



City Out of Chaos: Urban Self Organization and Sustainability (The Sustainable World)

R. M. Pulselli, E. Tiezzi

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This book introduces concepts from thermodynamics, non equilibrium systems theory and evolutionary physics in order to approach contemporary cities and to understand how human systems interact with the built environment. This theoretical framework asserts that cities can be conceived as ecosystems and dissipative structures with the emergence of collective properties and self-organization processes. Methods for understanding complexity of contemporary cities and life of human systems are thus investigated. A series of city-scape analysis will be presented. In particular, a method for monitoring intensity of mobile phones activity in urban areas was developed to visualize evolutionary patterns of urban dynamics and self-organization processes. Furthermore, an environmental accounting method, namely emergy evaluations, was applied to different processes, from the scale of a building to the dimension of the city, to figure out spatial patterns of urban relative to the intensity of resource exploitation. Values of specific emergy of processes were associated to land uses and developed through geographic information systems. Generating maps of non-homogeneous patterns, even unexpected, this book offers an opportunity to understand the mutating complexity of the contemporary city. Its focus on temporal, rather than spatial patterns suggests a possible new paradigm for urban analysis: dynamics represents the key to all of this.

The book will be useful to students and practitioners in numerous fields, including urban studies, natural and environmental science, and architecture. The book will also interest those interested in evolutionary theories; people interested in understanding the effects of new technologies in the life of contemporary cities; managers of telecommunications companies (especially mobile phone companies) and the construction industry, and policy makers and other stakeholders engaged in the challenge of moving towards more sustainable architecture and planning practices.

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