Chapter 11
Human Flourishing as a Way Forward in Smart, Learning, and Future Cities:
Connection, Positivity, and Resilience

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the notion of human flourishing in the context of urban life and the ambient in navigating a way forward for smart, learning, and future cities. As such, a review of the research literature is provided for human flourishing and for components such as connection, positivity, and resilience. Issues, controversies, and problems emerging from the literature review are highlighted informing the formulation of a conceptual framework for human flourishing in support of urban life and the ambient in smart cities. Using an exploratory case study approach combined with an explanatory correlational design, variables pertaining to the exploration are identified, and the nature of their relationship is assessed. Through the lens of human flourishing, focusing on urban connection, positivity, and resilience, urban life and the ambient is explored in navigating a way forward for smart cities while informing directions for future research and practice.

1. INTRODUCTION

Briggs and Reiss (2021) identify dimensions of human flourishing as the material, relational, and transcendent with the pillars being truth, purpose, and meaning. Dahl, Wilson-Mendenhall, and Davidson (2020) address the notion of the plasticity of well-being in the context of human flourishing identifying the core dimensions of awareness, connection, insight, and purpose. Bickley, Macintyre, and Torgler (2021) refer to the notion of flourishing cities focusing on safety and the 'human factor' in relation to smart livable cities. Ekman and Simon-Thomas (2021) articulate the notion of human flourishing in terms of connection, positivity, and resilience (CPR) for the greater good, where, although conceptually akin to happiness, the term flourishing is used and described as "a broad quality of life." Stahl, Andreou, Brey,

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4096-4.ch011

Hatzakis, Kirichenko, Macnish, Laulhé Shaelou, Patel, Ryan, and Wright (2021) describe flourishing as "an ethical principle typically associated with virtue ethics" applied in relation to digital technologies, to explore "whether the influence of AI" as in, artificial intelligence, "on human flourishing is noticeable in the way AI is developed and deployed" where "what constitutes flourishing or how technology can contribute to it" is regarded as "AI for good." For Goldenberg (2022), being able to imagine flourishing futures requires a "radical curiosity" as in digging deeper, excavating, requiring "a wider definition of well-being." As such, this chapter is significant in that it seeks to explore the notion of human flourishing and flourishing more generally on the planet, in the context of urban life and the ambient in relation to smart cities, learning cities, and future cities giving rise to, and motivating, the explorations identified in the following objectives.

Objectives: The main objectives of this chapter are to: a) provide a review of the research literature for human flourishing and the associated dimensions of connection, positivity, and resilience in relation to urban life and the ambient in the context of smart cities; b) formulate a conceptual framework for human flourishing in support of urban life and the ambient in smart cities aided by connection, positivity, and resilience; and c) explore the relationship between variables in smart cities such as *creative opportunities* and *visualizations of data that inspire* as factors relevant to human flourishing that may provide insight into navigating the way forward in smart environments. The explorations in this chapter gives rise to the main research question, as follows: *Why are connection, positivity, and resilience important for urban life and the ambient in smart, learning, and future cities?*

2. BACKGROUND

Focusing on the theme of flourishing cities, the Challenges of Government conference (CGC, 2014) addressed the issue of how to make cities flourish, as in "more prosperous, sustainable, and inspiring" with four key factors emerging – people, sustainable planning, investment, and good governance." From the perspective of "designing future advanced smart cities" and concerned with "making society flourish", Sakamoto and Nakajima (2017) proposed the notion of "flourished crowdsourcing" in the form of "social infrastructure" in order "to increase the social awareness of citizens" enabling them to "see the necessity of their contribution. Anderson (2020) maintains that "to flourish in a 'smart city'" where "data technologies deployed in our cities grow smarter" what is critical is "that we continue to nurture the human capacity for learning, wonderment, experimentation, risk-taking, and creativity." Schooling, Enzer, and Broo (2020) argue the primary purpose of infrastructure should be to provide "a platform for human flourishing" in support of a vision that is "people focused" playing "a fundamental role in the social, economic and environmental outcomes that determine the quality of people's lives." According to Clements-Croome (2021), the notion of flourishing "refers to the experience of life going well" as in "a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively" consisting of "10 attributes of positive wellbeing" namely – *competence, emotional stability, engagement, meaning, optimism, positive emotion, positive relationships, resilience, self-esteem, and vitality,* as defined in a European Survey described by Huppert and So (2013). Levin (2021), in the context of preventive medicine, describes human flourishing as an "underdeveloped concept" that "may provide a conceptual template for collaboration" across disciplines. In the context of a "flourishing automation-enhanced world", Shneiderman (2022) envisions an integration of AI (artificial intelligence) with HCI (Human-computer interaction) approaches so as "to amplify, augment, and enhance human abilities" in order "to empower people, build their self-efficacy,