

Chapter 18

A Smart City Initiative: The Case of Istanbul Senin App

Pinar Sungur

Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Smart city initiatives are current trends especially for local governments to synthesize urban policies regarding infrastructure, e-services, urban planning, smart networks and gather within the information and communication technologies (ICT). Strategies across world-wide foster for further developing practical response to urban needs as coping strategy. In such, especially mega cities reconstructing via digitalization or digitization, which is essential to consider its analytical distinction. 'Smart' cities, which is highly dominant within the discourse of contemporary urbanization, associated within the digital landscape, separating spatial relations of social life within the urban space. This study suggests that the concepts of digitization and digitalization, which are interrelated and often used interchangeably, can be an effective analytical tool in the political rhetoric in 'smart' city. Dialectical relationship between the inclusive, sustainable and smart dimensions of the city will be examined through political rhetoric using Istanbul Senin app case study.

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary cities-especially mega cities- are facing with urban growth, which is a relevant concern for organisations such as UN, reporting and evaluation studies, frequently emphasizes the importance of planning cities for coming years. While 55.3% of the world's population lived in cities in 2018, according to estimates by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), urban areas are expected to host 60% of the general population in 2030. Even this statis-

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tic speaks to significant policies which is bringing by and intended to be realized. There are few challenges capturing economy, environment, mobility and governance which convey by governments and relevant institutions taking into account for future planning. These challenges have prompted a series of solutions and responses to address economic, environmental, mobility, and governance issues.

Current discussions are often directed towards AI-centered solutions that highlight the opportunities of smart city conceptualization. Promising AI-centered practical solutions for global urban problems, that is smart city initiatives may be lacking in an analytical examination that underestimates the ‘smart’, sustainable and inclusive dimensions. The relation between these three dimensions is handled in a compact manner, in an approach that does not take into account the dialectical background. This approach creates an analytical gap that remains limited to the dichotomy of the challenges and solutions offered by the digitalization of urban space by information and communication technologies (ICT). This article addresses this analytical gap by problematizing the dichotomous perspective that interprets ‘smart’ city applications as a field that generates solutions to urban challenges using AI-based ICT. Instead, it aims to explore which digital processes are applied in the literature on political rhetoric of smartness and to trace the dominance of smart discourse through these features. Drawing on this perspective, the starting point is to discuss the processes by which urban space is digitalized by presenting the relevant literature. Therefore, one of the aims of this paper is to go beyond understanding the relationship between the smart, inclusive and sustainable dimensions of the smart city conceptualization and brining AI and ICT which position central role in the making of smart cities and to problematize the dominance of the ‘smart’ discourse. After questioning the dialectical relationship between the three dimensions, a case study of the Istanbul Senin smart city application developed by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality will be presented in order to understand the relationality of the smart term as a political discourse. Before introducing the case study, first, literature on the historical process of Istanbul becoming a smart city will be given, thus providing a background to consider the digitalization goals and policies of the smart discourse in the context of Istanbul. In order to understand the relationality of three dimensions and critically engage with political rhetoric of smartness, this study offers Istanbul Senin application to explore such a complicated relationship.

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