



# India's 100 Smart Cities Mission:

What type of citizen(ry) is envisioned through *top-down* and/or *bottom-up* processes?

## Re-thinking *urban-planning, citizen participation and the Right to the City* in 21st century's Chandigarh

Since 2015, the Ministry of Urban Development calls for Indian cities to compete for funding, while achieving a place within the **100 Smart Cities Mission**.

According to the Mission Guidelines the understanding of what a "smart city" entails is very flexible since it adapts to each city context and priorities. Notwithstanding the **criteria and methods** for constituting, as well as judging such *smart* proposals seem to **increasingly move away from democratic procedures**.

Certainly, not every strategy for "driv(ing) economic growth and improv(ing) the quality of life of people" is welcomed, but especially information and communication technologies, as well as big data management are used as iconic examples for "**smart solutions**" (Ministry of Urban Development, 2015). What is more, according to the Indian state, CEOs should now be designated as heads of planning and, hence, they are expected to take charge of implementing the *Smart Challenge* (Bloomberg Philantropies 2015).



Elante Mall, opened in 2013, is the second largest mall in Northern India.  
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Kapil Setia - Chandigarh Administration: Chief Architect  
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Crucially, the rather moral, than legal **Right to** (participate, enjoy or change) **the City** (UNESCO 2011) will depend on the citizens' confirmation or contestation of such **managerial ethos**, which beyond seeking to strengthen **Public-Private Partnerships**, attempts to assume the articulation of "smart people's participation" (Ministry of Urban Development, 2015, p. 18).



Family inhabiting one of the territories targeted by the *Slum-Free City* policy. 2017 April 2017  
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'Pali' and Aman Deep (Punjab University), founding members of 'Ghar Adhikar Sagharsh Morcha' (Front for the Struggle for Habitation Rights)  
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**Past and current expressions of resistance** in Chandigarh (such as protests against slum demolitions in 2014, as well as the voices of critical citizens and activists) urge us to reconsider the effects of urban planning for the population. Hence, this **empirical research's** leading questions are:

- How do the **opinions, critics and hopes on the smart city-paradigm vary** according to the identification of the citizens with certain categories such as class, age or gender?
- Is the **urgency of this challenge justified** with the same arguments by a variety of bureaucrats and activists based in Chandigarh?
- How do bureaucrats, activists, students -short, **actual citizens-** imagine the constitution of a "**smart citizenry**"? Are such visions in harmony or rather in tension with the government's articulation of an ideal citizen, content and ways of participating?

### References:

- Bloomberg Philantropies (2015): India's Smart Cities Challenge. In: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOqYMzEVE\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOqYMzEVE_g)
- Ministry of Urban Development - Government of India (2015): Smart Cities: Mission Statement and Guidelines. In: <http://smartcities.gov.in/content/innerpage/guidelines.php>
- UNESCO (2011): Urban Policies and the Right to the City in India: Rights Responsibilities and Citizenship.