

Beyond Smart Cities

José A. Ondiviela

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Creating the Most Attractive Cities for
Talented Citizens

 Springer

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ISBN 978-3-030-83370-1 ISBN 978-3-030-83371-8 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83371-8>

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This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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Preface

Our cities live in unprecedented times. Cities are, in essence, a place and time where humans meet or encounter, where every social activity happens. Cities are, accordingly, the epicenter of human activity, the central engine of social interaction, economic growth, and innovation. In the current context of social stability (both in economy – no major crisis – and peace – no war threats), cities are the factories where creativity and human development is produced, and that turns them into international hubs of talent flow. Welcome to the era of cities.

Without a clear leader in the 4th Industrial Revolution, cities are fiercely competing to attract talent. Western cities need additional human capital. Eastern and emerging countries' cities are working on building up their own (from their young people) and retaining it to serve as the base pillar for their future prosperity. The current pandemic has accelerated this race for talent. The city that recovers the fastest will enjoy a significant competitive edge over others in this global competition.

We live, undoubtedly, in the best moment in human history. Technology enables us to modify our physical environment and enjoy a longer and more comfortable life. Investing in technology and innovation (SmartCities) is an essential and mandatory condition to draw that talent in, yet it is not sufficient by itself. Choosing a city to live in is a complex but human decision, like making a major purchase, getting married, or signing a main contract or commitment. So, the question is: what makes a city attractive to talent?

This book's main objective is to understand what could be done and what is needed to make a city attractive for those talented citizens. There are many partial studies about happiness, employment, safety, lost traffic hours, expat treatment, social services, economy, and cost of living, but none has attempted to give talented citizens a comprehensive vision of this new era of cities.

In this book, it is postulated that, as with every human decision, there is a compromise between two parties: the emotional component, which we will call *City Magnetism*, and the rational component, which we will call *City Profitability*. Citizens will first select those cities they like, based on the emotional input and perceived image they get from them, then evaluate the rational components (services, cost of living) to finally make the right decision.

We are studying the world's top 140 most attractive cities according to international research institutions in our custom model made up of more than hundred main indicators. The objective is twofold: to help talented citizens evaluate the main world cities to find which ones will best help them reach their full potential, and to help mayors and city directors create the conditions that make their city as attractive as possible. This implies to find a balanced point between improving the services quality and quantity delivered to locals, with investments on external image and future innovation.

In addition to the described talent attraction contest, mayors are now forced to accelerate decisions and mid-term plans, prioritize the recovery funds, and make the right decisions in short time. Technology (data-driven cities, fueled by data, run on artificial intelligence) is again the best ally to help them achieve the digital transformation they are seeking. Balancing a social and economic sustainability with an environmental one means an intensive knowledge of own citizens, businesses, spaces, and physical environments, so data analytics and artificial intelligence can guide well-informed decisions.

Enjoy reading and use the smartphone app to find the best cities matching your emotional and rational preferences.

Madrid, Spain

José A. Ondiviela

Acknowledgment

To my family, Conchi, Patricia, and Toño, who has allowed me to steal a massive amount of time from them to write this. I hope its impact compensates them for these 2 years of work.

To my company, Microsoft, which kept me up to date on the latest technology, and also taught me how much human values, ethical principles, and environmental sustainability can be matched with technology innovation.

To my beloved cities, magical places for human social development and solid foundations for mankind's future dreams.

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About the Author



José A. Ondiviela is the Microsoft Western Europe public sector government industry executive for cities and regions. He joined Microsoft in 1995 and has a wealth of experience in field sales, sales strategy, partners management, operations, and marketing.

Frequent speaker at international events, such as SmartCityExpo, Mobile World Forum, TEDTalk, and EU events, he is also UNESCO-NetExplo SmartCities SME.

MS in telecommunications engineering from UPM Madrid, MS in human sciences from UFV Madrid, MS in enterprise and institutional communication management from UAB Barcelona, and MS in financial business from INSEAD (online), Prof. Ondiviela also holds a PhD from UFV, Madrid, for the thesis “Beyond SmartCities: How to create an Attractive City for Talented Citizens.” He is also associate fellow researcher and director of WW Observatory for Attractive Cities at UFV (Universidad Francisco Vitoria, Madrid, Spain) in association with Fira Barcelona (SmartCityExpo).

Passionate about cities, Prof. Ondiviela combines his job at Microsoft, providing the most innovative technological solutions, with writing articles and delivering lecturers and seminars about future of cities and the challenges they are facing at the beginning of 4th Industrial Revolution and now, in addition, with the main objective of achieving the fastest post-pandemic recovery.

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