EDITORIAL PREFACE

Participatory e-Planning, Complexity in Planning & Urban Planning in Africa

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This issue of the *International Journal of E-Planning Research* (IJEPR) addresses four important themes in the field of urban e-planning: citizen e-participation in urban planning; the conditions that need to be met for the acceptance of e-Planning by the community of professional planners, which is still largely constituted by practitioners of conventional urban planning; planning education in Africa; and the need to match the complexity of the environment to policy.

Maja Grabkowska, Łukasz Pancewicz and Iwona Sagan in the article "*The Impact of Web-based Media on Evolution of Participatory Urban Planning and E-democracy in Poland*" examine the relationship between the use of Web-based media and the emergence of social movements focused on the urban agenda in Poland. The findings confirm that these small urban grass-root groups take advantage of the web to achieve their political objectives, and show how these groups connect and interact within the overall urban policy process. The improved ability of these groups to participate in the policy process through Web-based media is a characteristic that policy-makers and planners should take into consideration in the design of e-planning projects.

In the following article "*Investigating E-Planning in Practice. Applying the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology model*", Wayne Williamson and Bruno Parolin examine the conditions that affect adoption of new Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by urban planners, a critical point for e-Planning implementation, since most of the professionals in this field have been trained and continue to practice within the traditional framework of conventional urban planning. The authors found that in order for information and communication technology applications, in particular those directly associated with e-planning practice, to be widely accepted by urban planners, the organizations in which they work need to address performance expectancy and facilitating conditions as priorities.

Consistent with its international charac-ter, the journal aims to include research on

the advances of urban e-planning and urban e-governance in developing countries. In this issue the journal starts collaboration with the Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS), which we aim to develop and expand in the coming issues. Nancy Odendaal examines and discusses the conditions and challenges confronting planning education in Africa and the prospects for its development, which all those engaged in urban planning in the continent as well as international aid institutions ought not to ignore.

Liz Vargas and colleagues explore in "*Transforming Critical Infrastructure: Matching the Complexity of the Environment to Policy*" the application of complexity science to policy for critical infrastructure systems, when systems, in particular urban systems, became so complex that it is undeniable the need to deal with the interdependencies. For the authors, a number of conditions require that any (urban) policy now need to match the co-evolving environment: increasing interdependency between utilities, uncontrolled demand leading to over use of diminishing resources, diverse technological opportunities with unclear investment choices, governance at different scales, public-private ownership differences and emerging business models. Liz Vargas and colleagues argue that "individual utilities are optimized with limited redundancy so that even minor failures can lead to major impacts throughout the whole infrastructure environment". A case study of critical infrastructure in Yorkshire in the UK provides an exemplar of complexity in the real world.

This issue includes also a review note on problems related to urban planning in Africa – "*E-governance Development in Africa: Overview of Barriers and Challenges for Urban e-Planning*". The review explores the barriers and challenges confronting e-Planning implementation in Africa, and examines the overall context of ICT in Africa and the e-government progress in the continent. Despite the overall negative vision of e-governance development in Africa and the barriers with which urban e-Planning implementation is confronted with, there are signs that it is feasible to have a sustained progress in this field in the future, a perspective that the planning education system in Africa will certainly take into consideration in the development of new planning curricula.

A book review of Karen Mossberger, Caroline J. Tolbert & William W. Franko´s book "*Digital Cities. The Internet and the Geography of Opportunity*" and a new section with short book notes complete this issue of the IJEPR. We hope these articles, reviews and notes will contribute to raise awareness for the new challenges associated with the widespread use of information and communication technologies in urban planning and hopefully will help advance the implementation of e-Planning projects worldwide, namely in cities in the developing countries.

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Carlos Nunes Silva, PhD, Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning, University of Lisbon, Portugal. His research interests are mainly focused on local government policies, history and theory of urban planning, urban and metropolitan governance, urban planning ethics, urban planning in Africa, research methods, e-government and e-planning. His recent publications include the books Handbook of Research on E-Planning: ICT for Urban Development and Monitoring *(2010),* Online Research Methods in Urban and Planning Studies: Design and Outcomes *(2012), and* Citizen e-Participation in Urban Governance: Crowdsourcing and Collaborative Creativity *(2013). He is member of the Steering Committee of the International Geographical Union Commission 'Geography of Governance' (2012-2016). He is the Editor-in-Chief of the* International Journal of E-Planning Research *(IJEPR).*