Gamification – The solution for a sustainable society?

A qualitative study regarding the launch of City Points Cascais

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Abstract

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The public sector is facing challenges related to digitalization. Modern citizens have expectations that the public sector should be more efficient and provide quality services. In the year of 2018, the municipality of Cascais, Portugal, was awarded the best platform in the category *Digital Innovation in Government and Citizen Engagement* by the World Summit Awards. The platform is called City Points Cascais, which is supposed to encourage good citizenship practices and rewards citizens with points that can be used for different activities. The platform is based on gamification, a concept that derives from the same strategic in-game characteristics that are used in online gaming. The aim of this study is to gain a more in-depth understanding of the release and launch of a digital platform from a municipality's perspective. This study is written from a strategic communication perspective and uses City Points Cascais as an example for our study. A qualitative study was conducted and the empirical material is based on four interviews supported by a document analysis. The study resulted in two overall themes connected to the municipality's strategic communication efforts; simplification and culture. These aspects contributed to the launch of the digital platform for City Points Cascais.

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Keywords: Gamification, public organization, municipality, strategic communication, digitalization, innovation, citizen engagement, dialogue, marketing communication, City Points, participatory budget

Sammanfattning

Gamification – En lösning för ett hållbart samhälle?

Den offentliga sektorn står inför utmaningar när det kommer till digitalisering och medborgare har höga förväntningar på att den offentliga sektorn ska vara effektiv och erbjuda högkvalitativ service. År 2018 tilldelades den portugisiska kommunen Cascais ett pris från organisationen World Summit Awards för sin digitala plattform City Points Cascais inom kategorin, *Digital Innovation in Government and Citizen Engagement*. Den digitala plattformen syftar till att uppmuntra goda samhällsgärningar och belöna medborgare med poäng som sedan kan användas till olika aktiviteter. City Points är uppbyggd av gamification, ett koncept som bygger på att öka engagemanget hos människor på samma sätt som i datorspel. Syftet med denna uppsats är att nå en ökad kunskap kring lanseringen av en digital plattform som från en kommuns perspektiv ska uppmuntra till goda samhällsgärningar. Denna studie utgår från fältet strategisk kommunikation och använder lanseringen av City Points Cascais som ett exempel för att nå studiens syfte. En kvalitativ studie har genomförts inkluderande fyra intervjuer och en kompletterande dokumentanalys. Resultatet av denna studie visar på två övergripande teman som har varit centrala gällande lanseringen av City Points Cascais; förenkling och kultur. Båda har visat sig vara bidragande faktorer till kommunens strategiska kommunikation.

Antal tecken: 118 980

Nyckelord: Gamification, offentliga organisationer, kommuner, digital strategisk kommunikation, digitalisering, innovation, medborgerligt engagemang, medborgardialog, City Points, deltagande budget

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1. Introduction

The following chapter includes our background description focusing on the digital platform City Points Cascais. Then a problem discussion will be presented, followed by previous research about gamification and communication planning. Lastly our aim and research questions are presented, followed by our case presentation and limitations.

1.1 Background

In February 2019, the Swedish Television broadcasted a news segment about the municipality of Cascais in Portugal (Fagerlund Jerrstedt, 2019). The news segment presented a digital platform called City Points Cascais, which is an app that encourages citizens to contribute to society and the environment for example by recycling, volunteering or adopting dogs. Consequently, citizens can be rewarded with something called City Points, which can be used in different activities within culture, environment, and sports in the municipality. The concept of the app is called gamification, which draws on the same strategic approach that is used in online gaming. In March 2018, the municipality of Cascais was awarded for their idea in the category *Digital Innovation in Government and Citizen Engagement* by the World Summit Awards, sanctioned by the United Nations (Hinchcliffe, 2018).

Capgemini presents an annual report, *eGovernment Benchmark*, for the European Commission about European countries and development of public digital services with different criteria such as transparency and mobility (Capgemini, 2018). Portugal is in the top range of nations when it comes to government services online, transparency and constant improvements. Therefore we saw the value in examining the app City Points in Cascais. We wanted to explore how the launch took place from a strategic communication perspective by investigating the communicative strategies behind it, and further explore how the information was received by the citizens.

1.2 Problem discussion

According to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, Mosseby (2016), the public sector is facing significant challenges due to an increasing expectation to be more efficient and provide quality services to its citizens. Mosseby (2016) is stating that digitalization is, until 2025, the most crucial challenge that the public sector is facing. The distance has increased from the public sector to the private sector in comparison, in which they can provide digital services (Mosseby, 2016). At the same time, the international comparison report, eGovernment Benchmark, states that Sweden is dropping in the rankings of digital development and the changing pace is slower than in the top countries in the European Union (Capgemini, 2018). Therefore, there are significant challenges for the public sector in Sweden to continue to change and use the digitalization possibilities in order to create a smarter and improved welfare.

According to Calantone, Benedetto and Rubera (2018), marketing and marketing communication has been a well-researched field of study, but the product and service launching stage has been a less researched area. Therefore, we have identified a gap in the research field of communication planning in the area of launch and communication planning strategies. Chesia and Frattini (2011) argue that the products functional and technical aspects are well developed, but innovators lack a focus on communication strategies connected to the launch of an innovation. In contrast to this, the launch is the stage of the development process that is most financed (Chiesa & Frattini, 2011). For a long time, the view on communication was different in private and public organizations, and now it has changed. Today the import given to communication is almost the same, according to Dahlqvist and Melin (2010). The budget posts and financing of communication functions are different in private and public organizations, since public organizations have less funding. Furthermore, public organizations have been starting to take on tasks that are beyond their core tasks and are beginning to look more like private organizations, where marketing and brand communication have become more important for municipalities (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010).

The fact that a municipality, like Cascais, has chosen to develop an app, could be seen as a step back from their core activities and therefore is a sensitive and delicate activity for a public organization. However, this could also be a response

to the increasing expectations of the citizens, with regard to efficiency and that the municipality is working towards developing the city to be more sustainable. According to Parment (2015) the consumer's need - in this case, the citizen's need - is an essential part of the communication strategy. The consumer's need is a vital part in the process in order to reach for meaning-making for the consumer (Parment, 2015). When a municipality is going beyond their core activities, we expect that the citizen's needs, are more significant compared to when a product is developed and released by a private organization. In addition to this problem discussion, we will elaborate on previous research conducted in the area of gamification, connected to communication and sustainability in the upcoming section.

1.3 Previous research

Nobre and Ferreira (2017) conducted research regarding how gamification could be used as a platform for co-creation connected to brand value experience. The researchers aimed to explore the drives and motives used by brands, when adapting to a gamified brand system and also achieve a brand co-creation. To reach their aim, they interviewed seven marketing managers and professionals, in order to collect and analyze information regarding consumers perceptions and motivations. Their research discovered that gamification could be used as a foundation to develop brand engagement and enhance the relationship between the brand and the consumer. Gamification is used to entertain, challenge the consumers, and get them involved in the brand, thereby building brand engagement and improve the relationship. The consumers valued the gamified platforms because they were entertaining, rewarding and provided a sense of community. From a management perspective, the use of a gamified platform provided relevant and valuable data about the consumers, that could be used in the further development of co-creation and communication with current and potential consumers. Nobre and Ferreira (2017) concluded that gamification could be used as an innovative and engaging branding tool in order to create participation in brand co-creation. In connection with our study in Cascais, the study conducted by Nobre and Ferreira (2017) is relatable from a demographic perspective since both researchers are active at Portuguese universities. This research is also relevant because the consumer motivators can be compared and related to citizen motivators. It is also interesting from a management

perspective if a difference can be identified in how managers view on gamification used from a private organization's perspective in comparison to a public organization.

Another research that can be connected to our study was conducted by Ro, Brauer, Kuntz, Shulka and Bensch (2017). The purpose of their research was to measure the effectiveness of an innovation incorporating gamification to reduce household energy consumption. To reach the aim of their research, they conducted a large scale field study with 1,975 participants to see if using their developed innovation reduced the energy consumption in their household. They expected to see a drop in energy consumption due to previous studies connected to gamification, since gamification has been successful in other fields to change behaviors. The study confirmed that the use of the application contributed to lowering energy consumption, in most cases. One finding was that the household, which before the experiment had the highest consumption of energy, showed the greatest amount of behavioral change. The authors also noticed that the in-game factors influenced the participants, since these factors put social pressure on other members, called normative pressure. They also found out that the inclusion of different activities was beneficial for the participants, since not every participant conducted the same activities. The authors argue that some studies have shown that sustainability initiatives are only appealing to the ones who already participated in sustainable choices, and that more actions should be pointed to the ones who currently do not do anything. It could be vital to show them that just by implementing a few changes in their lives could result in a large amount of energy saved. Ro et al. (2017) argue that in-game characteristics cannot always change the participants attitudes, although it can change their behavior which in the end leads to the same result. The research concludes that behavioral science and the use of gamified solutions have received a lot of attention to be a part of solutions for societal issues and challenges. In connection to our study regarding City Points Cascais, the research conducted by Ro et al. (2017) is relevant since it shows that a gamified platform can encourage participants to become more sustainable. From a communicative perspective it is interesting that actions should preferably be targeted at the ones who can make the most sustainable impact.

1.4 Aim

The aim with this study is to gain a more in-depth understanding of the release and launch of a digital platform that is supposed to encourage good citizenship practices from a municipality's perspective. Thereby, achieving an understanding of how digital strategic communication can contribute to a sustainable society. The aim is relevant due to the fact that municipalities today have difficulties when it comes to digitalization, and requirements to become more effective and provide quality services. Through our aim, we strive to reach insights and an understanding regarding a municipality's ability to plan strategic communication, related to the launch of an app and the use of gamification. In order to achieve this, we use the app City Points Cascais as an example to reach a greater understanding of how municipality's work with communication planning and how strategies might help achieve the overarching objectives.

1.5 Research question

- How can digital strategic communication efforts from a municipality contribute to a long-term societal change in order to create a more sustainable society?

Case questions

- What communication strategies did the municipality of Cascais use in their launch of the app City Points?

- How does the municipality of Cascais incorporate gamification in the app City Points in order to create citizen engagement and dialogue?

1.6 Our case – City Points Cascais

Cascais is a municipality located in the western part of Portugal, near Lisbon. Cascais is a growing municipality, that in 2016 had 210,000 inhabitants. Since the Revolution of April 25, 1974, the municipality of Cascais have flourished and the economy has been growing due to a high level of investment. During the recent years the municipality of Cascais has established initiatives in order to create citizens engagement, where they have developed a strategy for active citizenship called *Cascais Participa*, which can be translated to *Cascais Participate*. The objectives of the strategy is to strengthen the relationship between the municipality and the

citizens by promoting citizen participation (Dias & Duarte de Sousa, 2017). The biggest initiative is the *Participatory Budget*, where the citizens can contribute with their own projects that should be included in the municipality's budget. In 2016, the participatory budget had over 52,000 votes (Dias & Duarte de Sousa, 2017). The case we are studying is the app City Points Cascais, which is a digital platform that aims to reward and encourage participatory and sustainable actions. For each action, citizens receive points which can be used in areas such as social events and public transportation. The service also contains a ranking system, which encourage citizens to compete and compare themselves to other citizens. Down below, various actions are presented:

01 ENVIRONMENT	02 CITIZENSHIP	03 SOCIAL	04 MOBILITY	05 BONUS
• Waste separation • Reuse of goods • Green events participation	• Responsibility for a local association • Active in participatory budget process • Use of local tools for citizenship • Citizenship and local culture awareness	• Volunteering • Animal adoption • Fair and local shopping • Donate udeful goods • Participation in social responsibility events	• Regular use of public transports • Member of city shared bikes system	• Register in City Points(CP) • Sharing CP in Facebook • Ranking – best of the month • Sharing vouchers

Figure 1: Example of behaviors that give points. (World Summit Awards, 2018)

Sic! [udeful = useful]

1.7 Limitations

This paper is written in the research field of strategic communication. It is limited to external communication from an organizational perspective. Thus, this paper is focusing on municipalities, and it is limited to a management perspective. Since we are focusing on the external communication, it would have been interesting to also include a broader citizen perspective, but due to time and resources, we have limited the study to an organizational perspective. However, we have conducted an interview with two users, in order to include another dimension in our analysis. The majority of our empirical material was collected on location in Cascais, where interviews' took place on April 12, 2019. It is important to mention that during our thesis process a relaunch of City Points has been conducted. However, we will

mainly focus on the first launch. The relaunch will only be examined from a planning perspective, since these plans were mentioned during the interviews.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework contains previous theories related to challenges for municipalities and how the prerequisites for public organizations influences communication. We will also present the parts of communication planning and how, from a scientific point of view, communication planning could be performed. We will present Rogers (2003) diffusion of innovation theory combined with the more current diffusion model, UTAUT 2 created by Venkatesh, Thong and Xu (2012). Lastly, we will include a short theoretical framework regarding gamification. The theoretical framework will be used in our analysis of the empirical material.

2.1 Challenges for municipalities

According to Dahlqvist and Melin (2010), public sector's communication practices tend to resemble and be inspired by methods related to the private sector. Due to organizational differences, it has been argued as a fairly risky maneuver. Since, for instance, public organizations have a clear budget on the yearly income, which means for the public organization can decide exactly how the costs in the municipality will be distributed for the upcoming year. Private organizations, on the other hand, have to calculate the presumed income when setting up a budget and adjust the costs accordingly. The practices and ideas in public organizations have become more like a private organization when it comes to the view on communication efforts (Dahlqvist & Melin, 2010). Furthermore, Dahlqvist and Melin (2010) argue that public organizations have had a simplified perception on communication where the main focus has been to inform the citizens, but this view has changed during the last decades. The differences between public and private sectors have changed and become more similar over the years and therefore, Dahlqvist and Melin (2010) suggest that scholars should look at both private and public sectors from a perspective where both can take advantages from each other's areas.

2.2 From strategic communication to strategizing communication

The research field of strategic communication contains various already established disciplines. Falkheimer and Heide (2018) argue that organizational communication, public relations and marketing communication are the active parts of the framework of strategic communication, all integrated in order to communicatively contribute to organizational performance. According to Gulbrandsen and Just (2016, p.18), "*The best strategy is the one that allows organizations and their employees to respond quickly and specifically to concrete situations as they occur - strategy is a process, not a product*". Strategizing communication, is a verb, and a definition of what actors do when they purposefully are working to achieve a particular goal. The purpose is to take actions against whom, when and how to communicate. Being strategic is not always about following a specific plan, because all decisions and actions are not rational. Plans do not always suit a specific situation. It is, therefore, necessary to focus on the objective and strive to pursue the goal of the communication work (Gulbrandsen & Just, 2016).

2.3 A changing world

According to Palm and Åkerström (2019), people tend to have an overestimated opinion on communication, especially managers who have a picture of communication as an activity that can solve all social problems, from integration to people's behavior. Furthermore, Palm and Åkerström (2019) propose communication as a complementing and contributing tool in order to solve problems. Communication is an essential tool for organizations in order to communicate with their stakeholders in a collaborative, distributional and coordinated way (Palm & Åkerström, 2019). Marketing communication has an essential role to play in making stakeholders understand the organization's intentions in offering services and goods (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Today we live in a global and digital world, where consumer behavior and companies' communication activities are continually changing. Therefore, it is essential for companies' and authorities' to be up to date, not only in traditional marketing communication, but also from a digital perspective by applying digital communication tools (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016). This statement is also something that Palm and Åkerström (2019) agree with and they suggest that

communication practitioners need to develop communication strategies that suits the continuously changing digital world. The digital aspect of communication comes with numerous opportunities, such as offering new services, expanding into new markets and take a competitive role against other organizations (Palm & Åkerström, 2019). However, digitalization comes with challenges as well. Palm and Åkerström (2019) argue that digital technology has changed the process of communication practitioners, it has also influenced the traditional way of looking at communication processes between sender and receiver, when messages were targeted directly from an organization to a specific target group. Today, communication processes are much more complicated, where the sender also acts as a receiver and when consumers act as producers. This is something that is actively pressuring communication practitioners to plan and regulate according to the difficulty of anticipating the result of communication (Palm & Åkerström, 2019).

Collaborative communication

Understanding the concept of exchange is essential in order to understand marketing communication and one primary type of exchange is *collaborative communication* according to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2016). Especially in today's society when the complexity of senders and receivers has an impact on communication processes according to Palm and Åkerström (2019). The society, in general, is facing challenges when it comes to authorities, which is something that has to do with an increasing focus on individuality. This is something that organizations, brands, and politicians are aware of. *Relationship management* has become central in marketing communication. In order to work with relationship management and engage citizens, a common strategy is to work with co-creation projects, which involves both the municipality and citizens in order to create meaningful messages from a branding perspective, where the goal is to create a stronger message (Palm & Åkerström, 2019).

2.4 Planning communication

Palm and Åkerström (2019) suggests four components connected to communication planning; *objective analysis, target analysis, external analysis* and *evaluation*. First, it is vital that communication projects have clear decisions about objective

analysis, target analysis and external analysis. These decisions influence the messages and media strategies. The strategies will then determine the method in order to achieve the objectives. The communication planning starts and ends with an evaluation.

Communication objectives

Objectives are essential in order to reach desired effects with marketing communication (Kotler, Armstrong, Harris & Piercy, 2017; Palm & Åkerström, 2019; Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Marketing communication objectives are planned and can be explained as follows. When it comes to solving a specific, overall societal problem, objectives are set. Vision objectives are closely related to system objectives, focusing on how the organization will be in the future. The managers in the organization formulate both system and vision objectives. To reach the final objective, organizations need to set objectives focused on people's behavior. Behavioral objectives are essential if the goal is to engage and make people change the way they do a certain thing. The communication objectives are therefore used as a tool to specify what the organization wants to achieve when it comes to people's opinions, interest and knowledge. Examples of communication objectives can be to influence people's attitudes, affect people's actions or transmit awareness (Palm & Åkerström, 2019).

Target analysis

The main reasons to analyze the target audience is to choose the right message and to adopt the right media channels to communicate the message (Palm & Åkerström, 2019). According to Fill and Turnbull (2016), the purpose of marketing communication is to encourage and engage the target to enter into dialogue with the organization. It is essential to transmit and generate valuable messages that represent the organization, its services and adapt these messages for various audiences. This can be a challenge because the target audiences have different views on which information is needed. According to Palm and Åkerström (2019), to engage and influence the target audience, a target analysis aim has to clarify the attitudes, intentions, knowledge and behaviors of the target audience. It is also valid to establish the relationship between the target and the organization itself and therefore clarify if it

is an *asymmetric* or a *symmetric* relationship. An asymmetric relationship is the most common relationship between target and organizations, where the aim is to influence the target's attitude on a long-term basis. For example, communicate in a way that the target will buy a product or use a service in the future. A symmetric relationship is when the long-term aim is to have a dialogue between organization and target group. Demographic attributes such as nationality, age, gender and profession are common and the most basic factors of a target analysis according to Palm and Åkerström (2019). The reason why demographic attributes are useful from a marketing communication perspective, is the opportunity to match the target with relevant media channels. A harder but basic way of doing a target analysis, is to look at different lifestyles such as hobbies or values which organizations can use in order to tailor messages to a specific target (Palm & Åkerström, 2019).

According to Fill and Turnbull (2016), creating a message that engage a target audience is difficult but essential. One way is, according to Lewis (2011), to create stories about the organization and its services. Furthermore, Fill and Turnbull (2016) argue that it is vital that the message engages the target audience. Credibility is a central word in creating messages, whether the expertise of the service or product is high or not. One way in creating this credibility is to use a spokesperson that represents the product or service as the carrier of the message. Three crucial factors are relevant from a receiver's perspective, the *judgement*, *amount* and *quality*. These factors refer to the opinion of the receiver, what the message communicates and how much and in what way the organization is communicating it. All factors are vital, but the challenge is to find a balance between them, and there is a question about rationality and emotions (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). *High involvement* and *low involvement* are two ways of portraying the decision making of receivers. In high involvement decision making, the communication needs to be formal and the focus is mainly on information about lowering the level of involvement according to Palm (1994). However, in low involvement decision making, the vital factor is emotion and building images around a product or service (Palm, 1994). Sometimes even both practices are needed (Fill & Turnbull, 2016).

External analysis

Palm and Åkerström (2019) argues that an external analysis is valid in order to analyze trends and changes in society that can influence the organization. There are different ways of doing this. One typical example is the *SWOT-analysis*, which Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2016) argue is one way to state the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in order to position the organization on the market against other organizations. Another example is a trend analysis, when the aim is to form a long-term perspective to analyze signals or changes in different patterns in society. This can, for example, be connected to target analysis, in which analyzing changing attitudes or values in the society (Palm & Åkerström, 2019).

Evaluation

Fill and Turnbull (2016) argues that evaluation allow organizations to see if their communication objectives have been achieved. According to Palm and Åkerström (2019), the most common type of evaluation is a *summative* or *result evaluation*, which can confirm on which scale the objectives have been fulfilled. Fill and Turnbull (2016) state that evaluations are useful for future projects since the focus is on which factors have had an impact and which have not. The evaluation practice is dependent on resources, such as time and economic factors. Real-life indications is one standard option. If the objective is to sell a particular product, then the real-life indications can be; sold products as successful, and fewer sales as unsuccessful. Although, this method is not always reliable. Observations can be valid whether a product has been used or not. However, even observations may not be reliable enough. Questioning is another option when searching for answers as to whether objectives and messages have connected to the target audience. Other methods include, for example surveys, phone interviews and focus groups (Palm & Åkerström, 2019).

2.5 Diffusion of an innovation

The leading theory for many researchers in the field of technology adoption, is the *diffusion of innovation model* that was introduced by Everett M. Rogers in 1962.

According to Rogers (2003), a diffusion of an innovation can be explained by how a service is spread in a community and becoming accepted on the market. Furthermore, Rogers, (2003, p. 76) argues that an innovation is defined as "*An idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption*". The introduction of an innovation is spread and communicated through selected channels during a specific time to actors and citizens of a social system (Rogers, 2003). When adapting to an innovation, the readiness to take on and try a new product or service differs from person to person (Kotler et al., 2017).

The reach of an innovation to the *critical mass* is vital for an innovation's future life-span in a long-term perspective (Rogers, 2003). The concept of the critical mass in the diffusion process, is when the innovation becomes self-sustaining, that is when there are enough individuals in a specific social system that have adopted the innovation (Rogers, 2003). There are five categories in which adopters can be categorized to create a more specific communication plan. The categories are *innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority* and *laggards.* The categories will be defined below.

Innovators are the first 2.5 percent of the population who adapt to an innovation (Kotler et al., 2017; Fill & Turnbull, 2016; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016). According to Fill and Turnbull (2016), these types of consumers are the ones who are keen on new ideas and are often having a sizeable disposable income. Due to their substantial disposable income, they are more willing to take on a risk of a new innovation (Fill & Turnbull, 2016; Ellis-Chadwick, 2016). Innovators have an understanding and interest in technology and the complexity of new innovations. They also see a setback in functionality as an experience. In some cases, developers invite these innovators to try beta versions of a service in order to collect improvement opinions before releasing a service (Dann & Dann, 2011).

According to Fill and Turnbull (2016), early adopters are partly made of a large group of opinion leaders. Early adopters are leaders in their society, they want to stay ahead of the majority and be involved in trends (Dann & Dann, 2011). According to Dann and Dann (2011), these adopters are well connected and have established social media accounts. The early adopters represent approximately 13.5 percent of the population. As a provider of the innovation you need to differentiate them from the masses (Dann & Dann, 2011; Fill & Turnbull, 2016; Kotler et al., 2017).

After the early adopters, the two more prominent adaptation groups start to adapt to the innovation. The first one is early majority, which is one of the most substantial group in the diffusion process. Both the early and the late majority constitutes of approximately 34 percent of the population (Dann & Dann, 2011; Fill & Turnbull, 2016; Kotler et al., 2017). According to Fill and Turnbull (2016), the early majority consists mainly of opinion followers to the early adopters. The web and social media usage of the early majority is still at a high level, but they rely on well adapted sites and social media platforms compared to the innovators and early adopters (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). According to Dann and Dann (2011), early majority often take intelligent decisions and actively see the pros and cons of an innovation before adapting to it. The second group of the majority is the late majority. The late majority is, according to Kotler et al. (2017), sceptical into adopting innovations. The last group is the laggards. Laggards are very conservative and tend not to like new ideas according to Fill and Turnbull (2016). However, late majority and laggards, are not central for our study and will not be elaborated on further.

2.6 An updated diffusion model

The main arguments stated by Rogers (2003) in the diffusion of innovation model, is that adopters in a diffusion can be placed into categories. In these categories, adopters have different characteristics involving the acceptance and adaptation of an innovation. Along with Rogers' (2003) diffusion theory, we have included an updated version of a diffusion acceptance model named, *The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2* (UTAUT 2), developed by Venkatesh et al. (2012). The UTAUT 2 model includes a more complex theory foundation, which could be used in understanding acceptance of an innovation (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

The UTAUT 2 model is based on seven different determinants and three different moderators that are combined and used in order to predict the behavioral intention and adaptation willingness to an innovation (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The determinants are *performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, price value* and *habit*. The three moderators will not be elaborated due to the limitation of our study in only focusing on a management perspective. We have identified the determinants as most vital for an

organization to work towards improving before and during the launch of an innovation.

Determinants

Venkatesh et al. (2012) describes the first determinant, performance expectancy, as to what degree the technology will perform and benefit the consumers. In our context of City Points, it can be translated to if the application is fulfilling the perceived purpose of the citizens. In relation to Rogers' diffusion of innovation model, this can be connected to the various adaptation groups, that have different demands when it comes to user experience and expectations from the innovation.

The second determinant according to Venkatesh et al. (2012) is effort expectancy and can be defined as the time the user needs to put into the innovation in order to use the innovation. When a consumer is thinking about purchasing or deciding to start using an innovation, he or she is evaluating the time that is required to learn an innovation.

Social influence, is the third determinant and can be defined as to which extent potential users are influenced by other people. If a user is influenced and pressured, by for example family and friends, they are more likely to adapt to an innovation (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

Facilitating conditions is the fourth determinant, which can be described as how a perceived user is apprehending the available help and support (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Facilitating conditions is about how the potential customer experiences the help and support given from the innovator in order to fully utilize the innovation.

The fifth determinant is hedonic motivation and can be described by the fun or pleasure that the user experiences from using the innovation (Venkatesh et al., 2012). According to Venkatesh et al. (2012), it is essential for the user to find the innovation as fun and exciting, and therefore the more fun that the innovation can provide, the more likely a user is to adopt to an innovation.

The sixth determinant is price value. Venkatesh et al. (2012) argue that when it comes to consumers, the price for using an innovation is essential and the trade-off needs to be beneficial for the user. Since we are researching an app that is free to use and download, the price value can be interpreted as if the user finds that the trade-off between effort and points received in return is beneficial for them.

The seventh and final determinant is habit, which can be defined as to what extent people have a habit of using technological innovations (Venkatesh et al., 2012). According to Venkatesh et al. (2012), if a person already has a habit of adapting to innovations, he or she is more likely to adapt to an innovation. In our case of City Points, the municipality has launched several other apps in different contexts and that factor could influence the adoption willingness to try City Points.

2.7 Gamification

Gamification is the inclusion of elements from game design and usage of game principles in a non-game digital context. Gamification can be used to motivate and engage users to achieve organizational goals (Palm & Åkerström, 2019; Burke, 2014). According to Palm and Åkerström (2019), the usage of gamification can be used to change attitudes and behaviors, improve efficiency or simplify learning. Gamification is based on the interactive concept used in gaming where gamers are engaged, challenged, entertained, developed and rewarded. With these characteristics, the gamers feel a purpose to return and using the game (Palm & Åkerström, 2019). Burke (2014) describes game mechanics, such as points, badges and leaderboards as key elements when identifying a gamification based platform.

Gamification can be used in different scenarios according to Burke (2014). One example is that the innovator has a community of interest focus, were gamification could be used to motivate consumers to recycle, learn a new language or to engage citizens in solving complex societal challenges. According to Burke (2014), gamification is many times connected to digital and social media, where the user of the gamified innovation can share their achievements with family and friends. Furthermore, gamification can be used to change citizen behavior. If enough citizens engage in the app, new habits of a community can be developed and build upon a solution to a societal problem (Burke, 2014).

3. Method

The following chapter will begin with a presentation of our study's scientific approach. Consequently, the research method, qualitative thematic interviews, will be presented. The interviews were conducted with the technological partner Innowave, representatives from the municipality of Cascais, and two users of the platform. In addition to the empirical material from the interviews, a document analysis was conducted. In regards to the chosen research method, this chapter will also conclude with sections regarding ethical dilemmas and a method reflection.

3.1 Scientific approach

Hatchcoat and Nicholas (2014) argue that when doing scientific research, it is vital to establish and present the reader with the *epistemological foundation* that the study is built upon. In the process of selecting the research method, there is a need for a transparent scientific epistemological approach since each research method depends on different epistemological foundation (Hatchcoat & Nicolas, 2014; Åkerström, 2014). Epistemological dilemmas are within the philosophical foundation of which knowledge is created, and what knowledge is possible to reach within science (Åkerström, 2014; Crotty, 1998). When conducting academic studies it is essential to state which epistemological foundation is being used within the study (Åkerström, 2014). From an epistemological view, the approach that is suitable for our study, is the *interpretative approach*, which Bryman (2012) defines as allowing the researcher to access and interpret human actions, and see the world from their point of view. We chose this as our epistemological foundation since interviews gives access to another person's social reality.

Related to epistemological dilemmas are *ontological* considerations. Ontology focuses on the nature of social entities. When conducting research, an ontological position needs to be taken into account, as it impacts and influences the research that has been conducted. *Objectivism* and *social constructivism* are positions within the ontological foundations (Bryman, 2012). Objectivism defines social

phenomenon, as external factors, that are something that is out of our control (Bryman, 2012). Conversely, there is social constructivism, which implies that social phenomena are created and changed by social interactions; therefore, it is no absolute truth (Bryman, 2012). From an ontological perspective, our study is based on a position of social constructivism. We are aiming to understand how digital strategic communication efforts can, from a municipality's perspective, contribute to a long-term societal change and create a more sustainable society. For example, messages are created by humans, humans interpret these messages and are a part of a social context, thus, this ontological position is best suited to our research. In the upcoming parts of this chapter, our specific methods chosen from these scientific positions and approaches will be presented.

3.2 Qualitative method

According to Merriam (2011), the choice of research method should have a clear connection to theory and research aim, not by the method in itself. In our problem discussion, we describe the current field of knowledge connected to the strategies behind the launch of an innovation. A part of our aim is to gain a greater understanding of these strategies and how a digital platform can contribute to a sustainable society. Based on our research problem, aim, and background a *qualitative method* have been used. According to Strauss and Corbin (2008), a qualitative method is favorable when searching for an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. Both Berger (2016) and Rennstam and Wästerfors (2015), argue that a qualitative method focuses on the understanding of a social phenomenon rather than quantitative data and numbers.

As suggested by Merriam (2011), we have chosen the method connected to our research aim. A *case study* is relevant when the study is aiming to collect a broader field of information and emotions. According to Merriam (2011), the purpose is not to search for the truth, or correct facts, instead, case studies want to achieve a convincing interpretation among other implications. Case studies are *holistic, descriptive* and *particularistic* in their approach, which means that they are useful when the aim is to reach a greater understanding of dynamics or behavior. Processes are central when it comes to case studies due to the fact that they focus on real situations and result in broad and holistic explanations which contribute to insights (Merriam,

2011). In striving for a broad analysis, it is vital to mention the case study's limitations, which we have described in section 1.7. Time and resources are examples of factors that have an impact on limitations (Merriam, 2011).

3.3 Interviews

In order to answer our research questions, we have chosen a qualitative method, based on interviews which, according to Trost (2010), is a suitable method because since we want to achieve a more in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon. According to von Platen and Young (2014), interviews contribute to a deeper understanding that makes it possible to see the world through another person's perspective. A qualitative interview can also, according to Falkheimer (2014), contribute to insights about the conceptions and strategies of the respondents.

Interviews as a collection method, aim to produce knowledge through conversations according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2014). These conversations are created between the interviewer and the person being interviewed. The production is dependent on the interviewer's earlier knowledge about asking questions. The interviewers knowledge on the subject also dictates their ability to ask relevant questions. It also depends on the interviewers previous interviewing experience (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). Since we did not have much experience in conducting interviews, we decided to perform a test interview in order to see if our questions were clear and understandable.

We chose to use *semi structured interviews* in order to better understand our interviewees perspectives on the subject City Points. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) state that semi structured interviews are based on *themes* that are made to be changed or restructured during the interview. We have used the semi structured interview to better understand what our interviewees have experienced (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The use of semi structured interviews in contrast to *structured interviews* gave us the ability to ask questions out of order as the interviews evolved. We designed our interview guides differently depending on the respondent in order to broaden the answers. The four different interview guides can be found as appendixes.

3.4 Selection criteria

In order to collect information from interviews, it is vital to understand and define the interview respondents. The selection of interview respondents should be connected to the research aim and it is vital to choose people that are able to answer the research questions, according to Merriam (2011). Contacting these people can be managed through observations or communicate directly with key figures, who hopefully have more information about the subject or other contacts that can contribute to the study (Merriam, 2011).

We chose to contact the reporter responsible for the news segment on Swedish Television in order to get access to the municipality of Cascais. Through the reporter, we received the contact information to the Press Officer of Cascais. After that, we sent an email to the Press Officer and presented ourselves and the aim of our thesis. We explained that we wished to perform interviews with both people behind the development and launch of City Points, as well as persons using the app. When selecting who to interview, we strived to have a broad selection of people that were well informed about City Points and the people leading the project from the municipality's perspective. After that, we initiated a telephone contact with the Press Officer, who incorporation with us helped us decide which people were best suitable for our interviews. The Press Officer also helped us schedule the interviews as well as organize the time and place for these, which are both vital factors in arranging an interview according to Merriam (2011). We saw the Press Officer's help as an opportunity, since the Press Officer knew who was well informed on the subject and was responsible for the launch of City Points. However, from a critical point of view, we were aware of the fact, that this could maybe introduce a positive bias towards the project which could influence our empirical material.

We interviewed three respondents from Innowave, the technological partner that developed the app City Points. From Innowave, we interviewed the Chief Technology Officer, Global Marketing Officer and a Senior Tech Consultant. We also interviewed the Communication Director of the municipality of Cascais which were responsible for the overall communicative actions and strategies. The last representative from the municipality that we interviewed was the Deputy Mayor of Cascais. We chose to interview him, since this would contribute to a political perspective regarding the visions and values of Cascais and their connection to City Points.

In addition, we have also interviewed two users of the app. Since the users were selected by the Press Officer, they were likely to be biased in their responses, therefore we only used them as a support to arguments made by the other interviewees.

3.5 Elite interviews

Except the two users of the app, the interviewees were managers and leaders that have been highly involved in City Points and thus can be demonstrated as respondents with credibility since they are experts and holding either political or social power. Elite interviews is the definition of interviews with leaders, experts or people who usually hold a powerful position, either political or social (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). Since the majority of our interviewees were experts, leaders and one of them holding political power, we considered them to be elite interviewees. When conducting elite interviews, it is vital that the interviewer have knowledge about the subject in question in order to legitimize the interviewees' time and get quality answers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). That is one reason why we chose to conduct a document analysis, in order to gain knowledge about Cascais and City Points. We will elaborate on the document analysis in the next section.

3.6 Document analysis

In addition to the interviews as the empirical material, we conducted a *document analysis*. The documents we have collected are public material, from both the municipality of Cascais and the technological partner Innowave, that can be retrieved by everyone. According to Merriam (2011) and Bowen (2009), documents as empirical material are beneficial for qualitative case studies, since they can give the authors a foundation regarding the context where the phenomena takes place. According to Bowen (2009), documents can be used in case studies in addition to other collection methods in order to build credibility. In connection to Bowen's (2009) and Merriam's (2011) recommendations, we have conducted a document analysis in addition to our interviews in order to build credibility. The documents collected consists of three reports. The first document is a report published by the municipality of Cascais called *A wave of citizenship always on the rise* by Dias and Duarte de Sousa (2017). The other two documents are reports published by the

technological partner Innowave, *Gamification for citizenship and business activity* (Innovave, 2019a) and *Not just playing - Gamification as an incentive for citizen engagement in municipal initiatives* (Innowave, 2019b). In addition to these sources, we searched for as much information as possible regarding City Points in order to get a broader perspective. Simonsson, Hjorth, Sandberg and Thelander (1998) argue that a document analysis can have different purposes; one purpose is called *supplemental documents* that bring supportive information but is not the focus for the study. The documents we collected have been used to gain information about the municipality of Cascais and the platform City Points. That information was analyzed in order to give us a foundation for the case and the interview guides. Besides, we will also include parts of the document analysis in the analysis chapter to give a more in-depth analysis. Since the document analysis was used as a supportive method for collecting the material, it was not used in our thematic analysis, which will be elaborated in the next section.

3.7 Thematic analysis

Our aim with this study is to gain a more in-depth understanding of the release and launch of a digital platform that is supposed to encourage good citizenship practices from a municipality's perspective. Thereby achieving an understanding of how digital strategic communication can contribute to a sustainable society. Based on our aim, we have chosen a *thematic analysis*. According to Rennstam and Wästerfors (2018), a thematic analysis is used when the interest is focused on what a person is saying, not the words itself. In qualitative analysis, Eksell and Thelander (2014) argue that the author is using the transcribed interviews and starting to code the material. We used a *deductive* and *inductive* approach in our analysis since we went back and forth from our theoretical framework and empirical material, which is an *abductive* approach. This is an approach argued for by Eksell and Thelander (2014), as typical in the field of strategic communication. According to Rennstam and Wästerfors (2018), when conducting qualitative analysis, the transcribed material needs to be coded, sorted and reduced in order to develop themes. For example, a theme can be recurring elements in the empirical material. The primary themes in our analytical process were set first during the transcribing process and the final themes emerged during the process of working back and forth with the theoretical

framework. When sorting our empirical material, we also reduced parts that we did not find relevant in connection to our aim. During the process, Eksell and Thelander (2014) recommend having main categories and subcategories, when conducting a thematic analysis. We followed this recommendation during the analytical process since the themes were set with the aim and research questions of our study in mind. The final themes identified during our analytical process will be presented in the analysis chapter.

3.8 Ethical dilemmas

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2014), qualitative studies have tensions when it comes to ethical dilemmas. On the one hand, the interviewer wants to collect meaningful and in-depth information about a subject, while on the other hand, the interviewer do not want the respondent to become aggravated. Therefore, ethical dilemmas are important to have in mind throughout an interview process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) argue that the aim and themes of the interview guide should be formulated in a way that does not make it personal. With that in mind, we formulated the themes in a more generalized perspective rather than personal. Since we are looking at it from a management perspective, we are more interested in their knowledge and experiences of their profession, not as a person, therefore we have decided not to include their names in the study. We did not find it relevant to the study to include the names of users interviewed.

All our interviews were conducted at the City Hall in the municipality of Cascais, Portugal. We conducted the interviews behind closed doors in order to allow the interviewees to feel as comfortable as possible. In the introduction of all our interviews, we presented the aim of our study, our digital strategic communicative perspective and why we requested them as interviewees, as recommended by Kvale and Brinkmann (2014). We also requested the interviewees permission to be recorded and we let them know that their answers would be transcribed and used in our analysis. All the interviewees agreed to our request. The interviews lasted from approximately 40 minutes to one hour.

3.9 Method reflection

Heide and Simonsson (2014) mention four criteria for quality in qualitative research: *credibility, transferability, dependability* and *confirmability*. Credibility is about the collection of empirical material and making it available for the reader in order to decide the quality of the material. Dependability is to allow the respondents to read the material, analysis and conclusion, this technique is called *respondent validation*. Confirmability can be reached to let the respondents see if the results can be confirmed or through the use of triangulation. Heide and Simonsson (2014) argue that qualitative researchers often have a social constructivist approach and that it is not in the researcher's interest to try to see the objective reality. Since we have a social constructivist approach, we are not trying to understand the objective truth. To reach credibility, we have collected empirical material both through interviews and from a document analysis. When having a social constructivist approach, it is not possible to reach transferability. However, to make generalized logical arguments, we are including detailed descriptions in the analysis which is recommended by Heide and Simonsson (2014) to make the knowledge acquired more suitable to transfer for the reader. To reach confirmability you can use triangulation which is to use different methods in a study. We used both a document analysis and a thematic analysis of our interviews, which could be seen as triangulation.

To collect enough empirical material to use in our analysis, we were open to having as many interviews as possible. During the interview process, we conducted four interviews with a total of seven respondents which we experienced, combined with the document analysis was sufficient to reach *informational saturation*, since the interviewees began to repeat one another. To build transparency, we decided to write the thesis in English for a couple of reasons. The first reason was to make the thesis understandable for the interviewees and the second was to build transparency. In order to do that, we decided not to translate the transcribed material into another language, which can be connected to what Åkerström (2014) says about how essential transparency is in regards to the quality of scientific research. Transparency has to be shown throughout the academic process in order to make the analysis and the results valid. Therefore, we included a description of how we got access to the field and how the empirical material was handled. Åkerström (2014) also argue that transparency is essential in order to claim scientific and nonscientific relevance.

Connected to scientific relevance, we have placed our study connected to our problem discussion elaborated in section 1.2. In our analysis we have aimed to make clear connections with previous research and theoretical framework. Nonscientific relevance is related to the fact that the subject and field researched is meaningful from either a societal, political, economical or social perspective (Åkerström, 2014). Sustainability, digitalization and communication between municipalities and its citizens is a current dilemma for municipalities in the world. We therefore saw that our study is relevant both from a scientific and nonscientific perspective.

4.   Analysis

In the following chapter our analysis will be presented. We have identified two overall themes that have influenced the launch of the app City Points Cascais. The findings in our empirical material will be presented, analyzed and related to the theoretical framework. The themes, simplification and culture have been identified in the analysis to our aim of the study.

4.1 Simplification

Our first theme simplification represents the municipality of a Cascais as an organization, their communication strategies and the work with the app City Points. Simplification is a part of the overall strategy that we have apprehended by analyzing our empirical material combined the theoretical framework. Simplification is expressed in different ways throughout the analysis which we will elaborate on in the following sections.

4.1.1 Communicate as a brand, not a municipality

According to Dahlqvist and Melin (2010), the differences when it comes to private and public organizations has decreased during the years, for example, the practical ideas for how a public organization has started to work more like a private organization with lower focus on only informing citizens. The Communication Director (personal communication, April 12, 2019), expressed that the municipality of Cascais is communicating like a brand, similar to a private organization. Unlike other municipalities, he expressed that Cascais is an aware and self-conscious municipality. During the interview he claimed:

> So we have this communication division right above us it is basically a full-service agency, we have network planning, we have design and multimedia, we have content and reporters and we have video and photography and some production. [...] we communicate like any other brand does, not like every other municipality

because we have a very aware and very self-branding conscious municipality, so we communicate a brand, not a city hall, communicating the Cascais brand (Communication Director, April 12, 2019).

The Communication Director (2019), also argued that the municipality is working with brand activities where the municipality employees integrate with people on the streets of Cascais, and thereby building their brand. Here we can see a connection to what Dahlqvist and Melin (2010) argues for, when a public organization is starting to work and look as a private organization. The reason why the Communication Director (2019) encourages the choice to market the municipality as a brand, is due to the fact that it has become harder for both public and private organizations to reach out with their messages and information. According to the Communication Director (2019), the opportunities are endless with the new type of solutions and the new type of communication. Unfortunately, this has resulted in an information overload for citizens and consequently miscommunication. To act upon this challenge, which Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2016), also argue for, the Communication Director (2019) claimed that Cascais, as a municipality, needs to adjust their communication efforts in order to break through the information overload and to reach its objective to inform its citizens. This we can see is related to what Dahlqvist and Melin (2010) consider is one of the main focuses for municipalities; to inform its citizens. According to Palm and Åkerström (2019), one of the most vital parts in communication planning is to analyze the target group. From a municipality's perspective, we interpret that it must be a complicated matter since the target group is all of a municipality's citizens. Palm and Åkerström (2019) argues that a target analysis should be used as a tool for organizations to identify target groups in order to concretise which specific characteristics they have, and how organizations can communicate and engage with them in the best way possible. In relation to the municipality of Cascais, the Communication Director (2019) argued that this is a difficult task to balance, since the target group, all citizens, are typically not interested in all the information the municipality is communicating. During the interview he argued:

[...] we are now able to communicate one to one to our citizens as well, which traditional cities have very difficulties, a lot of difficulties doing this, so we usually

communicate everything to everyone, which is a mess because we have a lot of things to communicate, and usually, we, as a citizen are only interested in 5 percent of these things, because not everything is related to us and we do not need to know everything. But as a city, we should communicate everything. (Communication Director, April 12, 2019).

Furthermore, the Communication Director (2019) argued that he sees the digital society that we are living in as an opportunity for municipalities to communicate more precisely to each and every one of its citizens. This is something we believe can be related to what Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2016) argue for, that it is essential for organizations to adapt to digital communication tools. The Communication Director's (2019) view on adjusting the municipality's communication to a brand, and how it affects its communication planning, can also be related to what Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2016) mention about collaborative communication. The Communication Director (2019) claimed that digital solutions and tools, such as City Points, can help the municipality with its communication, in order to gain insights on what their citizens are interested in. We interpret these arguments, not only as a way for the municipality to inform its citizens, but also as a way for the municipality to create dialogue with its citizens, especially with using digital solutions. We made this interpretation on the fact that digital solutions often are built with an integrated function that provides possibility of replying to messages and starting conversations.

4.1.2 National and international media attention

As we previously mentioned in the limitation section 1.7, our study is focusing on the communicative activities that have been carried out until April 12, 2019. However, aspects from the upcoming relaunch will be used in our analysis, in order to show what communicative strategies and messages have been developed by the municipality along with the technological partner, Innowave.

During the interview with Innowave, the Global Marketing Director (personal communication, April 12, 2019), described the launch of City Points as two layers with different focuses. These two layers were described as a *macro layer* and a *micro layer*. In order to understand our analysis and the launch of City Points, we will elaborate on the history behind the app. According to Chief Technology Officer

(personal communication, April 12, 2019), the first ideas behind City Points were founded during a local hackathon, where both citizens and local companies were invited to an open work session. Already at this point, we see the municipality's interest in engaging citizens as vital. The hackathon led to a beta version of City Points, that was developed by the technological company Innowave in corporation with the municipality of Cascais. City Points was later launched in the municipality with little to none communicative actions. Later on, the Global Marketing Director (2019) stated that the municipality of Cascais participated in a challenge called *World Summit Awards*, sanctioned by the United Nations. City Points was awarded first place in Portugal in the category *Digital Innovation in Government & Citizen Engagement* and later that year the app won the global award in the same category. The media attention that came along with this award resulted in what the Global Marketing Director (2019) described as the macro layer. In this part of the launch significant communicative actions were targeted to the outside world and the bigger media outlets, rather than to the citizens of the municipality. During the interview he claimed:

> [...] Basically what we are going to do now is a relaunch. Because when we did the launch first, we did the launch in a very corporate level, of course also to the mass market, but it was very, the media, and everyone who grabbed this as a piece, were more based on a town that is quite innovative and talking about the future [...] So that is the macro layer that sometimes does not drill down so well to the masses, because, at the bottom line what you want is to have the most of the critical mass working with the app (Global Marketing Director, April 12, 2019).

We interpret this quote as an example of what effect national and international media may have on an innovation. When City Points was awarded, it put the innovation into the spotlight. Since it was appreciated by leading experts and the World Summit Awards, we understand that this had an effect on what Fill and Turnbull (2016) argue about the first group that adapt to innovations, the innovators. Both interviewed users (personal communication, April 12, 2019) mentioned their awareness of the national and international media attention of the World Summit Awards as a factor, that inspired them to download and use the app. Dann and Dann (2011) argues that the innovators have specific characteristics, for example, they

see innovations as a possibility to be the first ones to try something that is brand new.

During the interview with the users (2019) of the app, they mentioned how they came in contact with City Points. Both users claimed they heard about the app from communication activities in the municipality. One of the users shared a more specific answer. The user had discovered the app from a sign at one of the municipality's museums and later asked the staff about the app. Finding the app interesting, the respondent decided to try City Points. Here, we can see that the information was a bit vague, and it highlights the importance of the first contact being a face to face contact between user and staff. Furthermore, both users (2019) mentioned during the interview, that they are individuals that are fond of technology and often try innovations when they hit the market. Both also mentioned that they had an understanding that City Points was a beta-version in their first contact with the app. Therefore, our understanding of the users willingness to download the app, also could have something to do with a feeling of pride, deriving from their interest in technology. Our interpretation is that their decision to download City Points, as it was not like any other app, was based on the fact that their municipality was recognized by the World Summit Awards and therefore they as citizens had to download the app and at least try it. The interesting question is, why did they decide to keep using it?

When we asked the users about their experience of using the app, they responded that the app had met their expectations when first downloading it, but they still missed more daily activities in order to make it easier to earn points. However, our interpretation is that the users are open minded and have an understanding for the fact that City Points is still a new innovation that it needs further improvements. This is something we can relate to what Dann and Dann (2011) argue about the fact that innovators do not see a risk with trying an innovation that is not perfect in functionality. Furthermore, an innovator does not see setbacks in functionality as a problem, they see them as an experience. This can also be related to performance expectancy and effort expectancy elaborated in the UTAUT 2 model by Venkatesh et al. (2012), which argues that factors of performance and efforts determine if an individual is likely to adapt to an innovation. The innovators can be seen to have a lower standard of performance expectancy in the release of an innovation and they are ready and willing to put in some effort to learn a new product. Concerning the

following adaptation groups in the diffusion of innovation, the performance and effort are more critical for early adopters and early majority. These groups do not have the same patience with lack of performance and functionality of an innovation.

4.1.3 Continuous improvements and evaluations

The Chief Technology Officer (2019) mentioned that, during the time from the first launch until the upcoming relaunch, the municipality conducted evaluations where they invited users to give feedback on what part of the platform works and what types of improvements are needed. Evaluations are something that can be related to what Dann and Dann (2011) argue about, organizations launching an innovation often invite innovators to try the innovation before the launch and thereby encourage them to contribute to ideas of improvements before they release it to the masses. During the interview the Chief Technology Officer (2019) argued:

> [...] it was Cascais who did a focus group, so we invited people to use the app, to give feedback, to give ideas, one thing that is working very well (Chief Technology Officer, April 12, 2019).

According to Dann and Dann (2011), many organizations and developers try to find improvements and flaws before the final launch of an innovation. However, through focus groups and analysis by user data, Innowave have been focusing on improving several parts of the app and mainly on the user experiences before the platform is ready for the relaunch. This can also be related to performance expectancy and effort expectancy of the UTAUT 2 model by Venkatesh et al. (2012), and by developing the app and focusing on how the user experience is contributing to the factors that are more adjusted to a broader potential group of adopters.

One of few technical challenges that have not been implemented in City Points according to the Chief Technology Officer (2019), is the integration of social media, where users, for example, can share earned points and challenge their friends. This is also one of the functions that the users (2019) were missing in the app, they mentioned that you cannot see your friends progress, just the overall ranking of the municipality. According to Dann and Dann (2011), regarding adaptation groups after innovators, is that social media plays an important role and is also one of the communicative opportunities for an innovation to spread. We understand this as a

potential pitfall in the diffusion process if it is handled and developed. From a distribution perspective, this integration can be used to spread information and knowledge about the app more quickly and more efficiently than using traditional communication methods, which we will elaborate more in section 4.1.4.

Since the first launch, one of the biggest challenges for the City Points project has been to adjust the platform to the citizens and the local markets, which is according to the Chief Technology Officer (2019) something that is due to time priority from the municipality side. In parallel to this, Dahlqvist and Melin (2010) argue that public organizations often are under financed when it comes to communication, which we have identified in the interview with the Chief Technology Officer (2019) who argued:

> This is a challenge because you have to go to the streets, to the stores at the local market. [...] we were not the ones doing this engagement with the local market, it should be the city, the city hall team [...] they did not have the time [...] (Chief Technology Officer, April 12, 2019).

The Chief Technology Officer (2019) argued that the challenge has been to make the local market a part of City Points. He continued by arguing that this is a challenge that needs to be handled by Cascais as a municipality, but they did not have the time. City Points needs to be worked on continuously by the municipality, which is something we interpret as vital for the work regarding City Points. Furthermore the Chief Technology Officer (2019) argued that the municipality needs to make the app ready for the citizens. We understand that this statement is due to the fact that the municipality should know its citizens best. This is something we can relate to Palm and Åkerström (2019), who argue that offering rewards that are valuable for the user is something important in order to make gamification work. This can be seen as another potential pitfall that needs to be handled by the municipality in order to reach the critical mass. The Communication Director (2019) argued that since the first launch, until the upcoming relaunch, the app has been a beta version, or as he himself describes it, a soft opening. Looking at it from a time perspective, the app has been available on the market for a little more than a year, and has reached approximately 5,000 users, with little to none communication efforts according to the Communication Director (2019). Furthermore, the Communication

Director (2019) argued that the app is now ready for a hard opening, or relaunch, that focuses on what the Global Marketing Director (2019) called the micro layer. What can be drawn from the macro layer is the importance to have a pre launch or a soft opening since it has created an awareness for both the municipality and Innowave that are valuable for the continuation of the launch. Evaluations; as Palm and Åkerström (2019) points out, is vital in communication planning. What we can see throughout the interviews, is that evaluations and improvements suggested by the citizens need to function as a continuous process.

4.1.4 Keep it simple

> [...] basically launch the same way you will launch a consumer product. [...] The go to market process of the campaign is really simple and close to the same way you communicate this (grabbing a water bottle) and that is what makes a difference [...]. (Global Marketing Director, April 12, 2019).

As we interpret it, the first launch was not targeted to reach the masses in the municipality; the target was to create national and international media attention. Although it did reach a base of users that could be tapped as source for development opinions, in order to improve on the app before the relaunch. The Global Marketing Director (2019) mentioned that the first launch did not succeed in penetrating the masses, and this was due to the nature of this first launch; it simply was not targeted at them. Both the Global Marketing Director (2019) and the Communication Director (2019) argued that the objective in the upcoming relaunch is to reach a critical mass of users. This relates to what Rogers (2003) argues about when innovation does not need to be processed in the same way to reach potential users, the innovation has a clear base of users and the diffusion occurs on its own.

In order to reach its target group, previously defined as all citizens, the municipality together with Innowave were creating a communication plan in order to attract new users to the platform. According to Palm and Åkerström (2019), the message of a communication plan is crucial in order to attract and create engagement. A part of the message is, according to Fill and Turnbull (2016), that it needs to encourage engagement and creativity. Furthermore, Fill and Turnbull (2016) argues that credibility is an essential factor when developing the message. From Cascais'

perspective, the Global Marketing Director (2019) argued that it is essential for the municipality to reach its citizens and make them understand what City Points can contribute with to their lives. In order to complete this, the municipality wants to keep it simple. The message in the relaunch is to get the citizens to understand City Points' functionality and aim. During the interview he argued:

> Because if you go to the technological part, it is interesting for a niche of consumers, but the majority of your population would not be open to that kind of detail. They do not care, they want the action, the reaction and the outcome. That is it. So that is what we are focused on. (Global Marketing Director, April 12, 2019).

We interpret this by adjusting the message of City Points after the masses and focusing on how easy it is to use and this could potentially make it easier for the citizens to adopt to the innovation. In parallel to Palm (1994), an app can in its nature as a low involvement decision that does not require a lot of information and a long decision process for the end user. However, from an a long-term perspective in using on a daily basis we interpret the usage as a high involvement decision. By adjusting the message and the activities in the relaunch of City Points, to focusing on simplicity, it can lower long-term threshold for the citizens and thereby reach a critical mass, similar to a low involvement decision. Therefore we see both *usefulness* and *benefit* as two central parts of a potential message. Thereby, a mix of both high and low involvement factors, is crucial to have in mind in order to communicate the message. We understand the challenge is to find a balance between high and low involvement.

In order to reach out with this message practically, the Global Marketing Director (2019) described that the communication plan and activities of the relaunch are based on three pillars that together are contributing to the message; *an outdoor campaign, a digital campaign* and *brand activation activities*. The first two pillars, an outdoor campaign and a digital campaign, will last for three weeks starting with the *ATP Tennis Tournament in Estoril* in late April 2019. This is an event that attracts a lot of citizens according to the Communication Director (2019). We interpret this as a chance for the municipality to reach out to as many citizens as possible.

The outdoor campaign, according to Global Marketing Director (2019), is an advertising campaign, that will be placed all over the municipality. For example at

bus stops, and on road signs and billboards throughout the city. This advertisement will have a simple message, according to the Global Marketing Director (2019), which is *Super Citizen* as a slogan. The choice of slogan for the advertisements is not meant to focus on the technical part, it will instead focus on the emotions and hopefully; attract citizens to become super citizens.

The digital campaign will according to the Global Marketing Director (2019), contain usage of influencers that have followers in different ages and professions, in order to reach as many citizens as possible. The content of the digital campaign will be focusing on communicating the functions of City Points. Using social media influencers can contribute to reaching the potential users who use social media on a regular basis, described as early adopters (Dann & Dann, 2011). As mentioned by Fill and Turnbull (2016), early adopters can use their opinion building to reach the masses. This is a vital part of the diffusion of innovation process in order to create a successful diffusion. It is important to reach the early adopters in order to create a steep adoption curve and thereby gaining a critical mass according to Dann and Dann (2011). Again, the message of the campaign is integrated into the digital campaign. It will be easy to use for citizens in any age.

The third and final pillar described by the Global Marketing Director (2019) is about the brand activation activities, based on physical meetings where the multiplicity, through interpersonal communication, instructing City Points for the citizens and show them how it works. These activities will be ongoing throughout the year 2019, and the objective is to explain how it could be integrated into the citizens daily lives. The Communication Director (2019) mentioned that these activities will be focused on market days and other events that are well visited by its citizens. Our interpretation of this is that during these events, a relationship could be created between the municipality and its citizens. These types of activities are example of interpersonal communication, rather than just transmitting a message to the citizens, which is connected to the relationship management mentioned by Palm and Åkerström (2019). The purpose of these communication activities is to focus on the simplicity of using the app, and how it can be used by the citizens in their daily life. We understand the third pillar, brand activation activities, is most vital, due to the fact that the municipality will have a chance to communicate directly and influence their citizens through physical conversations about how City Points can be a part of their daily lives. We also see this as a vital part for the municipality to listen to its

citizens and collect valuable information about their opinions. In the upcoming section, we will elaborate on the integration of the platform into the everyday lives of the citizens.

4.1.5 Adjustment to everyday activities

According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2016), collaborative communication is a way for today's organizations to create an engagement that involves both the organization and its stakeholders. The foundation of this is relationship management, which also demonstrates what Palm and Åkerström (2019) argue, the fact that communication creates relationship opportunities through communicative messages as stronger and powerful. Behind the idea of City Points, there is a wish from the municipality, according to the Communication Director (2019), to increase the communication between the municipality and its citizens. Furthermore, the Communication Director (2019) argued that City Points can potentially work as a daily communication link between the municipality of Cascais and their citizens. The Communication Director (2019) sees this as a possibility to say thank you to the citizens for the societal practices they are performing in their daily lives. The Communication Director (2019) also explained that it does not necessarily has to do with changing people's behavior. During the interview he claimed:

> [...] show my appreciation for what you are doing already. So I need to be present in what you are doing already, so if you are giving blood, I am telling you thank you like I did before, but now I am giving them 50 p or whatever [...] (Communication Director, April 12, 2019).

In order to encourage the citizens to contribute to a better community, the Communication Director (2019) argued that City Points should be a communication tool for the municipality to use in order to say thank you. On the other hand, the Communication Director (2019) also argued that societal practices can in some way contribute to other people acting the same way. In this case, the Communication Director (2019) mentioned recycling as an example:

> You know some of the things might create some trends, like recycling, which maybe if you are recycling, and you are feeling empowered and you do more and

you spread the word, which is a good thing. But you needed to recycle before, you not gonna start to recycle because I give you 5 p every time you go to the recycling bin, it is just not, it is not worth it (Communication Director, April 12, 2019).

Despite from what the Communication Director said, our interpretation is that City Points will in the long-term, indirectly influence citizens behaviour, as these actions will be more exposed through the platform. The Communication Director (2019) was bright by arguing that the purpose of the app is to thank the citizens of Cascais for the societal practices that they are already doing in their daily routines. Palm and Åkerström (2019) argues that gamification can be used to show appreciation and to build engagement. From the Communication Director's (2019) perspective along with the Deputy Mayor's (2019) this is an example of how Cascais, as a municipality uses gamification to build relationships and engagements between citizens and the municipality. During the interview the Deputy Mayor (2019) argued:

> Why not award our citizens telling them that we like them or we like when they engage with the municipality we can award them and that's how that is why and how City Points appeared and was created, the first ideas. (Deputy Mayor, April 12, 2019).

However, both Burke (2014) and Palm and Åkerström (2019) argues that one part of gamification is the rewarding of points as an essential part of the experience and to feel appreciated. Through the usage of gamification, the municipality of Cascais communicates to their citizens, that they appreciate what they do to contribute to the society. In contrast to this, Burke (2014) and Palm and Åkerström (2019) argues that gamification can be used to change behavior and change people's attitudes. By including the activities that are good for the municipality, it moves the citizens in a direction to better the society. As we already mentioned, gamification could lead to behavioral change, which is not in line with the objective of the municipality, but it could be a possible result of City Points. This is something that we interpret is something to have in mind when they are communicating the message of City Points, because this could be seen as something the municipality says, but at the same time is the app built from the municipality's interest. The challenge is

according to the Deputy Mayor (2019) to understand which societal activities can be implemented in an everyday context to their citizens. During the interview he claimed:

> To find out all the activities we did in the municipality that should be awarded for. That's a very good exercise in the end of the day [...] let's see what are the behaviors the activities that should be awarded [...] (Deputy Mayor, April 12, 2019).

These societal practices that are integrated in the citizens' daily lives, needs at the same time be useful for the municipality, which the Deputy Mayor (2019) argued is a dilemma when wanting to reach the critical mass. Once again, the municipality shows an understanding of the vital fact in reaching the critical mass in a diffusion process. This can also be connected to the other point of view, that the municipality is saying thank you to its citizens. Our interpretation is that it has to be a balance because if the message is to say thank you, the app can at the same time give a signal about what the municipality wants their citizens to do. Work needs to be done in order to map all activities that are in favor of the community, which actions that the citizens are doing and what they should be rewarded for. This is something that the Deputy Mayor (2019) argued is one of the significant challenges for the municipality to do as a continuous performance. Therefore, it demands that communication efforts need to be made in order to involve the citizens and their opinions. In this case, an evaluation, as Fill and Turnbull (2016) and Palm and Åkerström (2019) mention, is a vital part in launching City Points which the municipality is aware of. This is something we believe that the municipality has to do continuously, in order to make the citizens be a part of the of the development, which could in the beginning have made City Points more beneficial for the citizens. The Communication Director (2019) mentioned another challenge, to get the citizens to even download the app, which he refers to the fact that today's society contains so much information that needs to be processed by the citizens. That is why simplicity has a central role in City Points, and something that the Communication Director (2019) argued is a part of the work for the municipality. During the interview he claimed:

> The most important thing is that we make it really simple first of all, and we make it useful and for that we need to get to know the people. And I think that we,

municipalities, have to do a better job in knowing the people (Communication Director, April 12, 2019).

From a more general perspective this is something we interpret as crucial for all municipalities to do in order to improve their communication with its citizens and an essential part of launching an app. If information is not adjusted to the citizens, the development of engagement is not reachable. The Communication Director (2019) argued that he also is aware of the challenge that every citizen may not own a smartphone, which is essential for an app as City Points. This is something that will be handled in a later stage, but something that the municipality have thought about. Furthermore, Communication Director (2019) explained that the overall objective for the relaunch is to work with efforts that will reach the critical mass. The Communication Director (2019) argued how City Points is integrated with other systems in the municipality and that all citizens that have ever been in contact with the municipality therefore have an account which automatically connects with City Points. This means that through all stations, where you can use City Points, it is not necessary having a smartphone because everything can be handled centrally by the station. Through showing how the service of City Points can be used offline in the future and state that citizens do not necessarily need a smartphone in order to use the platform, we interpret the municipality shows that they include all citizens and do not favor any particular individuals that are used to mobile platforms. We interpret this as something that shows the visions and values that Cascais is working towards, that all citizens are included and they want to encourage everyone to participate. This can also be seen as what Gulbrandsen and Just (2016) argues for, regarding strategic communication as a process that is developed over time. We understand it as the municipality do not want to rush anything before its finished, instead they are taking one thing at a time to see if it works. The visions and values and how this has contributed to a culture in Cascais, we will elaborate in the next part of our analysis.

4.2 Culture

One of the main themes we have identified as a contributing factor in the launch of City Points, is the culture of citizens engagement in the municipality. The definition of culture is a bit vague and can be interpreted in different ways and take expression in many different forms. We define culture as actions, attitudes and values of the citizens and the municipality. There are factors that we have identified in the interviews that points towards a culture from different perspectives, which have been a significant factor in the launch of City Points. In this upcoming part of the analysis, we will elaborate on how the culture has contributed to the launch.

4.2.1 A digital network based on tolerance and environment

During the interview with the Deputy Mayor (2019), he discussed the social problems he has seen during the years. He argued that we are living in a changing world, where citizens have lower trust in elected officials, and therefore new arrangements in listening and communicating with citizens needs to be developed. Furthermore, the Deputy Mayor (2019) argued that the municipality has to create new ways to engage its citizens on a daily basis, not only every fourth year. The Deputy Mayor (2019) claimed that this is a challenge, which the municipality of Cascais has worked with earlier, and the result of the municipality's work has resulted in several initiatives in Cascais, which is also supported by Dias and Duarte de Sousa (2017) where they are describing the citizens engagement initiatives that have launched over time. The way in which the Deputy Mayor is describing this work over time, is something we can relate to Gulbrandsen and Just (2016) who discuss strategy as a process and not as a plan.

The municipality of Cascais has launched other initiatives with focus on citizen engagement, prior to City Points. The Deputy Mayor (2019), argued that these initiatives began about ten years ago when Cascais launched a participatory budget, which enabled citizens to vote and give proposals on the yearly budget connected to the municipality. The participatory budget is also mentioned in the interview with the users (2019) which according to them, is one of the contributing factors of the existence of City Points. The participatory budget has become a part of the citizens' lives in Cascais. According to the interview with the Deputy Mayor (2019), there are twice as many people voting every year in the participatory budget of Cascais

compared to the regular elections. From this statement, we interpret an existing interest and engagement from the citizens and a way of showing their interest. During the interview the Deputy Mayor (2019) claimed:

> We double in votes. You know participatory budget. So this is a sign that people wants to be engaged (Deputy Mayor, April 12, 2019).

During the interview with the users of City Points (2019), one of the users recalled that there was initial feeling of scepticism towards the participatory budget from the citizens perspective, since people did not believe in the interest from the municipality's side in using it. Our understanding is that the citizens potentially saw the participatory budget as a show-off or something that sounded and looked good, but would not actually happen. In parallel, this is something that could be related to what Rogers (2003) argues is the reason why innovations disappear after a while, when it is not reaching a critical mass. This can also be seen from another perspective, that people, tend to overestimate the ability of communication (Palm & Åkerström, 2019). During the established years of the participatory budget the users claimed (2019) that the attitude towards the initiative has changed. During the interview one of the users (2019) argued:

> [...] the first time the budget came out, people were like "eh, yeah it is not gonna work, nothing is gonna be done" then one day they were starting to see that the project happening, more people got involved and every year it is getting bigger [...] (User, April 12, 2019)

From this we interpret that communication is not everything if an organization wants people to engage. The municipality's need of presenting concrete results to the citizens is absolutely vital in order to reach engagement. According to the Deputy Mayor (2019), the participatory budget is one of Europe's most significant in voting percentage but from the first launch of the participatory budget until today it has not been a clear journey. Only when the citizens saw change based on their engagement, did they start realizing the municipality was interested in their opinions.. The figure below describes how the voting has increased during the years up until 2016, also included in the figure is the satisfaction rate of the participated

citizens. From 2011 until 2016 the number of votes have increased from 6,903 to 58,567. In comparison to City Points which had, according to the Communication Director (2019), approximately 5,000 users in the first year, you can see a correlation with the first year of the participatory budget.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
NUMBER OF VOTES	5615	20527	25030	27738	48582	52731
	1288	2671	8685	13267	7337	5836
SATISFACTION RATE	81,34	88,49	74,24	67,65	86,88	90,04

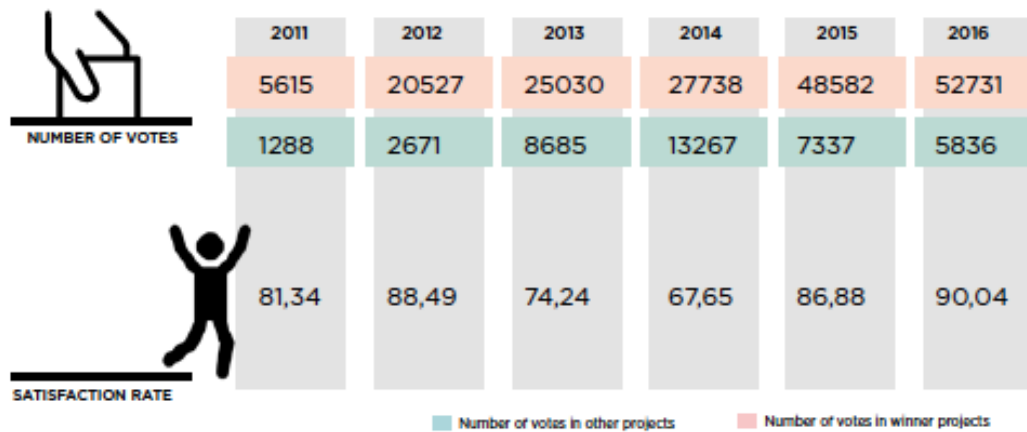■ Number of votes in other projects   ■ Number of votes in winner projects

Figure 2: Number of votes and satisfaction rate of participants [2011-2016]. (Dias & Duarte de Sousa, 2017, figure 8)

From this, we can understand that citizen engagement is something that takes time and the participatory budget is one great example of this. Another app mentioned in the interview with the users (2019) is *Fix Cascais*, which is an app that is used when citizens discover damage or problems in public areas of the municipality. The users (2019) mentioned that their experience from Fix Cascais had contributed to a knowledge of that the municipality listen and act upon the citizens' opinions and proposals since problems are getting fixed and they receive messages in the form of City Points. This communicative process of reporting an issue, get it fixed and receiving a message seems to be a vital part of the concept and it contributes to increasing the trust towards the municipality. During the interview one of the users argued:

> So, this is very important, for my communication with the municipality, [...] that is what City Points promotes, because [...] I solved a problem, that was solved and I earned points. (User, April 12, 2019).

In this type of communication, we can relate to what Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2016) argue for, that digital solutions can contribute to new types of

communication. The last app that is mentioned in our interviews is *MobiCascais*, where everything that is connected to transportation, such as parking, bike rental, and bus travels is handled. According to the Deputy Mayor (2019) MobiCascais is the most used app on a daily basis in the municipality, which according to the Deputy Mayor (2019) has to do with that all citizens need to transport themselves every day. Therefore it is essential according to the Deputy Mayor (2019) that the municipality of Cascais continue with their work to find out what other actions citizens perform on a daily basis.

The Deputy Mayor (2019) claimed that these aforementioned apps are rooted in the essential values of the municipality of Cascais, which are *tolerance* and *environment* and is used as the foundation for all initiatives. The Deputy Mayor (2019) claimed, that one of the reasons why the municipality chose to create City Points in the first place, is that the municipality can through City Points show which actions that are grounded in the values of the municipality. During the interview he argued:

> Tolerance and environment. Those two values are the most important values that we have [...] So these culture are very important is very important for us and these values are the values that you want to promote with City Points. [...] So that is why City Points you see a lot of those activities tend to be linked with environmental issues. And some tend to be linked with this tolerance and openness that we want to live in and the society that we want to build. (Deputy Mayor, April 12, 2019).

In order to show the citizens the values of the municipality through the app and combine it with gamification, the municipality of Cascais is building a society which is grounded in these values where practices connected to these values are rewarded. We interpret the already mentioned apps together with the participatory budget as a network of apps, where all these apps are linked and show a culture of the municipality and their citizens as a digital municipality. All of these apps are connected with the same login information and with the development of City Points, the other apps are connected to City Points and by making the right choice in the other apps along with specific societal practices in City Points, you will earn points. These apps are connected and the habit of using the previous apps can be seen as translating into the potential adaptation of City Points. With the background of the participatory budget, which was the first major initiative that was launched in order

to start citizen dialogue and citizens initiative, we interpret that the other apps would not be able to launch with a similar success, through the habits and attitudes that have been created by the citizens when the municipality launches new initiatives. This can be related to the UTAUT 2 model by Venkatesh et al. (2012) where they argue that habit is one of the determinants that are influencing the willingness of a person adopting to innovations. Since the municipality of Cascais has developed initiatives and apps that can be related to City Points, the process of determining to adapt to City Points is not so complicated if you compare it to the first time an initiative was launched, in this case, the participatory budget.

One of the other determinants in the UTAUT 2 model is hedonic motivation (Venkatesh et al., 2012), which we can relate to the others apps that do not encourage fun, instead focusing simplifying the citizens' everyday lives, which then can be related to that if their lives become more simple, it contributes to more time and activities that can be more pleasurable for the citizens. Seen with the inclusion of gamification in City Points, the hedonic motivation can be seen from another angle, to see the points increase and you get closer to a specific reward, which can be fun and exciting in itself. Looking at performance expectancy and effort expectancy from the angle of the UTAUT 2 model (Venkatesh et al., 2012), the municipality has shown its citizens that they can create apps that work and are user friendly, and that leads to the better everyday life of the citizens. Effort expectancy also is lowered when it comes to City Points due to the fact that the municipality uses the same login information, which contributes to less effort to start using the app and since the apps are integrated, there could be points for citizens to redeem from the moment they download the app.

4.2.2 From national to global

> The plan is to have a worldwide City Points engagement [...] (Chief Technology Officer, April 12, 2019).

In the interview with the technological partner Innowave, the Chief Technology Officer (2019) claimed that there is a vision about creating a global network based on the City Point platform. The Chief Technology Officer (2019) mentioned that

the vision is to create an opportunity for citizens to collect points in one nation, and transform these points in another nation. In the interview with the Deputy Mayor (2019), he called it *City Roaming* and claimed that the word is inspired by the same concept as roaming services for cell phones. This is a vision that the Deputy Mayor (2019) argued is something that is not easy to accomplish. The reason for that can be linked to several factors, since according to the report by Capgemini (2018) who measure the rate of the level of innovations and digitalization within the European Union, nations are on different levels. Our interpretation is that this could lead to difficulties because this is something that can influence citizens willingness and habit in different countries that are adaptable for innovations. In Cascais, City Points has been launched on a municipality level, and different municipalities have various problems connected to sustainability and digitalization. This is something that the Chief Technology Officer (2019) was discussing as an essential part of the work with City Points. During the interview he argued:

> So, as we build City Points, when you communicate City Points, we also need to understand the different cultures, and different problems, different approaches (Chief Technology Officer, April 12, 2019).

Understanding municipalities culture, seem to be a vital part of how a similar initiative like City Points can be launched. The Chief Technology Officer (2019) argued that there are cultural differences that affect how the app City Points will be developed for different municipalities that have an interest in implementing it. Different cultures and different levels of digitalization demands for different approaches and different types of communication efforts from a municipality. As mentioned before, we interpret that earlier initiatives have created a foundation for the implementation of City Points. According to what Venkatesh et al. (2012) discusses, about habit on an individual level, we could relate to a municipality. If a municipality has had similar initiatives that demands citizen engagement, the need for communication activities encouraging engagement is not as important for other municipalities that have not had similar initiatives before.

In the interview with the Communication Director (2019), he discussed this global perspective. The Communication Director (2019) claimed that a platform as City Points could work globally because it could be integrated into the world that

we are living in which he referred to as a *digital gamification world*. However, the Communication Director (2019) claimed that City Points will not be the big solution, but it could be a part of other solutions. The Communication Director (2019) argued that one key in a potential global launch of a solution like City Points could be something he called *city networks*:

> I do believe in a network of cities that share the exactly the same DNA. Either though they are coastal cities, or a lot of importance being given to community to territory and so forth, and I believe that they are more and more connecting sharing experiences, knowledge and solutions. One of the solutions will be City Points and within those cities technology can be exactly the same, but in other networks of cities, technology can be other but we will find a way to connect it (Communication Director, April 12, 2019).

We interpret this as that the solutions for a sustainable society cannot be rushed from a municipality's perspective, it takes time to get to know the citizens and gain experience in a rapidly changing word. The Communication Director (2019) argue that a vision for Cascais is; a society where people actually live and are living together and we should all together take care of the common interests. The Communication Director (2019) claimed, that it has become more difficult for municipalities in coordinating its work, due to fact of globalization. To create a sustainable society, we interpret that the municipality of Cascais has according to Palm and Åkerström (2019) integrated relationship management. In Cascais, the digitalization is taken into account, and is integrated into different initiatives as an opportunity for dialogue. From our understanding, by using a digital platform such as City Points, which is incorporating gamification and rewarding offline activities, the platform is a result of the common interests that the municipality has with its citizens.

4.2.3 Not a quick fix

The Chief Technology Officer (2019) claimed that the first reaction to City Points was *"Wow"* from both citizens and other companies. This is something that also the users (2019) explained was their first reaction and one of factors for downloading the app in the first place. The Chief Technology Officer (2019) argued that the

big challenge for municipalities in general, is to generate real effects and it depends on factors such as budget and engagement. The Chief Technology Officer (2019) also pointed out that it does not work to just launch the app, what is needed is a team of people working continuously with City Points to make it work. The Deputy Mayor (2019) claimed that from a broader perspective, it has to do with the quality of life for citizens, quality of life for their families and children which include education, healthcare and other services. The Deputy Mayor (2019) claimed that the first step was to find out what activities that the citizens should be rewarded for through City Points, is an excellent lesson for himself as a Deputy Mayor to understand which actions and activities that are good for everyone. The Communication Director (2019) argues that the municipality of Cascais needs to get to know their citizens and understand these people who do many things that contribute to a better community and say thank you for doing that. From our understanding, City Points as a part of a solution is not something a municipality can just implement and then not maintain it, it needs to be adjusted in accordance with the societal changes.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The aim with this paper was to gain a more in-depth understanding of the release and launch of a digital platform that is supposed to encourage good citizenship practices from a municipality's perspective. Thereby achieving an understanding of how digital strategic communication can contribute to a sustainable society. We have identified two overall themes in the empirical material that affected the release of City Points. These two themes are simplification and culture. First of all, we will present our findings connected to the two case questions and then will we answer our overall research question.

5.1 Communication strategies

What we have discovered from our empirical material is that there were no outspoken strategies that the municipality used in order to communicate City Points to its citizens in the first launch. City Points was launched as a soft opening and ahead of the upcoming relaunch concrete strategies were formulated. The strategy connected to the relaunch was not implemented during the limited time of our thesis. The City Points app was first of all created due to a hackathon that was open for the citizens of Cascais and local companies. From creating the app until the upcoming relaunch, the strategies were not that specific; not much presentation was made to the public and no concrete communicative actions were made. The significant factor that our findings show, is that the recognition from the World Summit Awards set Cascais in the national and international spotlight. As we see it, the media communicated the app City Points to the public, and from the amount of users that adopted the innovation, the municipality have evaluated the app to make it ready for a relaunch.

The first strategy that we have identified in the upcoming relaunch, is to make it *simple* for the citizens. The message of the overall relaunch communication campaign is to portrait City Points as simple to use and it easy could be integrated into citizens' daily lives. Our analysis shows that there is an interest from the

municipality to make this app a part of the citizens' daily lives, and thereby become a communicative link between the citizens and the municipality. We interpret this as most challenging for the municipality, to make City Points relevant for the citizens and in order to meet this challenge a dialogue needs to be conducted with the citizens on what they find relevant. In the communication plan for the upcoming relaunch, the most important finding is that the main focus will be on brand activation activities. This is well connected to the challenge in the dialogue with the citizens that many municipalities are facing currently. The interpersonal communicative actions are already something that Cascais has previously done. We see this as a vital part due to the fact that by meeting its citizens and explaining the app to them in person, the municipality proves that there is a sincere will to listen to its citizens. We also see this as an opportunity for the municipality to listen and receive opinions that may be integrated in the work of developing the app, apart from evaluations in the form of focus groups.

From a strategic communication perspective, it is obvious that the media attention from the award was essential for the municipality to create buzz around the app, and as well as, receiving comments on improvements in order to prepare the app for the relaunch. But, our findings show that it is not just about a buzz, it is vital that the launch delivers value for the citizens, which can be seen especially in the initiative of the participatory budget, where people's first reaction was sceptical, but changed when citizens experienced improvements. The participatory budget has needed long-term communicative efforts in order to get the citizens acceptance and engagement. Seeing this from the City Points perspective, the municipality has to develop the app along with citizens and need to have a long-term focus, since the platform needs to be continuously evaluated, improved and developed in parallel to the changing world we are living in.

5.2 Incorporation of gamification

Nobre and Ferreira (2017) found out that gamification could be used as a tool for brands to create more engagement and to create a relationship with the customers. Due to that, Nobre and Ferreira (2017) conducted a research on a private company. It is interesting to see how their results are translating into our study, since the authors also discovered that the data, generated by the gamified app, was valuable for

the organization in order to create better and more specified communication. Our findings show that the incorporation of gamification creates a way for the municipality in recognizing their citizens. According to our findings, the purpose is not to force the citizens to do things differently in their daily lives, instead, City Points will be used to show the appreciation for what citizens are already doing. However, this outspoken purpose is something we interpret that municipalities need to be careful with, since incorporating gamification directs the citizens towards specific actions by rewarding them. Consequently, we believe it is necessary to communicate a gamified app, as City Points, in a transparent way in order to avoid sceptical citizens. That is why we would argue that the municipality also should communicate their objectives of the platform in order to be transparent.

Our findings also show that City Points can be used as a platform where both municipality and citizens co-create a sense of community in using the core values of the municipality combined with the citizens' opinions of a quality of life. Instead of forcing people to change their behaviors, our findings show that the incorporation of gamification instead can be used to constrain both municipality and citizens into dialogue with each other which we understand, maybe could be one of the solutions for a sustainable society. Because the main challenge, which has been mentioned several times in our analysis, is the municipality's striving to get to know their citizens and to understand what activities citizens perform in their daily lives and what activities should be appreciated. In order to do this, the municipality has to listen to and talk to the citizens. We can see that this work has already begun in the evaluation of the app City Points, but our results also indicate that this is something that the municipality has to work with continuously due to the fact that it is an ongoing process. Therefore the municipality has to be active in listening to and getting to know the people.

From our findings, the particular in-game gamification characteristics were not all used since the users could not relate to all of them. With the integration of social media, the use of gamification can be more developed. This can be related to the research by Ro et al. (2017), which discovered that social pressure was developed since you had a relationship with the other in-game users. We cannot see that effect in City Points yet, since you are not able to see your specific friends, only the overall ranking for the whole municipality. The characteristics of gamification in terms of rewards, to perform activities and earn points that can be redeemed for vouchers

shows an inclusion of gamification. Looking from a strategic communication perspective, they will incorporate the gamification aspect in the campaign, and show how the citizens can earn points, and thereby become *Super Citizens*. Since we have a management perspective in the study, we cannot make any generalizations about the citizen's attitudes towards the gamified aspects. The nature of gamification and the incorporation of everyday activities and the continued dialogue on how to improve and what to include in the app is creating a communication path for dialogue.

5.3 Conclusion

To conclude our results, municipalities need to understand breaking through the information overload that exists today is essential, in order to reach out with information and their messages. Our analysis shows that Cascais is doing so by working and communicating itself as a brand to become more visible and using digital solutions in order to make it simple for the citizens to communicate with them. In order to create meaningful messages, not only by informing their citizens, municipalities also need to inclusive and engage with their citizens. Cascais has developed this by working with the municipality's values regarding tolerance and environment and developed initiatives that include their citizens by encouraging them to participate. In order to communicate with its citizens, the message of the communication needs to be simple for all citizens, by making them understand what a digital platform could mean for them as individuals and what it could contribute to in their everyday lives. A municipality also needs to have self-consciousness and continuously develop one thing at a time. Cascais was doing this by having a soft launch, and continually evaluating, and we also interpret that a municipality needs to do one step at a time as well as think one step ahead. It is also essential for a municipality and partners to have a common perception regarding the message of the digital solution. Since citizens are demanding transparency and efficiency, it is crucial for the communication to have a common perception of what you want to achieve with the digital solutions. If a public organization wants to create an app that is supposed to encourage citizens to conduct beneficial societal practices, it is vital to engage with the citizens and get to know them.

5.4 Further research

According to our findings, we have identified requirements that are used as a foundation in launching initiatives from a municipality's perspective. The prerequisites we have identified are used as a foundation. Looking from a public organization perspective, new tools and strategies need to be developed in order to communicate and inform its citizens. Looking at the multiple use of apps in the municipality of Cascais, the municipality has created a network of communication paths that could be used in order to continue to build dialogue and citizen engagement. Since our study took place and had a focus on the first launch with the upcoming launch in a planning perspective a follow up study in the coming years would be beneficial in order to see the result of the planned communication.

Due to the limitations of our study we have been looking from a management perspective with a small inclusion of citizens' opinions. To research with a focus on users from a quantitative perspective would benefit the area. Our empirical material and the results from our analysis are from a Portuguese context, and it would be exciting and beneficial for the field to look at different parts of the world, to see if the identified themes simplification and culture are applicable in another environment. Since the technological partner Innowave are delivering these type of services, it would be interesting to compare our results from Cascais with other municipalities, in particular having a different pace of innovations and digitalization. We have identified several other viewpoints that would be interesting for other scholars in other fields to be looking at the same phenomena, for example from a political science view that could look at the case from that point of view, on how these apps are affecting democracy and building trust to the elected officials. Since there are challenges for municipalities in regards to digitization, more research from every scientific field needs to be conducted in order to build a more sustainable future.

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7. Appendixes

Appendix 1 - Interview guide for Innowave

Background

- Would you like to tell us more about yourself and your position on Innowave?
- Any other positions?

City Points

- In what way have you been involved in the project City Points?

The launch

- Would you like to describe the process from idea to launch?
- Did you have concrete objectives with the launch? How were the objectives written? Were the goals measurable?
- Who was the launch targeted to? Why? In what way?
- What was the message with the launch? In what way? How?
- What communication channels did you use? In what purpose? How?
- In what way can you be sure that the objectives and strategies are working?
- In what way did you use gamification in marketing activities?

Experiences

- What experiences do you take with you, from being a part of the project City Points?
- Any challenges?
- What are the main differences in working with public organizations than private?

Future

- From your experience of working with the launch of City Points, what would you recommend other nations or municipalities to do when it comes to communication strategies?
- Do you want to tell us something else that we have not asked you about?

Appendix 2 - Interview guide for the Communication Director

Background

- Would you like to tell us more about yourself and your position?
- How would you describe the long-term objectives or goals of the municipality?
- How do you achieve these goals?

Marketing

- In what way do you work with communication activities?
- Who is responsible for communication marketing activities?
- Which communication channels do you use?
- What is the aim of using these channels?
- What message are you aiming for to share in these channels?
- How do you work to achieve and maintain the dialogue between the municipality and citizens?

City Points

- Would you like to tell us more about the app and the idea behind it?
- Can you describe the whole process and primary the communication process?
- Which individuals were part of developing the app?

The launch

- When the whole idea was turned into reality and the development was done, how did the work proceed?
- Who became responsible for communicating the app?
- Have you ever launched a similar service?
- Do you believe that this launch was different from earlier/other launches?

Objectives

- Did you have concrete objectives with the launch? How were the objectives written? Were the goals measurable?

Target and message

- Who was the launch targeted to? Why? In what way?
- What was the message with the launch? In what way? How?

Communication channels

- What communication channels did you use? In what purpose? How?
- If you could describe a perfect scenario in using communication channels, how would it be? What would be a success?
- In what way can you be sure that the objectives and strategies are working?
- How did you work with response and dialogue between municipality and citizens?

Other thoughts

- What attributes is needed in order to create engagement, keep people motivated, interested and loyal?
- What pros and cons did you see with incorporating gamification in the app?

Reception

- When the app was launched, what is your experience of how the citizens in Cascais reacted to the app?
- How did you experience the reaction by the citizens?
- How did you collect the information about how the citizens experienced the app?
- How did you experience the attitudes towards the app?

Evaluation

- Have you followed up the objectives that were set in the communication plan?
- How often do you evaluate the effects and usage of the app?
- Challenges
- Do you see any general challenges with launches by a public organization in comparison with private organizations?
- Do you see any cultural of demographic factors connected to the launch that is unique for Cascais?
- What kind of pieces of advice and recommendations would you give other municipalities in terms of citizen engagement and sustainable society?

Appendix 3 - Interview guide for the users

Background

- How long have you lived in Cascais?

Marketing

- Do you ever follow up happenings of your municipality? Where? How?
- How do you experience citizens general interest in the municipalities work in Cascais?

City Points

- When did you first came across the app City Points? How? Why?
- How did other people in your environment hear about the app?
- What was your first reaction to the app?
- What was the trigger to download the app?
- How often do you use the app?
- What is the reason why you are still using the app?
- Would you like to explain which activities you are using the app?
- In what way do you use your points?
  How do you believe that you influence other people to use the app?
- Do you often use scoreboards to compare yourself with others and how are you using these functions?
- Does the number of points determine what type of activities do you do?

Effects

- In what way have your daily activities changed from the day you started to use the app?

Personal values

- What expectations did you have on the app? Has the app lived up to your expectations?
- What do you perceive Cascais goal is with the app City Points?
- What is your opinion on how to reach more people to start using the app?

Experiences

- Have you experienced any changes in the municipality of Cascais since the launch? If so, what changes?

Future

- In what way do you believe that the app could be developed?
- Do you believe that the app is contributing to a more sustainable society?

Appendix 4 - Interview guide for the Deputy Mayor

Background

- Would you like to tell us more about yourself and your position?
- How would you describe the core values of the municipality of Cascais? - How do you achieve/fulfill these values?
- How would you describe the long-term objectives or goals of the municipality?
- How do you and the municipality of Cascais work to achieve and maintain the dialogue between the municipality and its citizens?

The launch

- Would you like to tell us more about the app and the idea behind it?
- Since the app launched, what is your experience from how the municipality has communicated it?
- What do you formulate to be the primary objective of City Points?
- From your experience how did the citizens of Cascais react to the app?

Challenges

- What are the challenges in launching this type of service according to yourself?

Personal experience

- What do you think is the reason why the app has gotten so much attention?
- In what way do you believe the launch of the app has affected the citizens' attitudes?

Challenges

- Do you see any cultural of demographic factors connected to the launch that is unique for Cascais?
- What kind of advice and recommendations would you give other municipalities in terms of citizen engagement and sustainable society?