



6TH WORLD PLANNING SCHOOLS CONGRESS
FINLAND : HELSINKI / ESPOO / TAMPERE

World Planning Schools Congress 2026

PERIPHERAL VISIONS - RETHINKING PLANNING

Book of Abstracts

June 2026

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morphological polycentricity, while progress in *functional* and *governance* polycentricity remains limited. The research concludes by proposing planning and policy strategies—including enhanced interjurisdictional coordination, improved public service provision, integrated transport systems, and stronger industry–city linkages—to support a more balanced and sustainable polycentric transition in the Addis Ababa Metropolitan Region.

2256 | Nicholas Phelps, Jia Zhang, Julie T. Miao

Side by side with Shanghai: real estate development and the structure of residential preference in the YRDR

This paper reports on initial desk-based research on the urban fortunes of the counties and cities bordering Shanghai municipality in China. We concentrate specifically on Jiading and Kunshan. We focus on what the marketing text and imagery of residential developments reveals of the centrality of Shanghai’s urban penumbra. In particular, we expect to observe how residential real estate developments reflect the possibilities for residents to benefit from borrowed size and function (Meijers and Burger, 2015; Phelps, 2004) effects associated with nearby Shanghai municipality. However, we also explore whether, to what extent and in what ways these developments can be considered ‘interplaces’ (Phelps, 2017; Danyuk et al, 2025) born of residential preferences within the wider Yangtze River Delta Region.

2820 | Edmondo Pietrangeli

Peripheral Corridors as Central Territories in the Wider Milan Region

Rural and peri-urban landscapes across the Lombardy’s central plain in northern Italy have become primary locations for logistics, data centres, intensive agriculture and other highly impactful functions at multiple scales. These “operational landscapes” are managed as mere service backyards of the urban–regional system (Armondi et al., 2024; Brenner & Katsikis, 2020; Balducci et al., 2017; Brenner & Schmid, 2015), despite geo-historical stratifications and local identities (Dematteis, 1995). These corridors resonate with current debates on suburban infrastructures and “peripheral centralities” (Keil, 2018; Phelps, 2015), which reconceptualise non-core territories as structurally central to metropolitan reproduction. Infrastructural and functional layering produces fragmentation (Graham & Marvin, 2001), ecological and social ruptures (Larkin, 2013; Halbwachs, 1992; Connerton, 1989) and a systematic neglect of landscape quality in planning and policy debates concerning these peripheral territories.

Nonetheless, they function as central spaces, operating as social infrastructures where the reorganisation of labour and logistics reshapes everyday mobility, access to welfare and local forms of inhabiting. New allochthonous communities live alongside entrenched local memories, reshaping meanings of places and belongings (Neilson & Rossiter, 2021; Cowen, 2014; Castells, 2010; Sassen, 2001; Nora, 1989) and reconfiguring civic networks that sustain collective action (Putnam, 1993).

This PhD research takes infrastructural corridors as its main entry point. It examines how analytical frameworks and governance instruments can be configured to relate landscapes, memories and social relations, and how changing labour geographies and the arrival of new populations reshape everyday accessibility and demand for welfare services in these peripheral centralities.



In methodological terms, the study combines analysis of governance arrangements with a qualitative reading of narratives, conflicts and public representations of these landscapes. The material produced supports interpretive frameworks that guide reflexive planning and governance of operational landscapes and connect debates on peripheral centralities with everyday mobility and accessibility in metropolitan regions.

2834 | Anna Kholina

Tracing Urbanity in the Urban Periphery: Unpacking the Emergence of Alternative Centrality in the Helsinki Metropolitan Region

Finnish capital region has a complicated relationship between the dense and compact central inner city and the geographically extended periphery. In 2020, only 15% of the total population of Helsinki metropolitan region lived in the inner city, while the remaining 85% were located in the suburban fringe. As the urban periphery continues to develop, more questions emerge on what constitutes urban life for 85% of the population. Attempts to mimic a dense city on the periphery creates 'density without delight', while low-density environments demand more resources per capita and threaten the strategy of the Helsinki region which envisions a polycentric urban agglomeration with several active nodes concentrating people, activities and jobs.

This research looked at alternative forms of urbanity or centrality emerging in the urban periphery, distinct from the traditional patterns of town blocks, squares and streets. Using a longitudinal case-study, it traced how a suburban campus area transformed into a dense cluster thanks to new construction, transport connections and population growth. The study focused on the process of urban transformation using Lefebvre's approach to the production of space as an analytical lens to "trace urbanity", meaning, to uncover the conflicts and contradictions which determine its emergence and forms in a given location.

The research began with the assumption that it's possible to orchestrate the emergence of centrality in a spatially deterministic, top-down manner by means of clever architecture or design choices in combination with the right infrastructure. Instead, the study captured how a place develops new, alternative forms of centrality and urbanity (backstage urbanity) without top-down orchestration, how these new forms exist outside of established ideas about physical design conducive to social life and how easy it is to overlook the significance of these new forms in an attempt to control and plan the development of public realm.

SS19: Peripheral Centralities

Thu 2.7.17:45-19:15, Special Session D, U406a | Session chair(s): Paul J. Maginn, Nicholas Phelps, Roger Keil

2232 | Paul Maginn

Archipelagos and Continents of Consumption and (P)Leisure: Retail Landscapes in (Sub)Urban Perth, Western Australia 2015-2025

Despite being a major land use, source of employment and contributor to local economies within metropolitan regions, there is a paucity of scholarly urban planning research on retail spaces. This paper