DIGITAL SOCIAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM IN BARCELONA (SPAIN)

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BARCELONA AND ITS METROPOLITAN AREA

- Leading **hub for congresses** → MWC is happening right now!
- **Entrepreneurial and Innovative culture**
- 4th European City by volume of **investment received**
- 3rd world **preferred hub by serial entrepreneurs**
- 1st southern European Start-up Hub
  - +1.300 Startups

Is Digital Social Innovation even the right concept?
- **Social** VS **Societal** – (Lin & Chen, 2016)

**Digital Social Innovation** as;

Ideas, activities or solutions conceived collaboratively and empowered by digital technologies and social media, which explicitly address societal challenges in a new way

- **Quadruple Helix** Models of Innovation – (Carayannis, Campbell, 2012; Leydesdorff, 2009)

- **DSI** as a **clear driver for entrepreneurship**
  - Bottom Up – Citizens as the drivers for the innovation
WHY BARCELONA? POTENTIALITIES FOR A DSI ECOSYSTEM

- **Research and Technology Institutions**
  - 21 out of 72 Spanish universities placed in Barcelona (28%)
    - *Research HUBs – Rich Environment*

- **Public Sector**
  - Particular interest in DSI from the Regional and Local governments - Investment & Policies

- **Private Sector**
  - +15,000 tech companies in Barcelona (*CTECNO, 2018*)
  - Congresses + Big companies – *Tech-Business HUB*

- **Citizens**
  - Spanish Citizens are less interested in collaborative associations (*Morales & Mota, 2006*)
  - Positive impact of Immigration in Barcelona & Madrid (*Bolívar, 2013*)
  - Richness of youth talent
PARTICULARITIES AND LIMITATIONS ABOUT BARCELONA

- Complicated political structure – National, Regional & Local divisions
  - Who is really in charge of the DSI policies?
- DSI as a traceable phenomenon
  - DSI is not a new phenomenon + Actors developing DSI may be "invisible"
- The functioning of 4H models of Innovation
  - Cohabitation between public & private actors?
  - Cohabitation between private actors & citizens?
- Beyond the physical actors
  - Programs & Networks play a key role orchestrating the ecosystem
THE WILD DSI ECOSYSTEM

FabLabs
Living Labs
Ateneus Digitals
Telecentres
Library Living Lab

Coworking Spaces

Labour Labs

“Innovation Ecosystems”

Innovation hubs

Networks

Programs

Foundations

Citizen Labs

StartUps

Universities*

The analysis and comparison between actors and between ecosystems should be facilitated

- **Not use self-attributed categories**
- **Reduce the number** of categories
- Look for **standardization** (*Considering the limitations*)

- Revision of the previous studies
  - *Growing a digital social innovation ecosystem for Europe* (Nesta, 2015)
  - *Survey on eInclusion actors in the EU27* (Garrido & Rissola, 2013)
  - *Mapping eInclusion intermediaries in Barcelona* (Peña, 2011)
CATEGORIZATION PROPOSAL

- We will consider:
  - **Type of organization:** based on the organization itself, activities, goals, interests...
  - **Nature of the organization**
  - **Role**

- Resulting Categorization

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<tr>
<th>TYPE OF ORGANISATION</th>
<th>ROLE</th>
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<td>Grass roots &amp; Community Network</td>
<td>Active Actors</td>
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<td>Firm-driven labs</td>
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<td>Research labs</td>
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<td>Public sector</td>
<td>Orchestators</td>
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<td>Programs</td>
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<td>Public</td>
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<td>Private</td>
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<td>Third sector</td>
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MAPPING RESULTS II

Total number of actors by the type of organisation:
- Grass roots and Community network labs: 29
- Firm-Driven labs: 10
- Research labs: 15

Total number of actors by the nature of the organisation:
- Public actors: 23
- Private actors: 17
- Third sector: 14

Percentage breakdown:
- Grass roots and Community network labs: 28%
- Firm-Driven labs: 19%
- Research labs: 54%
- Public actors: 31%
- Private actors: 43%
- Third sector: 26%
WHAT WAS NEXT?

In depth, semi-structured, synchronous interviews
- 26 Interviews
- 30 Questions

- Why?
  - Deeper knowledge + adaptability to every case

- How to select?
  - Desk Research + Political Authorities + Other Experts

- To whom?
  - DSI Impact
  - Adaptability to 4H
  - Representatives of all the parts of the ecosystem
FINDINGS

- Shared claim for **public investment** from all the actors
- Shared claim for a **change in regulation**
- Shared claim for political authorities' to **invest in local expert organizations**

- There is a **majority** of private **business oriented** actors on the DSI ecosystem
  - This difficult the functioning of 4H models – own interests – own ecosystem
- The Barcelona DSI ecosystem was born spontaneously – Xarxa PunTic (Telecentres) → Xarxa Òmnia
  - Nowadays is **orchestrated by the Regional Government and the City Council of Barcelona**
- Geographical **“clusterization” of the actors**
- The DSI ecosystem in Barcelona is slightly **biased by its orchestrators**

- Barcelona’s DSI ecosystem present limitations
  - Contextual factors in favor
  - Political initiative can easily boost the DSI ecosystem
WHAT WE LEARNT FROM BARCELONA’S DSI ECOSYSTEM

Certainly an ecosystem of DSI centers can help to develop a more innovative, entrepreneurial and risk-taking youth society. However, it requires:

- **Public Investment** as a Key Issue
  - To empower DSI and to avoid silos on the ecosystem
- Focus on the **education policies**: Entrepreneurship, Innovation
  - Citizens should be prepared / They are not ready yet
- Required **change in the regulation/legal framework**
  - New practices, new actors, new dynamics
- **Political commitment and initiative** is needed
- **Coordination** is needed between political levels
  - DSI Should be a transversal issue
THANKS!

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