ABSTRACT

The logic of public governance has evolved from the classic hierarchical model towards various forms of market and network governance. Such an evolution implies that the modes of governance reflect fundamental changes in society. Interestingly, since the 1990s the pace of change has been particularly fast in the new economy in the form of algorithmic revolution, ecosystem thinking and platformization, which are gradually leaving their mark on urban governance as well. These observations have provided a good reason to assume that platforms represent novel factors that may become prevalent in urban affairs. Thus, in this presentation we will build a schematic picture of urban policy, governance and innovation platforms as a new mode of local public governance, relying primarily on literature review. We focus on basic functions of platforms – such as coordination, integration, facilitation and intermediation – as well as the ways of guaranteeing the public value creation, stakeholder synergy and citizen empowerment in the processes facilitated by urban platforms. As examples of the early forms of urban platforms, we will discuss a few Finnish local platforms, the primary case being Koklamo set up by the city of Tampere as a part of collaborative Six City Strategy in Finland. The theoretically constructed model or ideal type of a City-as-a-Platform is assessed against the observations on our empirical case, allowing us to make initial judgements of the potential relevance of platforms as an emerging form of local public governance.