

Chapter 3

Urban Engagement and Participation in Smart, Learning, and Future Cities: Approaches to Collaboration, Openness, and Privacy

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to explore urban engagement and participation in the context of smart cities, learning cities, and future cities, focusing on the elements of collaboration, openness, and privacy. As such, a review of the research literature for urban engagement, urban participation, collaboration, and openness and privacy is provided in the context of smart cities. Issues, controversies, and problems are highlighted contributing to formulation of a conceptual framework for urban engagement and participation in smart cities. Using an exploratory case study approach combined with an explanatory correlational design, variables of interest are explored, such as collaborating and privacy, to learn more about the nature of their relationship in contributing to understandings of smart cities. Limitations of this chapter are identified, possibly opening opportunities, challenges, and directions for future research and practice. Insights and ideas emerging from this chapter are presented along with exercises encouraging further explorations.

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of engagement as a mediating factor for people and their experiences across domains has been identified by researchers (Cogut, Webster, Marans, and Callewaert, 2019; O'Brien and Cairns, 2016). Zandbergen and Uitermark (2020) explore situated engagement in urban life through use of “data and sensing technologies” setting the stage for a rethinking of urban engagement possibilities. Przybilovicz, Cunha, Geertman, Leleux, Michels, Tomor, Webster, and Meijer (2020) identify the underdeveloped

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role of “citizen participation in smart city initiatives” while identifying types of interaction such as collaboration, said to be important for achieving quality of life (Mills, Izadgoshasb, and Pudney, 2021), among other urban benefits. Bloom, Lauriault, and Landry (2018) associate openness with collaboration, among a series of other elements in smart cities while van Zoonen (2016) explores privacy concerns in smart cities in terms of “personal data used for service purposes” versus that used for “surveillance purposes” as well as “impersonal data” used for these two purposes. As such, this work is significant in that it explores engagement and participation in relation to collaboration, openness, and privacy in the context of urban life and the ambient in smart, learning, and future cities, giving rise to the motivation for this chapter as described in the following objectives.

Objectives: The main objectives of this chapter are a) to explore engagement and participation in urban life in the context of smart cities; b) formulate a conceptual framework for urban life, engagement, and participation in smart cities; and c) explore the nature of the relationship between *collaborating* and *technology-driven services* as ways of learning more about engagement and participation in smart cities. These objectives give rise to the main research question under exploration in this chapter – *Why do engagement and participation matter in urban life in the context of smart cities?*

2. BACKGROUND

Solove (2008) claims that privacy is “a concept in disarray” and undertakes to develop a theory of privacy including a taxonomy. Gil-Garcia, Zhang, and Puron-Cid (2016) identify 14 dimensions of smartness in government, one of which is openness, and another is citizen engagement. Cardullo and Kitchin (2019) identify the need to “rethink ‘smart citizens’ and ‘smart citizenship’ and to remake smart cities if they are to truly become ‘citizen centric’.” Fedorowicz et al. (2020) note that for urban engagement, “methods exist on a spectrum” drawing on the work of Arnstein (1969) from “activities that ‘inform’ the public about a specific topic or event” to “activities that ‘empower’ community members by putting them in leadership roles.” Przybilowicz et al. (2020) explore “the dynamics of citizen participation in smart city initiatives” arguing that “their roles and influence” when considered “as key actors” in smart environments “is underdeveloped.” Lister (2021) speaks of valuable engagement in the context of smart learning in the design of “urban digital citizen learning activities” that are especially amenable to creative participation. Doering, Schmidtnr, and Timinger (2021) address collaboration between universities and smart cities to bring about innovation in response to “societal and infrastructural needs.”

2.1 Definitions

Definitions are provided from the research literature for key terms used in this chapter.

- **Engagement (urban):** Engagement at the community level is describes by Fedorowicz, Arena, and Burrowes (2020) as “a process by which community members come together to reflect on and make decisions about the future of their community” and “can take place in person or online, and it can be an isolated, one-time event, or it can be an ongoing engagement.”
- **Openness (urban):** Openness at the urban level is described by Bloom et al. (2018) as an Open Smart City “where residents, civil society, academics, private sector, and public officials collaboratively mobilize data and technologies when warranted in an ethical, accountable and transpar-

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