
Neighborhood observatory – An instrument for place-making

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Abstract

Place-making concept underlies the production of livable and sustainable places within an urban context and seeks to promote better governance by giving importance to the place. To support planning and community practices for place-making and to reinforce the local capacity to assist the definition of priority issues for efficient management procedures, tools for the characterization and for dynamic analysis of the local territory are needed.

The use of spatial analysis indicators to support urban development policies are crucial for a means of building an expression of consensus around long-term objectives defined by a community, and for allowing the assessment of local governments or community actions at a neighborhood level.

Geographic information technologies are endowed with tools for spatial analysis and simulation of scenarios and allow an integrated view of the urban environment and the human systems that are located therein. Geographic data supported by these technologies allows the definition and use of indicator systems to evaluate contexts, realities, and trends, in other words to permanent monitoring by detecting deviations or variations on previous situations and by identifying the progress already achieved compared to the final results intended or expected.

A neighborhood observatory based on geographic data is an instrument that allows permanent mechanisms for monitoring and assessment. Therefore, it can provide urban stakeholders with a model of the neighborhood and that will reinforce the local capacity with the knowledge to formulate and implement urban policies that should guide the future of a neighborhood territory.

This presentation looks at the following issues: (i) a review of the concept of neighborhood as a target analysis to support urban policies at the municipal level; (ii) a neighborhood observatory model, based on geographic information technologies, to study and monitor the neighborhood dynamics and the processes that dictate them.

Keywords: Neighborhood observatory, Placemaking, Urban indicators, Geographic Information Technologies

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