

Review of: "Achieving Sustainability in Smart Cities Mission through Universities' Innovation in India"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Dear Mr Seema Singh,

First of all, congratulations on your resolution embracing the smart cities theme articulated with the sustainability message.

It's not that easy to uphold such linkage, since smart solutions in cities are frequently associated with technological determinism/technical reductionism, privacy issues, gentrification, drainage of resources to outside the city frontiers reinforcing the affluence of global corporations over the network of smaller, local entrepreneurs, and a huge list of side effects that rather alienate technological smartness from sustainable agendas in urban environments [1] [2].

These deviations are the result of inadequate social appropriations of smart technologies, neglecting the perspectives of many stakeholders affected by smart systems. Universities, in this context, play a crucial role in the reversal of such vicious cycles for the possibility of fostering transdisciplinary approaches throughout the entire smart platform deployment project and continuous operations.

This means that different knowledge areas can unite to create new disciplines, specialists can work together with lay citizens, and, amongst other ample, open participation efforts, representatives from all social classes and profiles can co-create solutions in a democratic, deliberative way, what furthers, in the long term, alleviation on inequality and poverty, besides favoring environmental protection.

That is, smart solutions can assist engendering new configurations of capitalism that transform cities (and the entire planet) into places of prosperity for all, solving the majority of wicked problems the smart technologies try to bypass.

Smart cities can, therefore, materialize not only technical progress and richness concentration, but social and environmental evolution towards true sustainability. [3]

I gather your manuscript conveys this essential mission assigned to the smart city paradigm, of aligning technology development to co-create another economy by means of democratic knowledge production and sharing, what should already be the vocation of all universities and the pursuit of science in general.

A focus on smart platforms as innovation levers to business growth is, however, more evident in the text than the social and environmental justice these smart arrangements should promote so that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are achieved. Hence the usual flaw of the trickle down premise lingers on the results: increase in richness, in capital and

production (what the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) indicates) for a city or country does not imply in better quality of life to all of the citizens when the resources are concentrated in the hands of wealthy minorities (what the GINI coefficient reveals). [4]

Indeed some of your correlations interpretations support this assertion, but supplementary clues on these arguments advocated by participatory and deliberative democracy could be added in the analysis of results and conclusions to enrich the work on its affinity to attaining SDGs.

By the way, this contribution on the quest for SDGs accomplishments that the article forwards carries some features of science-action that many works on smart cities also bear.

This contemporary approach, even more typical of the sustainability science, suggests alternative styles of performing research, including on communicating it. For instance, the ordinary test of null hypotheses in environments relying on equilibrium, predictability and total control of variables to isolate them and confirm causal relationships is no more valid in contexts like cities, which are complex, dynamic systems of systems, open and self-organized, adaptive and evolutive. [5]

What also seems to be deprecating in action-science is the excessive rigor in publishing that renders scientific contents only intelligible to scientific audiences, excluding non-experts from the edification of knowledge when everyone is relevant and influential in the sustainability agenda.

This is one of the reasons I won't add more comments on the structure of the manuscript, the importance of the abstract, the citations, the english language, etc. Besides, the previous reviewers did a good job fulfilling this task.

Moreover, there are other geopolitical factors adding to the difficulties of targeting a larger public by publishing than simply impeccable syntax and semantics in writing. [6]

Finally, I'd like to pay some compliments again on your work and the value it aggregates to forge paths of transition to a new, sustainable future with the aid of emergent technologies and enlightening the youth on how to appropriate such resources virtuously. I'm sure these efforts will bestow indian cities with precious outcomes on SDGs reachings which shall reverberate positively to the rest of the nation and globally.

Sustainability heroes: Fightiiiiiiiiing!

Some references:

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[5] Moran, E. F. (2010). *Environmental social science: human-environment interactions and sustainability*. John Wiley & Sons.

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