

EDITORIAL PREFACE

Planning Cultures, Planning Ethics and Citizen Participation in Urban E-Planning

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The *International Journal of E-Planning Research* (IJEPR) explores, in this second issue of 2014, the relations between Planning and E-Planning, started in the previous issue, and the implications for theory, education and practice in urban e-planning. Three main themes are discussed – planning cultures, e-planning ethics and citizen e-participation in planning –, as part of the broad debate on the theory of urban e-Planning that we aim to develop in the *International Journal of E-Planning Research*. The first two articles deal with planning cultures and ethical issues in planning. In the first of these two articles, “*The Concept of Planning Culture: Analysing how planners construct practical judgements in a culturised context*”, Frank Othengrafen argues that since planners make judgements in their daily work, and since these judgements are affected by both individual and collectively shared cognitive frames, a conceptual framework, offering a consistent system of criteria, is needed for a correct understanding and comparison of (e-)planning practices. Based on this assertion, Frank Othengrafen develops

and proposes a conceptual framework, based on analytical categories taken from the fields of organizational sciences and cultural studies, which will certainly prove useful for the analysis and comparison of specific and situated urban e-planning practices. In the following article, “*Planning Ethics in the Age of Wicked Problems*”, Jeffrey Chan examines and discusses the ethical dimensions of wicked problems in planning, and specifically in e-Planning, a much neglected aspect within the discourse on wicked problems that has expanded in recent years in the planning field and in other disciplines as well, arguing that “*e-planning should engage with the discourse of planning ethics, and further, that e-planning can begin to develop its own ethical discourse in the face of wicked problems in planning today*”.

The next two articles deal explicitly with key themes within the planning theory literature related to citizen participation in planning. In the first of these two articles, “*E-Planning and Public Participation: Addressing or Aggravating the Challenges of Public Participation in*

Planning?”, Mhairi Aitken explores the extent to which e-planning methods address the challenges of traditional citizen participation approaches in urban planning, all well-documented in the planning literature and in the literature of related disciplines. Specifically, the article focuses two challenges confronting citizen participation in planning: first, “Whose voices are heard within participatory processes, and how can less articulate voices be supported?”; and secondly, “Who controls participatory processes and to what extent, and in what ways can power be devolved to public participants?” Mhairi Aitken argues that developments in e-planning address these challenges by opening up new channels for public participation and by removing barriers to citizen participation in the planning process, but at the same time suggests that e-planning in itself will not be a magic solution and will certainly require critical reflection to ensure that it does not aggravate the sort of problems that citizen participation in planning has been confronted with, as is well documented in the already vast library on citizen participation in urban and regional planning. This is followed by the article “*E-Participation in Urban Planning: Getting and Keeping Citizens Involved*”, in which Maud Donders, Thomas Hartmann, and Anita Kokx explore and discuss the citizens’ perspectives, often mistreated in the planning literature in favor of the planners’ perspective, adding new insights to the ongoing debate on the role of citizens in the planning process and in planning practice, which will certainly prove useful for all those working in the field of urban

e-planning. The authors specifically address two issues: first, the motives of participants and non-participants in the planning process, concluding that different types of motives need to be addressed in order to increase the number of citizens involved in the planning process; and second, how citizens’ perception of influence and equality in the planning process affect their satisfaction with it, concluding that e-participation easily scores high on the perception of equality, but that citizens’ perception of influence requires particular attention of planners, and other policy makers working in the broad field of urban e-planning as well.

The last of these five research articles explore a different theme. Alexander Townshend Lambert, Scott McQuire, and Nikos Papastergiadis in “*Free Public Wi-Fi and E-Planning: the Use of Online Planning to Build Better Networked Public Places*” examine and discuss how networked media services in public spaces can enhance public space and culture and, in that context, discuss how e-planning can be mobilized to help the development of virtuous networked public spaces.

We trust these articles will help advance the discussion of key issues in planning theory, planning ethics and planning practice, and will improve our understanding of citizen participation in the planning process and in virtuous networked public spaces as well.

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