

# Smart Cities through Online Dating and Sustainability – Responsible Leadership in Smart Cities

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## 1 ABSTRACT

This research is the link between Online Dating Platforms, Sustainability and Smart Cities. It adds the fourth pillar of sustainability to the traditional three pillars: social, economic, ecological and fourth: online life. The research question is: How can Online Dating Platforms contribute to Smart Cities? New technologies in Online Dating Platforms, especially Artificial Intelligence, are changing the way Online Dating Platforms are used by daters. They are also managed differently by specialized organizations, and therefore are elaborated for the future. From the standpoint of sustainability, innovation management and entrepreneurship development the Online Dating Business is bringing a positive venue to Smart Cities through Sustainability and Happiness. Hence, this study investigates how ‘sustainability’, ‘responsible leadership’ and ‘online dating platforms’ are linked, and more specifically, how to avoid the uncertainty involved in new encounters in online dating platforms and/ or in business. Additionally, the study makes the connection between online dating platforms’ love and online dating platforms’ distrust and lies. To reach this goal, the author uses data collected in interviews with xx respondents from January 2024 until April 2024, and from previous studies from 350 respondents about online dating platforms from 2020 until 2023, and with 197 respondents about responsible leadership from 2015 until 2019. The research identifies elements of creativity and imagination in online lying that could be applied to further enrich communication on the Internet and in Smart Cities in general. It is about Responsible Leadership in Smart Cities. The fourth pillar of sustainability - online life - is added to the three traditional pillars: social, economy, and environment. This is innovative regarding Social Innovation, enhancing social integration, human relations, happiness in general and a creative way to improve Smart Cities.

Keywords: responsible leadership, digitalisation, online dating, smart cities, uncertainty avoidance

## 2 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore how ‘online dating platforms’ are related to ‘smart cities’ (Kaufmann et al., 2020), ‘sustainability’ (Vrontis et al, 2020), and ‘responsible leadership’ (Maccoby, 2011; Schinzel, 2018; 2019; 2020) seen from an innovation standpoint (Leonidiou et al, 2020), and, more specifically, how to mitigate the uncertainty (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010) involved in online dating platforms and business encounters. The research question is: How can Online Dating Platforms contribute to Smart Cities? Research about ‘Smart Cities’ has been in the focus for the last years (Albino et al., 2015; Angelidou, 2015; Chamoso et al, 2018; Lwakatere et al, 2015; Senapathi et al, 2018), the link to ‘online dating platforms’ is innovative and the author’s contribution to knowledge.

A by-product of this question is the proposition that the imagination and creativity used in personal misrepresentation on online platforms have the potential to be used in the process of the recruitment of new employees in organizations.

Online Dating Platforms have seen significant increase in use in the last years. With the coronavirus pandemic confining people to their homes, they went online to socialize in general, and on Online Dating Platforms in particular. Once the pandemic was over, they remained online. Research and experience have shown that people are not always completely honest, nor in presence, nor online, by not always telling the truth about themselves. While some might see misrepresentations as ‘lies,’ others may see them as ‘imagination’ or ‘creativity,’ and yet others as the mis-representer’s ‘second life.’ Hence, creative misrepresentations produce new useful ideas for the future, at universities among others (Papaleantou et al, 2014).

How much responsibility lies with the management of the online dating platforms to ensure the security of their users through ‘responsible leadership’ and overcoming ‘uncertainty avoidance’? Deception comes from lies, told by the online partners (Markowitz and Hancock, 2018). Are these partners lying or are they using their ‘creativity’ and ‘imagination’? Do they use misrepresentation of personal attributes such as age, gender, photos, salary, availability and other characteristics to allow themselves to experience a ‘second life’ of another person, online, and sometimes in reality?

The research question is: How can Online Dating Platforms contribute to Smart Cities? What is the link between Smart Cities, sustainability, responsible leadership, and online dating platforms? A secondary associated question is: How can one mitigate the uncertainty that exists in new encounters on online dating platforms? The study contributes to knowledge by linking and offering a comprehensive model of the relationships between Smart Cities, sustainability, responsible leadership, online dating platforms and uncertainty avoidance.

While every new encounter, online or in presence, dating or while negotiating, brings uncertainty, the question is how to mitigate this uncertainty and to increase the safety for the users. Additional questions come to the researcher's mind, such as: While digitalisation is the big winner of the 2020/2021 coronavirus pandemic (Schinzel, 2021), what are crucial parameters for a safer on-line future (Harari, 2020)? What are the dangers behind this (Harari, 2020; Floridi, 2014)? And what is the outlook for the future? Thus, this timely research about digitalisation of remote collaboration, friending, networking, and, of course, romantic dating, combines research about Smart Cities (Kaufmann et al, 2020), with Geert Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimension of 'Uncertainty Avoidance' and Maccoby's (2011) 'Responsible Leadership' with 'online dating platforms' (Markowitz and Hancock (2018) and the success of– Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and the Internet of Things (Leonidou et al, 2020; Santoro et al, 2018). It may also result in the improvement of the use of negotiation tactics as examined by Stefanidis, Banai, Schinzel (2021) and Stefanidis et al. (2016). Moreover, this research offers unexplored ways of collaboration and networking; unexplored, unelected, un-lived ways of knowing new people, and letting our imagination flow. More specifically, focus is drawn more on our imagination than on our lying capacity (Schinzel, 2021a, 2021b).

### 3 SMART CITIES

Smart Cities “are no longer about optimized traffic patterns, parking management, efficient lighting and improvement to public works.” (Gartner, 2018). Following Kaufmann et al. (2020), key elements are “increased interconnectivity, real time data exchange, machine learning based on artificial intelligence implying self-controlling production systems. The “four perspectives of DevOps are: 1) Collaboration Culture; 2) Automation; 3) Knowledge (architecture, cloud computing, threat modelling); Sharing knowledge (product and sprint backlogs). Key success factors for the Smart Cities of the future are, following Kaufmann et al. (2020): Connectivity and Networks between administration, Stakeholder and Citizens. They differentiate between different competences required by The Smart City Planner, The chief Digital/IT officer, The Co-operation with external partners, and Training demand. These different competences are: 1) Specific Technical Competences, 2) General technical / Transversal competences, 3) Methodological competences, 4) Social competences, 5) Personal competences, 6) Legal competences, 7) Smart City Planner's competences, 8) Civilizational competences.

Following Bencardino and Greco (2014) “smart city” is generally meant as a city capable of joining “competitiveness” and “sustainability”, by integrating different dimensions of development (economic, mobility, environment, people, living and governance).

For Kar et al. (2019), research moves beyond ‘Smart Cities’, to ‘Digital Nations’, involving the betterment of diverse social innovation initiatives, interdisciplinary approaches, and intellectual property creation with the citizen being the most important stakeholder. It is especially about innovation, the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, and data driven services. Smart cities require smart citizens who need to be developed in the following domains: 1) digital, 2) social, 3) economic, 4) professional, and 5) personal. Governments need to take initiatives of empowerment in 1) relational, 2) cognitive, 3) behavioural and 4) psychological domains.

Different cultures have cultural differences and need different approaches. This is where Geert Hofstede's research on cultural differences intervenes.

### 4 SUSTAINABILITY

Traditionally, sustainability has three pillars, namely social, economic, and ecological life (Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2019). This current research adds a fourth pillar: online life. Sustainability, and especially sustainability in online services, has become a focus of interest in the last months and years, notably due to its complexity and dynamism, sometimes unpredictability, constituting a powerful stimulator in many social and economic aspects (Fait, Vrontis, Maizza, and Cavallo, 2019). Particularly, and furthermore the current

central question is how sustainable are online dating platforms, and in case, how to increase their sustainability? Using technology advancement to increase chances in first dating and finally marriage in research conducted by Izang, Kasali, Ajayi and Adegbenjo (2020) proved them right in their hypothesis about the positive link between the use of social media and sustainable marriage, notably in a world with increased time spent on communication devices and social networks. Especially, and because of the benefits provided by the companies behind the online dating services, the revenues generated, the employment created, these online dating platforms constitute an economic and commercial factor not to be neglected my marketing, communication and management in terms of sustainability and profitability (Jung, Bapna, Ramaprasad, and Umyarov, 2019).

## 5 RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

Maccoby (2011) defines leadership as follows: “There is only one irrefutable definition of a leader: someone people follow. Therefore, leadership is a relationship between the leader and the led. Unlike management, the leadership relationship cannot be delegated or automated.”

This research concentrates on ‘responsible leadership,’ as a leadership style, that is classified along other leadership styles (Northouse, 2012) such as autocratic leadership, laissez-faire leadership, strategic leadership, responsible leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership. Responsible Leadership spans three areas: economic, social/human, and ecological (Financial Times, n.d.). Responsible leadership is defined as being “about making business decisions that, next to the interests of the shareholders, also takes into account all the other stakeholders such as workers, clients, suppliers, the environment, the community and future generations” (The Financial Times, n.d.). Responsible leaders build sustainable relationships with stakeholders to achieve shared objectives, for the common good (Pless, 2007). In this fast-changing world, and following technology used in online dating platforms, combining artificial intelligence and human resource management (Vrontis et al, 2022) has the potential to enhance organizations’ recruitment technology and process.

## 6 HOFSTEDE’S CULTURAL DIMENSION OF ‘UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE’

In the 1960s, Geert Hofstede defines cultural dimension ‘Uncertainty Avoidance’ (UAI) as “the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity.” The 1960s and the 2020s span 60 years of fast changes and innovation in the Information and communication Technology (ICT), justifying highlighting the following sentence of this definition by Geert Hofstede: “The fundamental issue here is how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? Countries exhibiting strong UAI maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. Weak UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles” (Hofstede insights, 2022). Contemporary developments, especially the Internet, online presence, and ICT, allow for particularly different views of what is ‘unorthodox behaviour and ideas’ in the 2020s compared to the 1960s regarding traditional ways of encounters.

## 7 ONLINE DATING PLATFORMS

Social innovation can be online dating (Blossfeld and Schmitz, 2011). Traditional encounters for some of us – mainly the young generation - might be online, while for others – mainly the old generation, might be in person. However, in every new encounter, might it be online or in presence, the three following theories apply equally: Impression Management, Truth Management, and False Consensus Effect. Especially lies. Or, more precisely, small lies, let’s call them misrepresentations or small deviations of the reality, you might say: fantasy, objects of our dreams, wish-to-be. First, strikingly, called ‘impression management’ (Markowitz and Hancock, 2018; Ellison et al, 2012, 2006), meaning the beautification of one’s self-presentation, where people would deviate slightly in describing their personal attributes such as age, height, weight, professional occupation, personal interests and hobbies, leisure priorities, sexual preferences, alcohol consumption, smoking, and ‘personality traits’, as well as showing earlier age photos, (Lim, 2021). Second, considering the before said, ‘truth management’: where you would ask yourself if the person was telling the truth or not. Consequently, Levine (2014) developed the Truth-Default Theory, suggesting that despite knowing the other person, you can never collect enough information about a person to be able to make the right judgement.

Thus, focus is drawn on the deception originated by these lies. Third, there is the ‘false consensus effect’ (Epley, 2015) which suggests that daters decide if it is acceptable to lie because they surmise that the other person also lies.

Fourth, people might deviate from the reality and be creative when talking about their ‘availability.’ This is called ‘availability management’ and involves marital and/or relationship status availability, general time availability, and, more specifically, time for meeting in person availability. Furthermore, some people may underestimate the time any kind of relationship expected of them.

In recent months, focus has been drawn on the ‘safety’ of users by reducing the ‘uncertainty of dating platforms’ (Corriero, and Tong, 2016); and by online dating platform requiring users to publish information and share it with all other daters. This information includes identities, background information, criminal records, court records, sex offender status, marital status, lawsuits, and personal reviews. In fact, the strengthening of users’ ‘safety’ has at the same time increased the discussion about a ‘complete surveillance’ of people. Obviously and consequently, the suggestion for complete traceability of everybody’s movements on mobile tracing applications instigated a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of total surveillance and controllability. Therefore, scholars Yuval Noah Harari (2011, 2015, 2018, 2020) and Luciano Floridi (2011, 2014, 2019, 2020) discuss the risks and opportunities, and the chances and problems of ICT, before the pandemic. Additionally, the ICT discussion does not only include topics like safety, surveillance, and controllability, but also communication, and more specifically ‘digital communications,’ calling for more professional entrepreneurial education (Papageorgiou et al, 2021).

## 8 A PROPOSITION

New technologies and computer applications have made the use of such dating and other social and business platforms more acceptable in general, and for Smart Cities in particular. Thus, they are used as a means for improvement of Smart Cities, for the quality of life, where diverse competences are required to improve the quality of life of the citizens. They allow for creativity, imagination, change, and innovation, essentially becoming acceptable means of meeting new people, in private or in business. Hence, the author formulates the following proposition: a fourth pillar is added to the traditional three pillars of sustainability: 1) social life, 2) economic, 3) ecological and 4) online life. Due to the pandemic, new ways of in-person or online dating platforms encounters stimulate and facilitate life in Smart Cities and their development, by enhancing imagination and creativity not only in private life but also in the workplace.

## 9 METHODS

For the purpose of this research, the author interviewed a total of 15 respondents in semi-structured interviews in January, February of the year 2024, asking them mainly: “How do Online Dating Platforms contribute to Smart Cities?” Interviews were conducted in several languages, English, French, German, Luxembourgish, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and translated to English.

In several previous studies, the author had already performed other similar and different research about ‘online dating ‘platforms’, namely, from 2020 to 2022, and in the heat of the coronavirus pandemic, the author investigated ‘Love and lies on online dating platforms’ (Schinzel, 2021, 2022b) by combining the result of previous studies about ‘Responsible Leadership’ and ‘Uncertainty Avoidance.’ Additionally, and to double-check the validity of the proposition, 32 semi-structured interviews were performed in 2022 for the purpose of another previous study.

For the purpose of another study (2021) a total of 242 people were contacted in writing, by telephone or in person via an online dating platform. Out of the 242 participants, first communication contact was in written on the platform, while with 179 this written communication ended then on the platform, 63 were contacted by phone and meetings in person were organized with 18 respondents once, 5 twice, 2 three times and 5 several times. Mainly, the research questions were: Did the coronavirus situation change dating habits? Can you trust people on online dating platforms? Can one really find love there, or is it only lies? Followed by an in-depth literature review on ‘Uncertainty Avoidance and coronavirus’ and “How to avoid the uncertainty in new encounters on online dating platforms, and not only there?” Replies, in English, German, French, Dutch, Italian, Luxembourgish, and Spanish, were translated into English and back translated to check for consistency.

Another previous study (2022), consisted of 32 semi-structured interviews and was performed with the objective to validate the findings from the 2021 study, what indeed had been confirmed. The author contacted online acquaintances through face-to-face, WhatsApp and dating platforms, therefore using a convenience sampling. For confidentiality and anonymity reasons, notably not to reveal the true purpose of being on the platform, interviews were chosen over questionnaires.

## 10 RESULTS

The results from this current research show mainly that 15 out of the 15 respondents believe in the increase in ‘happiness in general’ through online dating platforms in smart cities. It is believed that happy couples make happy citizens.

	Table 1 How can Online Dating Platforms contribute to Smart Cities?	N = 15
1	Increase of ‘Happiness in general’ of the citizens	15
2	They help the development of the multi-disciplinary Smart City Phenomena	13
3	They represent the development of smart cities intellectual minds	13
4	They improve ‘the quality of life in general’	14
5	Citizens embark on an intensive change process	12
6	Citizens unlearn ingrained behavioural patterns	13
7	Citizens internalise an ‘Innovative competence set’	13
8	They represent an increase in digital and transferrable skills	12
9	They require more strategic roles of the Smart City Planner / City Chief Digital Officer / City IT Officer / Smart City Administrator	10
10	They represent an intensive change process to determine the gap of competences needed for Smart Cities	12
11	New digital technologies facilitate the Smart City development	15
12	These new digital technologies and especially Online Dating Platforms provide/require newly emerging job profiles	15
13	A specialised software needs to be developed for Smart Cities, such as DevOps.	15
14	This specialised software could include ‘online dating’	15

Table 1 How can Online Dating Platforms contribute to Smart Cities?

How can ‘Online Dating Platforms’ contribute to ‘Smart Cities’, was answered mainly by the points mentioned in the above table, by 1) an Increase of ‘Happiness in general’ of the citizens; 2) They help the development of the multi-disciplinary Smart City Phenomena; 3) They represent the development of smart cities intellectual minds; 4) They improve ‘the quality of life in general’; 5) Citizens embark on an intensive change process; 6) Citizens unlearn ingrained behavioural patterns; 7) Citizens internalise an ‘Innovative competence set’; 8) They represent an increase in digital and transferrable skills; 9) They require more strategic roles of the Smart City Planner / City Chief Digital Officer / City IT Officer / Smart City Administrator; 10) They represent an intensive change process to determine the gap of competences needed for Smart Cities; 11) New digital technologies facilitate the Smart City development; 12) These new digital technologies and especially Online Dating Platforms provide/require newly emerging job profiles; 13) A specialised software needs to be developed for Smart Cities, such as DevOps; and as a consequence of this: 14) This specialised software could include ‘online dating’.

“Working towards a common goal that enables the fast flow of planned work into production while achieving world-class stability, reliability, availability, and security” is the definition of DevOps by the DevOps Institute (2019, p.15).

Quotes:

One of the respondents said: “The easiest way to achieve this is if the City Planners include a section ‘online dating’ into the specialised software for Smart Cities. Directly on the government website, there could be a link to the online dating platform, or the government could develop themselves their own dating platform, free of charge. This would be really innovative. Like the initiative in Luxembourg City to have a ‘Sports Pour Tous’ – ‘Sports for All’, that allows everybody to exercise or for free or at a very low price, the Luxembourg City could also have an ‘Online Dating’ on their <https://www.vdl.lu/fr> website. That would be really innovative, new, and people would have a look!”



Another respondent said: “Please have a look at the following websites, we use them in our company for innovation: <https://www.dworldvr.com/> This is ‘The world’s first ever Virtual Economy DWorld, where you experience real life in the METAVERSE. The different worlds are 1) Retail, 2) Tourism, 3) Real Estate, 4) Yachting, 5) Events, 6) Hospitality.

DWorld: “DWorld has recreated the first virtual twin of a country within the metaverse in the world starting from the Principality of Monaco.

We recreate smarter and greener virtual twins of cities worldwide, integrating all the main economic sectors in one single virtual reality platform to start the era of the V-Economy.

Live breathtaking experiences within a dynamic, immersive and interactive environment representing the more sustainable world of tomorrow.

Respondent Nr 3 said: The future of work has these following challenges: 1) Real Estate, 2) Technologies, 3) Transportation, 4) Taxation, 5) Sustainability. You can check this on the website <https://www.linkedin.com/company/hrcommunitylu/>

Respondent 4 said: “We could call the direct link on the government’s website to a dating platform: ‘Couples Heureux pour Tous’ in English: ‘Happy Couples for All’ - in accordance with ‘Sports pour Tous’ or in English ‘Sports for All’

Respondent 5 said: “We could have a direct link on the website of ‘Sports pour Tous’ to online dating, this would be good as participants would already be sporty. There is a ‘Cycling Dating’ in Luxembourg, but Luxembourg is too small to have enough participants on that online dating platform, we would need to go to Bruxelles Online Cycling Dating” to allow for more people to be there.”

The results from the previous studies from the years 2021 and 2022 revealed that respondents lied mainly about the following items (Schinzel, 2021a, 2021b, 2022b): their name, their profile photos (using photos 10 or more years younger), their gender (women who pretend to be men and vice versa), their age, their ‘availability’, their salary, other characteristics (such as their true motive for being there, alcohol consumption, smoking, sexual preferences, abuse (these traumatizing events in the past often represent a hindrance for future new relationships. Although, in the first place, they would NOT talk about having been abused in the past at all, only later mention it in a second or third encounter), deaths (like abuse, fatalities represent a traumatizing event in the past with often negative impacts on future relationships. If a loving partner has recently passed away, it is difficult to replace him or her entirely), or the loss of one of their children, the loss of their spouse/partner, an injury suffered by one of their children or their spouse/partner, a difficult divorce process from a former spouse, or sexual abuse by a family member.

Here is the representative quote of one of the respondents: “In my opinion, it is NOT about lies. On the contrary, online dating platforms allow for the participants to live some kind of ‘second life’, where they are living a kind of ‘dream’, being a different person, a person they would have always liked to be in real life. However, reality is not what they wish it to be. Here they can live their creativity, their fantasies, like a child exploring an unknown world, allowing for new experiences, to live under cover, with a different name, a different photo/image, or a different gender. Their creativity and fantasy are limitless, permitting borderless imagination, where streets are interconnected with secret passages, leading to unknown labyrinths, new people, funny encounters, great discussions, bringing excitement in their otherwise boring lives.”

The 2022 study yielded the following results:

Out of 32 respondents, 29 confirmed the author’s proposition. They stated that with new methods of working, namely working remotely, from home or from elsewhere, the employer can no longer exactly control what employees do during their working hours, and allow for the use of social media, including online dating platforms. These platforms then enable new methods of new encounters, not only romantic relationships, but also friending, networking, and recruiting. However, the main concern is the security of these social media and platforms, requiring firewalls, protection, including the prevention of perversity and crime. There are unknown possibilities of new encounters that remain to be explored paving new ways of creativity (Papaleontiou, 2014) and imagination.

However, the answer options depend on the age and/or on the gender of the respondents. The younger the respondents get, the more they are open about new forms of working, including ‘online dating platforms’ and

requiring the ‘responsible leader’ to include them in the work environment, making them ‘acceptable’ for ‘talent management’ strategies in ‘human resource management’ strategy (Schinzel, 2022a).

Here are representative quotes from five respondents in the 2022 study.

Respondent 1: (female, age 30-40, working in a bank)

“The Coronavirus pandemic has changed the behavior of many people. I think that ‘Leadership’ and ‘Online Dating’ are linked nowadays, during and after the pandemic. While, before the outbreak of the pandemic, in the office, it was mainly forbidden to use private Facebook or private other social media. Now everything has changed. Everything is linked, intertwined, we work from home, where we use all our social media channels in parallel. There is no boss to forbid our Facebook or LinkedIn or any other social media attendance, so that ‘Online Dating Platforms’ see a boom, because we use them during our official ‘office’ times and not only do we date online during working hours, but we use these online dating platforms not only for romantic dating, but also for friending and for networking.

Nobody wants to go back to the ‘old normal’, people want to remain in the ‘new normal,’ continuing to have online contacts all day long, during work hours. The wise leader is aware of these changes and doesn’t forbid these contacts during working hours.

People do many things in parallel on their computers, working mainly on several screens in parallel, having several windows open, and chatting in parallel with several people on several channels, all from their kitchen table, or office, or wherever they are. The responsible leader allows these new behaviors and doesn’t forbid them. The new generation of young people will be multitasking, they will be ‘all-online,’ using all their social media channels in parallel with work / school / conferences / etc. The young people will mix all these media to use them for their advantages, for friending, networking, romantic relations, business relations, there will be no more limits or restrictions in their use.”

Respondent 2 (female, age 25-35, working in education)

“Nowadays people are digitally connected more than ever. Either for business or private reasons, the usage of dating digital platforms became the normality: every day the first action is to turn on your laptop and meet your colleagues, have meetings; or simply meet your friends, loved ones who are living far away. About love, having a remote relationship with the partner is common. Video calls are received every moment of the day: while cooking, eating. Why not have a virtual lunch/dinner/coffee break together? Psychologists are also telling us that virtual sex is today a normal legitimized practice.”

“But, despite humanity’s virtual connection increase, people everywhere are experiencing loneliness and uncertainty: they often feel isolated. Social relationships can never be substituted by full digitalization. I think that the feeling of uncertainty could be overcome via high attention and listening while the speaker is talking. Following simple rules either during business or love meetings: put others’ devices far away; use the eyes/look to communicate an emotion/feeling; ask the right question and be always curious, open minded creating space for the others to whole express themselves.”

Respondent 3: (female, age 30-40, working in a bank)

“Big job changes are to be foreseen. Why is this so? For several reasons. People are working remotely – from far and realize several things. They don’t like their jobs, and it is easy to search for a new one, online. So, they quit and find a new one. Or they are close to retirement and prefer to benefit from their free time. Or they have a partner who earns enough money for two. Or they are just fed up with the job. It is important in life to find something that makes you happy.

The next and last subject I want to talk about is the web shopping, where supermarkets have a leading role while designing new concepts for the future, not only to avoid the spread of coronavirus, but also to facilitate shopping while working, remotely or in the office with a large, refrigerated storage places for overnight orders.”

Respondent 4: (male, age 50-60, working in education)

“Even though I haven’t used online dating platforms for years, being happily married, my opinion referring mainly to my experience with the new online working habits, and meeting platforms such as ZOOM is: Using new technologies and online platform to communicate becomes a new standard in our day to day lives: at work, to enable and expand work from home; in our private life, to communicate safely with our

relatives and keep a social link, whatever the context. All this was made possible with the growing security to join the platforms but also to secure the data. Habits evolved, nevertheless it seems important to me not to forget that behind an avatar or a profile, there is a real person. Why? Because it is easier to create a fake or our “ideal profile of ourselves” in the virtual world. Let’s keep reality alive!

If I make a link between the role of a “responsible leader” and “online platforms” the following points are essentials: The need to create or maintain a “community feeling.” Team- building exercise, regular meeting, information sharing (not only forwarding a mail). The definition of rules related to the use of online platform or meeting tool: video, document sharing, size of attachments... to limit the “ecological impact.” Economically, I would highlight the management of building, infrastructure costs: building location, equipment, such as laptop, headset, and consideration of an indemnity for people who work from home such as an Internet connection, desk, chair, additional screen, and others.”

Respondent 5: (male, age 20-30, student)

“I believe that each person needs to be responsible in both. Not all new encounters in business results in deals signed and not all new encounters in online dating platforms would result in a wedding. Artificial Intelligence that can manipulate our choices, in the end the ability to avoid uncertainty in this kind of platform is a kind of manipulation.

Technically speaking, Artificial Intelligence can run a set of tests in order to check if the profile belongs to someone real and the information is accurate, but after that it will always depend on free will of each human if they go ahead or not.”

## **11 DISCUSSION: ONLINE DATING PLATFORMS AND SMART CITIES: THE FOURTH PILLAR OF SUSTAINABILITY: ONLINE LIFE - STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY FOR ONLINE DATING PLATFORMS**

Over the last ten years research of Smart Cities and sustainability has mainly focused on three pillars (Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2019): a) social life, b) economy and c) environment (Thompson, 2017). This current research, however, adds a fourth pillar to the above mentioned three: d) Online life. On the one hand, this research follows on research conducted by Izang et al. (2016) on ‘sustainable marriage’ and focuses on ‘Sustainability on Online Dating Platforms’. On the other hand, it generalizes the investigation to include ‘creativity and imagination’ (Papaleontiou et al. (2014) and ‘digital communication’ (Papageorgiou et al., 2021). Especially the ‘community effect’, generated by online dating platforms, is of interest for the community sustainability and the profitability of the online dating platforms (Jung et al., 2017). Notably, and this is the conclusion of Mouratidis & Papagiannakis (2021), virtual mobility increases ecological sustainability by reducing traffic, especially by reducing and changing transportation, leading to more sustainable cities and society in general. The strategy for the future is to become more sustainable by being online, the fourth pillar of sustainability – social life, economy, ecology, online life.

## **12 CONCLUSION**

Online dating platforms could be an integral part of Smart Cities’ Software. Already by now, Online dating platforms are not only used for romantic relationships, but also for friending and networking, for collaborating and working together, negotiating, and even recruiting new staff, as shown by BBC (2021). These have a great potential to progress and develop in the future in Smart Cities. This is how stability, reliability, availability and security are enhanced. Parallel online activities, such as networking, friending, collaborating, negotiation, communication, working, and relaxing stimulate imagination and creativity. Unlimited use of online services, in all aspects of life, may create new concepts that may lead to a complete new concept of Smart Cities without boundaries. It may establish new ways of human activities such as shopping, working, transport – street, rail, air, sea, - friending, contacting, recruiting, negotiation, collaborating (Mouratidis and Papagiannakis, 2021). Future research may investigate the relationships among Online Dating Platforms, Artificial Intelligence and information communication technologies, and develop new domains, such as negotiation (Stefanidis et al. (2016).

Despite some lies on online dating platforms, creativity, argue Papaleontiou et al (2014), increases the possibility to create new knowledge and ideas, where everybody and everything is connected, while using all social media in parallel for all kinds of purposes. Artificial Intelligence and ICT are used thanks to ever



growing creativity and imagination, outside-of-the-box-thinking, while Geert Hofstede's (Hofstede insights, 2022) cultural dimension 'Uncertainty Avoidance' was propagated in the 1960s, other ways of thinking are acceptable in the early 2020s. A fourth pillar is added to sustainability: social life, economy, environment, and online life, with user friendly connected infrastructure (Albino et al., 2015).

The combination of 'Online Dating Platforms' with 'Smart Cities' is innovative. The creation of a direct link on the website of the government to an online dating platform would be a 'nice to have' solution for the future of smart cities. Or the direct link from a sports association to online dating platform.

### 13 FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could focus on the implementation of this direct link on the government website to an online dating platform and evaluate the results. Using more statistical methods by using big data and a bigger number of respondents would help coming up with better statistics and correlations.

Future research could also be a cultural comparison among different nations in Smart Cities – in Digital Nations - following Geert Hofstede.

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