

During and
After the
COVID-19
Pandemic

Data Politics and New Regimes of Mobility and Control

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We asked:

How are different forms of digitalization shaping human mobility and urban governance regimes during and after the COVID-19 pandemic?

We found that:



Technology reshapes ‘the rules of the game’

Digital tools – like AI, online permits, and city-wide dashboards, GIS mapping, multi-vector databases – aren't just neutral upgrades.

They are fundamentally changing how governments "see" their citizens, how people encounter the state, and how cities govern.

Technology is redefining urban governance through its forms of data tracking.

We explored our findings in three ways:



1 Looking Beyond the Tech Giants

Digital power is not something held only by huge corporations or national governments. We show that the digital transformation of cities is made up of many small, local, and very different projects all over the world.

2 The Crisis Imperative

There is a common idea that governments use crises like COVID-19 or migration as an excuse to quickly roll out new tracking technologies. We take a closer look at that idea, showing that the relationship between a "crisis" and new technology is often much more complicated than it looks.

3 Real-World Stories, From Which We Theorise

We examined this in two cities (Cape Town and Geneva) to see how local politics and unique situations change the way technology is used. It's a "behind-the-scenes" look at how digital tools are actually changing how our cities are run.

