

Unobtrusive, Seductive and Profound? The Silent Transformation of Mobility in the Region of Stuttgart

M. Heckel

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Student of MSc Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design (IUSD)
University of Stuttgart & Ain Shams University Cairo

Concepts

The 'smart city'

Influential ideas

Traits of becoming 'smart'

'polygo' in Stuttgart: the modest 'smart city'

Description

Aspects: unobtrusive, seductive, profound?

Conclusion and Outlook

Concepts

Different readings of the concept 'smart city'.

- Advocates
 - Competitive and efficient cities
 - Sustainability and resilience
 - Big data for informing (and making) decisions

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- Advocates
 - Competitive and efficient cities
 - Sustainability and resilience
 - Big data for informing (and making) decisions
- Critics
 - Advertisement delusion: nothing new
 - Neutrality and ethics of algorithms
 - Corporatised governance
 - Inequalities and centralisation
 - Insecurities and vulnerabilities

How the term is understood in this presentation/paper.

Understanding

- Technologically: deployment of ICT
- Pragmatically: incremental development and improvement of existing structures

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Context

- Existing cities
- Developed countries

Influences of Neoliberalism and Entrepreneurialism.

Neoliberalism

- Market economy and minimal state
- Self-organising society
- Importance of urban areas

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Entrepreneurialism

- Creating competitive environments
- External forces affecting cities (inter-urban competition)
- Preference for isolated developments

Cybernetics

- Self-stabilisation of communicating nodes
- Stateless society of globally connected communities
- Solving politics on global scale
- By 1980s and 1990s technology available: ‘The Internet’

Traits of becoming 'smart'

Which qualities describe the process of becoming smart?

Three aspects of the process of existing cities becoming 'smart':

- Unobtrusiveness
- Seductiveness
- Profoundness (?)

Hidden in plain sight: Unobtrusiveness.

- Black boxes: restricted access and complexity
- Piecemeal assembly: seeing the bigger picture is hard
- Matter of course: presence is not noticed

Smart is the new sexy: Seductiveness.

- Growth, improved services, reduced costs
- Sustainability and resilience
- Citizen involvement
- Alluring for both
 - Local government and administration
 - Citizens and users

Big data, big scope: Profoundness?

- Affecting all sectors
- Power and control becomes:
 - More centralised
 - Automated
 - Expanded: 'impotentiality'
- Increase in quantity makes change in quality
- Intensifying polarisation
- Technological fix changes morals (e.g. SCP)
- Lack of public deliberation

‘polygo’ in Stuttgart: the modest ‘smart city’

'polygo': the concept

- 'Smart mobility' concept
- Partially funded by German government ("Schaufenster Elektromobilität")
- 'Smart city' concept next to promotion of e-mobility
- Strengthening competitiveness and image of Stuttgart

Incremental implementation and partners

Incremental implementation:

- 2012: “Mobilpass”
- 2014: User field test
- 2015: brand ‘polygo’
- 2016: gradual transition of public transport subscriptions

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Partners:

- Mobility related: public transport, car- and bike-sharing
- Further partners for additional functions
- Local technology companies and research institutions

The unobtrusive aspect: Smartening up behind the scenes.

- Add-on: additional possibility to access services (except VVS)
- Unobtrusive (and frictionless) by design
- Developed by private partners

The seductive aspect: the allure of 'smartness'.

- Sustainability: environmentally friendly mobility
- Competitiveness and growth: local economy
- Competition: improving image of city/region
- “One card for everything”

The profound aspect: “milestone” towards new culture of mobility?

Profound change in mobility?

- Cooperation existed before
- Partners slow in joining campaign
- Tighter integration may only benefit existing users in rare cases

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Any profound?

- Opting out difficult or impossible

Conclusion and Outlook

Staying dumb, the smart thing to do?

Conclusion

- Transition to 'smart city' is **unobtrusive and seductive**
- It is **potentially profound**, especially given the first two aspects
- Transformation **easily lacks public deliberation and participation**

Staying dumb, the smart thing to do?

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Outlook

- Projects like 'polygo' an imperative to keep 'smart city' public?
- Trade-off between secrecy and security?
- Profoundness real?
- Cybernetic dream becoming reality?