



Hybrid Seminar Series - Online Events

Urban Complex Futures: Critical Leverage Points

The urban condition today oscillates between dystopian and utopian futures: increasing spatial segregation, political polarisation, socio-economic inequality, authoritarian governance, retrogressive and repressive national interventions are unfolding alongside a resurgence of urban agency, long-term thinking, visionary planning, collective action, community building, and the exploration of alternative futures, including post-growth paradigms, democratic innovations, and real(-istic) utopias. As time and space appear to compress further, urban discourse increasingly seeks pathways toward sustainable and equitable futures.

Our moment in time may represent an urban tipping point capable of leveraging transformations within complex, yet-to-be-understood and shaped realities. Exploring this momentum at the intersection of urban politics, spatial planning, systems thinking, and complexity theory offers a promising framework for developing, debating, and deploying concrete utopias to shape the future of our cities and regions. The aim is to seek pathways for reconciling urban politics today with potential positive future directions, connecting three established network efforts across Europe in consecutive events. The seminar series is in particular open for emerging ideas, young researchers, and students as the future drivers of democratic change.

Dates & Times

Wednesday, 21 October 2026, 14.00-15.00 hrs CET |  online

Complex Adaptive Systems & Sustainable Cities

Speakers: Ulysses Sengupta (Manchester School of Architecture): The Complexity and Sustainability Paradox, Mahmud Tantoush (Manchester School of Architecture): Engaging with Complexity in Design: Adaptive Patterns, Data and Urban Activities
Introduction/Moderation: Ulysses Sengupta (Manchester School of Architecture), Christian Lamker (University of Groningen)

Introducing a special issue in 'The Journal of Architecture' (forthcoming)

Co-hosted by AESOP Thematic Group on Planning and Complexity
Co-hosted with Manchester School of Architecture

Wednesday 11 November 2026, 15.00 - 16.00 hrs CET |  online

Complex Realities & Uncertain Futures

Registration: <https://forms.gle/AnAQH1oD33ugk8hAA>

Speaker: Anna Pagani (King's College, London): Can systems thinking help to re-think and transform the housing system?
Introduction/Moderation: Solon Solomou (University of Nicosia), Christian Lamker (University of Groningen)

Co-hosted by AESOP Thematic Group on Planning and Complexity
Co-hosted with University of Nicosia, Cyprus

Wednesday 2 December 2026, 15.00 - 16.00 hrs CET |  online

TIME/LESS Planning & Temporary Uses

Registration: <https://forms.gle/AnAQH1oD33ugk8hAA>

Speakers: Kobe Tilley, Tim Devos (both University of Gent): Beyond Dichotomies in Temporary Use of Space: Using Complexity to Broaden Understandings
Introduction/Moderation: Fabio Bayro Kaiser (RWTH Aachen University), Stefano Cozzolino (ILS Dortmund), Christian Lamker (University of Groningen)

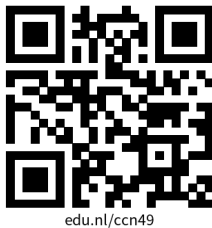
Introducing a special issue in 'Transactions of AESOP' (forthcoming)

*Co-hosted by AESOP Thematic Group on Planning and Complexity
Co-hosted with RWTH Aachen University and ILS Research Institute for Urban and Regional Development*

Friday & Saturday, 8-9 January 2027 |  Nicosia, Cyprus

Complexity Unpacked: Analytical Tools & Practical Insights for Uncertain Futures

*Hosted by the University of Nicosia, Cyprus
Co-hosted by AESOP Thematic Group on Planning and Complexity*
Call for Papers:
<https://aesop-planning.eu/tg-news/planning-and-complexity/complexity-unpacked-nicosia-cyprus-2027>



edu.nl/ccn49

Registration

Register for one or all three seminars:

→ <https://forms.gle/AnAQH1oD33ugk8hAA>

The login link will be provided before each event.

Stay updated

- <https://sites.google.com/rug.nl/where-is-urban-politics-series/>
- <https://aesop-planning.eu/thematic-groups/planning-and-complexity>
- <https://aesop-planning.eu/thematic-groups/urban-futures>
- <https://www.rug.nl/rudolf-agricola-school/research/democracy-governance/cities>
- AESOP TG Planning and Complexity: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12735445>
- AESOP TG Urban Futures: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13049050>

Hosts for the Full Series

- University of Groningen: Faculty of Spatial Sciences (Christian Lamker) and University College Groningen (Marian Counihan); Centre for Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE); Rudolf Agricola for Sustainable Development, CITIES Research Group (Marian Counihan, Beate Peter)
- AESOP Thematic Group Planning and Complexity (Christian Lamker, Jenni Partanen, Solon Solomou) & Thematic Group Urban Futures (Thomas Machiels, Peter Ache)
- University of Antwerp, Belgium (Thomas Machiels)
- RWTH Aachen University, Germany (Fabio Bayro Kaiser)
- ILS Research Institute für Urban and Regional Development (Stefano Cozzolino)
- Aalto University, Finland (Jenni Partanen)
- University of Nicosia, Cyprus (Solon Solomou)
- Collective Post-Growth Planning (Christian Lamker)