Governing Urban Transformation

Citizen Participation in Urban Transformation

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8956155

9053576

<u>Author declaration:</u>

I (8956155) confirm that this report is based on my own work and that I am happy with both my own and my partner's (9053576) contribution to the final submitted version.

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Executive Summary

Greater Manchester is currently developing a digital agenda that will establish it as a global leading digital region, rivalling places like Amsterdam, Barcelona, Singapore and New York (Manchester City Council, 2017). The city hopes that by harnessing digital technologies, they will have the potential to deliver better outcomes, improve efficiencies, accelerate growth as well as increase citizen engagement. Using case studies from Amsterdam and Barcelona this report aims to help ARUP, a global engineering consultancy, by presenting approaches to improving citizen participation in Manchester through technology.

It will look at the Amsterdam Smart City initiative that champions open data, focusing on the Societal Interface Lab, Civocracy website, and its NxtCity project. In Barcelona, we explore both the Open Data BCN project and the DSI4BCN Network. It is then suggested how easily Manchester could replicate and learn from the ideas and improve citizen participation. However there are limitations to the proposed initiatives because the smart city model cannot be seen as a panacea for participation.

1.0 Introduction

Nam and Pardo (2011) identify a smart city as one with a comprehensive commitment to innovation in technology, management and policy. They believe that there is a gap in existing literature surrounding the management and policy aspects of smart cities. Organisational innovation of the city is important to consider, alongside the technological innovations that are occurring: including ideas such as cross-organisational management, extensive roles of leadership and enterprise architecture (Nam and Pardo, 2011). Citizen participation is rapidly being recognised as a crucial factor of urban governance and transformation. Especially in the UK post-Brexit, there has been a rise in authorities and businesses trying to engage with a public believed to be disenfranchised.

Greater Manchester is currently developing a digital agenda with the aim of becoming a leading global digital region (Manchester City Council, 2017). The city is hoping

that by harnessing digital technologies, they will have the potential to deliver better outcomes, as well as increase citizen engagement. Certain pre-conditions are necessary to make participation effective and transformative (Bandyopadhyay and Vaishnava, 2013). Institutions need to develop mechanisms through which citizens can engage and interact with local governance and give feedback. Additionally providing a universalised space where citizens can exercise their right to participation, especially platforms for currently excluded marginalised citizens. The co-creation of the city between citizens, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders is paramount to a true culture of empowerment. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the innovation process relevant information needs to be provided to citizens and their ideas harvested (Bandyopadhyay and Vaishnava, 2013).

Manchester currently has a Smarter City Programme in place using "big data" to help manage the city in "real time" (Manchester City Council, 2017). CityVerve is an initiative being developed; a 'platform of platforms' deployed at city-scale to deliver transformative benefits. Using a bottom up approach they increase participation through an open innovation programme of community events and hackathons. They are open to everyone, gather feedback and ideas, and encourage people to develop their own apps for deployment through the platform (Cityverve, 2016).

A solution for providing information to all city actors is the 'Open Data' programme. This helps to promote transparency and accountability in local governance institutions. It is assumed that with greater access to data, citizens can use these records and their own knowledge to provide new insights on urban governance decisions. The quality of participation is directly proportionate to the ease of access to quality of information. Open Data Manchester was set up in 2010 as an independent network attempting to drive forward an open data ecosystem (Manchester City Council, 2017).

The collection of information about all aspects of daily activity in the city creates a information space that is the base from which smart-tailored services and better city management is delivered. There are two main information sources: data coming from the city that involves sensors and city elements; and information coming from the citizens as digital footprint, social media and crowd sourcing (Bakici, Almirall, and Wareham, 2013). It is

the second data source that this report focuses on, using two examples of other smart city projects to improve citizen participation in Manchester.

2.0 Key Questions

❖ What successful examples of citizen participation, which create a true culture of empowerment and co-creation between citizens and cities can be identified?

❖ How can these examples influence and shape citizen participation initiatives in Manchester?

3.0 Methodology

For this report case studies have been used from two smart cities that have implemented citizen participation initiatives into their approach. Case study methodology is well established in the social sciences (Yin, 2009). This approach can illustrate what has worked well along with any difficulties that may have arisen and hence inform good practices for Manchester. Single case studies are criticised due to their incapacity to provide generalising conclusions (Tellis, 1997). This is why both Amsterdam and Barcelona are studied, providing a broader overview of improved citizen participation.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Amsterdam

In an effort to increase urban sustainability, Amsterdam has marketed itself as a smart city. The city has experimented with numerous methods to increase citizen participation in urban governance and in 2012 won the world Smart Cities award for its open data program for transport and mobility. The Amsterdam Smart City (ASC) Initiative began in 2009, formed and funded by Alliander, Amsterdam Innovation Motor and the City Government. It is an innovation platform of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area that consists of a vast array of activities, projects, partnerships and entities, and is "constantly challenging

businesses, residents, the municipality and knowledge institutions to test innovative ideas and solutions for urban issues" (Fitzgerald, 2016; ASC, 2017).

ASC aims to start the largest smart city innovation platform to create an overview of what is happening in Amsterdam and to then bring different organisations together to collaborate on projects to improve the city for its citizens (ASC, 2017). Frequent meetings of key partners are held to discuss the latest concepts, ideas and calls for innovation from the ASC community. Becoming a member of the community is free but if an organisation wishes to become more involved in the initiative there are subsequent fees (figure 1) (ASC, 2017).
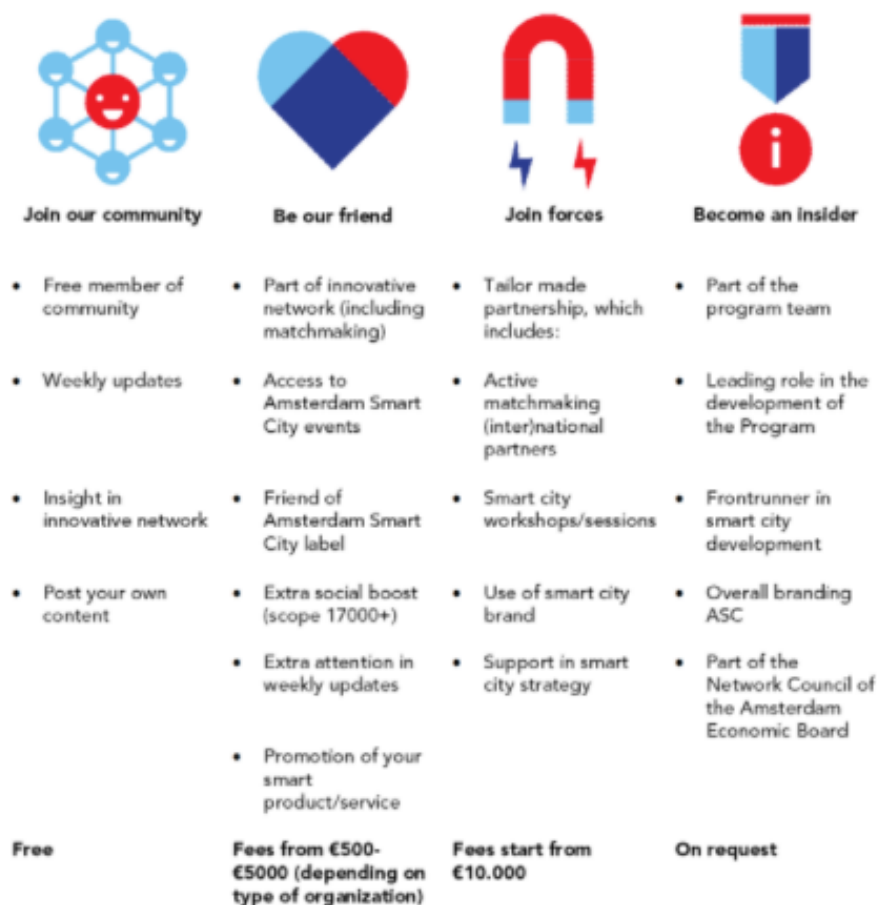

Join our community	Be our friend	Join forces	Become an insider
• Free member of community	• Part of innovative network (including matchmaking)	• Tailor made partnership, which includes:	• Part of the program team
• Weekly updates	• Access to Amsterdam Smart City events	• Active matchmaking (inter)national partners	• Leading role in the development of the Program
• Insight in innovative network	• Friend of Amsterdam Smart City label	• Smart city workshops/sessions	• Frontrunner in smart city development
• Post your own content	• Extra social boost (scope 17000+)	• Use of smart city brand	• Overall branding ASC
	• Extra attention in weekly updates	• Support in smart city strategy	• Part of the Network Council of the Amsterdam Economic Board
	• Promotion of your smart product/service		
Free	Fees from €500-€5000 (depending on type of organization)	Fees start from €10.000	On request

Figure 1
Source: (ASC, 2017)

4.1.1 Societal Interface Lab

A Societal Interface Lab is being developed as part of the ASC aiming for the "effective inclusions of citizen in urban innovation through (playful) dialogue" (ASC, 2017). Events have been held in NEMO Science Museum and other locations to increase the

number of citizens actively involved in urban innovation, contributing to a faster process of realizing urban sustainability, connecting stakeholders and facilitating mutual learning (ASC, 2017). Encouraging results have been seen in engaging citizens in community decisions; however, it is too early to measure its true effectiveness.

4.1.2 Civocracy

ASC has created a website that enables constructive discussion and emboldens active citizen participation: Civocracy. The website allows residents to learn more about the raised issues and explains how they can become personally involved in a practical manner, therefore connecting online and offline engagement (ASC, 2017). Civocracy is both a top down and bottom up approach; the government and citizens can both raise issues on the platform, however for a citizen's proposition to be a discussed it needs to gain support from other residents (Snow, 2016).

The involvement of local governments is crucial to success as citizens are more likely to participate if they believe there is real potential for action. The sites aim is to engage citizens on local issues as Snow (2016) argues that introduction at the local level can lead to citizen engagement with wider issues. Civocracy is designed as a platform so ideas can be shared between a network of cities, fostering a community of learning across Europe. However, a downfall of Civocracy is the lack of awareness of the site, which restricts those involved. Additionally, the initiative is not fully inclusive as it relies on Internet access; therefore sections of society (such as the homeless and elderly) are excluded.

4.1.3 NxtCity Amsterdam

Another initiative within ASC is NxtCity Amsterdam. This aims to increase engagement with young people in the city planning process. High schools enrol a team of students, who after two introductory workshops focus on a current governance issue for two days. They are guided by domain experts and mentors whilst working towards potential solutions for the city. This allows the students to create real solutions for real problems, and has the potential to trigger long-lasting engagement with city governance.

Danish Architecture Centre (2014) argue that ASC has succeeded in branding Amsterdam as an international smart city from which other cities can find inspiration, the challenge is to maintain the momentum and increase the involvement of all sections of society, allowing equal participation in reshaping the city.

4.2 Barcelona

In the 1980s, Barcelona transitioned from a city in deep economic crisis and having a serious infrastructure deficit, to a leading metropolis (Marshall, 2000). The democratic nature of the city's politics has played a major role in its success. Citizen participation takes a central role within the neoliberal government, and has become public policy, reinforcing the city's wish to become a leading European Smart city. Barcelona City Council (Ajuntament de Barcelona) has a dedicated sector, the Area of Citizen Participation, a subdivision of the Department of Decentralisation and Citizen Relations, to promote participation and to strengthen the composition of civil society (Blakeley, 2010). Barcelona has been highly successful in its urban transformation, demonstrated by being named the fourth "Smart City" in Europe in 2014 (Cohen, 2014).

For Barcelona, "smart city implies a high-tech intensive and an advanced city that connects people, information and city elements using new technologies in order to create a sustainable, greener city" (Bakici, Almirall, and Wareham, 2013: p. 139). Barcelona Smart City initiative began in 2012 and was focused on 4 main target areas: Smart governance, Smart economy, Smart living and Smart people (figure 2). Each sector requires the democratic interaction and collaboration of companies, faculties and citizens. The initiative hopes to promote multi-stakeholder engagement by local governance institutions encouraging other stakeholders, to pursue the goal of sustainable, equitable and just development and governance (Bandyopadhyay and Vaishnava, 2013).
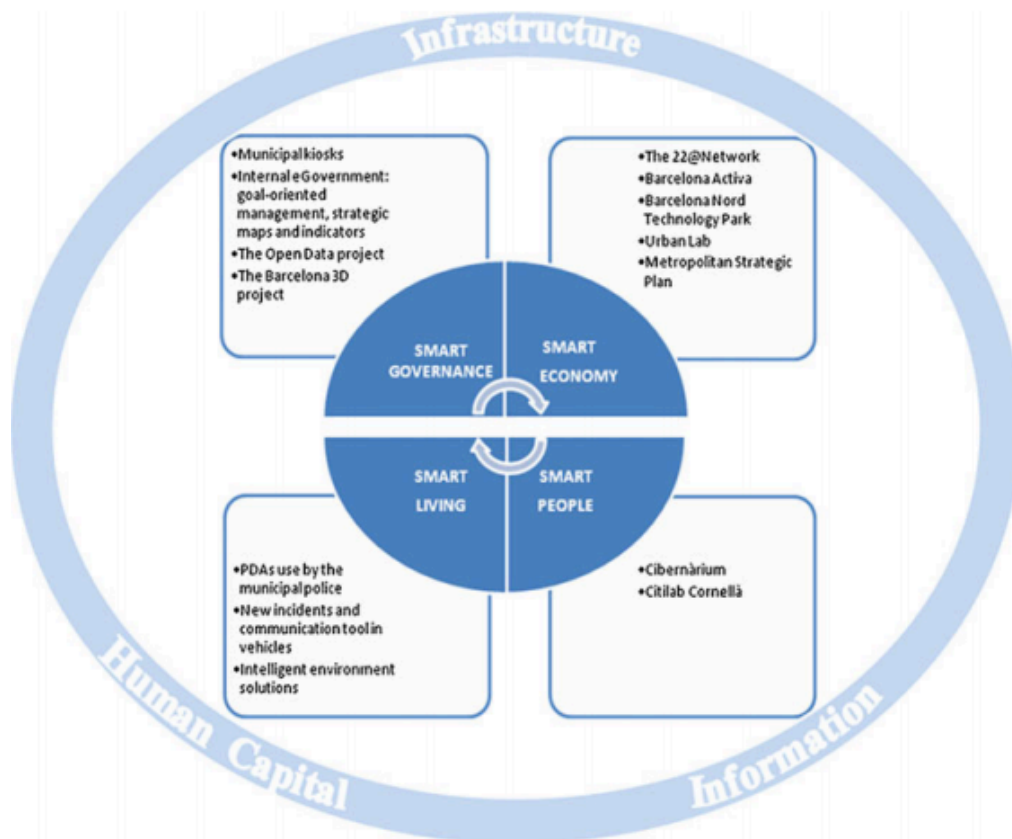
Figure 2
Source:
(Ajuntament de
Barcelona, 2013)

As well as launching the Barcelona Smart City initiative, Ajuntament de Barcelona has set out its Barcelona Digital City 2017-2020 plan. Its aim is to promote a new urban innovation model based on a more inclusive digital economy, with a public and citizen-based leadership, ensuring sustainable growth and improvements to the city (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2013). The Digital City Plan is split into four crucial categories: the common, democratic, circular, and creative city. The two areas focused on in this study, is the Open Data Barcelona initiative, part of the Common city category; and the DSI4BCN initiative in the Creative city category.

4.2.1 Open Data Barcelona

A flow of current information from daily activity within the city is an invaluable asset for governance and innovation. The data can be collected creating a smart city information space, which can inform smart-tailored services and better city management (Carrara et al., 2016). Ajuntament de Barcelona was one of the first city councils that engaged with the Open Data movement, and launched its own Open Data Barcelona in February 2011 (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2013). The objective being that government information will be open to the general public, enabling the community to use this data to create new services,

or increasing social and commercial value. The platform presents data on territory, population, management and procedure indicators, urban environment and documental data (Nam and Pardo, 2011). The Open Data movement's underlying objectives are to develop and validate a network management platform that is applicable for any city of any size.

4.2.2 The DSI4BCN Network

As part of the Barcelona Digital City 2017-2020 plan, the DSI4BCN network aims to drive the growth and expansion of the city's Digital Social Innovation (DSI) Network, by providing a platform that brings together social entrepreneurs, hackers, communities and academics who work in key DSI areas. On a wider scale, the DSI model aims to improve citizen participation and digital rights, in order to create an open democracy. DSI4BCN hopes to enhance society's ability to use and engage with new technologies. The initiative encourages bottom up development and is based on the precepts of social innovation. The initiative was only launched in January 2017, so it is too early to measure its true effectiveness, however so far it has shown encouraging results in engaging citizens in community decisions and digital innovation.

5.0 Key Findings

While these case studies have been relatively successful at creating opportunities for citizen participation in urban governance, there are criticisms of the Smart City approach. The open data approach has been utilised by Amsterdam and Barcelona, as well as Manchester, however for open data to play a key role in citizen participation multiple challenges need to be addressed. Firstly, the specific technical knowledge and skills required to create value from open data are not widely or equitably distributed across the cities. Secondly, open data is often presented in such a way that can be daunting and complex for the general public to understand and use (Martin et al., 2014). It would be advantageous to Manchester, if this could be rectified by the involvement of institutions such as universities and schools, to process the data and present it in a simpler, more accessible format. Finally, Martin et al., (2016) explains that open data currently is orientated towards the benefit of

large corporate actors, instead of being relevant to the citizens. Therefore falling short of the main objectives of the initiative, to increase citizen participation.

Another limitation of the smart city model is the reliance upon all actors' ability to access the Internet. The model cannot be seen as a panacea for participation, because one can argue that this approach cannot be truly participatory when automatically 11% of the UK population are excluded due to lack of access to the Internet (National Statistics, 2016).

5.1 Societal Interface Lab

The societal interface lab in Amsterdam would be replicable in Manchester, for example events could be held in Manchester Museum that aim to engage citizens with some of the problems within Manchester and to collaborate to form solutions. However, in order to be successful, a large awareness of the events would be needed in order to access the opinions and views of the marginalised groups in society.

5.2 Civocracy

Civocracy has had success in Amsterdam due to the large public support of the site, and its ability to reduce the gap in governance between the government and the public. Civocracy is trying to create network across Europe, and currently there is a Civocracy page for Manchester, however the utilisation of the site has been poor. This said, through increased awareness of the platform there is the potential for Civocracy to play a pivotal role in citizen participation.

5.3 NxtCity Amsterdam

NxtCity Amsterdam was implemented in 2015, and the ambition is to expand the initiative to multiple cities in the Netherlands and Europe. The project has shown the potential of engaging the younger generation in problem solving around the city, and it's importance for the future. This approach could help guide schools and universities in Manchester to involve their students in city governance.

5.4 Open Data Barcelona

Open Data Barcelona can provide considerable information and help to other cities that are wishing to implement their own Open Data platform. Manchester implemented it's own platform in 2010, however, the city can still learn from Barcelona as it is one of the "best practiced cities that are assessed" (Carrara et al., 2016: p 3). Manchester could learn from Barcelona's wide diversity of initiatives taking place, which could increase the audience reached.

5.5 DSI4BCN Network

The DSI model is replicable in Manchester due to the similarities in technological development to Barcelona, however issues similar to those faced with ASC regarding Internet access are present in both cities.

ASC and Barcelona Smart City initiative have a number of successful projects that have increased citizen participation in each municipality's governance. However, ARUP must remember that every city is different, therefore uptake and success of such projects is not guaranteed if basic replication of them is carried out. Each initiative needs to be adapted and tailored to Manchester's specific needs.

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