



## **E-NEWSLETTER**

### **ISSUE 16, FEBRUARY 2017**

Welcome to the sixteenth issue of the Regional Studies Association (RSA) e-newsletter. This e-newsletter serves as a way for the Irish Branch of the Association to highlight conferences, events, publications and other developments of interest in the broad regional policy area. Contact details are included below.

### **CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE**

#### **1. About the Association**

#### **2. News**

#### **3. Special features:**

**Comment: *Ireland 2040* - National Planning Framework**

*Jim Walsh and Chris van Egeraat*

**The Action Plan for Rural Development – a new accommodation for rural regions?**

*Ruth Pritchard and David Meredith*

**Establishment of the Regional Assemblies**

*David Minton*

#### **4. Upcoming Events**

#### **5. Funding Opportunities**

#### **6. Publications of Interest**

#### **7. Contacting the RSA Newsletter**

#### **8. Membership of RSA**

#### **9. Current Irish Committee Members**

#### **10. Joining / Leaving the RSA Mailing List**

## 1. About the Association

The Regional Studies Association is a learned society interested in regional development, policy and research. The Association carries out a range of activities including:

- publishing a journal, newsletter and books;
- organising conferences and other meetings; and
- establishing and maintaining a branch and international section network.

It has an international membership of individuals, corporate organisations and students. The Irish Branch was formed to provide a forum to discuss regional issues in Ireland.

\*\*\*\*\*

## 2. News

### **RSA (IRISH BRANCH) REPRESENTED ON THE ADVISORY GROUP FOR IRELAND 2040 – THE NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

Dr. Chris van Egeraat has been invited by Minister Coveney to represent the RSA (Irish Branch) on the Advisory Group for the National Planning Framework. Other Group members include Branch members professor Jim Walsh (representing Maynooth University) and Dr.

David Meredith (representing Teagasc). As part of the NPH process, and to support and provide input to the cross-governmental structures, the Minister has established the Advisory Group to ensure the participation of relevant non-governmental organisations, professional bodies and technical experts. The purpose of the Advisory Group is to harness the potential and capacity of a broad range of sectors, including representatives from business, environmental, social and knowledge-based bodies to guide strategic thinking and decision-making in the preparation of the National Planning Framework.



**Advisory Group meeting, 1st Dec 2016 (photo: Colm McCoy)**

The first meeting took place on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 at the Department of the Taoiseach, chaired by Rory O'Donnell of the National Economic and Social Council. After an introduction by the Minister, Paul Hogan provided an overview of the issues, structures and progress to date. This was followed by a discussion focussed on the question "What can the NPF achieve, as a long term, national strategy for Ireland. The next meeting will take place this month, following the launch of the NPF public consultation "Issues Paper".

## **REPORT ON THE RSA (IRISH BRANCH) ANNUAL CONFERENCE, NUI GALWAY, FRIDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2016**

The Theme of this year's annual RSA (Irish Branch) conference was *planning for regional development: the national planning framework as a roadmap for Ireland's future?* This year's conference was organised and hosted by NUI Galway. The conference was attended by approximately 80 delegates.

The conference was opened by Paul Hogan of the Department of HPCLG. Paul provided an update of the Roadmap for the National Planning Framework, thereby setting the scene for the theme of the conference. The delegates were treated to over twenty presentations. The three international guest speakers focused on National Planning. Mr. Peter Mehlbye, former Director of the EU ESPON Programme, dealt with the European perspective. Leonie Janssen-Jansen, Professor of Land Use Planning, Wageningen University, The Netherlands, provided a surprising account of the planning system of the Netherlands that, to an extent, debunks the myth of a very efficient and successful planning system. Markku Sotarauta, of Tampere University, presented a paper on place leadership. He argued that strategy implementation and the successful development of places crucially requires 'place leadership'. All presentations are available on line <http://rsa-ireland.weebly.com/presentations.html> and selected papers have been published in a special issue of *Administration* (Vol 64, No. 4) Detail and abstracts are included under the publications section of this newsletter. The day concluded with a panel discussion which further explored the conference theme.

We would like to thank Dr. Pat Collins, Department of Geography, NUI Galway for organising this successful conference. We would also like to express our gratitude to the following generous sponsors: The Southern Regional Assembly; The Whitaker Institute; The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government; The Western Development Commission; and the School of Geography and Archaeology, NUI Galway

## **JUSTIN DORAN ELECTED AS NEW CHAIR OF REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION (IRISH BRANCH)**

At the recent AGM of the Regional Studies Association (Irish Branch), which took place on 13th January, Justin Doran was elected to the role of Chairperson. Justin takes over this role from Chris van Egeraat. Please see below for a letter from our new Chairperson:

*Dear members,*

*I am very honoured to have been elected as Chair of the RSA-Irish Branch at the AGM and Committee Meeting in January of this year. The Irish Branch has moved from strength to strength over the past years under the Chairmanship of Chris van Egeraat and I would like to thank Chris for the service he has rendered to the Branch. I would like to thank the Committee of the RSA-Irish Branch for the work they have done on behalf of the Branch.*

*I have previously served as secretary of the RSA-Irish Branch for the last four years and look forward to further serving the Branch as Chair.*

*The conferences and workshops hosted by the Irish Branch continue to attract policy makers and academics whose interests are in the area of regional studies and in the coming years we will continue to contribute to discussions on regional policies in Ireland.*

*This newsletter provides an excellent summary of the events and achievements of the RSA-Irish Branch over the last year and I would encourage those who are not already members of The RSA to join and to contribute and attend the events of the Irish Branch.*

*Kind regards,*

*Justin Doran*

*Chair – RSA (Irish Branch)*

### 3. SPECIAL FEATURES

#### Comment: Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework

*Professor Jim Walsh and Dr. Chris van Egeraat and, Geography Department and NIRSA, Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute.*



**Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Minister Simon Coveney with members of the RSA Irish Branch at the Launch of *Ireland 2040* – National Planning Framework, Maynooth University 2nd Feb 2017**

The Regional Studies Association (Irish Branch) welcomes the announcement by the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government of the key issues that need to be addressed in planning for Ireland over the coming years. The Framework for Ireland 2040 will be one of the most important policy initiatives for the people of the State and the island of Ireland generally.

Ireland has experienced a significant transformation over the last decades, initially through the rapid economic development of the 1990s and more recently with the global financial crisis and subsequent gradual recovery. Significant disparities have occurred throughout this time period, with some of our regions developing at a much slower pace than others. At times development has appeared to take place in inappropriate locations, while other parts of the country have experienced very little development. As a consequence of this there are housing shortages in some areas and the provision of public services is inefficient, so the population has had to put up with overloaded hospitals, limited public transport and restricted employment opportunities for many people - to name but a few of the impacts of our limited approach to strategic

planning in Ireland. Furthermore, those regions which have experienced growth have had to come to terms with the cost of urban sprawl, congestion in our public services, and a questionable approach to environmental sustainability.

Our recent experience in Ireland has shown that in the absence of an effective planning framework, economic development has become increasingly concentrated in and around a small number of large urban areas. This had led to a decline not only in more rural and remote areas and smaller towns but also in our city centres. Over 60% of the population growth over the last 20 years in Ireland has occurred in the Dublin commuter belt or in the commuter belts of Cork and Galway.

Ireland is now at a critical juncture in relation to its planning system. A new approach to planning is required that will enable our political, civic and business leaders to guide our society and economy over the next 25 years towards shared national development goals. These will include improved living standards, better quality of life for all, enhanced competitiveness in global markets, and environmental sustainability. The *Ireland 2040* National Planning Framework will also include another specific strategic goal of achieving *effective regional development*.

In the current era of increased uncertainty and a disruptive political climate at an international level, it is vitally important that we have clarity regarding both the long-term strategic vision and the specific actions required to achieve a much better quality of life and living standards for all our citizens by 2040. The *Issues and Choices* consultation paper is a very welcome contribution to a process that will require input from individuals, communities, organisations, businesses, local authorities and state agencies across the country.

The key *Issues* identified are that (1) many of the outcomes from the approach to development over several decades can no longer be regarded as acceptable; (2) very considerable pressures and responsibilities that are unavoidable need to be addressed over the coming years; and (3) a continuation of a 'business as usual' approach that will maintain the status quo is not a viable option as it will lead to further decline in rural areas and small towns, poor urban services, and more environmental degradation.

The *Choices* presented for consideration provide opportunities to choose alternative pathways towards achieving a broad set of goals through which our individual and collective quality of life can be enhanced, as well as enabling us as a society to fulfil our international responsibilities towards development that will be socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

The *Issues and Choices* document is to be commended for its clarity in setting out recent trends and related risks, for emphasising the inter-dependence of many issues, and for setting out some radical shifts in policy. For example, there are inter-dependencies between issues such as highly uneven population distribution, access to specialist public and private services, and the cost of providing and sustaining key infrastructures. The more radical choices presented include prioritising the strengthening of middle tier cities, and replacing *balanced* regional development with *effective* regional development as an objective. The choices also invite us to reconsider the diversity of relationships between rural and urban areas, and to explicitly address the multi-faceted nature of our natural and built environments and, in particular, the challenges in relation to environmental sustainability.

This is a provocative consultation paper, as it should be. In order to move beyond the status quo there will need to be a sober and evidence-informed discussion of the risks and potential opportunities. It will be necessary to move beyond consideration of issues in isolation and avoidance of assessment of potential benefits from coordination and integration. Strong political and civic leadership will be required to maintain a distinction between truly national strategic objectives to be pursued consistently over the long term, and reactionary responses at a local level to issues taken in isolation where often short-term considerations may overwhelm more benign longer-term adjustments.

A radical rebalancing of the urban system, especially at the middle tier level, in a context of projections of significant expansion of the population will require innovative thinking on the design, construction, service provision and on-going support for such new communities. Otherwise, there will be a risk of non-placeness that will hinder the emergence of place-based communities, and possibly worse still may lead of the identification of such places as unattractive spaces within the wider urban environment.

Considerable progress was achieved in relation to North / South and cross-border cooperation and collaboration over the past 15 years in the context of implementation of the NSS and the Regional Development Strategy in the North. This is one of the neglected success stories in all-island spatial planning. The *Issues and Choices* paper reminds us that much more co-operation in strategic spatial planning will be required in the post-Brexit era.

The NPF, as proposed by the Minister, will aim to provide a more sustainable platform for Ireland's economic and social development. It will provide planners and providers of housing, industry, social services, etc. with a clear direction as the country continues to grow. National and local policy makers will finally be able to think, as is the case in most other European States, of the long-term impact of their day to day actions and policies.

The RSA welcomes the focus on achieving a more effective approach to the State's regions. There is the potential for the NPF to deliver real results in planning our towns and cities, our villages and rural communities. This, if followed through by the political leaders and officials of both national and local government, could lead to improved growth and development in Ireland's second tier cities, above and beyond what would occur in the absence of intervention, whilst providing a new environment for a sustainable rural population.

We do however caution that the past experiences of the previous NSS should be borne in mind – these have been documented in two recent issues of *Administration* based on papers presented at conferences organised by the RSA.<sup>1</sup> The failure to fully implement the NSS and its subsequent abandonment allowed for a continuation of unbalanced regional development within Ireland. The NPF has to have a stronger statutory backing than the previous NSS and the Minister's intention to putting such a statutory footing in place is to be welcomed. However, given the predictions of increasing population growth, unless the NPF is adhered to, further social and economic disparities, greater urban sprawl, longer commutes, and over extended services are to be expected.

The RSA would urge all readers to actively participate in the consultation process. Submissions can be made to the Department until 16<sup>th</sup> March. The email for submissions is [npf@housing.gov.ie](mailto:npf@housing.gov.ie). This is everyone's opportunity to set out what sort of place Ireland should be in 2040. Are we content to continue with inadequate infrastructure and an ever threatened environment - which will happen if we sit back and do nothing - or are we willing to take the opportunity afforded by the Minister's Initiative to set out our views on Ireland 2040? This initiative will bring with it the possibility to develop a more balanced country. However, this will only happen if all those concerned with education and healthcare, security and housing, employment and opportunity, as well as a vibrant environment, actively engage with this initiative.

*Jim Walsh served as Chair of the RSA (Irish Branch) in the period leading up to the NSS, Chris Van Egeraat is the current Secretary of the RSA (Irish Branch).*

---

<sup>1</sup> Meredith, D. and van Egeraat, C. (2013) Ten Years On: Revisiting the NSS, Editorial for special Issue, *Administration*. 60(3),pp.3-13; Ó'Riordáin, S. and Van Egeraat, C. (2016) The National Spatial Strategy: Lessons for implementing a National Planning Framework, *Administration*, 64(4), pp.5-21.

## **Action Plan for Rural Development - a new accommodation for rural regions?**

*Dr. Ruth Pritchard, NUI, Galway and Dr. David Meredith, Teagasc.*

On 23<sup>rd</sup> January last, An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, and the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Heather Humphreys TD, jointly launched **Realising our Rural Potential: Action Plan for Rural Development**. This action plan delivers on a key commitment made in the 2016 Programme for Government to provide greater political coordination between departments for 'areas that impact on rural affairs'. It follows in the wake of the 2014 Commission for Economic Development in Rural Areas (CEDRA) report and subsequent agreement of a Rural Charter for Ireland in January, 2016. The plan is timely, and notable for its considerable reach and breadth of approach. The critique that follows is then underscored by our welcome for the publication of the plan as the first of its kind in Ireland.

The APRD opens with a bold assertion of its intent to change the narrative of rural Ireland and to unlock the potential of rural communities. Produced in a by now familiar action list format, the plan nominates over 270 individual actions organised under 5 key pillars; supporting sustainable communities, supporting enterprise and employment, maximising rural tourism and recreation, fostering culture and creativity and, improving rural infrastructure and connectivity.

Initial responses by rural stakeholders to the plan cohere in a welcome extended to the planned coordination of national, rural and regional development initiatives and services with an impact on rural areas. For many commentators, the plan is ambitious in terms of its overall aim, scope and the range of actions included. In particular, positive perspectives point to the significance of the plan in making government accountable to rural communities. These views also value the alignment of previously discrete policy spheres, for health, housing or tax policy, as just some examples. For others, the investment for some actions fails to match the level of ambition promised and a more general lack of trust in fulfilment of its aims prevails.

It is impossible to comment on each constituent action in a short article and indeed, the 'flat' listing of actions challenges the reader to unpick undoubted innovations from long standing schemes, or to arrive at an assessment of its investment leverage. Some examples of noted initiatives include investment to revitalise 600+ small towns and villages, as well as provision of high-speed rural broadband. By contrast, a surprising omission is a low-key only reference to a main product of the CEDRA report, in the proposed action to review the rural economic development zones (REDZ). Finally, there are no horizontal priorities, such as environmental impacts or the alleviation of rural deprivation, and no overarching result indicators.

As an addendum to the above, it is worth noting that the APRD is one of a growing list of ‘action plans’ that have emerged over the past decade. From a public policy perspective, these are clearly a favoured and useful tool for monitoring and co-ordinating on-going or planned activities of government departments, state agencies and other actors involved in the delivery of supports and services to enterprises and communities. The strategic dimension in terms of vision, direction, priorities and actions is however missing from many of these plans or, if present, is a minor element.

Interestingly, we have noted that several commentators refer to the document in short-hand as the plan for rural Ireland, rather than the plan for rural development. Perhaps this slip of the pen reflects key transitions in the changing policy landscape for rural development in more recent times. Rural development policy has traditionally been closely associated with the much larger arena of agricultural policy in practice. The APRD adopts a different approach however. It promises a coordination of regional and rural development, but avoids unpacking these distinct concepts.

This may, perhaps, represent a governance strength rather than a policy weakness. The plan’s overarching structure can realise a potential to more flexibly devolve plan ownership to new local leaders for rural development. Clare County Council, for example, has recently appointed a Director of Services with responsibility for Rural Development and this leadership may draw on the plan to feed its priorities into county level rural development strategies, Public Participation Network activity and through the Local Economic and Community Plans.

The authors of this article recall the heady days of an EU policy focus on rural development in the early 1990s, leading to the establishment of the LEADER programme in Ireland and catalysing the White Paper for Rural Development published in 1999. A more general diffusion of negotiated governance arrangements through the Irish polity was given expression in a range of county level governance in the same period. That landscape has been overtaken by the provisions of the Local Government Reform Act (2014), which include a renewed commitment to stronger regional government.

The APRD has been launched immediately in advance of the national planning framework, which will have the greater import for spatial, infrastructural and socio-economic development at regional level. There is much to laud in a strengthening of regional governance and the emergence of a more fully developed concept of rural regions would certainly encourage better alignment between the European Structural & Investment Funds in Ireland, as well as between exchequer funded programmes. However, there is no information in the plan as to how coordination between rural and regional development will be managed in practice.

As Prof. Jim Walsh, Maynooth University argues, 'The main challenge for the APRD, however, will be around implementation. It will rely hugely on the efforts to promote co-ordination at all levels extending from the local to the national.' A particularly heavy onus is placed on Local Authorities and the lead government department. While there is mention of establishing a dedicated unit in the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, it will need to be adequately staffed, and have access to expert knowledge in order to undertake the tasks that it will be assigned. It will have the daunting task of monitoring progress on all actions and of reporting to the Cabinet Committee on Regional and Rural Affairs.

The monitoring exercise will require cooperation from all the agencies that will simultaneously be providing reports to officials in other government departments with responsibility for the regional jobs actions plans and regional skills fora. At the local level, the local authorities will have many coordinating responsibilities including bottom-up engagement by local communities. There is a risk that this process may result in a box ticking exercise with much duplication of summative data and little opportunity for formative learning or sharing of good practices. This will be a significant challenge for the APRD.

In the final analysis, rural development approaches are characterised by local level integrated planning and participative decision-making. It remains to be seen how the coordination promoted by the APRD will incorporate this rural development ethos, even if we have adverted to potential advantages of the structure proposed. Much will depend on the detail of the information referred but not yet provided in the plan, on the composition of the oversight committee, its local expression within rural communities and the definition of result indicators for the plan's actions. In conclusion, we are keenly aware of the limited time and resources available to those responsible for the development of the APRD and they are to be congratulated for delivering the action plan to a very tight deadline, as well as for their ambition in bringing such a wide-ranging set of commitments to public view. We await the upcoming national planning framework documents with interest, with an eye in particular, to the linkage they make to the APRD.

*The authors would like to acknowledge the significant contribution made by Professor Jim Walsh, NIRSA, Maynooth University to this article.*

## **Establishment of the Regional Assemblies**

*David Minton, Director Northern and Western Regional Assembly*

Since 2014 Regional Government in Ireland has been reformed. The 8 regional authorities have been abolished, while the two regional assemblies have been radically re-configured resulting in three new Regional Assemblies: namely, the Northern & Western Regional Assembly, Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly, and the Southern Regional Assembly. A regional approach to development has undergone a revival of late with successful place based initiatives such as the Action Plan for Jobs, Regional Skills Fora and other regional based policy initiatives such as IDA's 'Winning Strategy'.

The enhanced role of Regional Assemblies assisting the implementation of the new National Planning Framework could be a game-changer in Ireland's approach to regional development and competitiveness. Ireland has never pursued aggressive regional development targets. The Assemblies will be responsible for the preparation and adoption of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) bringing, it is intended, a clear regional focus on the implementation of the forthcoming National Planning Framework. The RSES are expected to herald a new era of 'effective regional development' rather than the traditional and unachievable 'balanced regional development' approach.

Each of the Regional Assemblies has a leadership role to play in identifying regional policies and coordinating initiatives that support the delivery and implementation of national planning policy. For example, the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) has adopted a 'New Regions' approach focused on Connecting the existing strengths, latent potential and focusing on Infrastructure, Investment and Innovation.

As a result the NWRA has put in place a clear strategy for its region which will underpin the approach that will be central to the adoption of the RSES. The aim of the Assembly is to:

1. Create Better Places by ensuring our region adopts effective and innovative planning and economic development policies
2. Enhance our Competitiveness by optimizing all exchequer and EU funding mechanisms
3. Act as a Platform for collaboration

The onus now is on Government Departments, State Agencies and regional stakeholders to utilise the Assembly Regional structures to ensure responsive and effective placed based responses. A failure to do so will restrict the impact of the forthcoming Planning Framework and as a result the continuing imbalances in regional development will remain.

It is essential therefore that the Assemblies are given the necessary competence and resources to ensure that mistakes of the past are avoided. In the event of this being the case, the future for a more regionally focused delivery of development could be bright.

## 4. Upcoming Events

### **RSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017**

*Date: 4th - 7th June 2017*

*Venue: Trinity College Dublin Ireland*

*“The Great Regional Awakening: New Directions”*

A ‘Great Regional Awakening’ is underway. There is a growing realisation that regional inequalities have both contributed to, and amplified, the ‘Great Recession’ that shook advanced and emerging economies alike. It is also becoming apparent that the crisis has been having very different impacts spatially. This will only help to further exacerbate uneven economic development, fuelling more trouble down the line. In Europe, major economic fault-lines are re-emerging between and within national economies; between the core and the periphery; between urban and rural areas; between city-regions and within cities themselves. This pattern is replicated elsewhere - in advanced, emerging and developing world. There is an urgent need to re-examine all aspects of local and regional development and how it relates to national and international economic dynamics; and to social, political, cultural, technological and environmental processes. Having spent over 50 years advocating more balanced regional development, the Regional Studies Association is now spearheading a major effort to address these pressing issues in such challenging times.

We are thus calling upon regional studies experts, spatial scientists, economists, business studies scholars, political scientists, local development specialists, urban geographers, spatial planners, transport experts, development studies scholars, environmentalists, sociologists, economic geographers, financial geographers, academics, researchers and practitioners alike, to join us to be part of ‘New Directions’ in regional studies!

Abstract submission deadline: 24th January 2017. Further information can be found on the RSA website: <http://www.regionalstudies.org/conferences/conference/rsa-dublin-2017>

## **4th International eDIGIREGION Conference: 'Sustaining Regional Innovation and Growth Through Partnership'**

*Date: 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> March 2017*

*Location: WIT Arena, Carriganore, Waterford*

The eDIGIREGION 'Sustaining Regional Innovation and Growth Through Partnership' conference examines how partnerships between industry, academic institutions and government can help drive regional innovation and economic growth. A range of international speakers will describe their regions' experiences of stimulating regional innovation and developing regional partnership models. Delegates will hear about the implementation of the South East Action Plan for Jobs and from those targeting the growth of specific industry sectors in the region.

The conference explores how industry and research institutions can better collaborate to deliver Innovation that meets Industry needs; and therefore is of particular interest to those involved in sectors such as agri., digital media, pharmaceutical, medtech, advanced manufacturing and ICT in tourism. In addition, the conference will include a workshop looking at opportunities, both public and private, for funding a company's innovation lifecycle.

*For further details, see: <https://www.edigiregion.eu/index.php>*

**If you have a submission or suggestion on any upcoming events, seminars, presentations or conferences and would like them to be included in a future edition, please email [chris.vanegaeraat@nuim.ie](mailto:chris.vanegaeraat@nuim.ie)**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **5. Funding Opportunities**

The RSA has allocated financial resources to support its members and offers a range of funding opportunities to suit different career stages. These opportunities provide members with the chance to apply for financial help to support their research, run networking events, receive awards for excellence and help towards the costs of travel to attend non-RSA events and present their work to international audiences. Further details on the funding opportunities outlined below can be found at: <http://www.regionalstudies.org/funding>

### **RSA POLICY EXPO GRANT SCHEME**

The Association has launched a new policy research initiative for successful teams aiming to connect the work of its members and wider communities to societal questions and policy needs. The Expos will deliver a short form policy focussed, clear and evidenced book for

launch particularly within the relevant practice based communities and to the academic community through the Association's membership benefits and wider book sales.

Applications are invited on the following themes:

- Industrial Strategy and the Role of Industry, Employment & Apprenticeships in Cities and Regions
- Climate change, adaptation and governance
- Global Migration and regional development

**Value:** up to £15,000

**Application deadline 2017:** 6th March 2017

### **RSA RESEARCH NETWORK GRANT SCHEME**

RSA Research Networks are formed by RSA members interested in meeting to examine an issue that responds to the aims and goals of the Association and is of interest and concern to members of the Association as well as non-members. The issue needs not necessarily to have a direct policy focus but the examination would normally lead to policy related conclusions.

**Value:** up to £10,000

**Application deadline 2017:** 31st July 2017

### **RSA EARLY CAREER RESEARCH GRANT SCHEME**

This award is open to single applicants in their early career (five years maximum between the date showing on the PhD certificate and the application deadline). Applicants must be based within an eligible higher education institution (HEI) and must be a current, early career member of the RSA and throughout the duration of the grant. Please note that applicants may join the RSA as members at the same time as applying for the grant.

**Value:** up to £10,000

**Application deadline (first selection round) 2017:** 31st May 2017

**If you are aware of, or your organisation is responsible for the administration of, funding opportunities and you would like them to be included in a future edition, please email [chris.vanegaeraat@nuim.ie](mailto:chris.vanegaeraat@nuim.ie)**

\*\*\*\*\*

## 6. Publications of Interest

### Forthcoming Research Papers

**Special issue Administration, Planning for Regional Development: The National Planning Framework as a Roadmap for Ireland's Future.** *Administration* Vol 64. No. 4 2016.

E-versions available at <https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/admin.2016.64.issue-3-4/issue-files/admin.2016.64.issue-3-4.xml>.

**Sean Ó'Riordáin and Chris van Egeraat** (2016) The National Spatial Strategy: Lessons for implementing a National Planning Framework, *Administration*, vol. 64, no. 4, pp. 5–21 doi: 10.1515/admin-2016-0022

**Abstract:** The Irish Government is in the process of developing a National Planning Framework (NPF). This will replace the National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002–2020 (NSS). The NSS is generally considered to have been unsuccessful, mainly due to a lack of implementation driven by shortcomings in governance. This paper explores these shortcomings, and suggests ways to prevent similar difficulties with the NPF. The paper concludes that the political process needs to be at the heart of the preparation and adoption of the NPF. There is the danger that the NPF will fail if the political environment remains embedded in traditional approaches to planning across the state. Keywords: National Planning Framework, local government, National Spatial Strategy reform, institutional structures, Ireland

**Markku Sotarauta** (2016) Place leadership, governance and power, *Administration*, vol. 64, no. 4, pp. 45–58 doi: 10.1515/admin-2016-0024

**Abstract:** There is an emerging consensus that place leadership is the missing piece in the local and regional development puzzle. In this context, leadership is a hidden form of agency, shadowed by such visible forms of influence as structures and formal institutions, as well as development programs and plans. This article argues that one of the most central issues in a study of place leadership is to analyse the relationships between governance, power and place leadership. The governance arrangements are undoubtedly important, as they dictate the kind of resources and positions provided to regional development work, and thus they also enable, as well as constrain, the many efforts of regional champions to exercise power in complex development processes. It is argued here that revealing how place leadership is enacted in different places and times would allow us to flesh out novel aspects about the eternal questions of how and why some places are able to adapt strategically to ever-changing social, economic and environmental circumstances while others fail to do so. Additionally, deeper investigations of place leadership would hopefully allow us to provide policymakers and practitioners with added insight on the ways to make regional development policies and practices not only more

strategic but also effective. This paper elaborates the conceptual link between place leadership, governance and power.

**Leonie Janssen-Jansen (2016)** Taking national planning seriously: A challenged planning agenda in the Netherlands *Administration*, vol. 64, no 4, pp. 23–43 doi: 10.1515/admin-2016-0023

**Abstract:** The Dutch planning system has been widely feted as a coordinated, ‘plan-led’ and evidence-informed system that has been successfully implemented, resulting in sensitive land management, an absence of urban sprawl and the protection of ‘green areas’. However, at least since the 1970s, the reality has been somewhat different. This paper reviews Dutch planning history over the past fifty years to highlight in particular the challenge of implementation. The paper also reviews the current challenges facing Dutch planners and provides some international reflection from Dutch experiences for Irish planners.

## Recently Published Research Papers

**Van Egeraat, C., Morgenroth, E. Kroes, R., Curran, D and Gleeson, J (2016)** A measure for identifying substantial geographic concentrations, *Papers in Regional Science*.

**Abstract:** Regional industrial policy emphasizes the notion of building on existing concentrations of competitive firms. A range of measures to identify such concentrations has been put forward in the literature. These measures, however, do not identify substantial concentrations which have the best potential for further development, tend to concentrate on scale measured by employment, and are applied using data for pre-specified administrative boundaries. This paper presents a new concentration index that identifies substantial concentrations and utilizes information on both the number and size of plants. It also proposes a method for generating relevant industry-specific spatial units.

**Doran, J., & Fingleton, B. (2016).** Employment resilience in Europe and the 2008 economic crisis: insights from micro-level data. *Regional Studies*, 50(4), 644-656.

**Abstract:** This paper analyses employment resilience to the 2008 economic crisis using individual-level data from the European Social Survey (ESS) combined with NUTS-1 regional economic statistics. It models employment outcomes for individuals for 2002–08 and generates counterfactual outcomes for 2010 for individual-level employment assuming there is no recession. A resilience index, based on the difference between employment outcomes assuming actual economic conditions and a no recession counterfactual, is generated. Resilience varies substantially and is higher in German and French regions than in peripheral

regions. Highly educated individuals, middle-aged individuals, unionized workers and men are more resilient.

**Doran, J., McCarthy, N., & O'Connor, M.** (2016). Entrepreneurship and employment growth across European regions. *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 3(1), 121-128.

**Abstract:** The role of entrepreneurship in stimulating employment growth is a topic of much discussion (Acs, 2006; van Stel & Suddle, 2008). Van Stel and Suddle (2008) note considerable interest since Birch's (1987) assertion that small and medium-sized companies create most new jobs in an economy. One explanatory mechanism, according to Van Stel, Carree, and Thurik (2005), is that entrepreneurs can be drivers of innovation or enhance competition in an industry, which may drive productivity improvements, which in turn can positively affect employment growth (Acs, 2006). Many studies have shown a positive relationship between entrepreneurship and employment growth, but research has focused on cross-country comparisons at the national level, or at the regional level within a single country (Baptista, Escaria, & Madruga, 2008; Braunerhjelm & Borgman, 2004). The specific research issue addressed by this paper is whether the often positive association between entrepreneurship and regional employment growth holds across diverse European regions. In light of the persistent negative effect of the 2008 economic crisis on employment levels, it is timely to consider whether entrepreneurial activity can alleviate unemployment rates through stimulating job creation. We utilize a unique dataset covering 90 European NUTS-2 regions (Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques) in 11 countries for 2008–10, as well as a fixed effects model to control for the panel nature of the data. The results indicate that entrepreneurial activity, proxied for by new firm births, has a significant positive effect on employment growth across regions.

**If you wish to have a recently published book/paper listed in this section of future newsletters, please e-mail details formatted as above to [chris.vanegaeraat@nuim.ie](mailto:chris.vanegaeraat@nuim.ie)**

## 7. Contacting the RSA Newsletter

If you have any queries regarding the newsletter, or any comments, suggestions or submissions for future editions (incl. details on upcoming events, publications of interest, job vacancies), please email [declan.curran@dcu.ie](mailto:declan.curran@dcu.ie).

\*\*\*\*\*

## 8. Membership of the RSA

Membership of the Association is open to all individuals and organisations with an interest in the analysis and development of regional policy.

Members receive the following publications:

- Twelve issues of Regional Studies (both print and online);
- Four issues of Spatial Economic Analysis (both print and online);
- Three issues of our new journal Territory, Politics, Governance, (both print and online);
- Four issues of Regions, the Association's magazine (both print and online);
- Regional Studies, Regional Science (online);
- Access to the fully searchable Regional Studies archive from Volume 1

In addition, RSA members also have online access to the following Taylor and Francis Journals

- City
- Contemporary Social Science
- Entrepreneurship & Regional Development
- International Planning Studies
- Policy Studies
- Planning Practice and Research
- Regional & Federal Studies
- Space and Polity

Membership is based on the calendar year. For the year 2017, membership costs are: Individual £96; Student £45; Early Career £73; Retired/Emeritus £73; Corporate £210. Further details and application forms can be found on the RSA international website: <http://www.regionalstudies.org/membership>.

\*\*\*\*\*

## 9. Current Irish Committee Members

The current RSA committee for 2017 are: Justin Doran (Maynooth University) - Chairman; Chris Van Egeraat (Maynooth University) – Hon. Secretary; Declan Curran (DCU) – Treasurer; Patrick Collins (NUI Galway); Micheál Collins (NERI); Edgar Morgenroth (ESRI); David Meredith (Teagasc); Deirdre Frost (Western Development Commission); Sean O’Riordain; Philip O’Connor (Dublin Employment Pact); Finbarr Brereton (UCD); Jamie Cudden (Dublin City Council); Celine McHugh; Deiric O’Broin (DIT); Damian Thomas (NESC); Brendan Williams (UCD); Dieter Kogler (UCD); William O’Gorman (WIT); Ruth Pritchard (NUI Galway); Stephen Blair (Southern Regional Assembly).

The following are the contact details of the Association: RSA Chairman Justin Doran: [Justin.Doran@ucc.ie](mailto:Justin.Doran@ucc.ie); RSA Secretary Chris Van Egeraat: [chris.vanegaeraat@nuim.ie](mailto:chris.vanegaeraat@nuim.ie)

\*\*\*\*\*

## 10. Joining/Leaving the RSA (Irish Branch) Mailing List

If you wish to have your details added to, or removed from, the RSA mailing list, please e-mail [justin.doran@ucc.ie](mailto:justin.doran@ucc.ie). The RSA updates its mailing list approximately once every six weeks.

**A pdf copy of this newsletter is available on the RSA International website at <http://www.regionalstudies.org/networks/network/rsair>.**