

REGIONAL DESIGN

Online Conference | 2nd of October 2020

on Regional Design: A Transformative Approach to Planning
by AESOP Thematic Group on REGIONAL DESIGN
Part of the Shaping Regional Futures Conference Series 2020

The AESOP Thematic Group Regional Design invites to the online conference “Regional Design: A Transformative Approach to Planning” – as part of the Shaping Regional Futures Conference Series 2020.

The conference “Regional Design: A Transformative Approach to Planning” brings together empirical research and theoretical reflections on spatial visioning and regional design-led planning practices. Its main aim is a deeper understanding of how these practices contribute to emerging transformative and adaptive planning approaches and to resilient regional spatial development.



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Host of the conference University of Florence, Department of Architecture

Organizing Committee **Valeria Lingua**, University of Florence
Verena Elisabeth Balz, TU Delft, B-TU Cottbus-Senftenberg
Agnes Förster, RWTH Aachen University
Cristina Cavaco, Universidade de Lisboa

Co-organizers Joao Pedro Costa, Universidade de Lisboa
Giuseppe de Luca, University of Florence
Carlo Pisano, University of Florence
Alain Thierstein, TU Munich
Wil Zonneveld, TU Delft

Objectives of the conference

Understanding regional design in the context of transformative/adaptive planning approaches

Attention to critical issues such as urban sprawl, climate change, and growing socio-economic disparities – all affecting areas that comply with neither fixed administrative boundaries nor traditional government-led jurisdictions – has triggered demands for new, more transformative, soft and adaptive planning approaches. Spatial visioning and regional design-led planning practices have been gaining momentum worldwide in this context. Practices involve knowledge about spatial particularities to foster tailored place-based spatial solutions while also envisioning the position of places in wider, regional settings and mediating between views in often contested multi-actor settings. A first objective of the conference is a more sophisticated understanding of the performance of regional design in the realm of emerging modes of regional spatial planning and of the processes that support their institutionalization.

Spatial planning for resilience - learning from the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic

The advancement of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic renders regions as important planning arenas for the provision of basic needs, the organization of daily life, and the safeguarding of a resilient economic base. It also underlines that regional spatial development requires strategies that address social, economic, political and societal change coherently. The conference will raise questions concerning the pandemic's assumed effects, and how these reinforced or disrupted prevailing regional spatial development, planning, and governance. Its second objective is to learn lessons on how planning for resilience can be supported by involving spatial knowledge, foresight and imagination.

Preparing a special issue on "Regional Design: A Transformative Approach to Planning"

The AESOP Thematic Group Regional Design currently prepares a special issue on "Regional Design: A Transformative Approach to Planning" @ Planning Practice and Research. It asks participants of the conference to present extended abstracts which will be discussed during sessions of the conference. A third objective of the conference is the selection of contributions to this special edition. The guest editors of the issue will invite scholars to submit full papers subsequently.

Conference Program

Draft version – program can be split-up in parallel sessions

Date 2 October 2020
Location The conference will be held as an online-conference. More information on the format will be announced in due time.

09:00	Welcome and Introduction
09:20	Spotlights from European Regions Panel discussion with experts from Italy, Germany, Portugal, The Netherlands
10:10	Break
10:30	Session 1 Paper presentation
12:30	Break
13:30	Session 2 Paper presentation
15:00	Break
15:30	Session 3 Paper presentation
17:00	Lessons learnt Concluding discussion
18:00	End of the conference

REGIONAL DESIGN

Call for abstracts

on Regional Design: A Transformative Approach to Planning
by AESOP Thematic Group on REGIONAL DESIGN

to be presented at the online-conference Regional Design: A Transformative Approach to Planning
2nd of October 2020

Part of the Shaping Regional Futures Conference Series 2020

The AESOP Thematic Group Regional Design invites the submission of abstracts to be elaborated for a special issue on “Regional Design: A Transformative Approach to Planning” @ [Planning Practice and Research](#).

AESOP Thematic Group on Regional Design invites the submission of extended abstracts to be presented at the related online-conference “Regional Design: A Transformative Approach to Planning” on 2 October 2020. Presentations concern empirical research and theoretical reflections on spatial visioning and regional design-led planning practices. Their main aim is a deeper understanding of how these practices contribute to emerging transformative and adaptive planning approaches and to resilient regional spatial development.

Background

As organizers of the AESOP Thematic Group (TG) on Regional Design, we conceived the below described call for papers for a roundtable discussion during the 2020 AESOP Congress to be held in Bristol. This event has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation, to avoid risk to individuals' health and potential disruptions due to restrictions. Because the journal *Planning Practice and Research* has recently agreed upon the publication of a special issue corresponding with our call, we have decided to replace the originally planned in-place roundtable with an online conference that will take place on the 2nd of October.

We invite scholars who intend to respond to our call for papers to the conference. Please note that participation in the conference is also open to scholars who do not intend to contribute to the special issue. We expect that discussions will be of interest of all who study planning spaces at the regional and metropolitan level in a context of governance as well as novel, design-led approaches to sustainable social, economic, political and societal change, both previous and post-pandemic. Participation and presentation during the conference are, however, requirements for an invitation to full paper submission for the special issue. The selection of the papers will consequently be subject to the journal's usual peer review process.

Formal requirements

Please apply with a long abstract for the presentation in the online conference on 2nd of October 2020. Abstracts shall refer to the Call for Papers for the Special Issue (see below).

Please send your abstract to the conference lead group by 4th of September 2020:

Valeria Lingua (valeria.lingua@unifi.it)

Verena Elisabeth Balz (v.e.balz@tudelft.nl)

Agnes Förster (foerster@pt.rwth-aachen.de)

Cristina Cavaco (ccavaco@fa.ulisboa.pt)

Your proposal should be a long abstract (no more than 1.000 words) and should include the following information (apart from the words count): author names, affiliation and e-mail address; title of contribution; abstract detailing the contribution of the presentation; and up to 6 keywords. Optional: Please indicate your willingness to contribute a paper to the special issue on the basis of the abstract.

Confirmation of presentation in the conference: 11th of September

Special Issue on Planning Practice and Research

The guest editors will select among the long abstracts and presentations in the conference the authors that will be invited to full paper submission for the special issue @ *Planning Practice and Research*.

Selection of abstracts: 16th of October

Deadline for full papers: 15th of January 2021

Papers will be reviewed following the *Planning Practice and Research* double-blind review process and must be prepared accordingly using the journal guidelines.

Call for papers

Spatial planning approaches have changed over the last decade. Major shifts in the institutional architecture of planning schemes has occurred: plan-led planning approaches – characterized by fixed administrative boundaries, statutory frameworks, and paternalistic forms of government – have turned into development-led approaches, in which soft planning follows and facilitates development proposals by market actors and the civil society at large. Dilemmas that are triggered by an accumulation of competing spatial claims – often due to highly urgent climate mitigation and adaptation measures – and a coupling of structural social, economic and political change have resulted in a greater appreciation of adaptive spatial planning approaches. Such approaches involve knowledge about particular areas, place-based community-led initiatives, tailored temporary governance arrangements and more transformative perceptions of natural, metabolistic and evolutionary spatial change. In a context of uncertainty, contentiousness and complexity, they aim at unlocking greater and timelier societal responses to problems in the built environment while maintaining robust, long-term planning rationales at the same time.

Observations of the emerging softer, more adaptive or flexible modes of spatial planning indicate that they give a more important role to spatial visioning and spatial design. The changes described above seem to have inspired more iterative and reflexive planning processes that are characterized by normative and persuasive agenda-setting approaches, often involving a variety of knowledge repertoires and many actors. Spatial analysis, the imagination of spatial metaphors and the ‘art’ of making spatial representations have emerged as respected tools in capacity and consensus building in the deliberative, interactive multi-actor settings that flexible planning modes imply. In various countries, design-led approaches became more intimately related to regional spatial planning. Regional design - as an explorative search for spatial solutions to problems at high levels of scale, emerged as a distinctive discipline that contributes to uncovering the mechanisms of regional spatial development, mediating the divisions and conflicting rationales that are caused by mismatches between spatial ranges and administrative boundaries, and encouraging local action while also supporting the coordination of such action across multiple and multi-scalar territories. Also, last but not least, it enhances the legitimacy and accountability of planning, linking the very different types of societal and civil actions that occur at different scales. However, while expectations of the performance of design-led approaches rise, their role in planning remains under-defined and the evaluation of their performance lacks empirical evidence.

The proposed special issue intends to gather contributions that critically discuss the impact that regional design has on regional governance and spatial planning at the regional and metropolitan level. Editors of the issue will in particular appreciate investigations of design-led approaches in a context of ‘soft’, ‘adaptive’ or ‘flexible’ spatial planning. Such investigations elaborate how design-led approaches challenge spatial planning policies and practices that are anchored in rigid administrative boundaries, and on how spatial visioning and design contribute to defining and redefining territorial entities and actor networks. The main aim of the special issue is a more sophisticated understanding of the performance of regional design in the realm of emerging modes of regional spatial planning and of the processes that support their institutionalization. We invite proposals that take-up this broad intellectual and practical challenge while also considering more than one of the more detailed points below:

Regional spatial planning in a context of social, economic, political and societal change	Re-)conceptualisations of regional spatial planning with particular attention to theoretical notions of ‘soft’, ‘adaptive’ and ‘flexible’ modes of planning; the relation with contemporary dynamics of social, economic, political and societal change.
Roles of spatial design and visioning in regional spatial planning	Theoretically founded and/or empirically observed relations between design-led approaches and regional spatial planning, with particular attention to the position of design in planning procedures, governance and actor constellations, and/or wider spatial and institutional settings. Considerations emphasize on design thinking as an approach to the resolution of wicked problems that occur in complex spatial settings and territories while acknowledging disparities in e.g. the distribution of spatial resources or power.
Performance of spatial design and visioning in regional spatial planning	Evidence of the impact of design-led approaches on regional spatial planning, expressed in for instance new allocations of resources, actor constellations, frames of reference, and/or fields of action; with particular attention to the role of spatial design in mediating between statutory and soft planning modes and frameworks, processes of governance rescaling and new territorial arrangements.
Tools and instruments in design-led approaches to regional spatial planning	New tools and instruments in regional spatial analysis, for instance concerning use of (big) data, and real-time modelling; elaboration of visualisation and communication techniques in design-led approaches; ways to involve spatial design and visioning in regional spatial planning processes such as design studios, international exhibitions, and design competitions.
Teaching regional spatial planning and design	Elaborations of transdisciplinary educational formats that involve learning about design and regional spatial planning.
Regional spatial planning and design in the context of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic	As the recent coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 pandemic spreads across cities, regions and countries, it highlights the very misalignment between political-administrative jurisdictions and the real geographies of spatial development patterns. The fall-out of the pandemic seems to support localism on the one hand; it raises questions about the necessity for commuting, or the reliance of regional economies on global supply-chains for instance. Fall-out illustrates a need for coordination across administrations on the other hand. Emerging mechanisms in the distribution of health equipment or economic support render the costs of non-coordination on a daily base. The team of editors recognizes that a deep and thorough analysis of recent development is barely achievable within the time frame set for the special issue. It however welcomes contributions that use evidence triggered by the crisis to reflect on the roles of spatial planning, regional design and visioning in an alignment between jurisdictions and geographies