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Guest Editorial

Retail planning and urban resilience – An introduction to the special issue

Globalization of retailing, dominantly through transnational corporations and foreign direct investment, follows various trajectories at different levels and scales that lead to salient changes in the structure and organization of retail businesses in host countries (Coe & Wrigley, 2007). The literature on the internationalization of retailing in emerging and less-developed markets mostly focuses on the economic aspects and impacts on local retailers. Resilience strategies of local and domestic retailers and traditional retail districts are one such aspect under investigation, yet their spatial imprints and links with urban planning are overlooked. These factors must be understood to achieve a more thorough analysis of the impacts of retail globalization. This need, pointed out by researchers in the field, is the major motive for this special issue.

Retail is an open system operated by several actors who have gone through periods of intense innovation and change followed by periods of reaction and adaptation. Recent changes in retail and in the relations between cities and retailing challenge urban sustainability because they affect the vitality and viability of traditional shopping areas. An increasing number of consumers have become car-dependent, a process that marginalizes some consumer groups (the less mobile, the elderly, and the disabled), reduces social cohesion and leads to a socially unsustainable urban life, as Bromley and Thomas (1993, 1995) and Guy (2007) have shown.

Some (Gardner & Sheppard, 1989; Messerlin, 1982) call the important changes that have occurred in urban retail in the last decades a 'retail revolution', which is essentially associated with large-scale stores mostly located outside the city center. With the rise of the consumer society, a higher diversification in terms of all types of stores' formats and location patterns has been observed.

This change in the urban retail structure is reflected in a decline of downtown/high street functions, simplification of the intra-urban hierarchy through the decline or disappearance of many shops at convenience and neighborhood levels and the rise of new retail poles in peripheral locations. The closure of nearby shops is responsible for the greater distances people must travel to buy even convenience goods. Large retail premises located outside the city center, on the suburban ring or even further away play a pivotal role in the urban model based on diffuse city regions.

Thanks to the globalization of real estate investments and retail corporations promoting specific stores of the same brands (hypermarkets and other chain stores, franchised outlets) shopping centers have been dominating the retail scene (Barata-Salgueiro, 1996, 1999; Erkip, 2003, 2005) in many cities around the world. They have introduced salient transformations in the retail landscape and consumer behaviors. Changes in consumption values and the role of images to compose people and place identities explain the establishment of new relationships between consumers

and goods, and between consumers and spaces designed for consumption (Cachinho, 2011). For example, historic architecture is used to underscore the distinctiveness of a city center (Warnaby, 2009). There is general agreement that an important change in consumption patterns began in the 1980s. Consumers' demands and values, practices and spending power started to change then, and along with these changes shopping has increasingly been associated with leisure, entertainment and social distinction. Shopping is no longer considered a basic activity to satisfy consumer needs, but has become a 'leisure experience' in itself (Gardner & Sheppard, 1989). This transformation necessitates considering consumption practices and consumers as important dimensions in assessing the vitality and resilience of urban retail systems in general and different types of shopping districts in particular.

With increasing competitiveness between urban areas occurring on a global scale, planning agendas have been moving towards place-based approaches. And interestingly, the need for place marketing and branding, combined with the general increase in mobility and the urban tourist industry, reveal that retail and leisure activities (therefore consumption) have been increasingly involved in the regeneration of declining spaces, from brownfields and waterfronts to city centers (see Findlay & Sparks, 2009 for a thorough analysis of this topic).

A convergence of interests between independent retailers' organizations, advocates for the preservation of heritage and/or nostalgic city centers, environmental activists, real estate developers and city authorities contributes to understanding the importance of investments aiming at city-center revitalization, along with the changing regulations of large retail premises. Many city centers have been rehabilitated by means of improvements to public spaces, pedestrianization and other programmes dealing with accessibility and the transportation structure, such as parking facilities, light rail systems and new buses to and within the urban center. These initiatives are combined with renovated retail and services provisions and private investments in the renewal of buildings and enterprises. Besides the changes in physical structures, many authorities or organizations have also been engaged in event promotion and marketing campaigns to increase the attractiveness of renovated districts (Jayne, 2006; Miles & Miles, 2004).

This special issue of *Cities* presents four manuscripts that are the products of research projects under the frame of REPLACIS (*Retail Planning for Cities Sustainability*), which was an Urban-Net Project carried out by researchers from universities in Portugal (Lisbon and Porto), France (Angers, Brest and Le Mans), Sweden (Malmo) and Turkey (Bilkent) between 2009 and 2011. With the researchers working in different contexts across Europe and the US, this volume is much enriched by their different cultural and disciplinary approaches. Two articles, which were invited to partake in the

special issue after REPLACIS' completion, found a place in this issue with their relevant and timely content (Balsas, 2014; Ozuduru, Varol, & Yalciner Ercoskun, 2014).

Working in different cultural contexts across Europe and with different scientific backgrounds (architecture, urban studies, planning and geography), researchers participating in REPLACIS were offered the opportunity to present their findings in this special issue. As noted by Coe and Wrigley (2007), the subject's complexity calls for multidisciplinary research, and we believe that the expertise of the project team fulfilled this requirement.

REPLACIS focused on the resilience of retail systems in urban areas and the ways and means retail systems contribute to cities sustainability and resilience.¹ Investigating recent transformations in urban retailing, the resilience of retail districts and actors' strategies, in addition to understanding how planning policies and governance in different countries have been dealing with this issue in relation to urban sustainability were among the major research interests.

Because retail has been both acquiring a growing role in the urban economy and becoming a key element in the experience and urban fabric of the contemporary city (Clarke, 2003; Jayne, 2006), urban sustainability has been associated with preserving balanced retail systems set in diverse facilities and shopping environments (ODPM, 2005; Dept for Communities and Local Government, 2009) that are able to respond efficiently to the needs, wants and desires of different kinds of consumers. Cities with an efficient network of centers that deliver goods and services to the vicinity should be more sustainable than the ones without such a network.

Moreover, neighborhood liveability is a dimension of urban sustainability (Knox & Mayer, 2009), and retail is undoubtedly an element of that liveability; a richer retail and service supply at the community or neighborhood level reinforces community ties and cohesion, and increases quality of life. A retail district's vitality and viability can only be sustained through the resilience of different retailers and the diversity of local supply, including products and services, as revealed by research presented in this special issue.

As retail district resilience is essential to build sustainable cities, understanding a retail system's evolution after threats or shocks may help city authorities and other stakeholders maintain and improve their shopping districts. Therefore, a focus on retail change, trying to understand the performance of different retail areas and the capacity of certain retail districts to transform and survive led us to adopt the theoretical framework of place/regional resilience for Replacis considering that retail might contribute to a community's image, identity, satisfaction and cohesion. Besides, "by shifting focus away from an ultimate end goal of sustainability, to an ongoing process of enhancing resilience managers, planners, council members, and residents can examine the community in its entirety, the interrelations among the various elements within a community, and how these elements collectively enhance community resilience and ultimately move a community toward sustainability" (Callaghan & Colton, 2008, 932–933).

The word resilience has recently become popular in political, academic and media discourses. Its increasing use, however, has led to a certain loss of meaning, thus we define it here as per our focus and understanding before presenting the texts in this volume.

The increase in damages from catastrophes (either of natural or human origin), the prospect of problems caused by climate change, as well as financial globalization and its impacts on local and regional economies have contributed to uncertainties that have generalized the meaning of 'resilience'. (See for example, Vale &

Campanella, 2005 or Manyena, 2006 for the resilience theory for risk management, and the special issue of *Cambridge Journal of the Regions, Economy and Society* 3(1) (2010) for regional development, in addition to its former uses.). It is also worthwhile to remember that the growing popularity of resilience may not be independent of the growth of neoliberal policies that transfer the costs and the responsibilities of preparation for and recovering from non-predictable hazards to people and territories (Walker & Cooper, 2011).

The concept of resilience originates from physics (the ability for an object to return to the same position after having been hit) and psychology (the ability to cope and recover from a shock or trauma). It was introduced in ecology by Holling's work in the 1970s but not into the social sciences until recently. Adger (2000) presented the concept of social resilience as a component of the adaptation of individuals and groups to environmental change, particularly relevant to communities that are dependent on a single resource.

It is possible to recognize three main interpretations of resilience: engineering, ecological and adaptive. In engineering resilience (Holling, 1973) focus is placed on the state of balance to which a system will return after having recovered from a shock. This is mainly a static concept as it underlines the capacity to return to the previous position or condition. Under this perspective, resilience is interpreted as being resistant to change (where the less the system changes, the greater its resilience) and is therefore not appropriate for the social sciences.

Within the framework of ecological resilience, researchers are more concerned about an ecosystem's functioning and conditions for its persistence. A system's resilience therefore would be its ability to absorb change and disturbance without changing its structure or function, which could be measured either by the speed of returning to the equilibrium (old or new) or the intensity of the shock it can absorb (Holling, 1973; Hudson, 2010). The Resilience Alliance adopts a marked ecological approach, and calls for cities that are able "to tolerate alteration before reorganizing around a new set of structures and processes" (Alberti et al. (2003) in *Resilience Alliance*, 2007, 8).

Evolutionary approaches in regional economy "emphasize disequilibrium rather than either a single or multiple equilibrium" (Pike, Dawley, & Tomaney, 2010, 3) and have proposed the concept of "adaptive resilience". This interpretation uses the theory of complex adaptive systems: rather than measuring a system's resilience, what interests these authors is to perceive how regions adapt to stress through time (Simmie & Martin, 2010). For Martin (2012, 14) "regional economic resilience is the capacity of a regional economy to adapt its structure to changes or shocks in order to keep a growth path over time", so it is a dynamic process and not just a characteristic of a place or region.

In spite of the interest in different meanings, the texts in this special issue more reflect the adaptive concept of resilience, because from an economic or social and urban point of view, places do not bounce back to the same situation, but, as Knox (1991) pointed out for the urban landscape, they change restlessly.

We share the idea that resilience is a process of reducing vulnerabilities to shocks and of accumulating a set of assets that enables systems or communities to transcend crises in such a way that they continue to fulfil their functions or follow their paths. Retail studies use all three assumptions of resilience (Wrigley & Dolega, 2011). For this issue, discussing the concept of resilience was not our major concern; instead we attempted to apply it to the understanding of the transformation of urban retail systems to support the evaluation of the changes and the design of policy tools that reduce vulnerabilities and increase adaptation to shocks, assuring, at the same time, the satisfaction of consumer needs and the sustainability of the city. Here, we should note that Findlay and

¹ For more detail on the project and its outputs, see Barata-Salgueiro (2011).

Sparks (2009) stress the capacity for change as one of the key dimensions of a healthy retail sector. In fact, integrating resilience thinking with retail planning is very important in current debates of economic restructuring processes, as Ozuduru et al. (2014) note in this issue of *Cities*. The case studies chosen in the texts deal with the dynamics of retail and service provision in different types of districts, from city centers to residential areas, looking for threats or shocks that forced an adjustment, and for strategies applied to anticipate or overcome them.

Critical elements to increase resilience in a community include planning and developing strategies that minimize vulnerabilities (Campanella, 2006), and supporting partnerships and independent initiatives that strengthen networks and create social support (Tobin, 1999). Walisser, Mueller, and McLean (2005) note that anticipation and planning should be regular practices when considering the life cycle of resources and that restructuring resource-based communities requires collaborative efforts from all stakeholders. The findings of the research in this special issue follow the same direction: that it is most appropriate to consider retail in planning and policy at the local or municipal levels, that certain kinds of local organizations are important for urban retail resilience and that diversity is a pillar of resilience.

Examples of the problems of retail in declining neighborhoods and the measures taken or required to prevent or solve them, as well as the change to town centers/high streets have flourished in the literature, following Berry's pioneering work on Chicago (1963). However, the scant research on retail resilience² and limited inquiries into the performance of retail districts from different perspectives (from retailer strategies to consumer views; from local plans to governmental initiatives) have encouraged us to share our findings on retail change, strategies and performance from a resilience perspective.

The evolution of urban retail systems is seen in the interface between actors' agency and place, mediated by regulation policies. It is possible to find some commonalities in policies adopted in different countries and cities, but public policy also displays much specificity, with, for example, different impacts on land use and the liveability of shopping districts.

Although the texts in this volume follow their own methodological path, we have stressed common issues resulting from the REPLACIS project, which intended to bring together retail supply, consumers' characteristics, values and choices, built environment features, planning options and governance networks. The project's conceptual framework was adopted to identify vulnerabilities and to understand the performance of retail areas, and thus a city's resilience from a retail perspective, took three broad realms and their interfaces into account: the retail supply; the physical and social attributes of urban districts; and the institutional context.

The first realm deals with retail supply in terms of retailer profile (age, education, experience as shop-owners), shopping facilities and the diversity of the retail mix in terms of size, types of shops, store locations, services offered, standing, modernization, levels and types of networking and retailers' associations. The characteristics of entrepreneurs, their relational networks and capacity for investment, innovation and anticipating change are decisive features of designing and applying successful strategies of adaptation, with consequences for the decline or liveability of urban retail areas.

Internationalization and the struggle between domestic capital (represented by traditional and small-scale retailers) and corporate foreign capital (represented by large retail investments) are the forces behind the rise of a dual structure in Turkish retailing,

pointed out by Erkip, Kızılgün, and Mugan Akinci (2014) in this issue. These factors provide the context for the design of stakeholder strategies. Assuming those as the indicators of resilience, this article explores cases (mainly the strategies adopted by small independent retailers to survive and adapt to changing retail conditions of urban Turkey) to either provide support for or criticize existing retail policies, which lack a holistic understanding of the role of retailing in urban planning and resilience. Erkip et al. (2014) reveal these aspects through retailer and consumer views on two popular streets in Ankara's (Turkey's capital) urban core.

Ozuduru et al. (2014) find that shopping streets and shopping centers are used by almost all types of consumers in Ankara. Despite the increasing competition between retail formats, this does not cause decreasing viability for any of them. The authors reveal the strengths and weaknesses of shopping centers and shopping streets and the features that make them attractive to various customers. It seems that the variety and quality of the offer, along with consumer diversity, are important qualities for the resilience level of shopping streets, i.e. streets providing a diversity of services in addition to retail, are more resilient. This conclusion is echoed by Ozuduru et al. (2014), who state that "resilience level can be increased by planning policies that focus on attracting consumers from different backgrounds, offering a business environment for special brands, and initiating new revitalisation programs for the maintenance and design of city centers".

Karrholm, Nylund, and de la Fuente (2014) also reach the above conclusion in their examination of three types of retail areas in Malmo, which focuses especially on the different strategies of retail development. In some areas, namely in the pedestrian precinct, the strategies of individual retailers focus mostly on quality and personal service, together with a good knowledge of the store's market. They conclude that a strong and efficient retail organization plays an important role in the performance of the shopping center and the pedestrian precinct. Another conclusion pointed to the importance of promoting and enhancing the relationships between different retail places rather than polarizing them. These authors apply the concept of spatial resilience, introduced by Nyström and Folke (2001) and compare it to the concept of polyvalence as introduced by Hertzberger (2001). One main finding point is that spatial resilience might be achieved by adopting strategies towards fluidity rather than network stabilization. For example, they claim that "a more fluid stabilisation would be to develop a multi-scalar approach that produces relations between the different retail areas".

The second realm considered in the REPLACIS project refers to the physical and social attributes of urban spaces. On the one hand, consumer characteristics (i.e., income, age, lifestyles) should be considered. On the other hand, retail locations and physical attributes should be taken into account in terms of their accessibility, building conservation, land use and environmental quality of the public space.

Among the elements considered in the second realm, the consumer dimension is particularly explored by Cachinho (2014), who uses the Consumer Culture Theory. The empirical research reflects that the appropriation of shopping districts was also affected, at the intangible level, by symbols and signs interpreted by the consumers. Considering the symbolic dimensions of retail landscapes and showing how "consumerscapes" might be called upon to reduce the vulnerabilities of shopping areas and improve their resilience, Cachinho (2014) claims in this special issue that "public authorities and other stakeholders should also consider representations and levels of consumer satisfaction in measuring the liveability of neighbourhoods and the ability of the retail structure to respond to demand".

² The article by Wrigley and Dolega (2011) is a remarkable exception, but it was published after our project had ended.

The last and third realm involves the institutional context. The town planning system, governance model and public policy that are viewed as the set of rules and relations between actors on different scales should be considered. National and local policies connected with the licensing of retail establishments, public support given to retailers and their associations, city structure (monocentric vs. polycentric) and the importance of regeneration policies provide the framework for investment decisions. The policies heretofore applied have had different levels of success in reducing the negative impacts of the retail revolution on traditional shopping areas (Davies, 1995) and in increasing the resilience of retail areas. Governance also pertains to public shares, community development, partnerships and other kinds of cooperation, mainly having to do with projects providing support to retail business and/or community organizations, town center management and other similar initiatives (Barata-Salgueiro, 2011).

Departing from Foster's (2007) distinction between spontaneous and anticipated or prepared resilience, Erkip et al. (2014), in this volume, state that "planned resilience that is a comprehensive approach requires the engagement of associations, municipalities and other public actors". In fact, Mueller (2011), cited also by these authors, points out that proper governance and a relationship between several actors with the ability to anticipate and plan make some cities more resilient than others. However, resilience "remained largely unpracticed in contemporary urban planning and design" (Ahern, 2011, 341) as also cited by Balsas (2014) in this volume.

The above situation provides academia an opportunity to discuss these matters with policy-makers and other stakeholders. Balsas (2014) deviates from the retail focus towards the revitalization of central areas, urging for the integration of resilience thinking in planning documents and strategies. He raises the question of spatial interrelations and the need to discuss what retail offers not only at the local level but also at the metropolitan or regional scale (the influence of exogenous factors). A similar conclusion can be found in Karrholm et al. (2014); they explain that in Malmo, some initiatives were taken by the city planning office and the district administration to develop a long-term strategy for a declining community center of a public-house neighborhood. The goal was to use changes in the physical structure of the district as a catalyst for socially, economically and ecologically sustainable development in the district.

Fernandes and Chamusca (2014) discuss urban policies from a comparative perspective, pointing out how the cultural context accounts for their differences and similarities. These authors document the development and phases of urban planning in parts of Europe using the countries that participated in the REPLACIS project as select cases. How and when the concept of resilience became the concern of urban policy makers in each country and how this shift was reflected in laws and related documents are among the issues discussed in this article.

Adger (2000) acknowledges the multidimensional character of social resilience, which requires an interdisciplinary research on various scales. He also stresses that simply applying a concept from ecological sciences to social systems assumes that "there are no essential differences in behaviour and structure between socialized institutions and ecological systems." (Adger, 2000, 350). Noting how to prevent some dangers of applying an ecologically rooted concept to social phenomena, Davoudi (2012, 306) highlights the need for "insights from the critical social science". This author also believes in evolutionary resilience's "potential to become a bridging concept between the natural and the social sciences and stimulate interdisciplinary dialogues and collaborations".

We hope this special issue offers insights into all these dialogues across disciplinary and geographic boundaries and that

the ideas presented will stimulate further debates about urban retail adaptation and its contribution to more sustainable cities.

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