

## Pressemitteilung

Leuphana Universität Lüneburg

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## New Leuphana research project: How smart systems contribute to our wealth

**Prof. Dr. Armin Beverungen from Leuphana University Lüneburg is investigating the promise of smart applications for the generation of wealth in his new research project "Smartness as Wealth". He is receiving funding of around 1.5 million euros over four years from the Volkswagen Foundation.**

In the course of digitalisation, intelligent systems that are capable of communication and can be controlled via the internet are being used in more and more areas of life. One speaks of a smart home, for example, when things like heating, lighting or washing machines can be controlled remotely. This smartness is increasingly becoming a principle for the organisation of our social life together. The evaluation and exchange of data, the growing control possibilities with advancing digitalisation, help us to react intelligently and appropriately to new challenges as they arise. Prof. Dr. Armin Beverungen from Leuphana University Lüneburg is investigating the promise of these smart applications for the generation of wealth in his new research project "Smartness as Wealth". He is receiving funding of around 1.5 million euros over four years from the Volkswagen Foundation.

"Globally, companies, philanthropists, start-ups and governments are investing more and more in computer-based infrastructures to manage cities and their inhabitants. This smartness is closely linked to venture capital and start-up experiments," says Prof. Beverungen, describing the initial situation for his research. Especially in the logistics, real estate, finance, energy and retail sectors, smart systems are supposed to promote innovation and entrepreneurship and respond to problems of economic planning. "In the process, intelligent technologies are often presented as solutions to all kinds of economic or even social, cultural and political problems, but they often displace other approaches to solutions, although they can only ever be part of societal solutions," emphasises Prof. Beverungen.

Beverungen's project is particularly concerned with the promises of prosperity associated with smartness. Specifically, together with his colleagues, he wants to investigate the aspects of optimising logistics, sustainability of housing, participation in economic life, resilience of energy supply and the convenience of smart retail. The role of venture capital, which promotes smartness, is of particular importance: investors are betting on a type of intelligence based on large data sets and machine learning. This approach has been viewed critically not only since the current debates on artificial intelligence and its dangers.

In order to investigate the relationship between contemporary smart urbanism and wealth, as well as the transformation of urban economies, historically and ethnographically, the research will take place in five locations in five countries: Hamburg as Germany's leading smart logistics city; Kolkata as one of India's selected smart cities centred on sustainability; Nairobi's 'Silicon Savannah' as a hub of decentralised financial technologies; Denver as a major start-up and innovation corridor in the US; and Tokyo as the epicentre of smart, convenient retail. For this, Beverungen is working with researchers from Montreal, Cape Town, Dresden and Delhi.