

## **The post-Covid city: the ongoing spatial and technological reconfiguration in China and the world**

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Epidemics and cities are consequences of the same phenomena: human agglomerations. Modern urbanism not only defines cities as a human agglomeration but also argues that the ideal city is the so-called “compact city” - the one in which the territory includes spaces for housing, work, leisure, retail and services, all next to each other, easily accessible on foot, by bicycle or public transportation. In the context the pandemic, there is a lingering question yet to be solved: does the ideal of a “compact city” remain valid? To what extent is an agglomeration - constructive and populational - considered to be desirable and acceptable after the trauma of a world-scale contagious disease?

For decades environmentalists, sociologists, economists, and urbanists have been trying their best to convince everyone that, for cities, the denser the better. Today, as an effect of the pandemic, new habits and technologies seem to be contributing to give momentum to urban sprawl.

How are the biggest cities in China and around the world going through this new scenario? Will the rise of the home office alter the relation between home and workplace? Will the new technologies that make autonomous vehicles, shared automobiles, and remote work a reality irremediably contribute to urban sprawl?

We know that the high-capacity transportation networks around the world are heavily dependent on government subsidies and tariffs that are paid by their users. With the decreasing demand over the last few years, how will these networks be able to survive?

Even before the pandemic, many cities around the world were going through a free fall in street retail activities. The COVID-19 outbreak increased e-commerce flows, further deepening the neighborhood, local stores crisis.

If demand for offices and stores continues to decrease, will this new trend determine a new urban form? Will the decreasing pressure on commercial properties finally improve the price accessibility of residential properties? In Brazil, the incidence of COVID19 is strongly correlated with poverty. How does the pandemic impact the informal city and labor, which dominate the urban landscape of the Global South? Will we be able to reduce the informal (and precarious) city that dominates the urban landscape of the Global South?

In the end, will this new urban form be more friendly and safe, or will it be more hostile? Will it be more efficient environmentally? Or more carbon intensive? Combining new technologies, habits, and ideas, do we have a chance of contributing to the construction of an urban space that is safer, fairer, and less segregated from a socio-spatial perspective?

Welcome to the XXV China Analysis Group Meeting, during which these and other topics will be addressed.