(Not So) Smart Cities?
The societal drivers and impact of smart environments

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- smart economy
- smart mobility
- smart environment
- smart people
- smart living
- smart governance
'As the term gains acceptance [...] it seems to lose specificity or indeed any meaningful content.' (Ye et al. 2005)
SHUR PROJECT

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The SHUR project is an initiative to improve urban infrastructure in an ambitious effort to integrate existing systems and create new ones. The project is supported by the Barcelona City Council and the European Union, and it has been implemented in various urban areas, including Barcelona, Spain.

The project focuses on an innovative integration of urban infrastructure and community aspects to enhance the quality of life for residents. It aims to create sustainable solutions by optimizing energy efficiency and reducing waste and energy consumption.

The high cost of operation and maintenance of street lighting is not only an economic problem but also an environmental concern. The aim is to develop a system that can efficiently manage and control lighting over a large area, ensuring the proper illumination of streets, sidewalks, and parks while reducing energy consumption.

The project has been successful in several urban areas, resulting in significant energy savings and improved lighting for residents, public spaces, and infrastructure. The SHUR project is a model for sustainable urban development, demonstrating the importance of integrated and efficient infrastructure to enhance the quality of life in urban areas.

For more information, visit www.hallux.org and www.shur.com.
Smart Cities are 'the urban center of the future, made safe, secure, environmentally green, and efficient because all structures -whether for power, water, transportation, etc. are designed, constructed and maintained making use of advanced, integrated materials, sensors, electronics, and networks which are interfaced with computerized systems comprised of databases, tracking, and decision-making algorithms' (Bowerman et al. 2000)

'[A city] that uses information and communications technologies to make the critical infrastructure components and services of a city -administration, education, healthcare, public safety, real estate, transportation and utilities- more aware, interactive and efficient' (Belissent 2010)
'The smart city is how citizens are *shaping* the city in using this technology, and how citizens are enabled to do so. The smart city is about how *people are empowered*, through using technology, for contributing to urban change and realizing their ambitions. [...] In this sense, the smart city is an urban laboratory, an urban innovation ecosystem, a living lab, an *agent of change*.' [italics and bold in original] (Schaffers *et al.* 2012)
1. Cyberbole
2. Smart as surveillance
3. Pull factors
In 'The Limits of a Technological Fix to Knowledge Management' Currie and Kerri tell the case of the CEO of a pharmaceutical company who decided to invest in knowledge management software. They quote one of the employees saying ‘He intuitively believes there is value in it. Reflecting this, unlike most other things, he hasn’t asked for its value to be proved’ (2004:18). Any investment in technology is thus seen as a good investment, regardless of its cost or impact, which are never evaluated as value is taken from granted.
'Surveillance concerns the mundane, ordinary, taken-for-granted world of taking money from a bank machine, making a phone call, applying for sickness benefits, driving a car, using a credit card, receiving junk mail, picking up books from the library or crossing a border on trips abroad. In each case mentioned, computers record our transactions, check against other known details, ensure that we and not other are billed or paid, store bits of our biographies, or assess our financial, legal or national standing' (Lyon 1994)

'They' know things about us, but we often don't know what they know, or with whom else they might share their knowledge. What does this mean for our sense of identity, our life-chances, our human rights, our privacy? What are the implications for political power, social control, freedom and democracy?' (íbid.)
'Imagine if everything in the world was connected up to the same network? Every computer, every loaf of bread, every car, every traffic signal, every human. Imagine the possibilities of combining and correlating that data'

[...], 'This all sounds awesome -but have you spotted the flaw in the plan? In such a smart city, the control systems would all be programmed, installed and managed by IBM and CISCO. These private companies would have huge, billion-dollar contracts to manage the biggest cities in the world. When Ops Centres around the world are eventually automated, IBM's software will effectively become your digital mayor -or tyrant'.

(Extreme Tech. 'The internet of things and smart cities: will an IBM computer be your next mayor?)
Security theatre
+
Technological fix
=
Perfect window of opportunity
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