Editorial

Ruoyu (Roy) Jin PhD, MCIQB, FHEA, PGCert

Associate Professor of Construction Economics and Management, London
South Bank University, London, UK

Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Management, Procurement and Law publishes studies in the construction industry covering managerial and legal topics with readership from both academic researchers and construction industry practitioners. This August issue covers three technical papers and one discussion in two topics. The first two articles, from Dolidze and Spillane (2020) and Al Hosni *et al.* (2020), address the emerging global issue of ‘being smart’ and the circular economy. The latter two, by Leung and Hui (2020) and Kowk *et al.* (2020), cover the mediation and contracting topics in construction.

The study of Dolidze and Spillane (2020) deploys the framework of the smart city into the context of a community, adopting the University of Limerick as the case study. The study, as it demonstrates, identifies existing and planned pillars and associated sub-indices for an iCampus in a higher education institution. Readers will think how this framework, consisting of multiple categories, can be synergised in a given context of community, such as the university campus. Further thoughts can be sparked in light of the robustness and generalisability of the bespoke smart community framework into different community sizes (e.g., city, campus, etc.) and contexts. Another point for thought could be the interactions between smartness and sustainability. Reviewing different sources of literature may yield to the assumption that a smart city includes ‘being green’, or vice versa. So how should the two concepts be measured and distinguished considering their interactions?

Moving from smartness to sustainability, the second article, by Al Hosni *et al.* (2020), explores the challenges of circular economy, an under-studied issue in developing construction markets. The study describes the framework of circular economy from linear to circular in the order of increased circularity defined by different strategies, for example, from recover to reduce. Circular economy can also be classified in micro, meso, and macro levels (Al Hosni *et al.*, 2020). These two studies by Dolidze and Spillane (2020) and Al Hosni *et al.* (2020) focus on different initiatives (i.e., smartness and circular economy) and in different geographic contexts. However, here comes the question for thought regarding why the initiation from higher authority or governmental support is considered a key in both studies for implementing the smart community and circular economy respectively. Would the bottom-up approach fail without the initiation by the top-down mechanism? It is not uncommon to

find studies, including that of Al Hosni *et al.* (2020), that address the importance of governmental support or external drivers. But shouldn’t it be ultimately market-driven for the continuous development of these initiatives?

The later two papers are on the legal part of construction. Leung and Hui (2020) highlight an inspiring point in mediation of whether and how the mediators’ construction knowledge/experience would enhance the mediation process in either a passive or proactive manner. The passive way is understood as being that mediators, with construction knowledge, have better understanding and communication of cases; the proactive manner means that mediators would be more capable of evaluating the cases from a technical perspective to propose solutions. The findings from Leung and Hui (2020) indicate that the management and legal aspects of construction are certainly not separated but highly connected – for example, the legal ownership of a building’s digital asset when building information modelling becomes the common practice.

Finally, the discussion of ‘spirit of mutual trust and co-operation’ in NEC contracts between Kwok, Leung and Colgan is based on the technical paper published by Leung and Kwok (2020). When thinking about mutual trust and co-operation between contracting parties, it is worth considering that, ‘Assessment among different users may deviate significantly depending on their personal understanding of the clause’ (Kwok *et al.*, 2020: p. 121). Readers from the legal background of construction may apply their own understanding and interpretation in viewing this discussion, which also implies that any published study may not be without argument. On the other hand, that is partly what a published study aims for, nurturing the further discussion on an ongoing studied topic.

Management, Procurement and Law continues publishing technical papers in themed and non-themed issues. Our editorial panel, consisting of academics and practitioners in construction, works with joint effort to ensure quality publications with merits for our readership. We are open to new ideas of themed issues related to management and legal aspects in the global construction industry. The editorial panel is also welcoming new members. If you have any ideas for themed issues or are interested in joining the editorial panel, please contact our Journals Editor, Rebecca Rivers, at Rebecca.rivers@icepublishing.com.

REFERENCES

- Al Hosni IS, Amoudi O and Callaghan N (2020) An exploratory study on challenges of circular economy in the built environment in Oman. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Management, Procurement and Law* **173(3)**: 104–113, <https://doi.org/10.1680/jmapl.19.00034>.
- Dolidze G and Spillane JP (2020) Smart city approach to educational campuses: case study at University of Limerick, Ireland. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Management, Procurement and Law* **173(3)**: 95–103, <https://doi.org/10.1680/jmapl.19.00044>.
- Kwok BCH, Leung RHM and Colgan J (2020) Discussion: How one shall interpret ‘spirit of mutual trust and co-operation’ in NEC contracts. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Management, Procurement and Law* **173(3)**: 120–121, <https://doi.org/10.1680/jmapl.20.00015>.
- Leung RHM and Hui BTF (2020) Success in construction mediation in Hong Kong, China. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Management, Procurement and Law* **173(3)**: 114–119, <https://doi.org/10.1680/jmapl.19.00046>.
- Leung RHM and Kwok BCH (2020) How one shall interpret ‘spirit of mutual trust and co-operation’ in NEC contracts. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Management, Procurement and Law* **173(1)**: 14–20, <https://doi.org/10.1680/jmapl.18.00051>.