Conference Report

The 3rd International Conference on Urban e-Planning - 2018

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The main goal of the IJEPR Annual Conferences is to provide a multi and an inter-disciplinary forum for the critical discussion of new perspectives, approaches, methods, and tools in the field of Urban e-Planning. In other words, the IJEPR Annual Conferences aim to explore and to discuss recent developments, emerging issues and future challenges in the field of urban e-planning across the world, to discuss the state-of-the-art of Urban e-Planning research, both theoretical and empirical, as well as to explore innovative research and new directions in the broad field of Urban e-Planning. Following the 2016 and 2017 successful IJEPR Annual Conferences on 'Urban e-Planning', the 3rd IJEPR Annual Conference was held at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning, in the University of Lisbon, Portugal, on April 3 - 4, 2018. This third conference confirmed once more the relevance and usefulness of an annual international scientific meeting focused on the problems, challenges and opportunities raised by the widespread use of ICT in urban planning, the core focus of the International Journal of E-Planning Research.

The program of the 3rd Conference was organized around four main themes, although with a concentration of papers in themes 1 and 2: Theme 1 - Smart Cities: Governance and Planning; Theme 2 - Citizens e-Participation & Collaborative Planning; Theme 3 - The real and virtual in Urban e-Planning; Theme 4 - Theory, Ethics and Methods in Urban e-Planning. The final program was structured in 13 sessions, of which 1 plenary meeting and 12 parallel panels, besides the welcome and closing sessions, a number of sessions similar to the first two conferences. Although the conference working language was English, as in the two previous editions, this time the conference included a panel in French, a bi-lingual model that will be repeated in the future in order to make the IJEPR Conferences more inclusive. In all sessions, plenary and parallel panels, the debate, led by the respective session chair, was initiated by two discussants, followed then by an enlarged discussion with other participants, which allowed a fruitful and livable exchange of perspectives among participants in the conference.

This 3rd Conference had a similar number of participants and papers compared to the two preceding conferences. As in the prior IJEPR Conferences, participants were required to present a paper in the conference. Participants came from 21 countries, in Europe, Africa, both North and sub-Saharan Africa, North and South America, and Asia. Participants in the conference work mainly in the field of urban and planning studies, and in the area of information sciences as well. This included researchers, students and planners from academia and other organizations. A selection of these papers, based on the IJEPR standard double-blind peer-review process, is expected to be published

in upcoming issues of the International Journal of E-Planning Research in 2019. As in the previous conferences, papers presented in the 2018 Conference, while endorsing some of the advantages of the new digital technologies also challenged established perspectives about the role of new information and communication technologies in urban planning, pointing once again for the need and advantage to articulate tech interfaces with face-to-face contacts in processes of community participation.

The conference was again an opportunity for networking, for researchers to meet and to discuss future research initiatives. The UEPRN – Urban e-Planning Research Network, closely associated with these conferences, will continue its role of active disseminator of information on Urban e-Planning. The Conference was endorsed by the Technology division of the American Planning Association (APA-Tech), by ISOCARP and by the IGU Commission Geography of Governance.

A word of appreciation is due to all those engaged in the organization of the third IJEPR Conference in 2018 at the University of Lisbon: authors of the papers presented; members of the conference scientific committee; session chairs and discussants; the hosting institution, the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning – University of Lisbon, and the staff directly engaged in the conference organization; and the group of students who acted as volunteers in the supporting activities during the two days of the conference.

Additional information on the third IJEPR Conference, its full program, abstracts, oral presentations, and a photo gallery, among other aspects, is available in the conference website (https://sites.google.com/site/uep2018conference/).

The IJEPR will continue engaged, in the context of the Urban e-Planning Research Network (UEP-NET), in the organization of an annual international conference on Urban e-Planning. In 2019, the 4th IJEPR Annual Conference on 'Urban e-Planning', to be held in the University of Lisbon, Portugal, will continue the exploration of new perspectives, approaches, methods, and tools in the field of Urban e-Planning (4th Conference website: https://sites.google.com/view/uep2019-conference/home).

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