

The role of Startups and their Ecosystem in Smart Cities Development

Research Visit Report

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Date: November 2016

Research Background

The literature about Smart City often underlines that the institutions have to be inclusive and encourage a shared governance of their programs and projects together with the largest possible range of stakeholders. Though, it's not so obvious that this relation has just one direction, and that Smart City projects have to be only top down processes started by institutions.

The use of digital technologies by citizens, associations, companies and Startups can improve the quality of their life, and also make them capable to produce solutions to their problems and for those of the community, and to promote a further development of the Smart City.

The aim of my PhD research is to verify if private actors, and in particular Startups and their ecosystems are not simply users of the technologies and the solutions that a Smart City can offer them, but that they can play an active role (directly or indirectly) in the process of constructing this type of city.

To prove this thesis I'm studying three different cases, in order to address this topic from different points of view. These case studies are:

- The FabLabs Experience in Veneto Region, Italy;
 - The Urban Innovation Bootcamp of Ca' Foscari University in Treviso, Italy;
 - The Startups' Ecosystem in Amsterdam.
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The Amsterdam Case Study: the Attractiveness of a Smart City

Amsterdam is, thanks to its long-term plan for Smart City and to its public-private partnership, one of the best international examples in this field. In addition, this city has a huge Startups' ecosystem: people from all over the world come to Amsterdam to set up their Startups because they can easily find a positive network, have contact with financiers, accelerators,... (PWC 2014). Amsterdam attracts creative and

innovative capitals to start there new companies and entrepreneurial projects thanks to the smartness of its infrastructures, services and possibilities.

For these reasons I chose the city of Amsterdam for my research, and I started to plan my case study in two short visiting periods in April and in September 2016.

Thanks to the fundamental support of the Smart City Entrepreneurial Lab of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences I had the possibility, during the month of November 2016, to collect the data and the information necessary for my research, that will be analyzed in the next weeks.

My Stay and My Networking

During my stay I completed 15 interviews with several components of the Startups' Ecosystem of Amsterdam (accelerator programs, experts, Startups and public managers), and I had also the possibility to see and live the environment of the Smart City and the Startups and to participate at significant events in this field.

With the support of the Smart City Entrepreneurial Lab I had a valuable experience which has been very beneficial for my PhD (in particular prof. Willem van Winden and the Coordinator Margot Frederiks helped me to build the case, and prof. Ingrid Wakkee provided me important suggestions).

For that, I am very grateful to the Smart City Entrepreneurial Lab, that has giving me the opportunity to introduce myself to some of the most important people in my research field and to obtain feedback on the work I have done so far through several fruitful discussions.