

# Smart City & Digital Sovereignty workshop 14-15 June 2021

## Monday 14 June

### Experiencing the smart city

#### **Heather Wiltse**

Cities are places where people live, work, play, explore, shop, travel and do many other things as part of everyday life. Some of these activities are in focus in smart city initiatives, yet the images we have of smart cities are often remarkably lacking in actual humans and in sensibilities for what life in a smart city feels like for its inhabitants and visitors (outside intended use cases). In this presentation, I suggest that we need to ask several important questions about how smart cities are and could be experienced. These in turn point toward the need to understand the nature of the digital materials and platformed socioeconomic ecosystems that shape its hybrid spaces in order to also design effective mechanisms for democratic configuration and governance. At stake are ways of being, acting, interacting, and knowing – both in terms of possibilities, and the ways in which those possibilities are distributed.

### Handling paradoxes of co-creation in public sector: how can emergent bottom-up initiatives be supported in a structured regime?

#### **Kristiane Fjaer Lindland**

Times of transformation demand new solutions to emerging needs. For public sector, changes in demography, tax income, societal and environmental challenges, calls for other ways of both identifying, developing and producing services for the future. Co-creation with citizens, service users, private actors and research, is seen as a model for how to do so. In addition to producing user-centered solutions, co-creation is expected to enhance citizen equity, democracy and reduce social inequalities. However, the way these processes are designed and implemented in public innovation, might also constrain the possibilities for “true” involvement, co-creation and co-production. The more we structure for co-creation, the more we potentially lock the possibilities for bottom-up initiatives. In this presentation I pose the question: is it possible to design for bottom-up initiatives in a structured public sector regime? The aim is to spell out the paradox and to raise a possible research agenda.

### The Perils of Visibility: The Obligations and Responsibilities of Smart Cities

#### **Irina Schklowski**

There are many visions of what a smart city could be - an efficient, supportive and comfortable place to live for some, but potentially hostile and difficult to navigate for others. As cities shift towards ever more granular data collection, living in the smart city makes increasing visibility - the making of the self visible and parsable to the digital eye in specific ways - a requirement. Taking a relational view, I consider what are the consequences of the way smart cities are built around demanding ever greater forms of visibility from their residents. Datafication of city life is a form creating new relations between the city, its subsidiaries and its residents. These relations can be supportive, empowering, oppressive or exploitative - just like any other

relations we have in our lives. As smart cities create new relations through data visibilities, what obligations and responsibilities do these entail?

### IoT and data consent: Privacy dilemmas arising from co-owned personal data in smart cities

#### **Cory Robinson**

Like many cities in Sweden and around the world, local municipalities are increasing access to government services. Municipalities, including Stockholm, are also implementing “Smart City” solutions enabling citizens to access timely public transportation, locate available parking spots, or access high-speed WiFi anywhere in their city. Smart Cities are enabling benefits and efficiencies for citizens that were previously not possible. Fundamentally, these services are enabled by the collection and usage of vast amounts of citizens’ personal data. However, with these services and the associated citizen data, there come concerns about how and what types of data are collected, the sensitivity of citizens’ data, and ultimately, how secure or accessible the data might be to fraudulent actors. In order to measure citizen concerns about the use of their personal data and increase citizen use of these efficient and money-saving municipal services, the presentation will explore conceptual topics of how citizens perceive the risks associated with their personal data necessary for use of these services.

### **Tuesday 15 June**

#### Digitalization and Human Dignity

#### **Olgerta Tona**

With the rapidly evolving permeation of digital technologies into everyday human life, we are witnessing an era of personal data digitalization. More than ever before, we know more about our own body, movements, and behaviour, and we can share that knowledge with others through digital platforms. Similarly, organizations and governments are able to know more about us and make visible certain aspects of our own existence. Personal data digitalization has the power to digitally transform our everyday life as digitized personal data have become integrated in our everyday activities and decisions. While personal data digitalization enables benefits such as improved security, self-expression, visibility, better health care, it also creates potential for discriminatory treatment and treating humans as objects. It can threaten human dignity.

### Transforming practices for inclusive innovation and societal transformation

#### **Ambra Trotto**

In the talk Transforming Practices for inclusive innovation and Societal Transformation, I describe the experience that we matured in creating a Design Driven Ecosystem in the North of Sweden able to trigger new practices for the development of the city and the region. The methodological framework Transforming Practices has been developed by RISE, Umeå Institute of Design and Eindhoven University of Technology. Its funding principles are

complexity, aesthetics, co-response-ability, codevelopment and situatedness. They are all illustrated by examples produced by the ecosystem, by different combinations of actors within.

### Prototyping publics for technical democracy? Challenges, frictions and openings in the co-creation of smart city infrastructures

**Claudia Mendes Bernhard**

Drawing on work from STS and related disciplines, I argue that smart cities take up a double role with regard to the problem of ‘digital sovereignty’: On the one hand, local governments as promoters/ safeguards of public values engage in an emancipatory endeavor to actively participate and shape digital platforms, infrastructures and services otherwise dominated by big tech corporations. On the other hand, municipalities become themselves increasingly involved in collecting, analyzing and governing urban data, developing digital, automated or predictive tools and services, and thus raising concerns about transparency, accountability and the possibilities for citizen participation. I will use ethnographic data from a smart city project, where I was involved in enabling instances of co-creation between citizens, public administration, industry and civil society experts around urban sensors and data platforms between 2016-18, to reflect on the approach we chose to navigate this double role and the openings, challenges and frictions we encountered.

### Urban digitalization as infrastructural institutionalization

**Julia Valeska Schröder**

Despite the valuable contributions to current urban developments, two shortcomings of „Smart City“ research can be identified: the tendency of auxiliary critiques and the lack of analyses of changing state-institutional arrangements. The Case of the “Smart City” project in Berlin illustrates the importance of a research perspective that focuses on the politics of infrastructural institutionalization. Based on findings of ethnographic fieldwork, it will be argued that “Smart City” Berlin is to be understood as frame for negotiation of political modalities and municipal organizing principles. Differentiating the notions of and practices around political infrastructures and material politics are considered relevant for “Smart City” initiatives more generally.

### Digital Sovereignty on the Urban Scale: Learning from city activism in discussing democratic decision making in the digital policy field

**Elizabeth Calderón Lüning**

In July 2020, Germany took over the presidency of the Council of the European Union, setting the goal for Europe to “establish digital sovereignty as a leitmotiv of European digital policy” (The German Presidency of the EU Council, 2020). The prominence of the concept of digital sovereignty begs the question what stands behind the term. Although not yet thoroughly academically researched, some first evaluations show the term to be predominantly normative and descriptive, striving for more independence and self-determination within the digital world (Couture and Toupin, 2019; Pohle, 2020; Pohle and Thiel, 2020 DRAFT).

One salient figure to advocate for the undertaking of strengthening digital sovereignty has been cities – its residents as well as their governments. Especially European cities and its citizens are increasingly seen as active decisionmakers in digital policy making (Calzada, 2019). Cities have long been the projection field, engine, and melting pot for societal transformation. With

a historically active civil society, Berlin residents have been very active in propagating tenant rights, public space and what we have come to understand under the banner of “Right-to-the-City” movements. But what can we learn from these activities when it comes to finding an urban voice in the digital age?

**The Street SmART City: Justice and Participation in Smart City Projects**  
**Anders Riel Müller & Jens Kaae Fisker**

Our cities ought to be for everyone, but too often they are planned, designed, built, managed, and regulated for the benefit of privileged segments of the population: an imagined average citizen that often operates as a synonym for male, middle class, and ethnic majority interests. Recently, Smart City Technologies (SCTs) developed for the presumed needs and preferences of a very limited segment of people have added another layer of exclusion. Urban planning processes and SCTs actively reinforce one another, creating a feedback loop where data collected by SCTs is fed into the planning process, generating new exclusionary urban spaces which further exacerbate the patterns picked up by SCTs in the first place. We wish to break this self-perpetuating look and our proposed project aims to bring the lived experiences and street-level knowledges of vulnerable populations into the formal planning process and to ensure that planning outcomes reflect these experiences and knowledges. The project will leverage the legitimating powers of SCTs and expertise of researchers, artists, and planners, strategically in the urban planning process to maximise the political potency of marginalised visions.