Right to the City 4.0? Digital Planning and Participation Arrangements for an Intelligent Transformation of Urban Infrastructures

Research Workshop May 16-17, 2024, Hospitalhof Stuttgart, Germany

Cities and their infrastructures play a crucial role in dealing with the climate and environmental crisis. They are contributors to the climate crisis, and at the same time places where it is already being felt drastically. Urban infrastructures must be protected from the impacts of climate change to prevent catastrophic disruptions and failures, but at the same time they offer a wealth of opportunities for effectively reducing CO_2 emissions and resource consumption. Our urban infrastructures must become more sustainable and crisis-proof; we need, according to a common catch-phrase, intelligent solutions for an intelligent transformation. But what exactly *are* intelligent solutions, what makes an intelligent transformation?

In urban planning, a number of digital tools have been introduced in recent years that promise to better integrate and improve urban planning and operation processes, and also to provide improved opportunities for citizens to participate in planning and decision-making in an informed and effective way. This includes tools, methods and concepts such as 3D models, augmented reality, city-specific apps, urban data platforms, software-based planning tools, digital twins and other that we will term digital planning and participation arrangements. The use of these arrangements is not necessarily contingent on the city's wholesale commitment to the smart city concept, but can also take place on a smaller scale or on a sector-specific basis, e.g., in building construction or neighbourhood planning, or the planning of green spaces, or individual infrastructure measures.

The purpose of this research workshop is to discuss the potentials and challenges, limitations and implications of digital planning and participation arrangements. We want to examine the hopes and expectations associated with these arrangements, but also their different designs, uses, and backgrounds and the experiences of different actors dealing with them, especially with regard to whether, when and how digital planning and participation arrangements contribute to a sustainability-oriented and socially just transformation of urban spaces. Of particular interest are the following questions:

What are digital planning and participation arrangements *doing* in urban and infrastructure planning? Do they basically digitize the given institutional processes? Do they mean business as usual by digital means? Do they shift existent power relations and constellations of forces, and if so, in what direction? Do they enable interventions for a sustainability-oriented production of urban spaces? How inclusive is the digitally supported city?

We welcome empirical and/or conceptual contributions from disciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary perspectives, especially, but not restricted to the following themes and questions:

- (How) Does the use of digital planning and participation arrangements shift existing power relations, constellations of forces and agency between the public sector, the private sector and civil society?
- Which potentials do digital planning and participation arrangements offer for dealing with wicked problems and how do actors make use of them?

- What aims and assumptions concerning urban life are underlying the design of digital planning and participation arrangements and how do they influence political decision-making?
- Who introduces digital planning and participation arrangements and why, motivated by whose needs and interests?
- (How) Do digital planning and participation arrangements affect the forms and practices of civic participation? How do citizens perceive, use and assess these arrangements?
- In which way do they address participants, which subject positions do they enable and which not (citizen, stakeholder, consumer, urban society, data source, affected person ...)?
- Which conflicts and processes of politicization, de- or repoliticization occur in conjunction with digital planning and participation arrangements? Is the right to the city won by digital means?
- (How) Do forms and processes of governance and distribution of responsibility, influence and agency change among different actors?
- (How) Do digital planning and participation arrangements impact existing urban infrastructures? Do they make them more sustainable, resource-efficient, inclusive and egalitarian?

Please send abstracts (300 words, in English or German) by **15 December 2023** to
kathrin.braun@zirius.uni-stuttgart.de.