



Comparison between the Ideal City and the Smart City

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Abstract

The human vision of the ideal city differs from the concept of a smart city, although both seek to achieve a better living environment. While the ideal city focuses on philosophical, social, and aesthetic principles, the smart city relies on technology and innovation to improve quality of life. In this article, we will compare the two concepts in terms of their foundations, goals, and challenges.

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1. Introduction

The concept of the city has evolved significantly over the ages, from philosophical visions of the ideal city to modern models of smart cities. While the ideal city is based on ethical and social values that embody balance and justice, the smart city relies on technology and innovation to achieve efficiency and sustainability. This paper aims to compare these two models in terms of vision, goals, and components, while exploring the possibilities of integration between them within the framework of contemporary urban planning.

What is the concept of a city? What are the similarities and differences between an ideal city and a smart city?

The linguistic derivation of the word "city" is from the root "madana," which means "to reside and settle in a place."

- Plural: "cities" or "cities" (e.g., Mada'in Saleh)(Manzur, H711, p. 403)
- It is also associated with terms such as "civilization" (i.e., urbanization) and "civilization" (i.e., civilization).
- Some dictionaries differentiate between the city (urban) and the village (rural).
- As for English(City) and French (Cité) The word originates from the Latin (Civitas) which means "community of citizens".(Quram, pages 45-46)
- In ancient Greek polis) referred to a "city-state" (such as Athens and Sparta).

Therefore, the city, "linguistically," reflects the idea of "stability and civilization," while "terminologically," it is a multidimensional concept. The precise definition of the city depends on the context, but it remains the nucleus of human development throughout history.

Definitions of the city vary depending on the scientific disciplines.

A. In Sociology and Anthropology:

Louis Wirth (sociologist) knows it.

"A city is a large, multicultural population center characterized by impersonal social relations and a complex division of labor." Max Weber: "A city is an entity with administrative and

economic independence, in which government is exercised in a rational manner."(Weber, 1978, p. 1212)

Therefore, the city is socially a complex society.

- Economically: a production and exchange center.
- Urban: planned physical space.

Politically: an autonomous administrative unit

Before we compare the ideal city and the smart city, we will look at the concept of the city historically.

The city has been a major subject of philosophical thought since ancient times, with philosophers viewing it not just as a physical entity, but as a human project bearing political, social, and moral values. In this article, we will explore how philosophers have defined the city throughout the ages, from ancient Greek thought to contemporary philosophy.

1- The concept of the city in Greek philosophy

1-1 Plato (427-347B.C.E.): The city as an ideal project

- In his book "The Republic", Plato introduced the concept of the "perfect city".(Kallipolis), ruled by "justice" and based on "class division"
- Philosopher rulers (reason and wisdom)
- Guardians (Courage and Defense)
- Producers (labor and economy)(Hussein, 2004, pp. 150-170)
- Plato's goal of the ideal city is to achieve "virtue" and "harmony" between individuals and society.

1-2 Aristotle (384-322B.C.E.): "The city as a natural and political entity"

- Aristotle defined the city in his book "Politics" as "a community of free citizens."
- Emphasize that the city is "not just a population center," but rather: A "political entity" aiming at happiness (Eudaimonia) based on the family and villages, but representing the "natural completion" of human society(Mr., pp. 20-25).
- Plato criticized the rigid class division, considering it impractical.

2- The City in Islamic and Medieval Philosophy

2-1 Al-Farabi (872-950 M): "The Ideal City Between Philosophy and Religion"

In his book, "The Views of the People of the Virtuous City," he combined Greek thought with Islamic concepts.

- He believed that the ideal city should:
- Ruled by the just "Philosopher Imam".
- It is based on "cooperation" to achieve "worldly and otherworldly happiness."
- He considered that "ignorance and corruption" lead to the "ignorant" or "misguided city." (Nader, 1986, pp. 120-125)

2-2 Saint Augustine (354-430 M): City of God vs. City of Earth

- In his book "City of God"(De Civitate Dei), distinguish between:
- "City of Earth": Depends on worldly desires and interests.
- "City of God": A community of believers seeking eternal good(Al-Bustani, 2010, pp. 250-260)

He saw the conflict between the two cities as an eternal conflict between material and spiritual values.

3- The City in Modern and Contemporary Philosophy

3-1 Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679 AD): "The City as a Social Contract"

- In his book Leviathan, he considered the city (or state) to be the product of a "social contract" aimed at:
 - Preventing a "war of all against all"
 - Ensuring "security and order" under the rule of "absolute sovereignty" (Al-Sabai, 2011, pp. 120-125)
- 3-2 Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778 AD): "The City between Freedom and Corruption"**
 - In "The Social Contract," he argued that large cities lead to "moral corruption."
 - He proposed a city model based on "direct political participation" (as in the Little Republic of Geneva) (Zaiter, 1986, pp. 120-125)
- 3-3 Michel Foucault (1926-1984): "The City as a Space of Power and Surveillance"**
 - Analyze the city as a field in which "power" is exercised through:
 - Urban planning (e.g., prisons and hospitals).
 - **Surveillance (the concept of disciplinary society)** (Muqallid, 1990, p. 230)
- 3-4 Zygmunt Bauman (1925-2017): The Liquid City in Globalization**
 - Modern cities are described as "liquid", where:
 - Traditional social ties are disappearing.
 - Individualism and consumerism prevail. (Jabr, 2016, p. 130)
 - **Today, modern cities raise new questions about:**
 - Sustainability
 - Technology and Artificial Intelligence
 - Identity in the Age of Globalization
 - Comparison between the ideal city and the smart city

First : The ideal city :

A. Characteristics of the ideal city:

The concept of the ideal city has its roots in Greek philosophy. Plato (427–347 BC) puts forward in his book "The Republic" ("Republic)," depicting a city governed according to the principles of justice and wisdom, in which harmony is achieved between individuals and authority. Later, this concept developed in Islamic thought with Al-Farabi in his book "The Views of the People of the Virtuous City," emphasizing the role of ethics and science in building an integrated society. (Hussein, 2004, p. 120)

The most prominent characteristics of the ideal city:

- Social Justice: Achieving Balance Between Classes Without Exploitation (The Republic, Book IV)
- Abolishing the private property of rulers and guards "to ensure their integrity" (Book V)
- Selective Education to Choose Rulers Based on Intellectual Abilities (Book Seven)

Its connection to Platonic "ideals" (Theory of Forms)

- For Plato, the ideal world is the world of "ideals" (or ideas), which is complete and permanent, while the material world is an imperfect shadow of it..
- The ideal city is a reflection of this principle; it emulates the "ideal of the just city" as it should be, not as it actually is..(Hussein, 2004, p. 150)

Not fully achievable

- Plato himself points out the difficulty of achieving this city on earth, because it presupposes the "rule of philosophers" who possess knowledge of the Forms, a rare condition.

- "Ideal" in the sense that it is a "theoretical goal" to be sought, rather than a practical model that can be easily implemented.

Where he says:

"Human troubles do not end until philosophers become kings...or kings become philosophers."(Zaghib, 1999, pp. 90-95)

Its absolute moral standards

- The ideal city is based on "absolute virtues" (justice, wisdom, courage, moderation), not on earthly interests.
- Perfect here means "free from human shortcomings" such as greed or injustice.

Distinguishing between the "ideal city" and "The Real City"

- In the Politics and the Laws, Plato speaks of more realistic models of cities, but Gallipolis in the Republic remains the most complete because it rises above reality..

Challenges

- The difficulty of applying idealism in reality due to the complexities of society and the economy.
- Individual visions of perfection may conflict with the needs of a diverse society.(Nassar, 1978, p. 125)

Second: The concept of the smart city:

A. Smart City: Concept and Technologies.

A smart city is an urban model that relies on modern technology to improve services and raise efficiency.

A smart city is an urban model that uses information and communications technology (ICT) to improve quality of life, enhance efficiency in resource and service management, and support sustainable development. This model relies on real-time data analysis, the Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence to make information-based decisions.(M.townsend, 2013, p. 18)

B. Its most prominent features :

Techniques used :

- Internet of Things (IoT) Connecting facilities and infrastructure to a smart grid.
- Big Data and Artificial Intelligence: Data Analysis to Improve Traffic and Energy Management.
- E-governance: Providing government services through digital platforms.(Zakaria, 2022, p. 73)

Smart city components include :

- Advanced digital infrastructure.
- Smart services (transportation, energy, education, health ...)
- Smart management of resources and the environment
- Citizen participation through digital platforms.
- Governance based on transparency and open data (Kumar, 2019).

Objectives :

- Improving the efficiency of services such as transportation, health, and security.
- Reducing waste of resources (such as electricity and water)
- Strengthening communication between government and citizens.

C. Comparison between the ideal city and the smart city

Differences :

- The differences between an ideal city and a smart city lie in foundations, goals, planning, challenges, and sustainability.

Basis :

- The basis of the ideal city is: philosophical and social values, while the basis of the smart city is: modern technologies and digital data.

Objectives :

- The main goal of an ideal city is to achieve justice and beauty, while in a smart city the main goal is to achieve modern technologies and digital data.

Planning

- Ideal city planning focuses on urban design, while smart city planning relies on digital infrastructure.

Challenges

- The most important challenge of the ideal city is its idealism, which is difficult to implement on the ground, while the challenge facing the smart city is its high cost and security risks.

Sustainability

- The ideal city relies on natural resources, while the smart city relies on green technologies. (Caragliu, 2011)

Similarities : Human ambition

- Both represent an attempt to create an advanced civilizational model idealistic: philosophically, smart:

Technologically. Example :

- Plato's ideal city seeks to achieve "happiness" through science and morality.
- A smart city like Singapore aims for happiness by providing smart services.. (Ho, 2019, pp. 23-25)

Focus on justice

- Idealism: Social justice (the abolition of private property of rulers according to Plato)
- Smart: Digital Justice (fair distribution of services across electronic platforms) (

Future integration

- The ethical principles of the ideal city can be combined with smart city technologies to create a humane smart city model (Saudi Arabia's NEOM project combines sustainability with technology)

D. Critical analysis**Weaknesses of the ideal city**

- Not fully verifiable (as Plato acknowledged in The Republic, Book VII)
- The economic and social complexities of the modern era are neglected.

Smart City Weaknesses

- The risk of digital hacking (example: hacking attacks on Ukrainian power systems in 2015 (Ho, 2019))
- It may lead to social isolation due to excessive reliance on technology.
- Both are human ambitions that seek to elevate humanity. The city is a symbol of development and advancement of the human mind. In the past, present or future.

While the ideal city seeks to achieve an ideal model of justice and beauty, the smart city focuses on efficiency and technology. However, the two concepts can be combined to create cities that are both sustainable, beautiful, and smart. The future may witness the fusion of higher human values and modern technologies to achieve more humane and advanced cities.

conclusion

The smart city can be viewed as a practical means of realizing some of the goals of the ideal city, particularly those related to achieving human well-being and equitable distribution of services. However, the absence of a value-based dimension in smart planning may lead to social gaps or the marginalization of certain groups. Therefore, the integration of the ethical values of the ideal city with the technical tools of the smart city may produce a more balanced and humane urban model.

The ideal city and the smart city are not opposing concepts, but rather complementary. The ideal city provides a moral and human compass, while the smart city provides the means and tools to realize this vision on the ground. Hence, the future of successful urban planning may lie in blending philosophical dreams with smart technologies to serve humanity and society.

The ideal city and the smart city represent different visions for urban development, but both aim to improve human life. While the former reflects an ancient philosophical dream, the latter represents a contemporary, practical development. Combining the two may be the optimal solution for the cities of the future.

What unites all these visions is that the city is considered a mirror that reflects human nature, between “idealism” and “reality,” and between “freedom” and “power.”

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