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## Open Lecture

# Success and Failure in British Town Planning: Lessons for the Future

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Mr. Chairman, Prof. Ishida, and colleagues, friends, thank you very much for coming this morning. I'm afraid that my Japanese is very limited. Ohayo gozaimasu. And that is half of all my Japanese. I will try to speak slowly, and I will follow the outline so that it will be important, if you do not understand, to ask. Please interrupt if I use words that you do not understand, and then we will ask Professor Nakabayashi to find the right words in Japanese.

In London, in my country now there is a debate about the future of large cities, and I think there are really three reasons for this debate. One of the reasons is the spread of information technology all over the world, which is also a problem, possibly, in Japan. Do we need very big cities in the future? Maybe you can do your work in a village using the fax, the computer, and the telephone. So one question about big cities is what is the impact of the new technology on the work of the city. This is one of the problems. Technological change creating the 'Informational Age', I think that creates possible problem in the future for big cities.

The second question is economic and political aspects of European integration. In Europe today, we are integrating the economies of twelve different countries, and therefore, the cities which are the modes of economic activity are also being integrated into a single urban system: not twelve separate systems but one system. Some cities will benefit, and maybe some cities will suffer, will lose. So that is a problem in Europe that concerns us.

And thirdly, we have now in Britain fifty years — for roughly fifty years, since 1947, we have been having a public policy of town and country planning. And after the fifty years we can look back at the history of what has happened and ask ourselves, were we successful or did we fail? Now is the time to make an evaluation, an assessment of the history of town planning and ask, what were the results and are we happy with the results?

So for these three reasons — informational age, European integration, and the lessons from past experience — is creating a big debate about cities in Britain. And what I want to do this morning is to discuss, first, the lessons, then the challenges of the future (Part Two:

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The 'New' Challenges), and then bring the lessons and challenges together to look at the way forward, a new view of planning for large cities in the twenty-first century.

Now, I would like to say just very briefly that, for me, I am a geographer; I talk about city planning not as an engineer, not as a lawyer, not as an architect, but as a social scientist. I'm very interested in a broad picture of town planning. Town planning is all those public actions which improve the quality of life in the cities. And also I want to make the assumption: Europe today and Japan is a private property owning democracy. Now these two conditions, any planning system must work within a situation of individual owned land, private land ownership, and also that we have political democracy. And that is very important for the kind of planning system that you have. It means that planning is essentially a dialogue, a process of discussion, debate. The word dialogue, Professor. Nakabayashi, is very important to me in this talk. What is the Japanese word for dialogue? Do you understand dialogue? A dialogue between the public sector and the private sector. Discussion, debate. What is Japanese for dialogue?

Cities have public sector, infrastructure including Tama New Town, universities and roads, and railways, and sewerage, and health facilities. So this public sector infrastructure has to be related to shops, industry, and housing. So we have to have some discussion how much infrastructure and where should it be? How many houses, and where should they be? So for me a city planner is a person who conducts, who arranges the debate. He's not a politician who decides, but he is the creative professional person who arranges this debate.

So let me come now to the lessons from British planning for the last fifty years, and I would like to ask three questions. Why have we been planning? How have we planned? And what has been the result?

But just before we do that, I want first to explain that if you take the results of, maybe, my evaluation, Professor Kidokoro and many other people, we probably can get a picture that most people agree with; not everybody agrees with all of it, but most people agree with most of it. And I want first to summarize the successes before I come to these questions of why, how, and what the result is.

Let me begin by giving you a summary of the outcomes of British planning, and I want to list six successes, which are listed here on the paper, and then I want to discuss these three failures or disappointments, which are at the top of the summary on Page Two.

Of the successes, the first thing to note is that we have in Britain new cities which work quite well in the urban age, in a well-educated, and relatively rich population. So it is the capacity to adapt the old cities to the new situation, which I think has been the first major success of British planning. It is the process of achieving improvement in the urban form, and it's clear that here in Tama you have many facilities and urban form which is very different from in Tokyo. And this is the new form. And the question is how far can you have these new ideas also present in the old cities? And in Britain we have managed to adapt and develop the old cities in a way which makes and work better than they would have done in the present time. And that has been by transferring the lessons from the new towns in Britain. So one question I want to ask of my Japanese friends is, how far are the lessons from Tama New Town? Are they

being applied in Tokyo or in other cities in Japan ?

In the process of modernizing British cities, I think we are particularly proud of the way in which we have modernized the city centers. We have retained social and economic activity in the city center and made it more accessible. And if you visit the United States, you will realize that the British planning system has achieved something very different from the United States. In the United States the city centers are very different now, and in some cities they have disappeared. I visited University of Syracuse in New York State two years ago, and all that is left in the city center is one hotel. I stayed in the City Center Hotel, and that was the whole city center. There were no shops, no parks, no facilities: just two motor ways. In Britain we have decided that we want to keep social facilities, economic activities, historic buildings in the city center. So the success number two — it is closely linked with number one — is the modernization of city centers and their retention as a very important part of the urban structure.

Number three is abolition of slum housing. If you ask of an ordinary citizen in Britain what has town planning done for you, most people would say it achieved the removal of the slum housing.

As our Chairman said, when I began my career as a university teacher in the mid 1950's in Glasgow, more than half, 60 percent of the housing was 100 to 150 years old; it was very sub-standard; we would call it slum housing. Today that figure will be maybe 3 percent or 4 percent. So it has gone from more than half to a very small proportion today, and that has been an enormous program of urban renewal, urban redevelopment. Demolition and rebuilding associating with changing the quality of the house, inside the house and the environment in the neighborhood of the house. And it is the process of building modern housing to cover perhaps half the area of the large industrial cities, in Birmingham and in Glasgow, and in much of London, and in Manchester, and in Newcastle, which has been a great contribution to the quality of life of citizens in urban Britain.

Then I have listed here the management of land use conflict. The traditional theoretical reason for planning is that the land market does not take account of externalities. Do you understand the economic use of the word externalities ? The locational externalities. And you have to manage locational externalities so that you plan for the schools for small children to be far away from the fast traffic, so that the houses are not beside great factories of sources of pollution.

And in this process of planning the land use so that the externalities are minimized or reduced greatly, you have to think about how do you handle the problem of modernizing but retaining history ? In my country many cities are 900 years old. London began here, over a thousand years ago. So there are many historical buildings which are very important for the Japanese visitor who comes to London. The Tower of London, and Westminster Abbey. So we don't want to demolish them and make new office blocks. But it's not just the main buildings; there are also many small buildings and historic churches which have to be planned to retain, while at the same time, we need to improve the city for modern living. So the balance between conservation and development is also part of this management of the land use conflict. That is

part of the success, I think, of professional planning in Britain.

Then I have listed countryside planning here. That is very important. In Britain today, only 2 percent of the population are farmers; 98 percent of the people carry out urban activities, even if they live in small cities or large cities, or even these small towns here. They are not farmers. And yet 98 percent of the people are urban, but they only live in 12 percent of the space. So 88 percent of the space here is not urban, and we have to plan that countryside, that 88 percent rural area for the recreation and relaxation of the 98 percent of the people who live in the urban areas. We call it countryside planning for the city dwellers: countryside planning for urban people for their holidays, their vacations, and for Saturday and Sunday, and even sometimes for the businessmen on Wednesday afternoon to play golf. Very important business facility is the golf course. And much of this space has been planned not for the farmers but for the urban population. So that has meant dialogue, discussion, or debate between the farming population and the urban population.

So I think countryside planning is very important in Britain, and of the space in Britain — which is not yet built and which is not so high in Scotland that you cannot build on it — of the space that is available for urban development, 60 percent, more than half, has some kind of planning control for amenity reason for good countryside golf courses, scientific nature reserve, and so on. 60 percent of the open space on which you could build, if you wanted to, has got planning restrictions. So that shows you how important this countryside planning is.

And then, finally, I have listed here containing regional disparities. Perhaps this is a very special problem in Britain, but if you look at the level of unemployment in south-east England and compare it with north England and west England and Scotland, the unemployment is much higher in the north than the south. The incomes in the north are lower than in the south. And we have tried for fifty years to stop that gap widen. In the United States they have widened and widened and widenend, but here in Britain we have tried to keep the gap quite small. It's not no gap, but it's not a vast gap; it's a small gap. And this has been partly achieved by the process of having major urban redevelopment as part of the program of regional development so that if you think of Scotland and the urban renewal in Glasgow and in the cities near Glasgow, plus the four new towns, you can see that town planning is a big part of regional development; we cannot really separate large - scale urban development from regional development. In an urbanized country with big cities of million, three million people, these two processes are very, very closely connected so that I think of one of the contribution that British town planning has made is to the constraining, the containing of regional disparities.

Now what I would like you to think of for one minute is add together all of these six topics, these six successes — urban form, city centers, slum housing, land use conflict, countryside planning, and regional disparity — if you add them all together, you can see that the overall effect, the overall impact is very large. When you come to visit Britain today, what you'll see from the train, or the car or the bus, is a landscape, a geography largely produced by public policy, not by the land market. What you see out of the window is public policy effects, whereas, when I take the train from Narita to Ikebukuro where I'm staying, what I see out of the window is mostly the effects of the land market, and only very small effects

of the public policy. And it is much the same in the United States. But in Britain we have changed the geography: where people live, and where the factories are, and where the schools and shops are, and where they are not in this green belt. All this space is still open space because of the green belt. So planning policy by creating some changes in new town and stopping, preventing other changes in the green belt has changed the geography of my country. The geography of Britain is the geography of town planning for fifty years.

So, what about these disappointment ? What about the things which have been less successful than we would have liked. And I have listed here three.

First, I think you know the problems of inner city regeneration. Although we have succeeded in improving the housing, we have not succeeded yet in improving as much as possible the employment in the inner city, and to some extent we still have many social problems.

Professor Nakabayashi very kindly has shown me maps of London to make me feel at home. This is just the middle part of London here. You see some boundary of Greater London, and these grey areas are the poorest parts of London, where poor people lived 1991, ten years ago, and you can see this is the inner city, not the suburban or outer London. And these red dots, these red shapes are where there have been serious public disorder; we say riot. I'm not sure what the Japanese word is for serious public disorder. Between 1981 and 1985. And you can see that this is a complicated story partly related to poverty which has to do with poor housing, and it also has to do with ethnic problems.

What we have learned for the inner city is that you have to manage the physical development: improve the housing and the environment. At the same time the economic development for employment, and at the same time social programs to improve the race relation or family structure. And what is difficult is to coordinate so that at the same time physical development, economic development, and social development. To get the mix right over twenty years is very difficult exercise, and I feel that we have many problems still in the inner city, and those of you who know London well know that we have here the London Docklands; it's still an area of social problems. So even after fifty years not all the problems are resolved. So I think this is one of our disappointments that we have found very difficult to manage to change and improve the inner cities in a way which has made them successful. We have achieved some success but not complete success.

The other major difficulty that we have in Britain has been to try to connect traffic planning or transportation planning with land use planning. Now I don't know if you have the same problem in Japan, but I know that in Japan you have the very effective technology for transportation: Shinkansen, big tunnels. The day I left London the Queen went to France by the tunnel, but she can only go from the coast in Britain, from Ostend to Paris, from Ostend to London she must use a train which is one hundred years old. We have good technology to build a tunnel; it took ten years to make. But even in ten years we cannot get the planning here, and which tunnel, where is it going to be built ? So we have a great problem somehow. Managing the engineers are very effective and can build tunnels and Shinkansen and new airports in the sea, Kansai Airport, but how to link the transport facilities to the land use planning we have found in Britain to be really very difficult.

And finally I have listed here 'Level of land and property prices ?' Because, in Britain, the main purposes of British planning have been to contain urban areas, urban containment with green belts and new towns, some people argue that the supply of land for new housing is restricted, and therefore, the price is increased, and maybe some housing and land costs more than it otherwise would have done. I think it is important to remember that although there is a possibility, it's very difficult to calculate how high the price has been made to rise by planning, because in Japan the price is even higher. But we do have a policy of helping poor people, subsidizing poor people's housing so the price goes up and they have subsidies to help them buy their houses. But it is a problem that some people would list as a consequence of planning.

So those are the six main successes and the three areas of disappointments. So that paints a broad picture of British planning, and what I want to do now is to ask these questions: why, how, and what are the outcomes.

And as you can see from the summary sheet, I have listed the five main aims, the five major aims which have accumulated over time. The important point I want to emphasize is that British planning has been learning to become more and more complex, more and more responsible for these kind of activities over time. Before the war it was limited just to city design. That is still an important problem in the British city, and control of advertising and things like the preservation of historic buildings and the skyline control in Britain, but it is not the main purposes of British planning which is really the second, third, and fourth one. After the war British planning tried very much to make the cities safe and convenient: safe in the sense of public health so that there were no diseases, and safe for traffic and people. So a safe city is one in which small children can go to school without crossing a very fast road. This is the point I was making about urban form. A convenient city is one in which there is good proximity to shopping, good proximity to public open space, parks for recreation, good proximity to employment. So the city safe and the city convenient leads a set of objectives which covers much of British planning. So we want a beautiful city, and safe and convenient city. And in the 1980's we tried to ask the question, how can we make our cities more efficient ? We asked the economic question, what is an efficient city ? And we concluded there are two aspects of efficiency for a city which are important.

The first is efficiency from the point of view of the public sector, from the point of view of providing infrastructure. How much infrastructure do you need in a city ? And in very small cities, under ten thousand cities, we find their infrastructure cost is very high per head of the population. And in very large cities you need more infrastructure, traffic control, pollution control. So again, it is rather high costing so the curve is a U shaped curve: high cost for small cities, high cost for large cities, and somewhere in between the medium size cities are more efficient. We are not arguing there is only one size of a city; there is a single optimum, but we are arguing that cities probably between 30,000 and 300,000 of the population have a more efficient relationship to infrastructure than either than the smaller ones or the much larger ones. So that was one consideration of efficiency.

The other one was how does the urban labor market work ? In the attempt to make British

industry to restructure, British industry to try to make it competitive with some Japanese industry — a very difficult process for us with very old industries — one of the contributions from town planning was to try to have cities in which they are large enough to provide each employer with a choice of labor and each employee a choice of jobs. The economists call this balanced labor market. And in technological age in the 1970's and 1980's, probably you need about 250,000 population to generate a labor market with choice for both employees and employers.

So if you have small cities like Oxford of 100,000 people, and maybe if you need other cities near by to give the choice, the diversity of employment to make it really efficient, it's not a precise statistic, but there were several studies done to suggest that cities of that size are likely to be more efficient. So the city of Milton Keynes, this new town here, is not the same size as the early new towns, say, Crawley New Town, which was only 50,000 but is now 100,000 and has many small towns around it. This is a city of a quarter of a million people. This is the same size, I think, similar size to Tama New Town, maybe with 200,000, 250,000 people. And in Britain that gives an efficient labor market. So we tried to have cities which are beautiful, safe, and convenient, and efficient.

And then finally, I have written here the 'just' city, by which I mean social justice in the city. In Britain the town planners have tried to ensure that the poor people do not get poorer as a result of planning. In the United States it is very difficult to prevent the poorest people becoming even poorer as a result of urban development and urban redevelopment. But in Britain we have tried to ensure that the poor are not made any poorer because of town planning, and sometimes I actually made welfare by town planning that their environment is improved or their accessibility to employment is improved. And it is very important in Britain to recognize that this measurement of poverty is not just a measurement of money income; I am talking also about environmental benefits and environmental costs. Many of the lower income people in Britain live in houses with very nice environment around the house. People have said it is the nicest country to be unemployed in within it you can live in a nice house in a nice area, but you have no income. But in the United States, if you have no income, you live in a poor house in a very poor area. So that is even poorer.

So we try to have cities beautiful, safe and convenient, efficient, and just. And if we were living in such cities, we would be living presumably in a place called Utopia. I don't know the Japanese for Utopia; perhaps it's the same way. And, of course, London is not yet Utopia. The town where I live is not yet Utopia.

That tells you about the direction of change in planning. Planning is trying to improve the quality of life so that we get nearer and nearer to the ideal cities, to Utopia.

Now, you notice that I have listed here, number five: the sustainable city. I have listed it because one year ago — Professor Sonobe will remember — the Secretary of State for Environment, that is the Minister for Planning in Britain, he wrote to every local authority, every small town and city, and he said, "Please will you make sure that every time the planning permission for development occurs, when you give permission for development, make sure that the development is sustainable development." He wrote this letter. So the mayor of Birmingham

wrote to the Minister, and said, "Please tell me what you mean by sustainable development. Please give me a definition of sustainable development." And, by the time I left London, more than a year later, still no answer to the letter.

The theoretical concept of sustainable city is very, very difficult to define. We do now try in Britain to have a planning policy which reduces energy consumption in the city. But for the people who argue that sustainable cities are essential if the whole world is going to survive the next century, they have a much bigger philosophical idea. They want the choices for the next generation to be not limited by decisions we make in this generation. That's a very, very difficult idea. And so I think sustainable city notion is going to become a planning problem, but it is a long way from being a possible planning practice at the present time.

So those are the reasons why we are planning, we are trying to achieve all of those objectives. And over the period, 1950 to 1990, we have been adding each decade new responsibilities to the city planners, and the question is, how can that process continue? Because I want to come now to the new challenges, and I see in the new challenges further responsibilities emerging for the city planners. Let me talk first about this question of globalization of the world economy.

For example, I recently visited the cities of Barcelona, Paris, Amsterdam, and Frankfurt, and London. And in each of those cities I saw large, new, very well designed office blocks, all of them empty. Nobody at work in these offices. And many of the city authorities tell me the offices will be empty for maybe five years or even ten years; there is such a large supply. And maybe in Tokyo there are also some empty offices. However, every one of these office blocks, every one of these development has planning permission. Every either one is given permission to develop. And so people are arguing in London now that maybe the city planner should try to intervene in the land market, in the process of urban development. This is a new responsibility to actually say, "No. You can have an office development, but not for ten years." This would be a very big change in the operation of the planning systems. But people are arguing that in the capital system we ought to change the cycles from Tsunami's to Sazanami's — I know Professor Sazanami in Kyoto; he tells me his name means riddle.

So this is another challenge, perhaps, to city planners in the future as the global economy increases to be integrated: Tokyo, New York, London, Sidney, and Hong Kong. Then maybe all the cities do this together, and we will have somehow to try to prevent these big cycles. So that is a serious problem for the planners.

I think also there is a problem in the future of how will the infrastructure requirements be provided for the new kinds of technology? And that is particularly a problem in Europe because we are now building European Highspeed Network Train, a European Shinkansen. But we have twelve government, not one national government, and so, you have a piece here, to Paris and to Brussels, and then another piece from Madrid to Seville, but no connection from Madrid to Paris, no connection from Clifton to London. So the challenges for the governments involve to coordinate better. This is more a coordination. And I'll say some more about that in a minute. And you can see this question of the sustainable city has raised new problems for the town planning. How do you know if Tama New Town is a sustainable city? How can you tell who is



going to be responsible for monitoring the sustainability of Tama New Town ?

Now I have to ask you a difficult question. Do you think the universities, even such good universities like Tokyo Metropolitan University and the London School of Economics, can we train students in your new graduate programs who are clever enough to deliver beautiful, safe and convenient, efficient, just, sustainable, and now market's global amelioration, coping with further international integration for infrastructure ? Can we continue to add responsibilities and continue to add regulation to achieve these ends ? I believe this is becoming impractical; it's becoming impossible. And we have to think a bit about a new way of looking at that.

So let me briefly come now —because my time is nearly up —let me come now to the way forward. What I want to explain first, though, is that in Britain public support, both in the citizens and from commerce and industry for town planning, is very strong because both the citizens and industry and commerce like the idea of planning, reducing the level of risk that would otherwise be there in an open land market so that we have to think about how can we in the future continue to help reduce the risk but not do it in a way which makes the planning very unpopular by increasing the amount of regulation all the time. And I think there is a possible solution.

The important idea is to go back and think of these lessons in British planning, which I mentioned, and remember that really what has been happening is a discussion or a dialogue about two things: two things that are very closely connected. We can only have a coin if both sides are correct; we say heads and tails. And planning has to have two sides; they are separate, heads and tails, but they both exist together simultaneously.

One is the dialogue about aims that I have been talking about: what aims should planning be? What is planning's responsibility ? That is a political dialogue. That is a debate about objectives. So that dialogue has to happen. But once you've decided let us build a new town in Tama, that's a political decision, then you have a different kind of dialogue. You have the problem of plan implementation. Not the problem of plan making; that's a political process. Shall we have a new town of Milton Keynes ? Yes. A political decision. Now we have to implement the plan. And we need a dialogue, a discussion, or a debate about which is coordination: how to get the universities to migrate, the railways, to build the houses, to build the schools, and so on. So this is about coordination.

If you think about the London Docklands here, the local government, the regional government of London, the national government, and the government in Brussels, the European government, they are all involved in giving money and facilities to the London Docklands today. So coordination between four levels of governments is already important for urban renewal. So that's coordination.

Then there is coordination between the specialist agencies, the transport facilities, London Docklands, the railway, and the land use planning. So specialist agencies need coordination. There's coordination between economic planners: investment planning which has three years or five years time horizon, which you have to fit somehow together with land use planning which is looking for fifteen or twenty years ahead. It's a very difficult problem. And the problem I mentioned at the very beginning, how to manage the public sector with the private

sector.

So there are many types of coordination required to implement a plan. What do all those types of coordination have in common ? There is something the same between coordination of levels of government, specialist agencies, types of planning, public and private coordination. Each of them, if you think about it, coordination is essentially providing one set of decision-makers with information about another set of decision-makers. One, it is about exchange of decision-makers. We are making decisions here in this level of government, and what are your decisions at the other levels of government. So if we think of coordination as the manager of an information system, we begin to see a way of handling planning that is very different from making plans and keeping them in the office in the Tokyo metropolitan government building. You can make an information system which everyone could connect you through their workstations. And then the dialogue, which is so important in planning, could happen much more easily.

So I am trying to think about what information is needed, who needs the information, when do they need the information, and what kind of information do they need ? Because, the last fifty years in Britain we made plans for London, and we made them once for fifteen years, and we put these plans in the desk drawer. But we should be thinking what information here is needed by whom, when, and in what form. We need it not in this form. Most businessmen can't read these maps; they can look at the screen which will tell them about good roads or good railways or good housing near by. That would be important for the next Japanese company to locate in London. The Nissan factory in the north of England and the Toyota factory, they are very carefully located in relationship to the proposed infrastructure planning. So, if you could explain in Tokyo or in London how much infrastructure do we have, what quality is it, where is it going to be improved, when is the next effort going to be build, and you make this information on a network which everyone can see and read, then perhaps the planning coordination process can be done not so much by regulation or by government, but it will be done by self regulation, what I call a self-learning process. Cities are very complicated; they have very many thousands of decision-makers. If you tell all of the decision-makers, if you provide them with high quality information about all the other decision-makers, then I think many will make very good decisions; the factories will locate where there is good transport facilities for them, in relationship also to areas of amenity that they can use or cannot use.

So we can think of a planning system in the future in which the planners do not have the full responsibility for detailed regulation.

If you look at the trends, this is the ack. So this is a political debate which you need to have.

At the same time you need to have a coordination process, and I think there is a wonderful paradox. I began my talk by saying that many big cities are very worried that the information technology will make great problems for the city as economic activities disappear to other location. However, I think there is a good sign to information technology that with the information technology we can construct geographical information systems for infrastructure provision in big cities, which would allow a lot of people to do their own planning which would be very successful planning. And so I think that we can look forward to a new kind of planning

with much more self-regulation because we will have to have more planning in the future.

My last important point is, of course, to remind you that as your population has become much wealthier, and in Britain the same experience, and in America and Australia, what the population need after they have got good houses and facilities is they want more quality environment.

I read recently of a survey conducted in Tokyo in public housing, people in public housing, which asked the question, "What do you want most if you have more income ?" Not a car, not another fridge, television, not a satellite channel. Another room or more space around the house, quiet. The thing that was at the top of the list, the top priority was environmental goods. People want to be wealthier, but not in the sense of more incomes, but more quality. And this is true in Britain. And the only way to provide them more environmental quality is through public planning towards the environment has to be composed with public regulation. So we need an information system with very high quality information. We will have to learn how, I think, to do that because the alternative looks to me very, very unsatisfactory. The alternative is to ask the planner not only to do five or six, seven, eight, nine jobs, for them to do it by more and more regulation, more and more control. This will make the population more and more angry, more difficult, and so I think planning will become less and less popular, and less able to achieve its objective. But because the quality of life in cities is so important, we must find an effective way to develop planning in the next century, and I hope that my suggestions can be the kind of source for the work of your graduate students in the programs, because it does seem to me very important to bring together economics and sociology, all of the urban disciplines to look at how we can use its new information technology to make a planning system which is more than a credit and which is more based on an information system.

Thank you very much for listening to me.