Understanding the Relationship between Metropolitan Planning and Governance systems and Urban Resilience

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Cities are complex systems that have to balance the environmental, economic and social impacts of their existence while being responsive to change and resilient. The pace of change experienced by cities and their systems can vary from moments (natural disasters) to decades (social changes such as ageing or migration). Some of the most important challenges faced by cities today, and possibly in the future, are the result of unforeseen change that occurs at a slow but noticeable rate, for example, globalisation, climate change, and increased rates of urbanisation. Metropolitan planning and governance systems have a crucial role in determining whether such incremental changes will result in a transition from one stable state to another, radical innovation, or uncontrolled urban decline.

The growing body of research on ‘urban resilience’ currently focuses purely on climate change or disaster resilience. Other bodies of research investigate how cities survive through the physical, economic, social and institutional shocks that inevitably arise as a result of rapid urbanisation, globalisation, growing informal economies, increasing demands for resources, and/or changing institutional structures. The human impacts of transformation in cities are also well-known. However, the opportunity to utilise this knowledge to holistically understand the resilience of cities and their populations remains untapped. It might therefore be suggested that the definition of resilience[i] as enhanced capacity to withstand unintentional and seemingly ‘transitional’ change has not until now been fully applied to cities, their decision-making systems, and their populations.

The proposed poster will define the nature of the threats faced by cities today. Adopting a combination of theory and case-studies, the poster will investigate the impacts of gradual change for cities across a range of municipal sectors, outlining the inter-relationships between sectors and the capacity of decision-making processes. In doing so, this poster will present preliminary findings about the relationship between urban planning and governance, urban resilience, and the vulnerability of cities and their residents to impending threats.

REFERENCES:
[i]
http://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/whatisresilience.4.aeea4691a3127427980004249.html