Chapter 21
Smart Cities and Internet Technology Research for Sustainable and Inclusive Development:
An Integrated Approach of Best Practices for Policy Makers and Educators

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ABSTRACT

The concept of smart cities has recently emerged to highlight the significance of innovation and information technologies in urban planning. In this chapter, after a discussion of different conceptions and important dimensions of smart cities, a wealth of information technologies that have been used in cities for a variety of services is presented. The authors advocate that smart urban solutions should be designed within a smart cities vision and strategic plan, defined by people's needs. They propose an integrated strategic policy making model for smart, sustainable and inclusive cities and they make recommendations for policies and education for smart cities. The special character of public and private spaces, the significance of everyday life, the pivotal role of open governance and meaningful citizen participation, as well as the balance between the desired surveillance for efficient resource management and freedom and creativity have been highlighted as challenges that should inform the design of smart urban solutions and future research on smart cities.

INTRODUCTION

"Where do you live? In the city of …." This is the answer of most of the people on Earth in our days. More than half of the Earth's human population lives in cities. So do Maria, John and Mike.

"How is your life?" John asked Maria who lives in Athens. "I wake up in the morning, I take my car and I rush to work; work is not in walking distance from home. Maybe I could consider walking some day, but I am always in a hurry. It would be good exercise and the truth is I am sitting most of the day. I finish work sometime in the late afternoon and I go by the super market or do other chores before going home. When I arrive, I change clothes, I check if I need to cook, I do some housework and I take my kids to their activities. They have different lessons – music, tennis, English lessons, and French. Every evening we have something. I am a taxi driver. They are also very busy – from very early on in their lives. I also call my mom, who is old now and has several health problems. She lives with a caretaker. Unfortunately, I cannot go every day. She lives at the other end of the city. We do not have the capacity to live together. We say a few words with my husband at the end of the day and he goes to sleep. I sleep later and sometimes well after midnight, as I often need to prepare for the next day's work. The bad thing is that we have considerable noise from the street and sometimes I don't sleep well. I am often tired. Weekends are less packed with "must do" activities. We see friends during the weekend and we may go to a movie, a music event, or simply take a walk somewhere in the city or the mountain close to us. They live mostly in other parts of the city. Our neighbors, we see in passing as we walk up and down the stairs of our apartment building. How about you? How is your life in … in Massachusetts, John?"

"Similar in many respects. I wake up, get prepared, take my car and drive to work. I am always prepared for a long commute and possibly even traffic at parts of the trip. I finish work and return home in the evening. I take supper with my girlfriend and then, we relax for 2-3 hours. If she is busy, I watch TV. I also talk with friends over Facebook. I also like posting photos on instagram. I like communicating with friends. But, we also end up doing it only in the weekends. I read a book and maybe write something; I like writing. But I have to say that oftentimes, I get a message from my boss for an urgent issue or a work that needs to be done. So, I spend some time thinking about that too. And then I sleep, at around midnight. I take care of the garden, the cars etc. in the weekend and I go to the supermarket, usually on the way back from work on Friday. I want more contact with friends." John replies.

Maria says: "And I want more time for relaxation, for myself!".

Mike, who sits nearby, has followed the conversation. He is sitting at the bench near their table. He jumps in. "Hm… I have ample time! I sleep wherever I find on the streets. Generally, I sleep around here but when it is cold I try to find a warmer place. It is not easy. I have adjusted to the noise. I can sleep anywhere. When I wake up, I think of how I will get food today, where I should go to get some water and if I could manage to take a shower. I sometimes go the homeless shelter, but not everyday because it is a hard and sad place. But I have to say, I have made some friends there. And I like going for that. Being on the street like me makes people scared. They may give me some money sometimes – I am thankful – but this is no connection, real connection. Some smile at me… I wish I had a job of sorts so that I could earn a living. But I admit that I would prefer a job that allows me to live and be free too."

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