City-as-s-Platform: The Rise of Participatory Innovation Platforms in Finnish Cities

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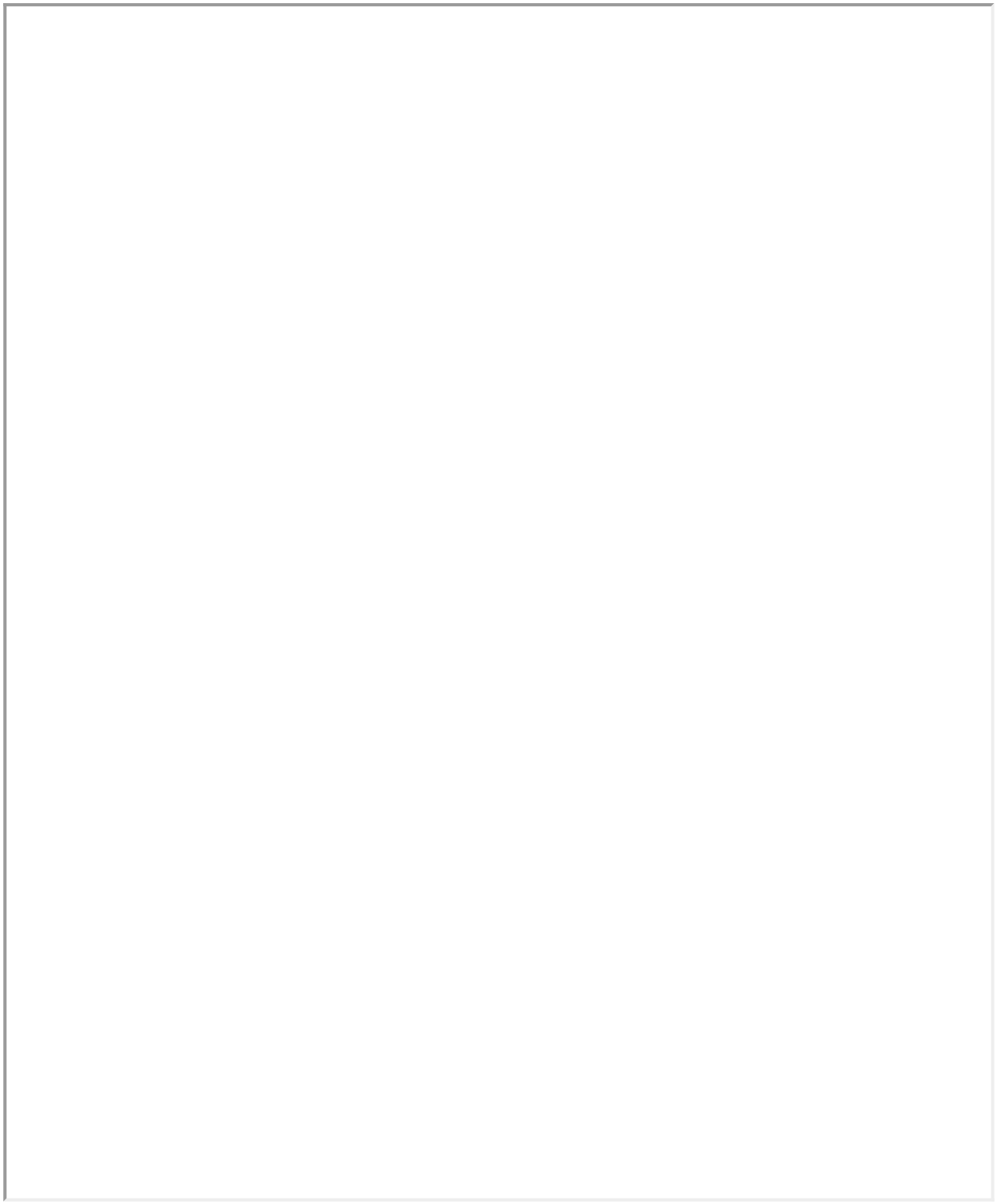
Why did we select this research?

This paper investigates the forms and implications of citizen involvement in publicly-supported participatory innovation platforms that facilitate urban economic development in the welfare society context. Platforms are used to support both urban revitalization and economic development, of which the former is based on representative and the latter on instrumental modes of participation. Platforms are well integrated with city governments, even though they vary greatly in terms of organizational forms and scopes. Democratic culture, welfarism, and redistributive policy provide contextual support for platformization by strengthening social inclusion, taming the growth machine, and easing the tensions between pro-growth and anti-growth coalitions.

Key findings

- Participatory innovation platform is an outcome from a range of intersecting trends, for which Nordig welfare societies seem to provide fruitful soil
- The role of citizen, user and stakeholder participation in smart environments and platforms in major Finnish cities contributes to urban economic development by enhancing broadly understood productive smartness.
- Citizens' roles vary from user involvement in product development to the use of citizens' right to take initiatives and bring their concerns to open platforms.

- When participatory innovation platforms become the norm in local development, they gradually reshape the entire city. In the welfare society context democratic culture and institutionalized solidarism provides support to such a transformation, not only in the form of broad civic participation but also at the level of material relations, for asymmetries of micro-level innovation processes and their outcomes are counterweighted by macro structures of solidarity. Such conditions are conducive to the emergence of a smart city that is co-created by its citizens or, as we may call it, the City-as-a-platform



Reference

Anttiroiko, A. (2016) City-as-a-Platform: The Rise of Participatory Innovation Platforms in Finnish Cities. Sustainability, Vol. 8: 1-31.