Transforming Urban Governance in a Post-Pandemic World

The "New Normal" in Planning and Participation

Aalborg University and Urban Europe Research Alliance
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Book of Abstracts

Edited by Enza Lissandrello & Janni Sørensen

Introduction

This 'Book of Abstracts' contains the works submitted to the conference organized on the 20th -22nd October 2021 at Aalborg University in Aalborg, Denmark. The conference is the result of intensive collaborative work with the Urban Europe Research Alliance (UERA), Anne Ruas (University of Gustave Eiffel), the Working Group on Urban Governance and Participation and its members, Pia Laborgne (EIFER, Germany), David Ludlow (University of the West of England, Bristol, UK), Roberta Chiarini (ENEA, Italy), Jolanta Dvarioniene (Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania). The conference has been possible also thanks to a local conference board with the collaboration of Janni Sørensen, Rasmus Nedergård Steffansen, Kristian Olesen, and Lasse Schytt Nørgaard (all Aalborg University, Aalborg city campus). A special thanks to the Forskningssupport at the Department of Planning, Aalborg University and Mette Reiche Sørensen for organizational support.

This book opens with an overview of the call topic and the four different sessions that frame the discussion of the 'New normal' at the conference, followed by a table of contents listing each individual abstract and their relation to the relevant session.

The Chair of the UERA Conference 2021

Enza Lissandrello

Aalborg University 20 October 2021

The 'New Normal' in Planning, Governance and Participation

The topic of the conference emerged during the second wave of the COVID 19 pandemic as reflection and conversation developed among a few researchers working in different corners of Europe. We all had the opportunity and the chance to be connected in a digital world; a world facing unprecedented risks. But also, a world in which a 'new normal' is emerging that is probably going to change fundamental parts of researching the urban, its governance and planning ideas and the way we understand participation. In just a few weeks, during the first wave of the pandemic, the Covid-19 pandemic swept across the world and caused tremendous human tragedy and a historical economic setback for which we still do not know the full impact. The pandemic has also given rise to the notion of an emerging "new normal", reflecting changes in attitudes and behaviors. Evidently, the pandemic has propelled cities and citizens through a decade of digital transformation overnight. Cities across Europe and the world are now facing a common challenge in planning for a deeply uncertain future to deliver carbon neutrality whilst transitioning towards the post-pandemic "new-normal". Both climate emergency and Covid-19 have thrown into sharp focus the limitations of urban governance, demonstrating the urgency for new solutions, given EU's commitment to define decarbonization pathways for cities by 2050.

Transforming and revising the priorities and the substantive goals of planning, as well as the silos-thinking and the disciplinary divides, are issues once again up for discussion in relation to governance and participation across local and international scales. New models of cities are taking form in the minds of urban experts to deal with the 'new normal'. However, inclusive future responsible citizenship requires new types of professionals, that not only think and apply innovative models but also mediate and negotiate power and ethics for a just and sustainable urban future. In order to transform urban democracy for more sustainable cities and communities, it is important to question the role research can play to cross borders of representative democracy and disciplinary divides and to recreate alliances for deliberative democracy in our future urban world.

The pandemic has taught everyone that early actions are necessary to deal with unexpected events. But unforeseen consequences are impossible to prevent in 'the risk society'. Planning as 'to think in action' might need to revise its substance, but also the processes and the skills to become ready to develop participation and expand urban governance in a limited time. The pandemic reminds all of us that societal change can be fast, even occur overnight and that events can accelerate transition processes. The ambition to build an urban harmonious society

requires new human capabilities to engage in common issues of health, climate and ecological crisis. In order to improve the sense of safety and security in situations of climate change and biodiversity loss, future governance models depend largely on our understanding of how the 'new normal' means not just to contrast, but to adapt and learn how to navigate persisting challenges. These challenges require an inclusive urban democracy as participation will be essential to develop future forms of governance for societal harmony and solidarity.

The aim of the UERA Conference 2021 is to advance new urban participatory planning and governance perspectives and strategies for Europe's city-regions, generating a debate on challenges and opportunities in the context of the "new normal", promoting potential pathways for EU's spatial policy by scrutinizing critical aspects. Emerging lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic will provide a forum for partnership and consolidation of collaboration for the upcoming Horizon Europe calls and future Urban Europe policy. The UERA Conference aims to promote diverse approaches to the understanding and framing of problems generated from experience of the pandemic in cities, and to address the transformation of paradigms of participation, collaboration, governance, and creation of urban commons, to rethink urban research alliances for urban governance and participation. The abstracts are presented by scholars, researchers, practitioners, and activists engaged with issues related to citizens engagement, participation, and governance in a post-pandemic era. Frameworks and case studies of large and small cities across the EU and globally will promote networks of peer-to-peer-cities, institutions and laboratories operating across topics including the green transition, the digital transformation, stimulating economies and creating jobs, dealing with conflicts and co-producing welfare.

Themes and Disciplines

The Conference promotes pluri-disciplinary and interdisciplinary as well as transdisciplinary research on urban studies and sciences across planning, governance, and participation. The interplay of these themes has been of interests to various disciplines including design, management, geography, the built environment, technology, data and digital innovation, ecosystem services, artistic creation, sociology, and politics. The 'new normal' is a multi-facet aspect that includes the digital transformations of cities, the creation of mini publics and deliberation after social distancing, climate change and citizen participation as well as issues on capacity building and sense of community across thematic issues on energy, food, mobility, biodiversity. The 'new normal' places research attention on partnerships and participatory strategies for urban justice and inclusiveness, on issues of conflict and agonism and creating possible mediation for new urban solidarities. The different sessions reflect the focus areas around which the conference has been developed. This includes issues on learning from new governance practice in COVID 19 times, the evolving roles of communities (and stakeholders) in participation, planning strategies adopted for more healthy and equitable cities, and new experiences of the new normal in post-pandemic cities.

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Learning from New Governance Practice in COVID-19 Times

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1.1 Planning Never Starts, Planning Never Ends - The Force of Working Unfinished

John Pløger

University of Agder, Norway

Abstract

For the last 40-50 years the democratic deficit of public participatory planning has been a recurring issue. Much effort has been made to improve the dialogical part of participatory planning, but not on the decisional part. Citizens never reach the top of Sherry Arnsteins participatory ladder but are told they mistake participation for decision. Following Chantal Mouffe, two lines have been followed on the agonistic planning theory. The first argues that it is possible to make a 'trading zone' between agonistic position to reach Mouffe's 'conflictual consensus' decision. Others, following Michel Foucault and Jacques Rancière say that dissensus is impossible within the current political consensus mode of thinking. Taking such positions as point of departure, the paper develops crucial questions on:

- Is it possible to reconcile (dissensus) disagreements and the need to make decisions to move on?
- Is it possible to work form an idea of commonality despite agonistic positions, or in other words, 'how to improve the losers' position' within a participatory planning process?
- Is it possible to work from an idea of justification?

The paper hopefully inspires a discussion on how we cannot avoid the question of 'how is power exercised' in public planning, how decisions are made, what discourse hegemonies (politically and within planning discourses) control the planning process, and what understanding of democracy prevails (over) public participation.

1.2 Rethinking participatory practices of professional planners as a response to urban governance in Serbia

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the new directions of democratic practices in urban governance, including public participation and multi-stakeholder involvement in Serbia. Through the reflections of Serbian planning practitioners and planners, the paper frames their historical reality of transitional, post-socialist local context as 'somewhere in-between' a complex system of dynamics. Therefore, the requirements of market economy, EU policies, new planning ideas and influences together with the formal participatory procedures and professional idea of the previous, socialist practice come together to this contemporary historical reality. The paper explores, through ethnographic research with professional planners (from 2007 to 2020), the application of participatory methods with the support of international programs that operated in the field of urban governance in Serbia. The research framework combines critical pragmatism and collaborative planning to shed light on daily planning practice characterized by an ongoing transition through dynamics that has shifted to governance, pluralism, and markets. These dynamics have been even more evident when the urban planning challenge during COVID-19 pandemic, have provided practitioners' insights into 'what can, and should we do now?'. The paper defines planning actions take form of small, pragmatic steps and alternative practices that hope to contribute to effective urban governance on specific urban challenges.

1.3 Lockdown democracy - Participatory budgeting on pandemic times: the Portuguese experience

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Abstract

In the field of citizen participation, participatory budgeting (PB) has gained a world-class position in last 30 years. Its global expansion is a case study, and since the first example in Porto Alegre in 1989, PB has expanded and become a major innovation in local decision-making and participation around the world, with over 6,000 to 7,600 experiences listed across 40 countries (Dias, 2018; Cabannes, 2021). However, the world changed in the last year and a half. The health emergency caused by theCovid-19 pandemic has had gigantic repercussion on people's lives, on human relations, on theaction of states and public administrations and of course in democracy too. Participatory processes, especially those that depend on face-to-face interactions, have been affected on a large scale, with the suspension or their reconversion through the adoption of digital channels. Namely, causing negative impacts on the access to the most disadvantaged or vulnerable people (Cabannes, 2020) or under-represented (Allegretti and Dias, 2020). Portugal was no exception. Despite before the pandemic it existed 3 national PBs, 2 regionalPBs and more than 200 local PBS, during 2020 only half of these PB processes started its normal annual cycles or kept working (Dias, 2020). Particularly, in the city of Lisbon it heavily interrupted the two PB processes in course: the Lisbon Green PB and the Lisbon Schools Green PB. The paper explores how the pandemic has transformed these processes. On the one hand, how the Lisbon Green PB — a broader, inclusive, and city-wide-process designed in 2019 (Graça, 2018) — was not launched in 2020, as planned, but just inMarch 2021, as a purely digital process. And, on the other, as the Lisbon Schools Green PB, started as a pilot in 2019 in four schools, saw its activities planned from February 2020 onwards interrupted by the pandemic lockdown and school closures.

1.4 Co-Producing Knowledge for Planning Future Sustainable Cities in Pandemic Times. A Nordic Experience

Enza Lissandrello, Rasmus Nedergård Steffansen, and Lasse Schytt Nørgaard
Aalborg University

Abstract

In the field of urban planning, knowledge is an important and controversial topic. For long, planning scholars have discussed knowledge as a fundamental element of democratic planning processes. Knowledge and power have been intertwined aspects in the evolution, and the transformation of the planning paradigm. The consideration that knowledge is power, has intensified discussions across planning and social sciences on the empowerment of citizens and stakeholders. Citizen-science has been particularly mobilized to address the issues that, acting as scientists; citizens are not just passive receivers of policies, but active drivers. Indeed, when a citizen takes the role of a scientist and becomes able to 'measure', adopt metrics, and understand them, this is a form of empowerment. But in planning and public policy, knowledge can only be an agent of power when it becomes internally embedded in governance processes that seek to influence. The diverse ways of understanding knowledge as a product of rationalization or as a process of rationalizing decision-making is at fundamental core of the planning paradigm. The planner as the knower has left the place to the planner as the mediator of co-production processes across multiple ways of knowing. This shift constitutes a fundamental turn in planning research and its methods. This paper explores planning as the social infrastructure of *knowledge co-production.* It explores the planning action set-up in the context of the NordicPath project, where planners dealing with knowledge co-production mediate interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge in pandemic times. The challenges of participation, collaboration and ecosystem learning are framed into two main mechanisms of knowledge co-production: a) knowledge co-production oriented to procedural aspects of planning and b) knowledge co-production oriented to substantial aspects in planning. These co-production mechanisms are analytically categorized and intertwined to progress planning as a science of thinking, guiding, and acting, strategically and democratically towards more sustainable urban futures. The paper offers critical points of participation, accountability, and legitimacy in the 'new normal' when digital practices activated in pandemic times present opportunities and constraints to knowledge for planning practice and theory.

1.5 Online Participatory Events, Myth or Reality? - Learnings from the easyRights Hackathons

Nicola Morelli and Maria Vitaller de Olmo
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Abstract

Due to their explorative dimensions, participatory events have become the fundamental pillar of strategies that involve many stakeholders in the co-design of innovative solutions to social challenges. Among them, hackathons have become a widespread format that can produce interesting solutions at different levels of maturation, from innovative concepts to working prototypes. This format has been explored in relation to civic issues, such as the access and use of open data (Lodato and DiSalvo, 2016; Carr and Lassiter, 2017;Taylor and Clarke, 2018). The hit of the global pandemic withdrew the main condition for the occurrence of hackathons: the gathering of several individuals in a physical place. Consequently, like any other codesign activity, hackathons switched to the online sphere, transforming the way they were arranged and experienced. While online hackathons opened new possibilities in terms of participation, they entailed important challenges that compromise core values such as teamwork, the atmosphere or participants' engagement. As some clear advantages in terms of social distancing, logistics and costs may provoke participatory encounters to remain digitally in the 'New Normal', how can we guarantee that their foundations remain? What should we consider when adapting our social events to the digital world and beat the so-called 'Zoom fatigue' of attendants? This paper presents the case of the easyRights hackathons (H2020 project) that, affected by the global health situation, had to shift to the online mode. Drawing from a combination of literature review in contrast to first-hand experience, we discuss the value of the digital format of hackathons, by studying the pitfalls and advantages encountered. Aimed to inspire the reflection and future practice of online hackathons or similar formats of events, the article sums up the collected recommendations and know-how for a conscious design of online participatory events.

1.6   Beyond Webinar Governance - The shift of public digital devices from policy implementation to metagovernance objectives

Nacima Baron and Thomas Achtereekte
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Abstract

www.Francemobilités.fr government web portal was launched by French Ministry for the ecological transition late 2019. Its creation is in line with the promulgation of the National Mobility Regulation (Loi d'Orientation des Mobilités). This regulation focuses mainly on local governments, especially on the suburban and rural parts of France, where a complete regulatory toolbox will implement innovative mobilities and tackle climatic and energy challenges. The web portal provides a platform for small municipalities and intermunicipal institutions the necessary information and skills. The purpose of the web portal is also to include into the digital system the most of the local transport authorities, considered the main driver of innovative mobility policies for rural regions. The broad goal is also to restructure at a national scale the deficit of bus services thanks to the devolution of new mobilities digital devices (bike renting and free floating, carsharing systems) and to the local funding of adapted infrastructure (bike lane schemes, park, and ride areas etc.). This paper presents this case for its relevant features in terms of progressive governance and participation strategies. The communicative and collaborative practices are considered by main scholars' key for the implementation of innovative public transport policies (Hrelja 2018). The paper demonstrates how the webinars, special events beyond proximity and other interaction tools have been mobilized and multiplied during the COVID pandemic. Crises are part of a much broader turn in governmental practices and strategies. The main aim of French government is to transform gradually the platform into a new institution, the "Innovative transport agency". This new body foresees the public national actor as an orchestrator of a «community» through tech-oriented innovation. The paper focusses on the emergence and transformation of e-governance and platform governance. It argues that this digital and communicative "dispositifs" (in the Foucauldian sense of the term) have very important effects, not only in the enrolment of local governments in the policy, but in the way multilevel government and multilevel governance were articulated to produce what Jessop calls multispatial metagovernance.

The Evolving Roles of Communities (and Stakeholders) in Participation

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2.1 Normality Under Uncertainty. Praxeological Approach in Research on the (Re)production of a 'Normal' Everyday Life in the City

Marta Smagacz-Poziemska

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Abstract

"I just want things to be back to normal again" – these are the words spoken by many individuals at the end of 2020. "Build back better" is the message from experts and global leaders, who emphasize that the COVID-19 pandemic is a chance to boost recovery processes toward sustainable transition. What is this future "normality"? What will it be for the people in the cities, who likely will end up tired and sore – socially, psychologically, economically - from pandemic experience? What is their imaginary normal future and how is it being done in practice? This paper proposes conceptual tools that can be applied in investigation on how the (urban) future is being arranged through the entanglements of everyday practices and political and cultural frameworks.

2.2 Building the Buzz in Blakelaw - Strengthening the quality of place through community focused in (post-) pandemic times

Georgiana Varna and Danny Oswell
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Abstract

COVID-19 transformed our world - it slowed urban life to a trickle and the measures required to manage it disrupted the vibrant, enriching, and healthy social interactions most humans crave. Almost overnight, we moved from each 'stranger' being a potential new social encounter, to a situation where 'others' became a potential 'threat' to our health, and even to our survival. As a result, the street ballet of which Jane Jacobs wrote in 1969, became more akin to a dystopian still life painting. In the UK context, the pandemic followed an epidemic of austerity, engineered by successive Neoliberal governments, ever since 2010. The result today is many left behind places, with poor place leadership, with a lack of the transformative capacity needed in so many areas to truly regenerate them into localities where people choose to live and work. In this paper, we go beyond current Government rhetoric, and its instrumentalized, thinking, exemplified by the 'build back better' soundbite seeded through the new Planning White Paper (August 2020) and National Model Design Code (January 2021). Instead, we look at urban places that have been left behind: those suffering in terms of overall place quality, and poor public realm. We try to understand both local conditions and contexts through a (power) networks analysis. And we seek to consensually and collaboratively embed our findings to help drive improvement. Our methodology centers on location specific 'experiments,' co-designed with the local community in the suburb of Blakelaw, in Newcastle Upon Tyne, Northern England. In so doing, we propose to translate the Star Model of Publicness from a normative assessment framework (Varna, 2014) into a more grounded experimental approach, to help facilitate change. We feel very strongly that to genuinely strengthen the place agenda (Varna & Oswell, TPR, 2020) at such a moment of fluidity of context, our challenge is to develop deep, multi-layered, complex understandings of left behind places through strong, long lasting collaborative partnerships and experiences with the local communities.

2.3   Social distancing and participation - The case of participatory budgeting in Budapest, Hungary

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Abstract

Pandemic and social distancing are not conducive to the implementation of participatory processes based on deliberation. Municipalities are also facing difficulties where participation has been institutionalized for decades. During the pandemic, decision-makers have several choices and solutions: delay or postpone events, or to transfer processes to online space. Hybrid solutions have also been tried in several places. In Hungary, participation is considered a need for a variety of reasons. Most solutions need to address the issue of equity and consideration of accessibility. The other issue is the resilience or the survival of institutions of participation. In our research, we examine a newly established participatory institution during the pandemic. The first announcement of the participatory budget introduced in Budapest (Hungary) coincided with the appearance of the COVID-19 pandemic. The process was also planned to emphasize deliberative elements. The main questions of our case study research are 1. how online and hybrid solutions affect the fairness and competence of the process 2. to what extent the use of online platforms helped the survival of the first introduction of the Budapest participatory budget and 3. to what extent equity and deliberation aspects were violated. Our research explored the participatory decision-making aspects of innovation in Budapest between 2019-2021 using qualitative tools (interview, document analysis). Our results show that resilience and fair deliberation generally do not help each other, and relevant trade-offs occur in the time of pandemic and social distancing.

2.4 A model of Action Research for Advancing University-Community Partnerships

Janni Sørensen
Aalborg University

Abstract

Exploring the processes and outcomes of participatory neighborhood scale urban planning with diverse and resource-poor neighborhoods rooted in community assets and organizing (Sandercock, 1998; Checkoway, 1984; Reardon, 2009; Peterman 1999, Harwood, 2003) is a long-standing field of interests. Empowering citizens to become effective participants in urban planning and policy making has been on the agenda of planning theory (Davidoff, 1965; Arnstein 1969) and planning practice (Krumholz, 1987) for several decades and more recently Rohe (2009) concluded that a requirement for public participation is now firmly established in the planning profession. Several questions however remain about who participates and what voices are heard in the planning process and the role of grassroots organizing and capacity building. In planning practice, professionals will often experience participation as skewed towards homeowners, native speakers, formally educated and other lines of privilege. This paper presents a model for community-university partnership where planning programs training the future generation of urban planners work with communities to build capacity for meaningful participation in government led planning. The paper shares knowledge built during an 8 yearlong partnership between students and faculty at University of North Carolina – Charlotte and the Charlotte neighborhood Reid Park. The work has resulted in a replicable model for mutually beneficial partnership that allows students and faculty to learn about and practice participatory planning methods while supporting the local communities in preparing for participation in ongoing municipal planning.

2.5 Stakeholders' involvement in smart city business models

Edoardo Croci and Tania Molteni
GREEN Bocconi University

Abstract

Stakeholders' involvement in smart urban transformations is considered necessary and beneficial. Smart city development is a complex task that cannot be achieved by a single actor. The involvement of stakeholders brings their knowledge, skills, as well as their needs, into the decision-making processes and into the design and operation of smart city solutions. The collaborative work is essential to contribute addressing a series of operational, financial, technological, and human resource challenges. This paper aims to identify the roles of stakeholders in smart city solutions and their business models in three sectors (energy, mobility, ICT), through a literature review and an in-depth analysis of three city case studies: Valencia, Dresden and Antalya (involved in the Horizon 2020 project "MAtchUP"). The analysis of MAtchUP case studies is performed through a questionnaire-based survey, targeted to stakeholders directly involved in the project as well as external ones (i.a. city governments, public companies, utility providers, ICT companies, research and academia, NGOs). Overall, 115 answers are analyzed. Most answers refer to energy (48%) and mobility (42%). A relevant share of answers was provided by city governments. The survey highlights the variety of user needs that smart city solutions developed by the project aim to satisfy, as well as the relevance of barriers that stakeholders encounter in the implementation of smart city business models. On average, political-institutional and economic barriers were mentioned to be the most relevant by stakeholders. Furthermore, market and business opportunities arising for stakeholders from smart city solutions have been identified. For more than 40% of interviewed stakeholders, the considered smart city solutions have opened new market opportunities for their organizations. The results aim to contribute to a better understanding of the role of stakeholders in smart city solutions deployment and to address the most relevant barriers in their implementation.

2.6 'How can we cope with the heat?' - Involving citizens in climate adaptation through PPGIS

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Abstract

Since the publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (hereafter, IPCC) reports on the current climate situation, international activities to mitigate climate change have increased. Data and consensus exist that health risks and extreme weather events will nevertheless increase over the course of the 21st century, more and more people will live in cities, and adaptation to climate change must be more actively implemented as well (IPCC 2014). Due to high density, and high levels of sealing, cities are particularly affected by the urban heat island phenomenon. In this context, the concept of resilience is increasingly emerging. Today, many different disciplines are addressing social resilience at a macro level, focusing on resilience and regenerative capacity in the face of modern and increasingly unpredictable risks (Fathi 2019). Resilience is not only emphasized in PPCC reports; even the World Economic Forum called the resilience concept a "21st Century Imperative" (Fathi 2019). It is apparent that resilience is becoming increasingly important in dealing with heat waves. But how are citizens currently dealing with heat waves? Where are specific needs? How can local knowledge be captured and used to make cities more resilient? There has been a shift in urban planning discourses from planning as a technocratic process to a more inclusive practice. In this so-called "communicative planning paradigm," (Innes 1995) planning has a new and additional responsibility to actively engage the community. This paper introduces the methodology and results of a Public Participatory GIS survey in Karlsruhe, Germany, in the summer of 2021. The goal of the survey is to identify people and places in Karlsruhe that are particularly affected by heat, and to better understand how the population is affected and how they deal with heat waves e.g., by changes in their daily practices or in their living environment but also collecting comments and ideas regarding climate adaptation measures on city level. Finally, the usability of the methodology and resulting data for research and urban planning will be discussed.

Planning for Healthy and Equitable Cities 3

3.1 Innovating Urban Governance: Challenges, Tools, and Ideas from Contemporary Practices

Pietro Elisei

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Abstract

Cities will play a fundamental role in determining the pace, intensity and impact of the economic recovery that is preparing for the post-pandemic period. The greatest illusion is to think that introducing new (mostly financial) resources into the urban systems can lead to a revival of the local economies. However, resources have been already compromised by two consecutive economic crises (Subprime, 2007 and Covid, 2019) and therefore it is crucial to focus on tools of global and local governance, and their harmonization. Cities, in the context of an approach based on multi-level governance, must invest and work on deploying and adopting new, creative governance instruments and building their capacity for effectively involving, connecting, and empowering a wide group of stakeholders in thinking and managing contemporary urban issues. It is essential to give priority to the most urgent challenges within the production of city value system. Improving governance tools on the design and finance of innovative, effective, and efficient urban policies is essential to achieve substantial change in the process and workflow of public administrations at local level. But this would be just possible in a framework of transnational collaboration with the objective of sustainable development, counteracting the effects of climate change and the phenomenon of urbanization as significant challenges that cities must face.

3.2 Urban Living Labs: how to enable inclusive transdisciplinary research

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Abstract

Urban Living Labs (ULLs) approaches have the potential to create enabling environments for social learning and to shape successful arenas for innovative local collaboration in knowledge co-creation and experimentation in the context of research and practice in sustainability transitions. Nevertheless, the realization of ULLs present challenges especially regarding their inclusiveness. In this paper, this issue is explored in the case of a complex issue such as the urban Food-Water-Energy (FWE) Nexus. In this case, the ULL approach is explored as a frame for a local knowledge co-creation and participation based on an international project named 'Creating Interfaces'. The project Creating Interfaces aims at making urban FWE Nexus linkages better understandable to the stakeholders (citizens and associations, city government, science, businesses), and to facilitate cooperation and knowledge exchange among them. We draw form the experiences in three ULLs in Tulcea (Romania), Slupsk (Poland) and Wilmington (Delaware, USA). This presentation focuses on and discusses inclusiveness as a key aspect and challenge of ULLs. Against the background of existing ULL literature in relation to our project findings, the paper suggests an advancement of the concept of ULL towards ULL 2.0. In this regard, we discuss the accelerated digitalization due to the pandemic and its effects on co-creation and participation. In conclusion, we underline that inclusiveness and meaningfulness to local society are key points regarding the legitimacy and impact of ULLs in view of ensuring the scientific value of the outcomes. We summarize key points when addressing the concept of ULLs towards ULL 2.0, and how these points should be strengthened in a co-creative process of ULLs.

3.3 Pandemic urbanism through mobility in intermediate cities: A singular episode or a real shift? The case of Mulhouse, France

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Abstract

This paper deals with COVID developments within urban governance and planning processes and explores novelties in French intermediate cities respect pre-pandemic modes of designing, building, and living. Based on our work within the interdisciplinary research project MUT'action – Mobility and Tactical Urbanism in Action*, the novelty of COVID urbanism is here envisioned and analyzed from the perspective of stakeholders, planning and design approaches, participation practices and spatial features. The paper examines how desirable and lasting urban responses are when facing the health crisis and their possible impacts on the post-pandemic future as innovations. The urban area of Mulhouse in France, particularly impacted by COVID-19 during the first lockdown in 2020, is chosen as an exemplary field of investigation. As cities around the world experimented with social and physical distancing measures, in Mulhouse, temporary urban and public space transformations have been implemented, often in a record time, in favor of active mobility modes. This fast and relatively low-cost mode of action on mobility spaces and practices, often qualified as "tactical urbanism", have been especially effective in medium size cities as Mulhouse, where mobility – still automobile-dominated – is seen as a major sustainability and resilience issue. The paper unfolds three main questions: (i) What language and urban imagery are used by different urban actors to describe pandemic approaches to city making and realized COVID spatial projects? (ii) What are the specificities in terms of spatial planning and built environment, as well as in terms of decision-making processes, participation, and actors' interaction? (iii) What temporal, spatial, and political scales appear to be at play? The paper draws from field work, document analysis, bibliographic monitoring, and interviews with local actors. Ultimately, it asks to what extent the experience of pandemic urbanism can serve to catalyze long-term change for city making. Is the COVID experience an isolated event strictly related to the health crisis or it shows a more profound renewal of the post-pandemic city project facing ecological crisis?

3.4 Nordic participatory, healthy and people-centred cities (NordicPATH)

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Abstract

Nordic municipalities are providing policies for reducing pollution, building more healthy and liveable spaces, and reducing climate change impacts. However, municipalities have limited resources and institutional hindrance for innovative policy approaches. During the last decades, the main approach to tackle environmental challenges was to harness innovative technologies and to acquire knowledge through data mining strategies. The problem of this approach is that the human aspects like the perception of the space or the human interaction with technology have been not a focus point. NordicPATH's research strategy focuses on bringing together a wide range of stakeholders in the process of socio-technological change required by planners and designers to provide the built environment and the services that will shape future sustainable cities with a human-centered approach. Exploring a living lab method, NordicPATH research demonstrates that technologies can facilitate processes of collaborative co-design to support planning for sustainable cities. The paper analyzes potentials for environmental co-monitoring strategies through low-cost sensors and participatory GIS to engage citizens in reducing urban pollution and negative impacts of climate change of cities. Exploring urban living labs in Nordic cities (Aalborg, Gothenburg, Kristiansand, Lappeenranta), the paper identifies a set of themes as wood burning, densification, mobility, and public shared spaces. The outcomes of the Nordic Living Labs will provide insights on the challenges and opportunities for a participatory methods and collaborative planning in the Nordic countries to create (more) healthy and people-centered cities.

3.5   Housing Associations in Denmark - Drivers of, or solution to, segregation in Danish cities?

Kristian Olesen and Matthew Howells
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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has in many ways provided a window through which we clearly see and understand the challenges of urban areas, but also which challenges that are recognized and articulated as problems, how these are framed and understood, and put into words considering the pandemic. Danish politics has for the last decade become increasingly concerned with issues of segregation. An entire political apparatus has been built up to monitor the performance or vulnerability of particular social housing areas, which have been labelled as 'ghettoes', and the Danish Government has taken drastic measures to prevent what has been referred to as 'parallel societies. In this paper we trace the evolution of the Danish housing association, which traditionally has been driven by values of equality, affordability, and direct democracy, to the more recent territorial stigmatization of social housing areas as ghettoes and parallel societies. Furthermore, through a textual/discursive analysis of news media and grey literature, we use the COVID-19 pandemic as a lens to explore how the political stigmatization of social housing areas unfolds in a time of crisis and the rationalities behind the stigmatizing political discourse. Under the pandemic, vulnerable housing areas have frequently been highlighted as 'corona hotspots' with the embedded accusations that the residents do not comply with government guidelines. We argue, echoing a recent Nordregio report, that the COVID-19 pandemic has put a new light on the societal structural injustices inherent in our societies, and that the pandemic provides an opportunity to address these injustices. In conclusion, we discuss what role the Danish housing associations with their underlying ideologies can play in reducing segregation and promote socio-spatial justice in Danish cities.

3.6 Collective actions in the "Post"- pandemic democracy: the relevance of an alternative storytelling

Valeria Monno
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Abstract

In the recent years, several studies have outlined the profound changes in the forms of collective action produced by the rise of urban governance and highlighted their positive/negative effects in terms of production of democracy 'from below' or in co-production with local governments. The pandemic has stopped several of these activities and sometimes highlighted an instrumental use of the democratic discourse in planning practice. In this paper I propose a critical interpretation of the multiplicity of collective actions that have inhabited contemporary cities and their adaptations to the new pandemic and post-pandemic scenario. The paper identifies three kinds of activities: individualizing, purifying and generative. It describes these activities under the lens of learning in terms of content and influence on the transformative possibilities of urban space in terms of equity and spatial justice. In particular, the paper shows as several generative collective actions have shifted during pandemic to become new sources for an alternative storytelling on urban development. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the theories of collective action to identify categories for decoding the relationship between urban action and planning. The second part describes through a case study some forms of collective action in practice. By individualizing and purifying part of the collective action, changes occur around the influence of massive uneven transformations of urban space. The paper concludes that by identifying collective actions for their individualizing and purifying effects, an emerging alternative storytelling is possible to generate hopes for an emancipatory change in the community and inclusiveness of urban spaces.

Experiencing the New Normal in Post-Pandemic Cities 4

4.1 How to make the next ten years feel like a Revolution of the Imagination

Rob Hopkins

Activist of Transition Network and Transition Town

Abstract

The science is clear, and the need for action on the climate and ecological emergency is deep, ambitious, and bold as unequivocal. Might it be that one of the reasons societies are failing to act with sufficient ambition is that our collective imagination, our ability to see things as if they could be otherwise, is depleted, constrained, undervalued and being actively eroded? If we were to do everything the scientists tell us we need to do, the next 10 years could feel like living through a revolution of the imagination, an exhilarating time we, for the first time in our lives, anything felt possible. Rather than fixating on all the acting on climate change means we have to leave behind, how about we reframe the focus on the new world that becomes possible, its sights, smells, sounds, possibilities. This paper explores how we got into such a mess of imaginative poverty, and how we might find a way out of it, illustrated with stories and case studies. Be realistic, demand the impossible.

4.2   Anthropology of the co-emergency - Getting inspired from the COVID-19 to learn from the over economy

Roberta Chiarini

Italian national agency for new technologies energy and sustainable economic development - Smart City and Smart Communities Laboratory (ENEA)

Abstract

There are many cultural and economic "viruses" in the world that are not really perceived as priority emergencies. Exploring an anthropological approach, the paper addresses the question on how the COVID-19 pandemic has elicited solutions that can be adopted or inspire other solutions to address the sense of emergency and become more aware of priorities over other societal and human emergencies. A central aspect of the anthropology applied to the emergency is to study and to analyze on how impact products and economic process can be faced in a more fundamental perspective than within state sovereignty. The paper identifies solutions of participation and governance that have been led during COVID-19 to advance a possible natural and sustainable economy in a more fundamental and therefore possible international perspective. The paper highlights how an anthropology of the economy can provide insights into the 'new normal' by linking what can be understood as a universal human behavior of the emergency and the construction of a possible enduring new economy for the future.

4.3 Pandemic learnings and sustainable mobility goal achievements in Norwegian urban and transport planning

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Abstract

The COVID-19 has been one of the most serious health threats in over a century. Fueled by global interconnectedness and with unprecedented travel restrictions as a consequence, the pandemic has faced complex related issues of mobility and transport. The pandemic initially left authorities across the globe no other options than stringent ad-hoc top-down confinement interventions, based on neither sufficient knowledge on the epidemiologic effects of such interventions, nor sufficient understanding of societal responses. Even though the short-term impacts of the pandemic and consequent interventions on socioeconomics, mobility, health, and wellbeing have been profound and increasingly well-documented, mid to long-term impacts on such issues, and the consequences for land use and transport planning are still largely unknown. Drawing on ten in-depth interviews with high-level administrative leaders within land use and transport planning in the Norwegian urban regions of Oslo and Bergen, this study provides insights into planners' early-stage pandemic learnings and copings against this backdrop of crisis, uncertainty, and ongoing pandemic restrictions. Based on planning theory and decision-making processes on the role of planners and their use of knowledge in such processes, we investigate what planning leaders see as potential changes in citizens' preferences and mobility behaviors, what implications this could have for future planning and development of land use and transport systems, and if/how this challenge will consolidate or change well-established goals and objectives concerning zero-growth in urban road traffic, compact city development and the UN's SDGs.

4.4 Urban Governance in the Post-Pandemic Barcelona - Superblocks as a New Normality?

Federico Camerin

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Abstract

The COVID-19 crises created a drastic confrontation with our built environments and the city-making process. In Barcelona, the implementation of the concept of Superblocks, initially applied in the pre-pandemic period with several difficulties in terms of urban governance in Poblenou and Sant Antoni neighbourhoods, apparently gained support and attention during the pandemic. Local planning and participation in the post-pandemic period seem have flourished from late 2021 to 2023 in Barcelona – i.e., the Cerda's Extension – is going to be reconverted into a great Superblock. This paper aims to partially fill the gap of knowledge on the role of the urban design in mitigating the effects of COVID-19. As no large public survey has still been released on this aspect, the paper addresses Superblocks features in terms of healthier, safer, accessible and inclusive city. The focus of the analysis is on the innovation of the existing Superblocks experiences in Poblenou and Sant Antoni neighborhoods and the main features   of the Cerda's Extension new Superblock. The theoretical framework contextualizes the concept of Superblocks to analyze the Barcelona's Superblocks impact in the urban environment. The two case studies of Poblenou and Sant Antoni neighborhoods are compared in terms of urban governance. The methodology relies on a desk research literature review of Superblock concept and application, plus archival research, i.e., Barcelona's archives, on-site visits andon-line interviews with Superblock's residents and non-residents (2021). This paper demonstrates that Barcelona's Superblocks are innovative solutions to guarantee a sustainable accessibility and connectivity though urban democracy, being capable of creating a new sense of community in the pandemic and post-pandemic era.

4.5 Towards the social and economic sustainability: what can we learn from the Multi-level Network Marketing?

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Abstract

In this information age, technology and overseas competition have led to the increase of unemployment and decrease of wages. To make matter worse, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to mass layoffs, declining of jobs and an economic downturn. However, at the same time, the digital world has opened possibilities to expand service provision, to communicate and run businesses more efficiently, while reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions associated with traveling. The transition from our traditional way of doing things and the unusual challenges that we are facing in a world of limited physical mobilizations force us to develop creative, innovative, and resilient solutions that might harmonize economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. One of the successful businesses with the matching profile that is called as the perfect model for the 21st century is Network Marketing, which has flourished during the pandemic. Network Marketing is characterized as a people-oriented, a personal-development, an equal (open for every person regardless of race, age, gender, skill, and geography), a sustainable and residual, and home-based business. This paper asks what we can learn from its business model as well as its inclusive and participatory governance, and how we can replicate its success factors in a different context. The paper adopts action research and uses literature review, observation, and interviews to investigate the prevailing opportunities, practical benefits, and possible challenges of this business. Insights on the limiting conditions and potential to shift lessons will be useful to rethinking applications to other contexts.

4.6 Designing and planning the post-pandemic city: delivering carbon neutral cities whilst transitioning towards the post-pandemic 'new-normal'

David Ludlow
University of West England Bristol

Abstract

Due to COVID-19, much of Europe has been in lockdown or operating with restrictions on movement and engagement in activities since early 2019, and we are likely to experience the pandemic's shockwaves for years to come. The pandemic has highlighted once again the importance of resilience and adaptability in city planning for the fulfilment of key policy objectives for post-pandemic economic recovery, whilst securing climate change mitigation and social wellbeing. As the pandemic has propelled cities and citizens through a decade of digital transformation overnight, it has given rise to the notion, and anticipation, of a 'new normal' emerging, reflecting potentials for the twin green and digital transitions to redraw city planning re-do and re-energize the economy, and securing Net-Zero Neighbourhoods. Consequently, city planners across Europe are now facing a common challenge: how to plan for a deeply uncertain future and transforming city. How to influence the shaping of that future to deliver carbon neutral cities whilst transitioning towards the post-pandemic 'new-normal.' The climate emergency and COVID-19 have thrown into sharp relief the limitations of urban governance, demonstrating the urgency for new solutions, given the need identified in the European Green Deal to define decarbonization pathways by 2050, creating cities of Net-Zero Neighborhoods. The vision of the Net-Zero Neighborhood is emerging as new ways of living and working more locally have promoted major environmental benefits with reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved air-quality. The Net-Zero Neighbourhood plan envisions liveable neighborhoods of mixed urban land-use providing housing, employment, education, shopping, and cultural facilities within easy walking and cycling distance. Here neighborhood living and working gives benefits of homeworking for families with business benefits of lower cost 'hybrid working". Promoting these visions, city planners are actively working to understand on how we plan for the Net-Zero Neighborhood as hubs of living and working and on understanding what this means for city centers, and on how to target behavioral change strategies to respond to the new socio-economic and spatial reality of cities. This paper sets this discussion in a context, aims to support the development of the critical thinking necessary for planning the socio-economic transformation of the city, as digital transformations impact on city life and neighborhoods.

4.7 Driving Urban Transitions in Europe and Beyond: Stepping-up the Game for the Next Seven Years (DUT)

Jonas Bylund

Management Board JPI Urban Europe

Abstract

The European Partnership Driving Urban Transitions to a Sustain Future (DUT) is set to launch in 2022. It is a collaboration between Horizon Europe and JPI Urban Europe and presents an increased ambition and opportunity in the landscape of urban transformation research and innovation (R&I) and transnational collaboration. For European actors, to mobilize and get acquainted with this, the paper introduces and outlines what the DUT proposes in terms of themes and programming approach for the next seven years.