

## Virtual CORP 15 April 2020

### Planning in Challenging Times and Circumstances

Chat Recording

#### Hosts

Prof. Christa Reicher and Canan Çelik, RWTH Aachen University, Germany  
Manfred Schrenk and Clemens Beyer, Competence Center of Urban and Regional Planning,  
Vienna, Austria

#### Content

Welcome by Prof. Christa REICHER and Manfred SCHRENK

Impulse Statements for different spatial levels

- Christa REICHER (Head of Urban Planning at RWTH Aachen, host & partner for CORP):  
*Intro and Conference Topic/Urban and Regional Level*
- Pedro B. ORTIZ (Planner & Manager of Metropolitan Issues, Washington DC & Madrid):  
*Metropolitan Resilience*
- Dirk ENGELKE, HSR Rapperswil, Institute for Spatial Development:  
*Public Spaces without Public – Planning in the Pandemic*

Impulse presentations on Contemporary Urban Planning and Dealing with Exceptional Challenges

- Ali ASGARY (York University, Toronto, Canada):  
*Advanced Disaster, Emergency and Rapid Response Simulation (ADERSIM)*
- Stefan GREIVING (TU Dortmund):  
*Opportunities and Limitations of Spatial Planning for Disaster and Emergency Management*
- Pietro ELISEI (URBASOFIA, consultant and EU expert):  
*Let's Get Urban Planning out of Quarantine!"*

**All presentations are available at <https://virtual.corp.at/>**

## CORP 2020

### Virtual Opening of 2020 Conference on Zoom

#### Summary Proceedings of Questions by Judith Ryser

The summary divides into Substantive comments and thanks. The technical comments are omitted. This summary is a complement to the direct transcript of the Zoom chats of 15 April 2020.

#### **Substantive comments (public for all)**

##### *In response to Pedro Ortiz presentation*

##### *(MetrUrban Planning during Covid19)*

##### From Guenter Koch

Just to convey that the idea of quarantine was invented in the medieval age by the town of Ragusa in Italy (which did not exist as a nationstate in that period). In my opinion, this historic story is most interesting and it is important to discuss the influence of epidemics in a historic context.

##### From Bernardina Borra

Following up on the historic perspective, after the Spanish flu pandemic, we apparently had no change in planning approach. Conversely, the COVID-19 pandemic is raising plenty of critical questions about how we run our capitalistic system and the way we pollute the world. Shouldn't we - as urban designers- rather take action, instead of predicting that (climate) change is not going to happen and returning back to business as usual?

##### From Pietro Elisei

What about advocating a Global Territorial Agenda around the Half Earth concept?

##### From Dr. Md. Manjur Morshed

Does the informal economy represent urban adaptability and/or flexibility?

##### From Mete Basar Baypinar

Actually adaptability and resilience of a region or a city and global industrial resilience are quite different processes and are most likely to have many conflicting issues in relation to the current pandemic.

##### From Frank D'hondt

How can we planners make ourselves heard, not to throw out the baby (dense walkable cities) with the dirty bathwater (dense means contagious)?

From Amjone

I wonder if you have thought of multigenerational households and the future of how to plan for mixed living.

From Judith Ryser

Crisis makes people extremely adaptable and more cooperative and compassionate. However, history shows (e.g. in Britain the miner strikes and the three-day-week in the 1970s) that as soon as a crisis has waned behaviour tends to snap back to ex ante and all this creativity etc seems to be lost. How to change that for the better, and how can planners contribute? How to plan to make at least some of such positive behaviour remain after the pandemic? For example air pollution is declining due to less car travel, so what could planners do to persuade people to use their cars less for inessential purposes and what alternative mobility provision would that entail?

From Frank Otte

Like for Judith, my apprehension is that people will forget everything after the crisis.

***In response to Ali Asgary***

***(Urban recovery & Covid-19 pandemic)***

From Silas Achidago

How to plan or manage public transportation in this social distancing era?

From Manfred Schrenk

How about travel distances now in times of crises (bike/car)?

From Mete Basar Baypinar

Actually the problem is that often health or transport systems have strong emphasis on user preferences. In the pandemic period we need to establish them on the basis of collective parameters and realign efficiency and effectiveness parameters according to these terms. From the perspective of resilience, maybe some of these new standards should remain even after the pandemic. What I see is that many metropolitan municipalities are paralysed, not learning and not agile.

From Bernardina Borra

Could we try to focus also on the positive flip side? What are the positive effects? Maybe it helps finding a right recovery strategy, e.g. no physical damage, but environmental improvement, significant social impact, but also cooperation and social cohesion, public attention to inequalities under new perspectives, raised awareness. Yes exactly: a better world! Thanks!

From Frank D'hondt

How to factor in the risk of disaster capitalism as defined by Naomi Klein?

***In response to Dirk Engelke***

***(Public spaces without public planning during the pandemic)***

From Bilal Saghir

How are we expected to deal with the possible change in user perception towards public spaces which is likely to result from long lasting social-distancing?

From Amjone

What should we take away from the public space question you pose at the beginning? It was not clear to me what you want to really communicate with this example. '

From Frank D'hondt

Don't we need more differentiation in the 'people-based' planning approach? In the absence of generic spaces?

***In response to Pietro Elisei***

***(Getting planning out of the pandemic quarantine)***

From Dr. Md. Manjur Morshed

What will be the impact of Covid19 on the democratic planning process?

From Merham

How can we train the young planners to perceive the world differently? This requires a lot of changes, especially in less democratic governance processes. Governance is always the key for change, but this is not so perceivable/ attainable in comparatively rigid and sectoral paradigms.

From Pietro Elisei

Thank you for your question. While territorial and urban governance is taking its first steps we need to experiment a lot (hybrid combination horizontal/vertical, people based/place based). We need to upscale to a new dimension for urban planners, where we are more mediators than old style designers and we finally need to refresh our box of tools. We need a strong change of mentality to survive and have an impact on urbanisation and the disparities that led to this phenomenon.

From Steven Forrest

What do we mean when we are referring to tools? (as in concepts, frameworks, something else?)

From Olaf Mumm

I disagree! Planning needs very much both: design and mediation skills, and a lot more.

From Bernardina Barra

Small food for thought: an important factor of the actual challenges (and more to come in the future) is speed. In this century anything is accelerating but what about the speed of reaction of the urban planning approach? Can the issue of speed be integrated in urban planning education, as well as planning itself?

**Manfred Schrenk invited Frank D'hondt, and Judith Ryser to make concluding remarks**

From Frank D'hondt, in his capacity of Secretary General of ISOCARP

[He underlined the need for, and position of planners, the public sector as planning authority and the taxation system as essential parts of a democratic process to sustain fair access and use of space for all. Planning is essential in the management and equitable allocation of finite space and planners are the ones who have the professional tools to deliver this.]

From Judith Ryser

This discussion has highlighted key issues on which planning should focus for its future action after the pandemic.

The most pressing one is how to rescue the positive and creative actions by humans during the pandemic, and especially their readiness to subscribe to collective action, e.g. sticking to physical-social distancing despite hardship to themselves. Post-pandemic the climate change urgency will resume as prime issue for planners and they could build on the positive effects of the pandemic. For example they could encourage people to ask themselves before zooming to the other side of the planet for the weekend what this would add to their quality of life and how this would harm the quality of life of others.

Another important issue raised is the relation between formal planning and informality (local economy, self-built communities, etc). Planners would have to find a viable role for themselves in building bridges between the formal planning system and the reality of informal settlements and people's right to public participation and self-determination.

Density was opposed to overcrowding. However, flexibility/adaptability enabling space to accommodate new future uses depends on the amount of space available. Georgian houses could easily be transformed into workplaces, but it would be very difficult to transform speculative minimalist bedsits into anything else.

Equitable taxation not beset by massive tax evasion and avoidance could help accessing and sharing global wealth and space more fairly.

I do not agree that planners have the appropriate toolkit. Now would be the time to look critically at the normative, reactive and box ticking mode of planning and how planning should adjust its toolkit and approach to post-pandemic planning needs.

## Thanks

*Thanks for the presentations*

From GM Batha

(re Ali Asgary) This was informative, thank you for this.

From Beniamino Murgante

(re Ali Asgary) Thank you for the very interesting presentations

FromMerham

(re Pietro Elisei)

Thanks Pietro for your very interesting discussion

*Thanks from presenters*

From Pietro Elisei

Thanks for the rich food for thought, grazie.

From Dirk Engelke

Thanks a lot.

*Thanks for the online opening of the 2020 CORP conference*

From Maram Tawil

Thank you for the amazing session you have organised!

From Peter Zeile

Amazing! Thanks. I have to leave! See you all in Aachen, I hope!

From Frank Otte

I have to leave too. many thanks to the speakers and organisers for this very good idea.

From Aidan

Thank you for this amazing informative event.

From Frank Otte

Many thanks to the speakers and organisers for this very good idea.

From Christian Eizinger

I have to agree 100% with Frank Otte: THANK YOU for all the interesting presentations in Virtual CORP, and CONGRATULATION to the CORP organising team in Vienna and Aachen!

Let's stay in touch online till September & see you in Aachen mid of September.

From Merham

Thanks for all the speakers and the organizers for this great virtual event.

From Linda Dörrzapf

Thanks a lot and see you in September!

From HR Kaufmann

Thank you for the organisation of these diverse perspectives coming just at the right time.

From Kees Stam

Thanks for the organisation of this very informative event!

From Gianfranco

Thanks a lot for the very interesting meeting. Thanks thanks.

From Bernardina Barra

Thanks everyone, kind regards

From Olaf Mumm

Thank you!

From Sevim Sezi Karavazi

Thank you for the event, see you in Aachen!

From Dr. Md. Manjur Morshed

Thank you, enjoyed it a lot. bye

From Beatrice Owusu-Appiah

Thank you very much to all the organisers and presenters. Much appreciated.

From Beniamino Murgante

Thank you for this interesting event

From Raisa

Thanks!!!

## **References**

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/realcorp/>  
<[Pedro.b.ortiz@hotmail.com](mailto:Pedro.b.ortiz@hotmail.com)>