

## **Conceptualising A Community-Centric Smart City: Towards The Improvement Of The 'Malaysia Smart City Framework'**

Smart cities have proliferated globally and are fast becoming the future policy solution for enabling more digital-based and productive societies. With no exception for Malaysia, both the federal and local governments have taken active roles in promoting smart-city urbanisation. Such attempts can be discerned in the Malaysia Smart City Framework which manifests the smart city agenda embedded in the 11th Malaysia Plan, the National Physical Plan 3, and the National Urbanisation Plan 2. While this would unlock the socio-economic potentials of smart-city urbanisation, more recent literature on smart city warns us about the disjuncture between government planning, market initiative and social expectation. Scholars have highlighted the technocentric tendency of smart-city discourse which belies its top-down nature and risks marginalising communities which would actually be affected by its implementation.

To this end, it is essential to conduct an interdisciplinary study for integrating more place-based insights and social values into the present fundamental theory of the smart city. The study is guided by three objectives: 1). To compare and examine the purposes, practices and challenges of smart-city urbanisation in four Malaysian cities (Putrajaya, Selangor, Penang and Iskandar Malaysia Johor). 2). To identify different types of communities (ranging from technocrat to end user) on their roles, needs and concerns over the variegated smart city initiatives. 3). To critically appraise the Malaysia Smart City Framework for improving policy aspirations, cohesiveness and effectiveness. Drawing from the expertise of a multidisciplinary team that combines urbanism, policy studies, and informatics, the study employs a mixed-methods approach under the aegis of comparative case study in order to gain a more holistic perspective.

This study contributes towards the improvement of the Malaysia Smart City Framework through a grounded knowledge of smart-city urbanisation specific to Malaysia, and assists the nation in aligning its development trajectory with UN Habitat's New Urban Agenda.

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