

Book Notes

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Citizens and E-Government: Evaluating Policy and Management

Christopher G. Reddick (Ed.)

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552 pp.

\$180.00

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The book edited by Christopher G. Reddick addresses different aspects of the relationships between citizens and government, which is a critical dimension in the field of urban e-Planning studies. Under the general theme “citizens and e-government” the book deals with problems, challenges and practical solutions that are of interest for all those engaged in e-Planning projects. The book has 24 chapters and can be divided at least in six main themes, all of them directly related to e-Planning: user-centered or citizen-centered e-government; evaluation of e-government projects; effectiveness of e-government services; Web 2.0 applications in the public sector; transparency, privacy and security in e-government; human factors and factors that influence e-government use by citizens. The cases studied by these authors are based on a wide diversity of economic, social and political contexts, in North-America, Europe and Australia, but also in the so called

emergent economies of Asia, as is the case of India and China, and in South America.

One of the themes explored in the book is the role and importance of user-centered and citizen-centered e-government approaches, a topic explicitly addressed in three chapters. In the first two chapters the book explores and discusses how the user-centered and citizen-centered provision of information and services is a critical factor for the effectiveness of e-government. Chapter 13 (*Citizen Centric or Government Centric?: Perceptions of Risk in New Identity Management Systems*) explores citizens’ perceptions of information risks intrinsic in the move towards e-Government and suggest that citizen-centricity requires specific forms of government – citizens relationship. Lessons from the more general case of e-government examined in these chapters should be considered by those engaged in the design and implementation of e-Planning projects.

A second theme that is certainly of interest for planners and policy makers in the field of e-Planning is the evaluation of e-government projects. In Chapter 5, the authors propose an evaluation framework for e-government software projects’ progress and results, which can easily be applied to the field of e-Planning. Chapter 3 (*Evaluating the Impact of E-gov-*

ernment on Citizens: Cost-Benefit Analysis) shows that e-government has had, in Taiwan, a positive impact on citizens' satisfaction with the government, while at the same time facilitated a broader distribution of political information, an important condition for the success of e-democracy. This theme is also explored in chapter 18 (*Assessing e-Government Services: The Case of e-Filing of Personal Income Tax in Malaysia*) and in chapter 20 (*Assessing China's E-government and Its Impact on Government and Citizen Relationship*), an approach which may prove useful for more advanced stages of e-Planning maturity. Both chapters show how e-government is transforming the relations between citizens and government.

To put it briefly, the evidence provided on each of the themes explored by these essays is an important contribution for the literature on e-government practice in different geographical and institutional contexts. This and the critical insights offered by the authors make this a book to be commended to readers of the International Journal of E-Planning Research.

Green and Ecological Technologies for Urban Planning: Creating Smart Cities
Ozge Yalciner Ercoskun (Ed.)

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404 pp.

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The book edited by Ozge Ercoskun has 19 chapters and is focused on a wide spectrum of issues related to sustainable and resilient urban development and offers evidence from various regions of the world (e.g., Australia, Singapore, USA, and several countries in Europe), including comparisons between cities or countries. The first two chapters introduce the concepts and paradigms of sustainable and resilient urbanism in a way that make them a good introduction to these themes for planners and policy makers in the field of urban e-Planning. In the first chapter (*A Paradigm Shift towards Urban Resilience*) the editor sets the scene for the entire publication, examines processes responsible for the shift towards more sustainable and resilient

urban development, and explores the use of technologies and urban design strategies to create urban resilience. Chapter 2 (*Sustainable Urbanism Revisited: A Holistic Framework Based on Tradition and Contemporary Orientations*) discusses the philosophical foundations of sustainable urbanism and possible directions for the development of this new paradigm. The remaining chapters address several topics related to the creation of smart cities the central theme examined in the book.

The role of information and communication technologies is addressed in chapter 3 (*Sustainable and Equitable Urbanism: The Role of ICT in Ecological Culture Change and Poverty Alleviation*), the use of GIS technologies in smart cities projects in chapter 11 (*Urban Environmental Applications of GIScience: Challenges and New Trends*) and in chapter 12 (*An Approach for Land-Use Suitability Assessment Using Decision Support Systems, AHP and GIS*). Chapter 8 (*Technologies in Urban Design Practice: Integrating Environmental Design Considerations*) emphasize the importance of citizen engagement in processes of sustainable urban development and in particular in association with the use of computational tools for simulation of outdoor conditions.

Issues of energy efficiency and zero energy buildings are explored in chapter 6 (*Towards Zero Energy Buildings (ZEB): The Role of Environmental Technologies*) and in chapter 7 (*Energy Efficient Residential Block Design: The Case of Ankara*). The theme – smart cities – is explicitly addressed in chapter 4 (*An Advanced Triple-Helix Network Model for Smart Cities Performance*), chapter 5 (*The First Ecological Steps in Architectural Utopias: The "Nature" of Imaginary Smart Cities*), and in chapter 10 (*Creating Smart Cities with Intelligent Transportation Solutions: Experiences from Singapore*). Environmental issues and natural resources are examined in chapter 13 (*"Green Infrastructure" Concept as an Effective Medium to Manipulating Sustainable Urban Development*), chapter 14 (*Natural Resources Conservation in the Influence Areas of Cities: A Case Study on Bucharest, Romania*), and in

chapter 15 (*The Sustainable Waterfront*). The book includes other case studies, most of them focused on Turkey, some of which related to urban transport planning issues.

In conclusion, by offering a broad discussion about the role eco-technologies and citizen engagement can play in processes of sustainable urban development, this book is helpful for all those working in the urban e-planning field. It is not only the good practices and some unsuccessful experiences examined in these essays that make it a book to be commended but also the questions that it asks on the complex issues faced by urban planners and policy makers which will probably motivate new research in this fast moving field of sustainable and resilient urban development.

Geographic Information Analysis for Sustainable Development and Economic Planning: New Technologies

Giuseppe Borruso, Stefania Bertazzon, Andrea Favretto, Beniamino Murgante & Carmelo Maria Torre (Eds.)

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This edited volume comprises 23 chapters and covers a wide collection of themes and issues that are relevant for all those working in the broad field of urban e-Planning. The book

offers innovative approaches, methodologies and research tools for the analysis of geographic information that will certainly prove useful for urban planners, researchers, students and policy makers. Among the themes addressed in these essays, some are more directly related to urban e-planning than others. It is the case, for instance, of cartography, modeling and geovisualization (e.g., chapter 4), data mining, GIS applications, or research on climate issues, climate change and land degradation (e.g., chapter 6 and 7). The book includes also chapters on new data and new tools for urban planning research (e.g., chapter 8 on mobile phones and chapter 6 on indicators on land degradation), on cultural heritage (chapters 10, 15 and 17), and on the key issue of web 2.0 technologies to enhance citizen participation in urban planning (e.g., chapter 23 on wiki planning). A few chapters, although still relevant for urban planners and policy makers, are not focused on the core issues of urban e-planning (e.g., multivariate regression on cardiac disease; insurance in Italy). Students, researchers and practitioners in the field of urban e-planning and policy makers will certainly find, in this book, valuable information, examples of good practices, new methods and tools, new data, and new questions that require further research and experimentation. For all these reasons, the book can be considered a positive addition to the fast growing library on e-Planning.