Editorial

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In this volume, across four papers, we focus on the notion of resiliency – how planning helps or hinders communities that are in the midst of some type of decline to return to sustainability, prosperity and an improved quality of life. It is a critical topic, in need of extensive research.

The first paper in this set, written by Dr Lakshmi Priya Rajendran and entitled ‘Understanding identity and belonging through incidental spaces’ (Rajendran, 2016) focuses upon the propensity of planners to ignore the opportunity to create environments that allow for spontaneous and meaningful spatial engagement. Focusing on a case study of research undertaken in Sheffield, England, she presents a very strong case for planners and designers to gain an understanding of how people use space and to create plans to meet this social good. She asks us, as planners, to gain a thorough feel for how people move through space, occupy it, adopt it and make it their own. This physical environment, complete with comfort and spatial freedom, is essential if our citizens are going to make planned spaces their own territory. She does make it clear that if the planner or designer endeavours to restrict the freedom of space or take away the comfort that one finds therein, then non-formal planning adaptive change is likely to occur. The incidental sense of community and opportunities for serendipity are important to all of us.

The second paper, authored by Aoife Doyle, and entitled ‘Urban resilience: the regeneration of the Dublin Docklands’ (Doyle, 2016), looks at resiliency in terms of economic development in the context of the boom and bust cycles of the Irish economy between the 1980s and 2000s. Ms Doyle’s work is particularly valuable in that she provides us with a concise, but very understandable analysis of the term ‘resilience’ with all of its fuzzy edges.

The Dublin Docklands, unlike central Dublin, has been in almost constant transition from the 1980s through to the present. Impacted by the slow moving, thoughtful planning of city staff, through its takeover by national authorities and then back to city control, its ability to create a stable management system seems flawless. In addition, due to the economic boom and bust cycles of the last 30 years in Ireland, investment in Docklands projects had to be undertaken only by the brave and risk-taking few. And finally, what was the price of the changes that occurred as the area became gentrified and the poor moved away?

Ms Doyle’s story in the context of this resilient district of the city is quite compelling in several ways. First, it asks us to be quite mindful of international economic trends and their impacts on long-term investments and its form of community. Second, it asks us to be wary of moving too fast or too slow in our planning. Many short-term development proposals that lack an understanding of long-term consequences can be dangerous and there is a need for the thoughtful planner who grasps the long-term consequences of his or her actions.

Moving forward from the role of urban planners in managing growth, we then move to looking at how planning must adapt to new partners and procedures if it is to ensure resiliency in responding to earthquakes. Focusing on the Italian experience, Professors Marco Vona, Paolo Harabaglia and Beniamino Murgante, in their paper entitled ‘Thinking about resilient cities: studying Italian earthquakes’ (Vona *et al.*, 2016) have created a thoughtful paper examining the role of seismic mitigation in planning a resilient city in Italy. Their research findings suggest that it is virtually nonexistent. It is simply not a concern of urban planners. What ‘response planning’ exists is in the domain of the civil public safety authorities who are responsible for its prevention and protective activities. In short, there is no agency or organisation that has the responsibility to analyse, assess and/or respond to the natural risks that the communities are facing. What’s more, there is a total absence of rational research based upon ‘good science’ that could aid both civil authorities and planners in their work. The authors close with a concise list of strategies that should be undertaken. The paper is a wake-up call for all planners in disaster prone areas. It raises the question: ‘Where in a planning education curriculum does disaster response planning of any type occur and should it not be elevated?’. This paper sends a powerful message that there is a need to create a research agenda to assist cities in their efforts to become resilient and a new management model developed to implement required strategies.

Finally, in the work of Professors Kyo-Chang Hsu, Tsung-Yu Lai and Chia-Nung Li, entitled ‘Why is there an urban pattern toward sprawling development?’ (Hsu *et al.*, 2016), the authors focus on the factors that have induced sprawl in Taiwan. Interestingly, the authors suggest that it is planning itself that is a critical actor in creating this unintended development pattern. Indeed, urban resiliency is creating such high price

demands that poorer people are increasingly being forced to move to the suburbs. Rather than encouraging smart growth or sustainable practices, the net result is increased sprawl. It is an interesting finding.

From an American perspective, we have seen both similar and different results. Take Boston, Massachusetts, for example, one of America's poorest cities as recently as 40 years ago, is experiencing gentrification and economic growth, resulting in housing costs being among the highest in the nation. The working poor and the lower middle classes are increasingly having to look to the working class inner suburbs to find affordable housing. These working class suburbs, long in decline, are now experiencing a degree of resiliency and prosperity that they had not experienced in decades. Empty buildings are occupied, reinvestment in older structures is occurring and higher density units are bringing in much needed dollars. And sprawl? Not in Boston. The outer suburbs have created such tight growth controls that there is very little sprawl at present. It is this point that makes the Taiwanese experience different from Boston. In Taiwan, there appears to be far less 'push back' from the rural communities. Developers have apparently found a positive market.

In summary, as a researcher, professor and practitioner, I learned a great deal from the articles. I hope you have a similar experience.

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