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Editorial

Resilient Urbanism

The global population is growing and urbanizing at an ever-increasing rate. For the first time in human existence, more people live in cities than in rural areas; in 2018, 55% of the global population were city dwellers, and this is predicted to rise to 68% by 2050. In the global north, the rapid development of cities has been taking place for over 200 years; however, elsewhere, it has been much more recent in origin (Hernández, 2017). It is in these latter economies where urbanization, including the development of megacities with populations of 10 million or more, has been the most spectacular (Paddison, 2000). Of the world's 33 megacities, 27 are located in the global south, as are 9 of the ten cities projected to become megacities by 2030 (UN DESA, 2019b).

Accompanying such growth has been developing research and policy to understand a more urban world (Robinson, 2016; Gleeson, 2012). However, the paradox is that as literature expands to comprehend our increasingly urban moment, the cities themselves are rapidly changing in the face of new challenges such as climate change, unplanned urbanization, and restrictions imposed by Covid-19. The articles presented in this journal offer a timely intervention in the landscape of urban theory, providing future-focused analysis that illuminates not only the unique challenges facing our contemporary cities but also offers mitigating and preventative solutions. This introduction identifies the critical urban issues highlighted in recent literature and outlines why resilience is a necessary methodologic tool to examine complex and ever-changing urban realities.

Cities have been viewed as 'complex' (Opromolla, 2020), 'contested' (Jones 1994), and contradictory spaces. Cities are at once the center of national economies and constitute potent engines of economic growth, contributing some 80% of global GDP (WEF et al., 2022), while at the same time, 1 billion people live in poverty in cities' informal settlements (World Bank, 2022). Although urban living offers millions of workers and their families access to services such as transport systems, electricity, food, clean water, and education, urbanization can also increase rather than reduce health risks (Ye, 2022). The disease spreads more easily in vast, densely populated informal settlements than in dispersed rural ones (Zhang, 2023; Clegg, 2022). Urban living, characterized by poor air quality, reduced access to fresh food, and a more sedentary lifestyle, increases the vulnerability to chronic diseases such as asthma, heart failure, obesity, and diabetes (UNSW, 2019). Despite this, the rich can still live healthier lives in well-built, well-served homes and, when not well-served, can rely on private provision, even for energy, water, and cleaner air (Benna, 2016). Their self-exclusion from the public sphere has the knock-on effect of making the provision of public services less accountable, so cities and their corresponding infrastructures become spatially divided by poverty and wealth (Ridge, 2008).

When urbanization is haphazard and unplanned, the provision of services can fail to keep pace with the increase in population, and the process brings risks rather than benefits (UNSW, 2019; Polk, 2011). A rapidly urbanized area may not offer sufficient services to its inhabitants or new arrivals. Poor urban infrastructure – such as unreliable power systems, poor public transport, inefficient ports, and inadequate schools –reduces cities' competitiveness and economic prospects (UNDP, 2017). The stakes for such unplanned urbanization are high. As the World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report proclaims: 'rapid

and unplanned urbanization can quickly lead to urban violence and social unrest. The combination of inequality, competition for scarce resources such as land, impunity from the law, and weak city governance increases the risk of violence and potential breakdowns in law and order (2018).

Climate change exacerbates such problems. Cities have been described as 'ground zero' for climate change (Dawson 2017); they are responsible for over 75% of global carbon emissions and are the key drivers of the global consumption patterns that cause or exacerbate climate change (UNEP, n.d.). Much of the land in and around cities is degraded, threatening native habitats, the genetic and functional diversity of flora and fauna, and the quality of air and waterways (Shlomo, 2017, cited in WEF et al., 2022). Nonetheless, many of these cities are acutely at risk from the effects of climate change. For example, the majority of the world's megacities are located in coastal zones, yet few of them are adequately prepared for climate change-induced flooding (Rajabi, 2023; Deng, 2022). It is estimated that 189 cities are at high risk of exposure to two or more types of natural disasters; cyclones, floods, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, and volcanic eruptions (UNDEP, 2019b).

In the case of such climate catastrophes, poorer people are often more endangered than the wealthy (Dodman, 2019; Winsemius, 2018; Douglas, 2008). Poorer people may live in more structurally unsound and informally built dwellings, they may be more reliant on agricultural production, which is significantly impacted by climate change, or they may be excluded from living on the literal margins of cities, closest to bodies of water or floodplains (UNSW, 2019). As Hallegate argues: 'the exposure and vulnerability of people living in poverty to shocks and stressors are expected to increase in frequency or intensity due to climate change, such as floods, droughts, heat waves and impacts on agricultural production and ecosystem services' (2018). Consequently, the 'link between poverty and climate vulnerability goes both ways: 'poverty is one major driver of people's vulnerability to climate-related shocks and stressors, and this vulnerability is keeping people in poverty' (Hallegate, 2018).

However, the disastrous effect of climate emergencies compels us to take new urgent measures and shifts our perspectives on urban planning and architecture construction (RRAU, 5th Edition, 2022). Globally, nations and communities spend billions on a paradigm predicated on disaster recovery and repair in preference to one based on readiness, preparedness, and prevention. What if we could evolve our cities to the point where, when they encounter shock and stresses, they are so robust that they can continue without any severe damage? What if we can build our urban resilience to a capacity that prevents every disruption from becoming a disaster?

Urban resilience is defined as:

The ability of an urban system and all its constituent socio-ecological and socio-technical networks across temporal and spatial scales to maintain or rapidly return to desired functions in the face of a disturbance, to adapt to change, and to quickly transform systems that limit current or future adaptive capacity (Meerow, 2016).

As cities continue to grow and grapple with uncertainties and challenges like climate change, it is clear why urban resilience has become an increasingly favored concept (Rodin, 2014; Carmin et al., 2012; Leichenko, 2011). Indeed, in the most recent United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), key practitioners from across the field came together to draft the 'New Urban Agenda,' responding to pressing urban issues such as climate change. In this Agenda, they write: 'we anchor our vision in the concept of [...] resilient and sustainable cities' (UN, 2017).

Resilient Urbanism is an attempt to provide a blueprint for such a vision and, in doing so, present a fresh approach to the pressing issues that arise globally as a consequence of rapid urbanization, climate change, and socio-political turmoil. As such, the articles presented in this journal examine contrasting, divergent socio-cultural practices and varied geographies to understand the facets of shared identity embodied in everyday urban practices that underpin community resilience and sustainability. They look at what happens when cities grow, the relationship between the physical and the social, and the structural inequalities to be overcome to ensure equity of access to services such as education and healthcare and due process. To this extent, Resilient Urbanism invites the whole urban community, including researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, to attend to often pre-existing yet undervalued urban solutions that can futureproof our cities. As we know, 'sites of metropolitan innovation often emerge at the sights of metropolitan degradation' (Holston, 2009). These articles draw attention to the juncture between built geography and governance, focusing on how to platform established spaces and design new spaces that forge more resilient cities.

Mou, Rahman & Mim's article critically examines urban studies' linear understanding of rural-to-urban migration. Based on fieldwork in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Mim describes the complexity of the experience of migrants arriving in the city from various rural areas. The spatial systems they enter in Dhaka range from shared living to institutions to temporal displacements due to external factors (such as the Covid-19 pandemic). The article documents how their nonlinear migratory journeys contribute to building a sense of urban resilience. It also shows how alternative narratives of nonlinear migration can redefine urban resilience from a migrant's perspective.

Cheshmehzangi et al's research focuses on food security and resilience, which have attracted renewed attention regarding food shortages in cities during Covid-19. Ali adapts theories of social-ecological resilience and resilient cities to propose the framework of "urban food resilience." This framework consists of eight key aspects: water and energy resilience, land and space resilience, ecosystem resilience, technological and digital resilience, institution and governance resilience, supply chain resilience, economic and population resilience, and smart resilience. The chapter also includes a discussion of challenges and opportunities for food resilience in cities, as well as recommendations for implementation.

"Performative Resilience: artistic activism in urban space" by Sakellariou, A. explores the responses of urban cultural practitioners to conditions of austerity and political turmoil. "Performance" in this context refers to temporal kinesthetic actions that critique and interrogate socio-political narratives in public space. Sakellariou describes how performative actions initiated by cultural practitioners and urban activists demonstrate their resilience and capacity to adapt, pushing the boundaries of what the public space can accommodate and expressing complex social transformations in spatial terms.

In "The Role of Digital Technologies in Building Resilient Communities," Mehan, A. argues that digital technology is vital in building resilient communities by enabling improved communication, collaboration, and resource management.

Mehan describes the different ways in which digital tools enable people to communicate and share ideas, coordinate activities, collaborate, and use physical resources more efficiently. Mehan also highlights how digital tools can be used to enhance community sustainability and energy efficiency, as well as to support the development of renewable energy sources. From building smart cities to creating resources for local communities, this article suggests that digital technology transforms how communities are built and managed, offering various solutions for building more resilient and sustainable communities.

While this journal cannot pretend to embrace all aspects of urban study, these articles offer a framework in which cities can survive, adapt and grow in the face of the many chronic stresses and acute shocks they will inevitably face (100 Resilient Cities, 2018). To reach that resilience point, potential solutions must be people-centric, participatory, and nature-based, building social capacity and physical infrastructure.

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