Editorial

URBAN DESIGN International (2016) 21, 111–112. doi:10.1057/udi.2016.2

Planning strategies and decisions and the stakeholders and actors involved in making them across different scales and driven by different motivations play important roles in the quality of the built environment. Informal settlements and planned unit developments exemplify two popular but polarized types of such outcomes. The long-standing debate on *market planning*, *market planners* and *planned markets* (Banerjee, 1993), reminds us that top-down or bottom-up, driven by market forces or the state, planning is not considered the only way that protects the future of our cities as a public good. Of course, other formidable challenges facing our cities in the twenty-first century add to the complexity of the efficacy of planning in theory and practice.

The current issue focuses on four different planning approaches and the outcomes associated with them. Each of these approaches has emerged from a number of physical, social, cultural, political and historic circumstances discussed in each paper. The hope is that by showcasing these strategies, once again, the power of planning not as a one-size-fits-all global approach, but as a local response in coping with complexity in the face of uncertainty becomes evident.

The first article by Silvano De la Lata explores the power of bottom-up planning in *indignados*, representing a spontaneous movement in an encampment in Barcelona. Against the backdrop of three types of insurgent spaces in Iceland, Palestine and *Tahrir Square* in Egypt, the author draws inspirations from three planning moments by relying on everyday urbanism and ethnographic methods of observation. These conditions gave rise to three ‘commissions’ each of which had a particular planning charge: the *infrastructures commission* (in charge of people’s donations for a shared cause); the *kitchen commission* (in charge of recycling efforts of wasted goods from local markets, restaurants and cafes); and, the *garden commission* (in charge of a 400 m² open space that was converted into a community garden; a symbol of appropriation of public space). As such, the author explores both the insurgent and open-source planning in shaping bottom-up decision making and planning processes. These experiences illustrate

distinct planning movements and the spatial outcomes associated with them. These tripartite planning moments were in constant state of influx and contestation rather than relying on social consensus. This planning process eventually resulted in the ‘eviction of the encampment’. But while it was alive, it celebrated a process of ephemeral as opposed to permanent planning through contestation, negotiation, and consensus, and eventually transformation.

In the second article on shaping suburbia, Hyungkyoo Kim and Seung-Nam Kim explore two types of planned developments: top-down, state-led versus market-led. The top-down development lacked regional coordination and civic engagement. However, it performed better compared with the market-led development. According to the authors, the state-led approach fared better on land use, circulation and urban design strategies with better transportation infrastructure, access to public space and social amenities. Conversely, however, due to high auto dependency, fragmented regional structure, spatial deterioration, segregated land use and increased privatization, the market-led approach reflected an inefficient low density sprawl development model. This comparison reminds us of the market versus planning dichotomy.

The market-led development was a vast swath of Greenland, privately developed bedroom community that attracted a large population between 1990 and 2000 in the Seoul Metropolitan area. The authors acknowledged that even though the state-led development was overall better designed, it destroyed, and in part, produced ‘cookie-cutter buildings’. The study revisits the state-led versus market-led approaches to planning and seeks to paint a realistic picture of its ramifications and consequences in South Korea.

The next two articles focus on yet two other aspects of planning and development – not as much on virgin land, but more in places imbued with meaning and memory. Bahar Durmaz Drinkwater and Stephen Platt’s article on urban development process and creative clustering explores the impacts of ‘creative clustering’ and specifically the film industries on urban form in Soho, London

and Beyoglu, Istanbul. The authors discuss the virtues of the successful interpretation of public policy against the idiosyncrasies of market forces. They caution that the strong sustainable public policies backed up by citizen participation would counterbalance the possible volatilities and unpredictable outcomes of market forces. So, while they do not directly address the planning versus market question like the articles on South Korea, they do caution against what might go wrong when dealing with local or extra-local economic forces (that is, creative clusters).

The last paper by Behnaz Aminzadeh *et al*, addresses the landscape design process based on scenario writing phases in Darabad, Iran – a rather rare aspect of urban design practice in using landscape design the same way that screenwriters use textual narratives in their scripts. Just like creative clusters benefit the urban design and placemaking processes, where localities are endowed with certain assets, landscape design elements can also benefit placemaking if carefully scripted. Common among all these articles is the broad array of placemaking strategies that urban designers and

policy makers can utilize. The verisimilitude of these urban design techniques and the ways in which they involve the state, the market forces or citizens, goes against the false notion that planning practices are rigid, and produce similar outcomes. A closer look at the strategies that were utilized in each of the cases explored in this issue of UDI, certainly proves different planning and legal apparatuses, different local and non-local forces acting in each case, and ultimately the end product.

Reference

- Banerjee, T. (1993) (Commentary and counterpoint): Market planning, market planners, and planned markets. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 59(3): 353–360.

Mahyar Arefi
University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, USA.

Noha Nasser
Cardiff University, UK.