

DESIGN-LED RESILIENCE PATHWAYS FOR PLACES BEYOND METROPOLIS

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Climate change will turn how we understand, feel, and design cities. Cities are the stage and a key actor to imagine and realise a resilient present how we live and work together. The aim to transform Europe into the first climate-neutral continent will need inventive design for living spaces—that combines technology with arts, and that enhances new economic and social opportunities. The initiative New European Bauhaus calls urbanism and architecture to link, combine, and accelerate with other disciplines, other creatives, and with active citizens to set up a cultural project for Europe as part of the Green Deal. The creative research exercise of NEW BAUHAUS CITY responds to this call through setting cities at the core—as places where a multitude of phenomena occur at the same time, where people, space, flows, and ideas interact, where new quality of life can be imagined and achieved. Started in 2021, the initiative New European Bauhaus aims to enhance creative action to transform built environment in order to reach climate-neutrality. Specifically advocating interdisciplinary collaboration, civic and entrepreneurial spirit, and to merge technological and creative approaches, the initiative already led not only to directing European policy and funding programmes towards a creative transformation of the built environment, but is further developed in numerous activities from bottom-up. In this context, NEW BAUHAUS CITY as a research exercise targets cities to addresses two crucial dimensions: cities will be places where different sectoral changes will have to play together, such as green building, sustainable mobility, circular economy, the use of renewable resources; and cities will be spaces to offer new liveability and inclusiveness (Schröder 2020a.)

The research exercise is developed along three questions: how can an actualised and targeted analysis of different urban conditions respond better to the objectives of the New European Bauhaus? How can crucial chances and obstacles for the impact of sectoral policies of the Green Deal in a comprehensive vision be described, focussing on the different urban realities in Europe? And: how can, in particular, urban strategies actively deliver creative action towards resilience and sustainability, which urbanistic concepts and tools do we need?

CREATIVE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

NEW BAUHAUS CITY as creative research exercise builds on a theoretical framework of design research which includes creative methodologies not only in the form of projection with case studies (addressing action) but already in the systemic modelling contextual information and in the formulation of objectives bound to spatial action (Schröder 2021). In order to delimit the range of examination, the work on "cities" here is—in order to move beyond current scientific and political mainstream—focused on living places beyond metropolis. This relevant target field corresponds to the 130,000 towns and villages smaller than 100,000 inhabitants where 2/3 of Europeans are living (Eurostat 2020), in forms of city that we neglected in common debates, in media, and architecture: medium and small cities, suburbs, towns, villages, hamlets, farmsteads. Hence, "cities" in this context mean living places, pointing to the urban dimension of smaller places not to the EC-OECD definition of city (Dijkstra, Poelman 2012; European Commission 2014).

Therefore, NEW BAUHAUS CITY aims to add an architectural and urbanistic perspective to research on smaller places (Espon, KU Leuven 2014; Servillo, Atkinson, Hamdouch 2016; Wagner, Growe 2021). Referring to the concept of "Dynamics of Periphery", specific challenges, trends, and existing initiatives in these places are systemically condensed in a comprehensive vision organised in three levels: the modelling of contextual dynamics in order to establish transformative dynamics, driven by dynamic narratives ((Schröder, Carta, Ferretti, Lino 2018; Schröder 2020b). Narratives are used simultaneously to grasp multiple voices and energies of space and society, leading to identify possible pathways towards resilience that combine social, economic, and ecological aspects with a spatial dimension—driven by the innovation of design-led research for sustainable urban transformation (Wolfram 2016; Elmqvist et al. 2018). Hence, NEW BAUHAUS CITY explores places beyond metropolis not only as stage to implement sectoral policies of climate-neutrality, but as possible active agents for transition to resilience (Schröder 2020a).

EXPERIMENTAL PLATFORM

NEW BAUHAUS CITY organised as an experimental platform with a shared methodology that evolved in a first phase the selection of place and focus for 10 case studies together with a typological framework. An analytical phase clarified the specific task of each case study, in spatial, programmatic, and processual aspects, according to the specific context and adopting creative research tools. In the projectual phase, narratives are turned into inventive, visionary, and processual strategies that correspond to adaptive and

interactive resilience pathways.

For this research and design approach, particular tools for analysis and projection have been developed in the experimental platform, crossing disciplinary borders between architecture and urbanism with social sciences and arts (e.g. mapping, diagramming, infographics, drawings, texts, models and videos). Creative exchange with stakeholders and guest experts chosen for each of the case studies, coming from other disciplines, different professional fields, from enterprises and start-ups, and from civic engagement, contributed not only to sharpen the objectives and projectual actions but to enhance the communicative and interactive aspects of the creative methodology and its tools.

PROJECTUAL EXPLORATIONS: 10 CASE STUDIES

NEW BAUHAUS CITY shows evidence from 10 selected case studies (Tab. 1) that is organised in three levels of knowledge production: (1) establishing a typology of relevant urban dimensions beyond metropolis with their different implications for urban transformation, (2) offering a range of urban actions towards sustainability, and (3) leading to insights into transversal criteria for pathways towards resilience.

The identified urban dimensions throw light on current challenges of places beyond metropolis in a geographical range from several places in Germany to Sweden, Hungary, and Perú, as small settlements to small- and medium-sized towns (103 to 53,466 inhabitants). Still, this categorisation is not about size, rather oriented to flows and networks (Castells, Cardoso 2005) of territorial patterns—nevertheless establishing approaches adapted to smaller places that are different to the mainstream

of urban planning concentrated on metropolis. The projectual explorations address: (1) peripheral coast areas face effects of climate change and abandonment, (2) post-mining areas are main arenas of change in decarbonisation, (3) touristic areas deal with increasing monofunctionalism, (4) inland peripheral areas face problematic further extension of monofunctional settlement (housing or industry) and at the same time musealisation and/or abandonment of centres, similar as (5) areas of metropolitan extension where these phenomena are even remarkably stronger, and—in contexts of megacities—lead to precarious and risky informal settlements.

COMMUNITIES FOR RESILIENCE / QUALITATIVE DENSITY

The experimental search for design-led resilience pathways—building on creative analysis and projectual exploration—led to identify two main criteria: (1) the place-bound transformative setup of communities for resilience, activating collaboration between different groups of stakeholders, citizens, and economic actors, and including new forms of temporary engagement (mobility) as well as new forms of work (digitalisation) in interaction with places (see Melis, Medas, Pievani 2021). Examples are a new role of architecture as climate care provider (North Frisian Islands; Germany), bottom-up initiatives to revive town centres (Helmstedt postmining region, Germany), pioneers for new living/working models (Norra Lagnö; Sweden), or new spatial/organisational/financial models for community-oriented living beyond metropolis (Wildau near Berlin; Germany).

(2) Qualitative density, on the other hand, starts

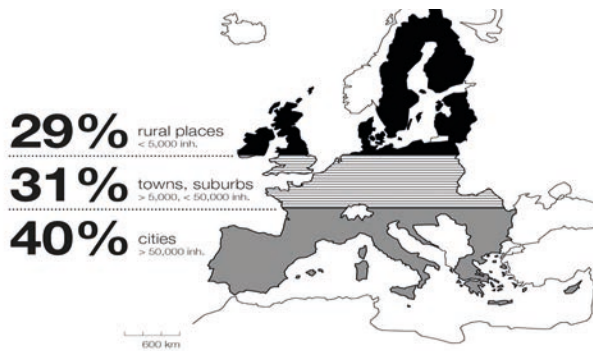
from a spatial perspective of new engagement and entrepreneurship, discovering multiple and interconnected values of concentration—thus defining qualitative density in relation to context as well as in its social and cultural dimension to provide new attractiveness and liveability (Schröder 2020c), not at least through enhance community-building. In particular, a new role of centralities—of small settlements and towns—towards poly-functionality and poly-performativity, the creative use and new invention of cultural resources, and new forms of regional cooperation are shown as promising aspects. Examples are inner intensification of polycentric settlement and an urban adoption of the recycle paradigm (Hoyerswerda; Germany), polyfunctional activation of urban shores (Lake Balaton; Hungary), activation of centres through green economy (Rhoden, Germany), new community hubs (Rödinghausen; Germany), or sustainable mobility (Neuruppin near Berlin; Germany).

PATHWAYS TOWARDS RESILIENCE

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we observed a new awareness and interest in territories, and in places outside of metropolis: for weekend flight, nearby mountains, lakes, rivers, coastlines attracted as instant cities metropolitans in large numbers; for living and working, for longer or temporarily, places outside of metropolis became a searched, promoted, and admired topic. Driven by digitalisation, sustainable mobility, cultural resources, green economy, and new linkages in networks and with metropolis, peripheries are already transforming to Future Habitats (Schröder 2020d). NEW BAUHAUS CITY shows the potentials of these places to become active agents for

sustainability—if visions, strategies, and actions are built in place and are supported by overall frameworks. NEW BAUHAUS CITY promotes peripheries as an urbanistic project to co-creative design-led pathways towards resilience.

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EU-28 population according to settlement typologisation, projected by graphic share (precision: municipal level, LAU2)
Data: Dijkstra, Polman 2014. Graphic: Jörg Schröder

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