Strategies for Sustainability

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Strategies for Sustainability

Aims and Scope

The series, will focus on "implementation strategies and responses" to environmental problems – at the local, national, and global levels. Our objective is to encourage policy proposals and prescriptive thinking on topics such as: the management of sustainability (i.e. environment-development trade-offs), pollution prevention, clean technologies, multilateral treaty-making, harmonization of environmental standards, the role of scientific analysis in decision-making, the implementation of public-private partnerships for resource management, regulatory enforcement, and approaches to meeting inter-generational obligations regarding the management of common resources. We will favour trans-disciplinary perspectives and analyses grounded in careful, comparative studies of practice, demonstrations, or policy reforms. We will not be interested in further documental studies. Philosophically, we will adopt an open-minded pragmatism – "show us what works and why" – rather than a particular bias toward a theory of the liberal state (i.e. "command-and- control") or a theory of markets.

We invite Authors to submit manuscripts that:

Prescribe how to do better at incorporating concerns about sustainability into public policy and private action.

Document what has and has not worked in practice.

Describe what should be tried next to promote greater sustainability in natural resource management, energy production, housing design and development, industrial reorganization, infrastructure planning, land use, and business strategy.

Develop implementation strategies and examine the effectiveness of specific sustainability strategies. Focus on trans-disciplinary analyses grounded in careful, comparative studies of practice or policy reform.

Provide an approach "...to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," and do this in a way that balances the goal of economic development with due consideration for environmental protection, social progress, and individual rights.

The Series Editors welcome any comments and suggestions for future volumes

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Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development

Approaches for Achieving Sustainable Urban Form in Asian Cities



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Preface on Behalf of the Editors

Researchers across the world are concerned with sustainable urban forms, and this field is particularly significant for policy planners aiming for sustainable and smart growth. This book investigates the impact of policy on sustainable urban forms through spatial planning implementation, which has been examined by analyzing Asian planning experiences from a multidisciplinary viewpoint that involves different professional planning in various fields, such as land use, transportation, geography, and environment.

Sustainable urban form represents the objectives of spatial planning and relevant policies. For example, the compact city, one of the concepts of sustainable urban form with a high density of urban settlements, has revitalized central city areas, and mixed land use has been widely accepted in Europe, North America, and Asia. Urban form is a result of the interactions between stakeholders using spatial planning and relevant planning policies and considering economic, social, and ecological aspects. Private investors are always competing for low cost and high profit; thus, the land demand of such private sectors as industries, shopping malls, and housing development projects tends to be located at the urban fringes, thereby resulting in urban sprawl. In this book, the authors argue that sustainable urban form is possible under effective urban policies in the process of spatial planning implementation. "Public policy" in this book refers broadly to government actions in planning and implementation.

Overall, this book attempts to provide insight on achieving sustainable urban form by focusing on planning practices at the city level and certain metropolitan areas in different Asian countries. Currently, some cities in developing countries are experiencing rapid urban growth, whereas many cities in developed countries are experiencing urban decline because of depopulation and an aging society. We can attempt to learn from both sides in order to achieve sustainable urban forms that employ a multidisciplinary approach, considering natural resources, aging societies and population transformations, housing developments, transportation and land use, and landscapes.

Although local governments have made many efforts to implement the compact city concept in many of the developed cities of Japan and South Korea, urban sprawl has substantially influenced city form. In order to find a sustainable urban form in the developing period, many developing Asian cities nowadays are learning from the experiences of their European counterparts. However, most of the cities in developing Asian countries, such as those in China, still pay more attention to economic development and physical planning, following the history of urban sprawl in European, US, or Asian developed cities. Therefore, conflicts are emerging between economic extension and compact urban areas in Asian cities. In such situations, we believe that effective planning policies are necessary for reaching a sustainable urban form.

Public planning policies are important in achieving sustainable urban form and controlling urban sprawl in both developing and developed countries. For cities experiencing urban growth, it is important for local governments to set demand allocation patterns, such as for industry, housing, and transportation. Meanwhile, setting the balance between social and ecological quality in the economic development process is an important task of local governments. For those cities undergoing urban decline, it is important for city governments to make effective decisions on public planning policies in order to prevent decreasing population, to improve urban regeneration, and to increase centrality. It is also important to introduce a new public transportation system for improving access to downtown areas. Moreover, cooperation between public actors and the private sector is important for using new advanced environmental technology to improve ecological functions in dense urban areas.

We have organized this book into five parts. The first two parts concern urbanization and sustainable society, and the following three parts deal with landscaping and ecological systems for sustainable development.

In the first two parts, we focus on planning issues regarding urbanization and deurbanization. In Part I (Urbanization and Planning Approaches) and Part II (Housing and Transportation), policy measures in planning and design are taken as important tools to achieve sustainable urban form.

In Part I, we see that through decades of urban development, the local cities in developed Asian countries are now experiencing urban decline from large-scale development projects on the urban fringe—namely, urban sprawl. Spatial strategies for improving centrality and increasing population in urban areas are taken into account for preventing this trend. We have focused on planning issues in downtown areas with advanced depopulation and aging societies resulting from urban sprawl. We have also introduced some planning practices to decrease the negative influences of urban decline, such as urban regeneration by implementing appropriate design guidelines and developing urban facilities for aging societies. On the other hand, in developing countries where approaching urban development with economic growth leads to exploitation and use of natural resources in excess, public efforts for spatial planning are expected to encourage an environmentally friendly development in order to improve sustainable society.

In the next part, we focus on public policies regarding housing and transportation. Housing policies are challenged against a background of rapid urbanization. Many traditional dwellings have been abandoned in favor of flat roof houses; meanwhile, traditional culture is absent. This part tries to explore a sustainably oriented housing development, while keeping traditional society in the historical areas. On the other hand, we also suggest pursuing housing policies through enriching the methodology for predicting housing demand patterns.

Research has recently been carried out on strategies whereby public transportation system can provide a solution for traffic congestion in urban areas. In this part, we do not include these popular transportation topics. Rather, we present some unique and new ways to achieve a low-carbon transport society; for example, we are interested in representative technological innovation, such as personal mobility vehicles (PMV). We investigate the significant sociopsychological factors that can influence the acceptance of PMVs in society so that public policy may be formed on the application of PMVs. We also examine the advantages of bicycle transportation and conduct a city-wide evaluation of the walking accessibility and bus availability of urban facilities and public transit; walking and bicycle transportation are now considered as completely pollution-free methods.

Policy makers have now found that urban transportation energy as the main part of urban energy consumption has a strong relationship with urban form. We attempt to develop some tools for evaluating plan alternatives in terms of transportation energy consumption. A theoretical model is introduced by our colleagues in this stage, which is likely to be applied in the Beijing metropolitan area.

The remaining three parts consider environment and ecological issues: Part III (Green Design and Landscape), Part IV (Agricultural and Ecological Systems), and Part V (Urban Vulnerability).

Part III looks at local governments' support for the development of new green technologies, such as green curtains and green roof systems for improving the urban thermal environment and reducing CO2 emissions. Under such local environmental policies, some case studies show the benefits of green technologies for ecological functioning and urban landscape in dense urban areas of Japan. However, because environmental planning and urban planning are separated in most planning systems in Asian countries, even in developed countries, we attempt to argue that integration of environmental planning, including ecological vulnerability, with urban planning, is very important. Additionally, we describe a system framework for assessment and regulation of ecological security when implementing urban planning.

In Part IV, on agricultural and ecological systems, we show that rapid economic growth and urbanization have led to a series of resource and environmental problems. We discuss the existing agricultural status and environmental impact and propose new agricultural planning and policies whereby agriculture may not only exert its production functions but also fulfill landscape and ecological functions for making a more comfortable and sustainable living environment. In terms of spatial planning to deal with these issues, spatial indicators that reflect the patterns of land use and social patterns, such as land ownership, are very useful for achieving sustainable landscape management. We present some case studies in which geospatial techniques were used as new planning tools that played an important role in the spatial planning process.

Finally, the perspective switches from ecology back to urban systems. The part on urban vulnerability shows that, during urban or economic development with its consequent competition for land, vulnerability to urban systems floods, drought, and pollution has become a widespread concern. We recommend establishing a pragmatic overall index in order to increase the number of reference values for disaster assessments and disaster preventions based on spatial planning and relevant planning policies.

In the introduction to this book, we argue that public efforts are important in all case studies, from planning and design to policy-making. The key contribution of the book concerns the role of public actors in implementing spatial planning. The sustainable urban form is examined according to different scales—such as the human, urban structure, landscape and ecological structure, and global scales—which are related to planning and design issues at the national, regional, and urban levels.

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