the other SRIA thematic priorities and the longitudinal programme as well as many other related issues (such as the current refugees' situation) double-back to the question of how to enable, plan, and govern urban areas.
- 2) However, integrated urban governance is more an art than a science, and how to make the participatory approach 'stick'?
- 3) JPI Urban Europe welcomes constructive reflexivity and challenges on these issues, since the session also kicks off a format, ethos, or atmosphere of how to continue the dialogue during SRIA implementation.

Panel

Olivier Coutard (vice-chair SAB, LATTS) introduced the main lines of the UGP thematic priority in the SRIA: contemporary societal context calls for more and variegated participatory forms of governance because of increasing technicisation and decreased trust in experts [technocracy is out of fashion]; representative democracy deficit invites new kinds of mediations; communication infrastructures transformed drastically recent decades which begets new forms of mobilization. Friction in diverse forms for urban policymaking and implementation: increasingly wicked issues; 'real-time' issues complexities by crisis events and long-term trends; calls for more agile, distributed, and open urban governance.

Overall this situation calls for a focus on the *politics of knowledge* when these are an acknowledged plurality. Questions on what knowledges (knowledge practices) are taken into account as 'useful', 'relevant', and 'legitimate' and which are dismissed as 'not useful', 'irrelevant', and 'non-legitimate' should be foregrounded – particularly in how lay, expert knowledges, and vested interests can be combined in decision making (including how they are commercialized, e.g. big data). Since urban R&I need to articulate the processual (how?) and substantial (what, and with what results?) dimensions of governance; as well as inter- and trans-disciplinary research and innovation need on governance and participation ("participatory research" to study participatory governance!) topics proposed as:

- Plural forms of knowledge, policymaking and urban responses to major contemporary changes (esp. Climate change)
- Participatory policymaking and distributive justice
- Policymaking and the material transformation of urban spaces, landscapes and infrastructures

Diana Mangalagiu (Oxford University) reflected upon three issues:

1) Participation as concept and 'hinge'/approach to urban governance: how to ensure maturation and irreversibility; reflexivity and values; not necessarily synonymous to 'engagement'; develop (codified and formalized) knowledges in the field: what constitutes 'success'? Scalability a necessity?

2) Friction between 'have' and 'have nots': global increasing divide between elites and marginalised groups, how does UGP reflect this? Urban injustice and inequalities (gender issues, age, ethnicity, religion, disability issues, etc.)? European urban areas' youth unemployment issues?

3) Urban R&I still tend to focus on 'technology fixes' and side-line SSH and e.g. digital social sciences/digital humanities: how to connect multi-scalar 'real-time'? How to deal with 'algorithms against human rights'? Foreground the issue of open data and how to engage 'hard to reach' groups (e.g. urban poor) for citizen technologies, urban living labs, social innovation, etc.

Dionysia Lagiou (EC DG R&I) commented on transdisciplinary and co-creative challenges to R&I, particularly a longstanding discomfort in the academe to involve non-academic actors; on the possible support to responsible research and innovation (RRI) to increase shared responsibility and egalitarian benefits across the board; on open innovation to enable citizens' initiatives to play a key role to shape pathways; and, in the light of these remarks, foregrounded the SRIA as a catalyst in public service innovation.

Three questions or issues put on the table for UGP to pursue:

1) New forms of normativity, regulatory devices and their implications?

2) The global dimension with a European model of urban governance? There's a distinct European urbanity, approach to urban issues, which could be worthwhile to cultivate and communicate around the world.

3) It is important to foreground how the SRIA in this perspective (governance and participation) also supports 'the right to the city' (David Harvey).

Discussion

Three questions in audience.

Michael Keith, UK SEiSMiC NANET representative: The keynotes are too narrow in a conceptualisation of participation as citizen-government relations. There are more kinds of actors and this has regulatory implications.

Mart Griesel, EUKN / Platform 31: Links to EU Urban Agenda will be exciting. But too little attention on urban inequalities? The EU Urban Agenda discussions do not lack this dimension. Also more a 'political' view – in the sense of empathy to everyday political work practices – on the topics. Since the SRIA may be put to good use informing the EU Agenda and Habitat III, there are important differences between scientific and political knowledge practices: e.g. research takes time, politicians don't have time.

Ania Rok, ICLEI: Where are the gender issues in UGP and the SRIA in general? And how can this be more developed in the implementation?

Key messages

Three key messages we extracted on the go, and these may have to be revised in the light of a slightly more rigorous analysis of the session's input and discussions.¹

- 1) Work with different kinds of inequalities, not just the 'conventional' socio-economic (Weberian marginalization/exclusion from big table in civil society). The other vistas of inequalities may e.g. be: gender; digital divide; accessibility; urban conviviality (more-than-human urbanity); 'articulatory' inequalities (publics' various competencies to participate and raise concerns).
- 2) broaden the sense of 'participants' and knowledges for co-creation. The theme needs to break out of a narrow sense of citizen-government relations into a broader implementation sense (more 'heterogeneous engineering' and 'emerging publics').
- 3) cultivate a sociotechnical process approach instead of fuelling the opposition between 'social' and 'technical' issues and 'solutions'. This also pertains to the issue of how to deal with wicked issues and silos in the UGP, not to propose a total deconstruction of silos but still increase exchange and connectivity between them.

¹ The key messages were instantly tweeted by @LearningWoB as 'Key msgs: 1 how to work w diff kinds of inequalities 2 broader sense of participants 3 how to deal with silos #SRIAlaunch'