Book Review: Smart City Citizenship

Dr. **Igor Calzada** (iD)

Cardiff University, WISERD, Wales, UK

E-mail: calzadai@cardiff.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

Against the backdrop of the current hyperconnected and highly virialised post-COVID-19 societies, we, 'pandemic citizens', wherever we are located now, have already become tiny chips inside an algorithmic giant system that nobody understands. Furthermore, over the last decade, the increasing propagation of sensors and data collections machines and data collections machines in the so-called Smart Cities by both the public and the private sector has created democratic challenges around AI, surveillance capitalism, and protecting citizens' digital rights to privacy and ownership. Consequently, the demise of democracy is clearly already one of the biggest policy challenges of our time, and the undermining of citizens' digital rights is part of this issue, particularly when many 'pandemic citizens' will likely be unemployed during the COVID-19 crisis. This book suggests reverting the intertwined mainstream paradigm of the technocratic policy scheme popularised as Smart City. The Smart City paradigm has increasingly been influenced (and even shifted) by the debate regarding urban liberties, digital rights, and cybercontrol by leading us to the consideration that actually the Smart City incarnates a society of techno-political control, which in itself has flourished abundant critique from cybernetic urbanism. To provide a constructive standpoint and acknowledging that since 2018 GDPR may have well contributed to open up a pertinent debate, this book asks whether it is possible to alter existing data governance extractivist models to incentivize further democratic citizenship through data ownership and technological sovereignty. As such, the book highlights citizen's perspective and social accountability in both transitional and experimental frameworks by pointing out the importance of creating platform-based alternative urbanism such as data and platform co-operatives. To examine citizenship is always important but perhaps never more urgent than right now in the fragile post-COVID-19 hyperconnected societies. Amidst the AI-driven algorithmic disruption and surveillance capitalism, this book sheds light on the way citizens take control of the Smart City, and not vice-versa, by revolving around the new book entitled Smart City Citizenship recently published by Elsevier. By following the methodological and conceptual proposal of the book, this review article will introduce nine key ideas including how to (1) deconstruct, (2) unplug, (3) decipher, (4) democratise, (5) replicate, (6) devolve, (7) commonise, (8) protect, and (9) reset Smart City Citizenship.

www.ijcua.com

1. Introduction

Citizens in Europe have likely been pervasively surveilled during and probably as a result of the COVID-19 crisis (Aho & Duffield, 2020; Hintz, Dencik, & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2017; Kitchin, 2020;

*Corresponding Author:
Cardiff University, WISERD, Wales, UK
Email address: calzadai@cardiff.ac.uk