

Deconstructing Resilience

Special Edition of Planning Practice and Research

Guest Editors: Dr. Iain White and Dr. Paul O'Hare, University of Manchester, UK.

The term 'resilience' has emerged to become a prolific - if vaguely-defined - idea within research, policy and practice. Like 'sustainability' or 'progress', superficially the term is an agreeable, pliable, and 'fuzzy' concept, that appears difficult to dispute. It seems counter-intuitive to argue that we should not become more resilient, particularly in the face of economic, environmental, and social 'shocks' that can prove to be deeply disruptive or even disastrous to everyday life.

However, this should not immunise 'resilience' from being critiqued, automatically promoted or unthinkingly employed – both conceptually, and in practice. Attempts to pursue agendas of resilience may augment spatial and social inequalities and generates significant issues for governance and administration. In some instances many of these may be the unintended consequences of what may actually transpire to be a powerful paradigm shift masquerading as a benign theoretical construct. In much the same way that 'Sustainable Development' captured the zeitgeist of the late 20th century, resilience may be the perfect exemplification of its time: a conveniently nebulous concept incorporating shifting notions of risk bounded within reconfigured governance frameworks – all of which can facilitate the transfer of responsibilities away from the state to the private sector, the market, communities and individuals.

The pursuit of resilience presents a series of challenges for planners and the planning system. It similarly creates tensions for societal and institutional bodies involved in shaping urban environments as well as for communities subject to these transformations. This special edition of *Planning Practice and Research* takes a critical approach to the study of resilience, re-evaluating it to be a term for interrogation and contest rather than a paradigm to be accepted. We invite papers that reflect upon the term's promotion throughout policy and practice and illuminate instances when resilience has itself become a source of exploitation or alternatively has been resisted.

In particular, we would welcome work that explores the following themes:

- How resilience has emerged as a tool and aspiration within both planning and governance;
- How competing notions of resilience are proposed and pursued by stakeholders;
- How 'resilience' has been operationalised in planning policy and practice with an analysis of the consequences;
- How and why attempts to gain resilience through policy and practice have been contested or resisted.

Please provide extended abstracts of up to 500 words by e-mail by Monday 4th April, 2011 to:

Dr Iain White (iain.white@manchester.ac.uk), Dr Paul O'Hare (Paul.O'Hare@manchester.ac.uk), University of Manchester and Professor Vincent Nadin, TU Delft (V.Nadin@tudelft.nl).

Papers will be subject to blind peer review with a view to publication in 2012.