The real-time city? Big Data and Smart Urbanism

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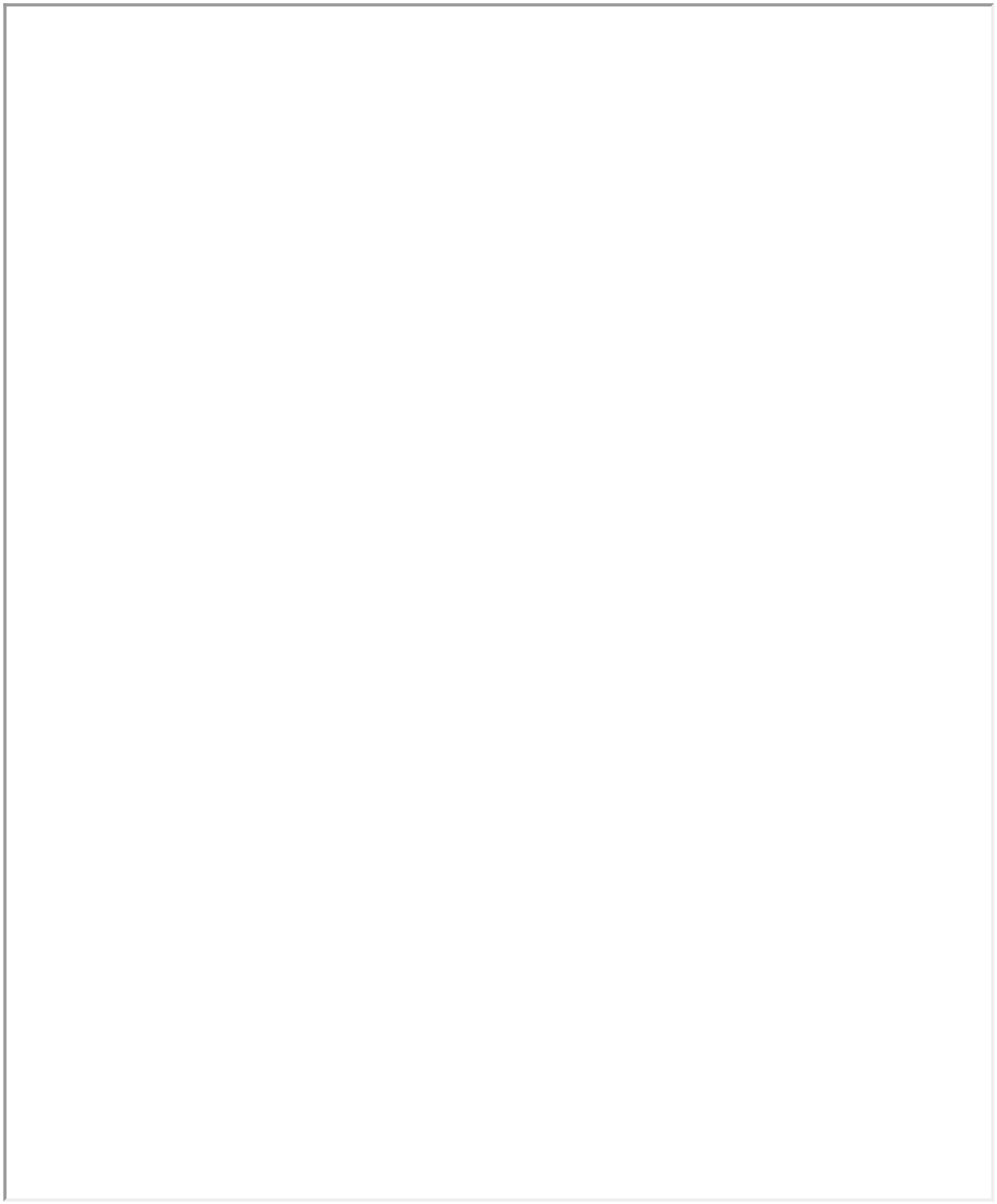
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Why did we conduct this research?

With the obvious growth in interest and attraction towards smart cities, local governments are increasingly aiming at collecting citizen's data as to be able to provide the services and facilitations that characterize smart cities. Nonetheless, despite strong arguments defended by smart city advocates, great concerns arise too. This paper provides both insights and a critical thought on five arising concerns: the politics of big urban data, technocratic governance and city development, corporatization of city governance and technological lock-ins, buggy, brittle and hack- able cities, and the panoptic city.

Key findings:

- Production of sophisticated data as to understand, monitor, regulate and plan a city.
- Great variety of data, which grows exponentially as the city expands (both in citizens and devices, networks, sensors, etc). Need to interconnect these data and establish relationships amongst it.
- New business opportunities for business (analyzing such data), and potential partnerships with key partners in the governance realm.
- Potential to empower citizens and their decision-making capacity
- Big data can promote a more efficient and effective city management. Nevertheless, there is still persisting the question regarding how to assess whether data is veridical and how it is interpreted and acted upon.
- Concerns regarding the potential for technocratic governance, corporatization and neoliberalization of city management, with ethical issues regarding surveillance, dataveillance and control.



Reference:

Kitchin, R. (2014). The real-time city? Big data and smart urbanism. *GeoJournal*, *79*(1), 1-14.