Call for Papers:
Digital Governance and Public Service Delivery:
Comparing City Experiences Across the Globe

for contributions to
Urban Governance

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Governance refers to the social, economic, and political institutions that govern the relationships between citizens, the government, businesses, and community organizations (Kaufmann, et al. 2004). The design and practices of governance define not only the formal rules, structure, and organizational process of social and political interactions, but also the normative expectations of government-citizen interactions and the informal rules on collective actions in society. It looks beyond the boundary of the government and the roles and functioning of governmental agencies.

From this perspective, digital governance refers to the governance principles, structure, and conditions related to the usage of digital tools in the public sector and society. As the daily life of citizens becomes more integrated with the use of digital technologies, such as the Internet, mobile phone apps, and cloud services, and as more transactions and communication among citizens and businesses are being done through different digital platforms, such as social media and web-based services, the transformed social life and business-customer relationships have inevitably impacted the expectation of government-citizen relationship and public service delivery (Picazo-Vela, Gutiérrez-Martínez, & Luna-Reyes 2012; Wirtz, Weyerer & Schichtel 2019). Indeed, many new technologies, such as rising capacity to store and process large amount of data rapidly and cost-effectively, and the use of sensors, cognitive computing systems, artificial intelligence, block chain, and 5G technologies have transformed public governance and provided new possibilities for citizens, policymakers, and public managers to rethink how public services should be planned, designed, delivered, monitored, and evaluated (Ho & McCall 2016; Androutsopoulou, et al. 2019; Kankanhalli, Charalabidis, & Mellouli 2019; Desouza, Dawson & Chenok 2020; Haris & Al-Maadeed 2020; Makasi, et al. 2021; Yigitcanlar, et al. 2021).

However, possibilities are not necessarily realities. City governments in different parts of the world have had varying degrees of success in e-government development, and

many institutional, social, organizational, and leadership factors influence the successful adoption and deployment of new technologies in the public sector (Luna-Reyes, Gil-Garcia & Romero 2012; Li & Feeney 2014; Dwivedi, et al. 2017; Tang & Ho 2019; Tang, et al. 2019). In addition, the use of digital tools and platforms has given rise to new managerial, policy, and ethical challenges (Grossi, Meijer & Sargiacomo 2020; Makasi, et al. 2021). From how digitalization should be regulated and managed, what values and ethical principles should be used to guide these decisions, to how government-citizen-business relationships may be impacted by these technologies, digitalization has opened up a new frontier of public governance and created many new questions for policymakers and the public to wrestle with.

The purpose of this special issue on "Digital Governance and Public Service Delivery" by *Urban Governance* is to foster an inter-disciplinary dialogue about the process, impacts, and challenges of digitalization in the public sector. Questions that may be explored in this special issue may include but are not limited to the following:

- What are the implications of rising digitalization for the future of public service delivery, particularly customer service and the use of "one-stop service" by public agencies? What are the best practices and lessons learned from the experiences of different cities and countries?

- What are the challenges and risks of rising digitalization in public service delivery? What are the implications for digital divide and concerns about social equity?

- What should be the end-goals and governing philosophies of rising digitalization? Should public agencies consider values beyond efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and customer service? Do these decisions differ by social, economic, and cultural contexts?

- Given the trend of rising digitalization, who should have access to the data generated by various public service platforms? What should be done if the services are provided by private contractors and/or nonprofit organizations? What accountability mechanisms should be in place?

- What should be the proper roles of the public sector in leading and regulating the development of digitalization? How does the literature of collaborative governance inform (or fail to inform) these practices?

- What are the implications of rising digitalization for organizational design and managerial strategies in the public sector? Do the implications differ by organizational types, service nature, and social contexts?

- How may reform advocates encourage public agencies to embrace digital innovation and overcome barriers and resistance to change? How do these strategies differ by cultures and organizational contexts?

Urban Governance is a new journal on urban policies, management, and governance published by Elsevier that strives to provide open access to all articles. https://www.journals.elsevier.com/urban-governance/ Contributions by academic researchers, practitioners, and policymakers using either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods are welcome. Studies that focus on inter-cultural comparison, regulatory governance, and the nested impacts of institutional, organizational, and leadership factors on innovation adoption, are especially encouraged.

Paper abstracts should be submitted by **May 31, 2021** via email (cszl@sjtu.edu.cn). After reviewing the abstract submissions, the guest editors will organize an online workshop jointly sponsored by the Department of Public Policy at City University of Hong Kong, KU Leuven Public Governance Institute, the China Institute of Urban Governance at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, as well as the Asian Association for Public Administration in mid-June, 2021. Selected authors will be invited to present their early paper drafts and provide critique for others' papers for further improvement.

Fully-written papers for the special issue should be submitted by **August 1, 2021** via the journal's online submission system (https://www.editorialmanager.com/ugj). Authors should indicate that the paper is being submitted for consideration for publication in this special issue. All submissions will be subject to the journal's standard peer-review process. Criteria for acceptance include originality, contribution, and scientific merit. Acceptance for publication is based on referees' recommendations.

After reviews and revisions, the expected publication date of the whole special issue is **November, 2022.** Early online access to the accepted manuscripts will be made available, though we expect that **some of the early publications will be organized as mini-symposia before November, 2021.**

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