

Debating the Future of Cohesion Policy: Spatial Justice and the Role of Locality

The RELOCAL project ('Resituating the local in cohesion and territorial development), funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 programme, has been identifying and investigating factors that condition local accessibility of European policies, local abilities to articulate needs and equality claims and local capacities for exploiting European opportunity structures. It is based on case studies of local contexts (cities and their regions) that exemplify development challenges in terms of spatial justice.

Regional policies, such as European Cohesion Policy, and concrete actions targeted at local development are basically an attempt to negotiate a balance between structural forces, economic interests and socio-spatial needs. The complexities involved in this task are more than evident and it is clear that redistributive measures alone will not achieve a more equitable distribution of opportunities and basic amenities within the European Union. The aim of this final project conference is to invite scholars interested in the development of European Cohesion Policy and particularly in the future of place-based action to present their insights and to participate in active discussion. We aim to both share our results as well as learn from others who have been involved in similar research.

We welcome presentations and posters that elaborate themes germane to debate regarding social, territorial and institutional aspects of place-based development. For example:

- What might be the potential contribution of local stabilisation strategies to wider European cohesion?
- How might greater and more flexible policy focus on communities be achieved?
- To what degree do political and administrative decentralisation promote successful local development practices?
- In addition to the socio-economic consequences of inequality, what are some of the political challenges facing a greater place-based policy focus?

These and other questions will be the subject of this international conference to which you are cordially invited. Please send abstracts of maximum 250 words to James Scott (james.scott@uef.fi).

Deadline for abstracts is 31 March 2020.