Thinking Regionally: Research, Policy, & Practice

SMALL CITIES CONFERENCE • MAY 8-9, 2020 • MUNCIE, IN

Wide variation in regional economic performance has troubled Americans for more than a generation. Job losses due to international trade and automation, coupled with rapid urbanization, rural population decline, and the divergence in educational attainment between growing and declining places, have had especially dramatic effects on small cities, towns, and rural communities. Scholars and policy makers increasingly recognize the need for regional approaches that address these issues.

Non-metropolitan places regularly encounter public policy challenges spanning multiple communities and jurisdictions. These challenges call for extended scholarly research with a policy or applied focus. Effectively confronting challenges facing rural communities, towns, and smaller cities requires both a better understanding of regional linkages and greater interaction between the academics who study these issues and the policy makers who address them.

Call for Proposals

The 2020 Small Cities Conference at Ball State University brings together academics and policy makers interested in regional solutions to common problems facing communities and regions. The conference organizers seek proposals for papers and/or panels that consider the regional dimensions of challenges facing small cities, towns, and rural places. Research on international issues is also welcome if it is clearly linked to U.S. impacts.

We welcome analysis of various geographies, including micropolitan areas. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Rural-urban linkages
- Development policies focused on regions
- Higher education and regional development
- Local government in regions
- Role of small cities or towns in regions
- Delivery of public services
- Regional governance
- Revenue sharing
- Financing regional organizations, programs, and/or projects
- Impact of regional organizations on small cities and surrounding regions
- Regional planning approaches
- Capacity of state and local governments to address regional issues
- History of regional organizations
- Impact of and responses to industrial job loss in the U.S.
- Impact of trade and automation on small cities and surrounding regions
- Impact of labor demand shocks in service sectors (health, accommodations, retail, etc.)
- Impact of automation on public services

Proposal Requirements

Proposals for individual papers or fully formed panels (three papers) are welcome.

- A proposal for a single paper should be no more than one page and should outline the substance of the planned paper and its relevance to the conference theme.
- Panel proposals should be no more than four pages and include an outline of the substance of each paper as well as an explanation of their relevance to the conference theme.

Papers will circulate among conference participants in advance. Please also include a brief vita for each proposed presenter (maximum two pages per presenter).

Proposals & inquiries should be directed to: Dagney Faulk, dgfaulk@bsu.edu
Proposal deadline: Nov. 1, 2019 (Notice of acceptance by Dec. 2, 2019)
Completed paper submissions deadline: March 30, 2020

Conference Registration

$150 per person; price includes two-day admission and five meals.

Note: A small number of bursaries will be available to defray travel and registration costs for graduate students and scholars without access to sufficient institutional support. Please indicate your interest in such support when you submit your proposal.

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L.A. Pittenger Student Center
Ball State University
2000 W. University Ave., Muncie, IN 47306

REGISTRATION AND DETAILS:
sites.bsu.edu/SmallCities

Published Volume

The conference organizers may seek to publish some or all of the conference contributions in an edited volume and/or refereed journal with permission from the authors. Papers will be subject to the standard review process of the journal and/or press.

The author of the best conference paper, as chosen by the organizers, will receive a $1,000 prize.