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Aurora Fellowship Public Lecture

Adaptable and Healthy Cities: Permanent Autopoietic Process

Prof. Marcus Zepf (Université Paris Est-Créteil)

Planning practices and instruments are undergoing temporary and structural adaptations in the context of socio-environmental transitions and global risks. Tactical urbanism and experimentations outside of the “traditional planning processes” have become important measures, reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Health, well-being, and urban planning are inevitably linked. Urban planning, since its origin, has traditionally addressed issues related to urban health and well-being. However, the multiple crises intertwined with the climate in post-pandemic times. The energy crisis as well as threats to peace in the world, new migration trends, and widespread urbanization, are worsening the human conditions for urban health and well-being. The classical project-based approach in urban planning has reached its limits to more adaptive and experimental processes with evolutive forms of governance. Post-pandemic lessons highlight the role of political visions and proactive adaptability strategies based on inclusiveness and co-creation with local communities. Adaptable, inclusive, and experimental planning practices are transforming urban planning towards a “Permanent Autopoietic Process” where long-term visioning plays an important role in discussion and sensibilization impacting actual planning issues. *Autopoiesis* in urban planning translates to the capacity to redefine objectives and reinvent practices facing global changes and dealing with uncertainties. Permanent inclusive planning processes with a strong potential for adaptivity and preparedness can help to renew planning practices and education, considering uncertainties as an opportunity rather than a risk.

To join the public lecture, please click [here](#)!

What is the Aurora Fellowship?

The Aurora Fellowship is a two-week programme that we were able to establish with the support of the Förderverein der Universität Duisburg-Essen (the University of Duisburg-Essen's sponsorship association). This programme aims to invite internationally renowned researchers working within the Aurora European Universities Alliance to UDE, allowing them to engage in intensive exchange with our University's researchers, doctoral candidates, postdocs and students. For UDE, it is particularly important to involve urban communities and the wider region, which is why the Aurora fellow is to give a public lecture for interested members of the public.

The thematic focus of the fellowship is centred on the four pilot domains that we are committed to as a university together with the Aurora Alliance:

- Sustainability and Climate Change
- Digital Society and Global Citizenship
- Health and Well-Being
- Culture: Diversities & Identities

Each semester, the focus shifts to a different one of the four pilot domains. It began with 'Culture: Diversities & Identities' in the winter semester of 2022/23. The summer semester of 2023 centered on Sustainability and Climate Change. In the summer semester of 2024, the emphasis is on "Health and Well-Being."



The Aurora Fellow for Summer 2024

Marcus Zepf is a full professor in urban planning at the Paris School of Urban Planning (EUP), faculty of Université Paris Est-Créteil (UPEC), and a researcher at the Lab'Urba research laboratory. He was co-director of EUP between 2019 and 2023 and director of the Institute of Urbanism – Grenoble (IUG) at Pierre Mendès University France (UPMF) during the period of 2010–2015. His expertise embraces different approaches to contemporary urban traditions. These include "Urban Uncertainties and Climate Change," "Local Democracy & Urban Projects," "Public Spaces and Urban Policies," and "Urban Environment and Health."