

RESEARCH PROJECT ABSTRACT

EVALUATION OF THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEMS IN THE SMART CITY CONTEXT

Around 55% of the world population and 75% of the European population live in cities (World Bank 2019). By 2030, six out of every ten people are expected to live in a city, and by 2050 this number will increase to seven out of ten. As the world becomes more urban, cities need to become smarter (Manville et al. 2014). From the end of the 20th century, cities have been increasingly looking for solutions to traditional management challenges, environmental problems, as well as creating the necessary conditions to raise citizens' satisfaction and well-being, so the phenomenon of Smart Cities arises.

The variety of the smart city definitions (Yigitcanlar et al. 2019, Laitinen and Piazza 2020, Salkuti 2021) justifies that this term identifies cities through a wide range of attributes to favor efficient and sustainable incentives for economic development and entrepreneurial growth to provide high-quality life and inclusiveness for the citizens. One of the main characteristics of the smart city is its digitalization that is not only an inevitable part of smart city infrastructure - smart telecommunication networks, intelligent transportation systems and developed energy infrastructure, but also a fertile land for the talent discovery and entrepreneurship.

Rapid development of digital technologies creates digital ecosystems that penetrate into everyday life of the society. Digital ecosystem is a relatively new phenomenon and has multiple connotations and dimensions in the scientific literature, but it is univocally recognized as a context or a mode of technological execution of both innovation and business ecosystems in the urban environment (Cassia et al. 2020; Loos et al. 2020; Nugroho and Cahyono 2021). Digital ecosystems are giving the opportunities but at the same time posing new challenges related to interaction between citizens and the city in the changing circumstances.

Despite the concepts of smart city and digital ecosystems are both widely discussed in the literature there is still lack of evidence on the interaction between these two concepts. The goal of this project is to build a model of digital ecosystem and smart city environment interconnection.

The research is divided into three main stages, each of them is of different nature and claims different research methods. As the first step the scoping literature review is conducted to shed a light on the nature of digital ecosystems, their role in different domains of urban life, the main digital ecosystem variables will be stipulated. Once the variables of digital ecosystem are defined, its confrontation with the dimensions of smart city is conducted in order to create *the multi-dimensional framework of smart city-digital ecosystems interaction*. When the model is established, demonstration of its applicability in the context of a smart city throughout an empirical study will be conducted.

Keywords: smart cities, digital ecosystems, sustainable urban development, multi-dimensional framework, entrepreneurship.