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# ADVANCED URBANISM VISIONS & CHALLENGES

ROUND TABLE  
Montpellier, January, 15th 2016

**ka-  
au-** Knowledge  
Alliance  
for Advanced  
Urbanism

**Iaac** Institute for  
advanced  
architecture  
of Catalonia

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On January 15th 2016, as part of the Symposium MÉTROPOLES DU SUD, organised by ENSAM, some members of the Knowledge Alliance for Advanced Urbanism (KAAU) participated in a Round Table titled: Advanced Urbanism: Visions & Challenges.

KAAU participants:

- IAAC: Chiara Farinea & Mathilde Marengo
- UNIGE: Manuel Gausa & Nicola Canessa
- ENSAM: Jacques Brion, Elodie Nourrigat, Guillaume Girod, Johan Laure & Marion Moustey
- InAtlas: Luis Falcón
- Mcrit: Andreu Ulied & Marite Guevara
- Technilum: Vassili Beillas
- Useful Simple Project: Judith Sykes & Oliver Broadbent-

After the introduction of "Urban dérive " ENSAM students began the discussion by asking questions related to KAAU project. Sometimes the questions led to new questions. Below we have compiled some of the questions raised and some answers given. Our intention is that this text will serve to further discuss KAAU vision, goals and challenges.

**How could we preserve spontaneity in discovering the city, if cities are constantly observed and completely mapped?**

- Turn off tech devices and enjoy serendipity. Turn on tech devices to be guided. Tech allows you to safely lose yourself.

**Do big tech companies own the city, as Saskia Sassen argued?**

- A city is not owned by anyone. There're many innovations coming from multiple start ups, not only from big companies said Luis Falcón from inAtlas.

**Can technology help the city to reinvent itself?**

- Cities are complex systems; tech can help but is not the cure.
- Investment in prototypes as "policy laboratories" or "Change Labs" can create the conditions for successful integration of different perspectives and knowledge sets, facilitating breakthroughs in complex problem domains through the use of sophisticated process

design, and “beta testing” alternative, more sustainable policy and management options.

### **Is a smart city equal to a rich city?**

- Smart cities don't only benefit the rich but also the poor- open data, open education, free flow of information allow for knowledge creation and new jobs.
- Smart is synonymous to efficiency and production.
- It is not about smart cities is about smart citizens.

### **Is an Advanced City about optimised data or subjective (humanised) data?**

- Cities are not smart; it depends on how tech is used by citizens. Tech use should be questioned economically, ecologically and socially. Advanced city is more sensible to cities complexities and irregularities. Sometimes cities are not smart.
- Technological innovation is not sufficient to bring a paradigm change and might, in some cases, even drive development in the opposite direction.

### **Do advanced cities need a vision and projection?**

- Advanced cities need a strategy to be the inspiration of the future but urban planning needs to be a fluid exercise, a “winding guide” implementation. The strategies need to have an adaptive DNA, if not they will not survive in dynamic market or disruptive environments.
- Whatever form a transition it might take, being an advanced city implies finding the institutional arrangements to stimulate the kinds of innovation that solve rather than augment our environmental and social challenges.

### **How can we describe an Advanced city, what kind of adjectives are related to this condition?**

- Connection and fostering of public (people's) spaces
- Informational
- Multiscalar
- Computational
- Easy spread knowledge
- Spatial Justice
- Adaptive