Editorial Preface

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of the International Journal of Urban Planning and Smart Cities (IJUPSC). This journal is intended to discuss recent innovations in the smart city context. IJUPSC addresses urban planning and digital transformation of cities as two synergic disciplines with the potential to drive sustainable urban innovations around the globe. The main idea behind this first number of the IJUPSC is to bridge research, experiences and meanings of smart cities, from a multiplicity of angles, contexts and disciplines, to inspire urban planning theory and practice to a more progressive international perspective and towards new bases for transformative capacities and actions.

Often, smart city ideas and movements cover high-tech ambitions to transform cities for a better future. These ambitions deserve further exploration across the theory and the practice of smart cities, to unpack lessons for a progressive planning idea to uncover how technologies can play with issues of value, fact and action (Forester, 2019). The planning idea underpinning smart city imagination as a flow of technological innovation seem to not deviate too much from a citizenship model (Cardullo & Kitchin, 2019) in which individual citizens are placed at the center of distributed smarter urban transformations. As drivers of smart sustainable practice, citizens are however guided to assume 'the correct' behavior as incapsulated through a multiplicity of technological services, digital platforms, apps, wearables that can be seen as pervasive and technology-mediated opportunities for citizens participation. However, this often mirrors a one-way direction to inform, narrow, limit and control the interplay among technology-and-participation according to a certain entrepreneurial pre-given planning design (Wilson, Tewdwr-Jones, & Comber, 2019; Baker, Coaffee, & Sherriff, 2007).

The question is therefore how technology-and-participation within the smart city ideas can co-produce a smart urban planning able to develop new capacities for knowledge, communities and commons beyond the market and for the public good. An effective shift towards a smart urban planning would require a focus on how planners can instead improvise to assist the community to best ecological design and planning and bridge gaps between local situations and practitioner knowledge (Forester, 1999, 2019) to shape forms of negotiations and interplay across the spheres of technology-and-participation.

The smart city develops a new technological urban imaginary (Vanolo, 2016) and big data production for evidence-based city planning and management, but as recently discussed in literature (Cowley, Joss, & Dayot, 2018; Saunders & Baeck 2015), a new phase of citizen focused or people-centered claims and language in urban policy documents is becoming part of the discourse. Smart cities imply smart citizenship and raise new sense of cityness opening up a new research agenda that links more closely participative urban planning processes to pervasive technologies. However, this also calls for a deeper understanding of the processes that underpin the implementation of smart city experiences (Kitchin, 2015). The tensions that develop when the participative talks and voices of the people are simplified by experts according to smart design languages still wait to be translated into smart planning practice if a progressive international smart urban planning have to take place.

This first number of IJUPSC explores some smart city experiences, pointing to diverse approaches adopted in an international perspective to understand actual technology-and-participation relations and tensions that emerge between people and technology in urban contexts. The perspective towards a new smart urban planning requires the construction of new meanings of the smart city that include the adoption of technological infrastructures for participatory democracy. Citizens are becoming in the idea of smart city the human resources of community capacities and co-production of urban ecological systems of knowledge that offer potential for planning through technology-and-participation for a public commons and deliberative democracy.

Across the selected articles, the reader will be inspired to imagine a new *smart urban planning* practice that expands and enrich the vocabulary of *smartness*. Unfolding at diverse scales of the smart spatial contexts – from smart museums, to smart neighborhoods and regions – the articles unravel experiences and meanings of becoming smart. Critical insights point to the distinctive spatialities of the smart public, the digital divide that often mirror the traditional accessibility to public realm and the difficult and often unquestioned relationships between people and technology in local contexts. Strategies of state-driven and market-driven community building through digitalization point touch often the limitations of a blind trust for technology as a metric of progress. The articles offer international perspectives of smart cities that often bring a plurality of disciplines and competences to meet at the border of diverse disciplinary divides. The role of the expert to make visions of the future limited by the design of technologies, their marketization, their performance assessment and the economic and technological progress is pushed to the limit when smart means knowledge of/for urban communities. At that point, the data derived from interconnected individuals need to be translated into social collective and truly participative results for urban planning and policy implementation. This issue often requires a re-orientation of technocratic models rooted in consolidated disciplines to find a common ground on the human scale of cities. This open attitude to cross-fertilization for a new urban-ontology and a vocabulary of the smart city is still not an obvious goal and difficult to achieve. The articles offer here an opportunity to continue cultivate a critical attention for the smart city and to dream for smart urban planning as a political and ethical societal transformative activity for the next city to come.

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