

Bochum International Seminar on the Transformation of Urban Spaces: “Resilient Cities”

09.-13.01.2017, 17-20 Uhr, Ruhr-Universität Bochum (RUB)

Lecturer: Sara Meerow (School of Natural Resources & Environment, University of Michigan, USA)

Target audience: Postgraduate and PhD students in Geography and related disciplines

Registration: Email to matthias.kiese@rub.de until 23 October, 2016

Available places: Up to 20 (priority given to RUB students)

Fee: None

Seminar Description

For the first time in history, the majority of the world's population lives in cities. On the one hand, urban areas are vibrant hubs of innovation, culture, and economic productivity, accounting for 80% of global GDP. On the other hand, cities are responsible for more than 70% of global energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and are frequently plagued by congestion, pollution, social inequality, and natural disasters. The sustainability paradigm dominated urban policy and practice for the last two decades, but there is a growing focus on resilience. This 'resilience turn' is evident in major international initiatives such as the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities and the UNISDR's Making Cities Resilient.

Urban resilience approaches generally recognize that cities are complex systems in a constant state of flux, and therefore, focus on improving their capacity to cope with disruptions and change. But definitions and models for urban resilience are highly contested. What does this concept mean in theory and practice? How does it differ from sustainability? How do we operationalize this fuzzy concept? And how would we recognize whether or not a city is resilient? This seminar will introduce students to different approaches to understanding, implementing, and measuring urban resilience. Students will be exposed to research from different disciplines including urban planning, political science, geography, urban ecology, and engineering, as well as real-world examples from cities across the globe.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the seminar students should be able to:

- 1) Summarize the historical development of the concept of urban resilience
- 2) Compare and contrast different definitions and characteristics of resilient cities
- 3) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of resilience theory and discourse
- 4) List some of the biggest challenges for urban resilience across key urban sectors and some of the proposed solutions
- 5) Apply a resilience approach to problems in real-world cities.

Contents

- 1) The evolution of the concept of resilience: From the sustainable to the resilient city
- 2) Definitions and characteristics of resilient cities across disciplines
- 3) Urban resilience frameworks, metrics, and applications
- 4) How urban resilience is applied in different sectors (critical infrastructure, governance, hazards, climate adaptation, green infrastructure, etc.)
- 5) Critiques and limitations of urban resilience

Selected Literature

- Da Silva, Jo. (2014). City Resilience Index. ARUP and the Rockefeller Foundation. Available from: http://publications.arup.com/publications/c/city_resilience_index
- Elmqvist, T. (2014). Urban resilience thinking. *Solutions*, 5(5), 26-30
- Leichenko, R. (2011). Climate change and urban resilience. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 3(3), 164-168.
- Meerow, S., Newell, J. P., & Stults, M. (2016). Defining urban resilience: A review. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 147, 38-49
- Meerow, S., Newell, J.P. (2016). Urban resilience for whom, what, when, where, and why? *Urban Geography*.
- Stumpp, E.-M. (2013). New in town? On resilience and "Resilient Cities". *Cities*, 32, 164-166.
- Zolli, A. (2012). Learning to Bounce Back. *New York Times Op-Ed*. Available from: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/03/opinion/forget-sustainability-its-about-resilience.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

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