

# Chapter 4

## Tracking Paths to Smart Governance: The Case of Korydallos Municipality— Greece



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**Abstract** Strengthening capacity of urban systems and their constituents in order to effectively tackle contemporary challenges and risks in a rapidly evolving, complex and uncertain global environment; and produce value for local communities in a sustainable and inclusive way, brings to the forefront the concept of smart governance. Tracking paths to smart governance, being the focus of this work, implies the need to conceptualize smartness and governance; and shed light on key organizational attributes that can pave the way for the transition from government to smart governance. Having identified these attributes by literature review, the paper highlights institutional, organizational, societal etc. developments in a Greek city, Korydallos Municipality, in order barriers and gaps in its trajectory to smart governance to be illuminated, both before and during the economic recession and austerity stress, faced by the Greek economy. Experiences gained by this pilot example, representing a rather typical small and medium-sized city in the Mediterranean context, provide useful inferences and evidence-based results for similar cities that strive to ride the smart governance wave.

**Keywords** Urban management • Smart governance • Information and communication technologies (ICT) • Offline and online participation • Economic recession  
Social innovation

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## 4.1 Introduction

The world is currently witnessing an escalating *urbanization wave*. Indeed, in 2016 more than half (54.5%) of the world's population lived in cities, a figure that is projected to reach 60% by 2030 (UN 2016: ii). The pace of urbanization is accelerating quite fast, rendering the 21st century the “Urban Century or Age” or the “Metropolitan Century” (Alvarez et al. 2008; UN-Habitat 2009; UN 2015; OECD 2015; Stratigea et al. 2017a). As Suzuki et al. claim, urbanization is nowadays the most important *global trend* and the “... *defining feature of the 21st century*” (Suzuki et al. 2010: xv). This noticeable trend can be perceived both (Stratigea et al. 2017a):

- *Positively*, with urban areas being considered as *motors of growth and prosperity* (Clos 2016), a *magnet* for highly qualified, talented and young labour force, and thus important *nodes* for innovation and creativity. They currently count for 80% of the global Gross Domestic Product GDP (Clos 2016), forming the *backbone* of the global economy. Considerable importance is also attached to urban areas in the European territory, where cities are claimed to boost European innovation and productivity; and become key drivers for steering the revival of the European economy (EU 2011; Stratigea and Panagiotopoulou 2015a; European Commission and UN-Habitat 2016).
- *Negatively*, with overcrowded urban areas being conceived as the *source* of the currently witnessed global challenges and risks that are due to the excessive use of resources (e.g. energy, water and land), pollution, congestion, irrational consumption patterns, overproduction of waste, unemployment, migration, segregation and poverty, etc. As such, urban areas are nowadays at the forefront of policy concern for serving *glocal* (global/local) *sustainability objectives*, i.e. focus areas in seeking to cope with current environmental, social and economic inefficiencies.

Cities nowadays are in front of a variety of challenges and risks that are case-specific, e.g. the rapidly ageing population or the urban sprawl in developed countries; the urban poverty and slums' creation in developing ones (UN Habitat 2009). However, they share an *overriding planning goal*, i.e. the struggle for reaching *urban sustainability objectives*, implying the pursuit of prosperity and innovation, the establishment of conditions for social cohesion/inclusion and health/safety for their communities, the adaptation to climate change impacts, etc. (Stratigea 2012, 2015; Tao 2013).

The *scene* within which sustainability goals have to be achieved by urban settlements is marked by a range of current transitions, namely:

- The evolving *collaborative, decentralized and smarter governmental structures* that are largely grounded on *institutional rearrangements* and *political will/vision*, capable of establishing wider partnerships and coalitions crosscutting the urban or even wider spatial scales. These structures aim at: increasing *awareness* about various urban problems; collecting *distributed knowledge* for better

grasping risks and policy options ahead; and identifying *policy priorities and paths* that can ensure *consensus* as well as effective and efficient *implementation* of plans coping with these risks (Burby 2003; Elliott and Slocum 2005; Stratigea 2015; Rodriquez Bolivar 2018).

- The revolutionary *technological developments* permeating all different dimensions of urban life/management and supporting the establishment of effective means for: *interaction* among urban actors (citizens, entrepreneurial and research communities, decision makers); gathering of *intelligence* and new ideas emerging from *synergies' creation* among them; broadening (*e-*)*participation* potential; supporting the provision of innovative public services, etc. (Rodriquez Bolivar 2018).
- A changing *societal environment*, where issues like justice, fight of poverty and social equity, empowerment and motivation to engage and participate in more substantive ways in decision-making processes, increase of awareness and sharing of responsibility, shift in power structures, consensus building etc. become *key issues* of policy concern and planning practice in searching sustainable future pathways; and reveal the importance of the *local level* as the most challenging one for inspiring and engaging communities in fulfilling global sustainability objectives (Nalbandian et al. 2013; Stratigea 2012, 2015). Following this rationale, *citizens and communities' engagement* is nowadays perceived by many researchers and decision makers as a no longer optional choice, but an imperative one (Nalbandian et al. 2013); and one that has at its heart a more *human-centric approach* of urban management, largely supported by current ICT-enabled urban developments (smart city, smart governance, smart environment etc.) (Coe et al. 2001; Lombardi et al. 2012; Stratigea and Panagiotopoulou 2015a; Panagiotopoulou and Stratigea 2017; Prado Lara et al. 2016; Bell 2017).
- The *economic recession*, implying scarcity of financial resources for investing in urban environments; and introducing the need to explore new, innovative and more resource-efficient urban problem-solving ways for producing wealth and services for their citizens. Such ways are nowadays enhanced by technological advances as well as the ICT and their applications in the urban context (Stratigea and Panagiotopoulou 2015a; Rodriquez Bolivar 2018).

Within such a scene, the shift of local governments towards more collaborative decentralized structures has enforced the debate and triggered even more the need for *partnerships' creation practices* in urban policy making. The increased importance attached to partnerships is associated with: different aspects of urban life, from urban management to urban planning, e.g. collaborative planning (Healey 1997); and a variety of fields in urban policy-making e.g. participatory budgeting in Brazil; urban public-private partnerships for coping with resource scarcity and the raising infrastructure demand, imposed by the escalating urbanization trend (Abers 2000; Healey 1997; Kyvelou et al. 2011); etc. Management of complex urban problems through such practices is subject to *collaborative endeavours*, seeking to pool knowledge and resources from the variety of urban actors, with the support of

technological advances and ICT developments. As Brabham (2006:29) states “... *interdisciplinary and participatory design collaborations seem to be the best option for problem solving in a democratic society of the digital, postindustrial age*”.

The recognition of the value of collaboration and partnerships’ creation within the urban policy arena has paved the way for the transition of the urban political system *from government to governance* (Stoker 1998; Rhodes 2000). Governance, in this respect, constitutes another *global trend*, recognizing the need for *cooperation* among different actors and levels of government in order complex problems of urban areas to be properly addressed and solved. The term was originally introduced by different disciplines (institutional theory, public administration, international theory, political science) (Rosenau and Czempiel 1992; Rhodes 2000; Heywood 2002). As such, it has “*meant different things*” (UN-Habitat 2009: 6) to different scientific communities. Two diametrically opposing views are the one presented by the World Bank (Maldonado 2010), taking an *administrative and managerial stand* of governance interpretation; and that presented by the UN-Habitat Global Campaign of Good Governance (UN-Habitat 2002), taking a more *democratic as well as human and civil rights’ stand*. In the course of the governance debate, World Bank has adjusted its approach to incorporate *participation*, as a means to fight against corruption and support transparency and unimpeded access to information, thus widening the context of ‘*good governance*’ agenda (Maldonado 2010). Today, urban governance has grown to a prevailing concept in politicians’ rhetoric and policy considerations (Jessop 2002); and governmental structures at various scales strive for gaining capacities needed to “ride the wave”.

Progress in urban governance has been largely facilitated by the intensifying digitization of urban environments. Indeed, digitized environments enable city governments to cope with challenges in a more *effective and resource-efficient* way (Winters 2011; Baskerville 2012; Walsham 2012; Hoon and Lee 2013; Stratigea and Panagiotopoulou 2015a; Panagiotopoulou and Stratigea 2017; Stratigea et al. 2017a); and carry out their tasks in a *legitimate and transparent* manner. In such a context, digitization supports remedy of former governance failures and transformation of urban government to collaborative governance (Caragliu et al. 2011; Chourabi et al. 2012; David et al. 2018). The crosscutting power of digitization in urban environment is sketched by its impact upon all spheres of urban life, society, economy, environment and government, revealing new opportunities but also challenges for urban problems’ solving; while it also offers new ways of e-interaction and e-collaboration among cities’ actors.

From the previous discussion it is evident that smart governance is actually based on the interplay among complex technological, institutional and societal changes (see also Sect. 4.3.1). Since technological aspects are extensively discussed in the literature, the focus of this paper is mostly on the institutional and societal aspects. More specifically, the *goal* of the paper is to *track paths to smart governance* by identifying *key organizational attributes* of local governments that can support such a transition. This is accomplished by a conceptual exploration of both the smart city (smartness) and smart governance, grounded on literature review.

Based on this exploration, the paper attempts to highlight institutional and societal developments in a Greek urban environment, Korydallos Municipality. Trajectory and experiences gained by this pilot example, representing a rather typical case study in terms of similarities to many other small and medium-sized urban environments in the Mediterranean, could provide useful inferences for relevant cities that strive to follow such paths.

The *structure* of the paper has as follows: first it elaborates on the conceptualization of smart city and smart governance in an effort to delineate a range of attributes that characterize these concepts. Next, the steps undertaken so far towards smart governance by the specific Greek case study are discussed with respect to the above identified attributes, so that the trajectory of this typical city example (small/medium scale, lagging behind town in the Mediterranean/Greek context) and the pros and cons that are marking the paths followed to be illuminated. Finally, certain conclusions are drawn, grounded on the conceptualization of smartness and smart governance and the evidence-based results of the case study at hand.

## 4.2 Shifting to Smart Governance—Key Drivers’ Exploration

### 4.2.1 *Conceptualizing the Smart City Concept*

The concept of *smart city*, as a contemporary ICT-enabled approach for serving sustainable urban development objectives, is currently at the top of the research and policy agenda for coping with the unprecedented challenges faced by cities in the “Urban Age”. At the same time, it is also constantly gaining popularity among various cities around the globe in order to cope with the most pressing problems of today that occur at the urban scale. However, it still remains a highly ambiguous, fuzzy and equivocal concept; a concept that, as quite successfully was stated by Zait (2016: 3), “... *strives to clarify its identity*”. This implies the lack of an *operational definition* and a *semantic interoperability* of the term across disciplines, as can be depicted by the large number of definitions articulated in various research papers (ITU Report 2015; Kummitha and Crutzen 2017; Stratigea et al. 2017a; Panagiotopoulou et al. 2018); and the exponentially growing literature on the topic (Deakin 2014; Albino et al. 2015).

A literature review could reveal different *conceptual approaches* of the smart city concept, emanating from different theoretical streams and stands of respective researchers (Stratigea et al. 2017a). For example these may refer to the use of ICT for effectively managing the six dimensions of an urban space, namely economy, people, governance, mobility, environment, living, articulated by Giffinger et al. (2007); the smart city’s conceptualisation developed by Hollands (2008) who, while emphasizing the role of sophisticated ICT and their applications, he is also

stressing the importance of gathering stakeholders and community groups' intelligence; the *innovation theory approach*, within which smart cities are considered as the ground for promoting innovation strategies in social or economic fields (Hoon Lee et al. 2013); but also the more advanced conceptualization of participatory or collaborative governance, stressing the importance of network interaction and collaborative decision-making processes (Castelnovo et al. 2015). Recently, there is an effort for integrating key concepts and theories, articulated so far, in order an all-encompassing approach for smart cities' notion to emerge (Meijer and Bolivar 2016; Przybilovicz et al. 2017; Castelnovo et al. 2015).

Research works of Nam and Pardo (2011) and Meijer and Bolivar (2016) converge towards the classification of existing definitions/conceptualizations of smart city in *three distinct streams*, appearing in various research efforts. Such a classification is based on the core perception of these definitions, referring to the *technological, the human resource and the governance stream*.

The *technological stream*, i.e. the *hard dimension* of smart cities' designation, as stated by Zait (2016), actually emerges from smart city definitions that emphasize the role of technology and ICT as the defining features of the concept. This technologically-grounded, rather narrow, smart city perception is effectively promoted mostly by the ICT industry, but also by a certain part of the research community (Keeling and Mooney 2011; Zhuhadar et al. 2017). It is usually sketched by a *'smart' compartment*, i.e. an implicit reference to the technological dimension, coupled with terms reflecting a *sectoral interest*, e.g. ('smart') water, waste, energy, buildings, health, education, mobility; a *social interest* e.g. ('smart') people, living, inclusion; a *spatial interest*, e.g. cities, communities, territories, regions, environment; and a *policy interest*, e.g. ('smart') economies, governance, development, strategies etc. The number of works falling into this stream far exceeds articles related to the rest two ones (Zait 2016). The technological stream endorses qualitative and high-speed ICT infrastructure, forming the backbone of smart cities or being integrated into urban systems (Dirks et al. 2009). This infrastructure is grasped as enabler of cities' transformation to more intelligent, interconnected, innovative and sustainable urban spaces (Komninos 2011; Dirks et al. 2009). Despite the criticism exerted on this stream with regards to its *"technological determinism"* (Castelnovo et al. 2015: 5), this has been acknowledged for the huge potential that digital technology can offer towards more informed, data-intensive urban policy making.

Second lies the *human resource stream*, the *soft component* of the smart city (Zait 2016), which addresses *human capital/smart people* as the main constituent of smart cities, considering technology more as a leveraging rather than a defining attribute of such a city (Lombardi et al. 2012; Shapiro 2006). This stream features the role of a highly qualified, intellectual social capital for adopting and using ICT infrastructure in urban reality, endorsing transformation of urban environments into smart and creative places (Albino et al. 2015; Zait 2016). The importance of this component is delineated in the work of Deakin and Allwinkle (2007), Deakin (2009a, b), and Deakin and Al Waer (2011), addressing a *community-led smart city approach*. In this approach, it is stated that the transition of a territory to smart relies

on its *capacity to learn and innovate*. This, in turn, is built upon the *creativity* of its population, the availability of institutions for knowledge production and finally the disposal of digital infrastructure, enabling communication, empowerment and training of people. Moreover, in this approach emphasis is placed on the enhancement of participation and democratic debates as well as on inclusive vision-building processes.

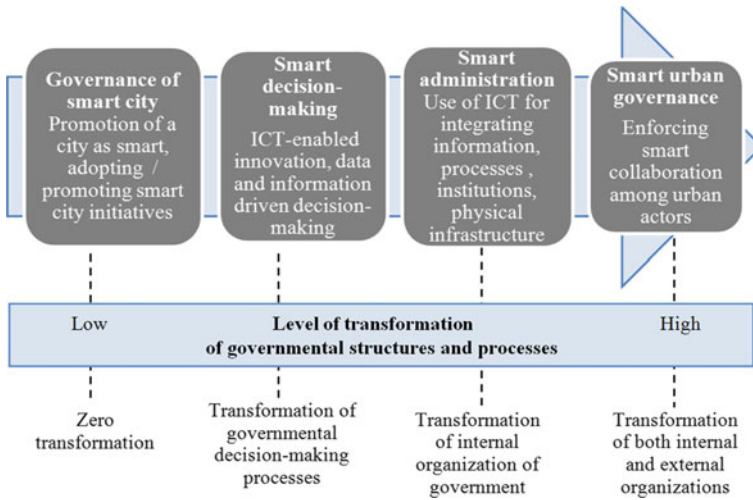
Last is the group of smart city definitions that are falling into the *governance stream*. This rather recently emerging stream in the vast smart city literature, highlights, *as a determining feature* of a smart city, the *productive network interaction and smart collaboration* among various urban actors and stakeholders' groups (Meijer and Bolivar 2016). Its value towards effectively implementing smart city initiatives has been recognized by a range of researchers (Bélissent 2010; Washburn et al. 2010; Misuraca et al. 2011; Albino et al. 2015; Zait 2016). According to the rationale followed by this stream, a smart city is the outcome of *cooperative stakeholders' efforts*, collaborating in partnerships of different shape and form, in order to produce value through the collective planning, implementation, monitoring and assessment of city- and citizen-specific smart initiatives, policies, programs etc. (Stratigea and Panagiotopoulou 2015a).

Based on the above three streams' discussion, Meijer and Bolivar (2016) reach the conclusion that a city:

- Cannot be characterized as '*smart*' or '*stupid*' and its progress should be explored in an integrated way in all these three domains, i.e. smart technology, smart people and smart governance, taking into consideration its *structural and cultural attributes*.
- Can *progress gradually in smartening up* to one or more of these domains, with this progress being largely determined by its historical context, needs and future expectations as well as challenges ahead.

#### 4.2.2 *Conceptualizing the Smart Governance Concept*

Further to the above discussion on grasping smart city constituents, various attempts have been made towards smart governance conceptualization (Torfing et al. 2012; Meijer and Bolivar 2016). In this respect, four literature-driven, ideal or typical conceptualizations have been identified by Meijer and Bolivar (2016). These actually reflect different theoretical perspectives with regards to the role of government and the level of certain *institutional rearrangements or transformations* at the governmental level in order the transition from government to smart governance to be accomplished. They argued that what actually may occur can be represented by a *ranking of cities* according to the current level of transformation, ranging from an *institutional conservation* (traditional governance of a smart city) to an *institutional transformation* (smart urban governance), with intermediate stands between



**Fig. 4.1** Gradual transformation of governmental structures and processes towards smart governance model (Adapted from Meijer and Bolivar 2016)

these two edges being the ones of *smart decision-making* and *smart administration* (Fig. 4.1).

According to Meijer and Bolivar (2016), the most conservative conceptualization of smart governance refers to simply *governing a smart city*, i.e. make the right policy choices and find effective ways for implementing them. Next comes the one of *smart decision-making*, placing emphasis on the role of technologies for collecting and elaborating a huge amount of data for better informing decision-making processes and their implementation. This is followed by the third level—*smart administration*—incorporating a certain transformation of governmental structures; and accommodation of more sophisticated technologies for integrating information, processes, institutions and physical infrastructure and better serving citizens’ needs. Finally, the most transformative level of smart governance conceptualization, calls for *smart collaboration* among a variety of city actors. This implies an ideally transformed *networked governance system*, where collaboration in both decision-making and policy implementation is apparent; and value for the city as a whole is produced.

The networked governance system is qualified by Meijer and Bolivar (2016) as the highest level of transformation, bound by the radical changes of both the government internal organizations and the external organizations. According to Tapscott and Agnew (1999), this also constitutes a more *community-based model* that is leveraged by technological developments as enablers of ubiquitous digital connectivity. This is in alignment with the definition of smart governance by Misuraca (2010), Castelnovo et al. (2015), and Przeybilovicz et al. (2017). This definition designates this model as a technology- and ICT-enabled (social media, Internet, open data, citizen sensors, etc.) city governance, targeting the more



effective and efficient internal administrative governmental operations; as well as proactive and open-minded governance structures, capable of collectively-designing policy decisions through online and offline interaction between government and community actors. In this way, it opens up *better opportunities* for all actors of a local ecosystem to participate in decision-making processes.

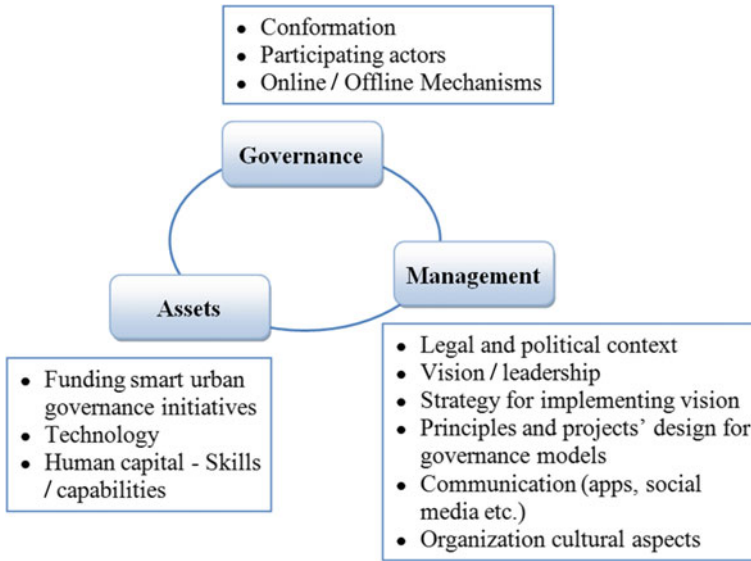
At the same time, Meijer and Bolivar (2016: 403) also argue that “... *one cannot assume beforehand that a higher level of transformation of urban government is by definition more effective in smartening up a city*”. The effort of a city to become smarter entails the need to transform governmental processes alongside with internal governmental organization structures in such significant ways that the city’s potential to cope with sustainability objectives and negative externalities will be strengthened, keeping track with *historically grown path dependencies* (Meijer and Bolivar 2016; Przybilovicz et al. 2017; Edelenbos et al. 2018).

Based on the above discussion, it is evident the highly appreciated role of city governments (elected such as mayors or members of city council, city’s committees and/or delegated leaders or chief executives of local government organization) as *key actors* in motivating engagement of local stakeholders’ groups and co-designing—co-deciding those smart initiatives that can pave the way towards a smart transformation of communities, nicely acknowledged by the work of Barber (2013), stating that “*mayors can change the world*”. This depicts the power attributed to local governmental organizations in making those decisions that can support the smartening up of their cities.

But how this can be accomplished? Or what are those decisive *organizational attributes* of local governments that are capable of marking the path towards smart governance? This concern brings to the forefront a rather *new dimension* of smart governance discourse, largely connected to *technology and innovation*, as well as *public engagement*. Moreover, while e-government and organizational aspects are issues already widely explored in the literature, this does not hold for research on tracing the above mentioned decisive organizational attributes (Chourabi et al. 2012; Przybilovicz et al. 2017).

The recent work of Przybilovicz et al. (2017) elaborates on the above raised topic, through a systematic literature review, taking into consideration a number of articles that present different theoretical approaches. Their findings are quite useful, drawing upon an exhaustive literature search and producing a coherent synthesis out of knowledge gathered. More specifically, they claim that smart governance is an *urban innovation perspective* that can be grasped as the “*interplay among technological, managerial, organizational and policy innovation*” [Przybilovicz et al. (2017: 1)]. Additionally, they identify a range of *key organizational attributes* of local governments for shifting to smart governance, which are falling into three distinct *layers*, namely the *governance, assets and management layer*. The essential elements of each single layer are presented in Fig. 4.2.

The *first layer* of organizational attributes—*governance layer*—refers to the *nature and scope* of interaction between the government on the one hand and the *actors* of a local ecosystem on the other (institutions, business stakeholders,



**Fig. 4.2** Layers of organizational attributes for shifting from government to smart governance (Adapted from Przebilovicz et al. 2017)

research and civil society, etc.). Essential attributes falling into this layer are Przebilovicz et al. (2017):

- *Conformation*, implying the ways in which *governance is activated*. This relates to different *streams* of actors' engagement, which in turn is associated with their role in the decision-making process (from purely informative to more substantial one, being active part of such a process), control over planning information (open data), level of empowerment, as well as control over the final policy decision (Stratigea 2015). Literature review, as conducted by Przebilovicz et al. (2017), reveals three *main streams* of actors' engagement, namely the: *participative model*, where government adopts participatory planning approaches for actors' engagement in the process of designing and delivering policies; *collaborative model*, where actors are getting involved at certain stages of the planning process in order knowledge exchange and empowerment of those involved to be achieved; and *co-creation model*, implying full engagement of actors throughout the stages of smart governance planning process attributing, to those engaged in a more substantial and active way, the power to define the type of desired applications and become content developers and consumers.
- *Actors' engagement* is one of the most critical factors of success of governance structures towards smartness (Luna-Reyes et al. 2007; Stratigea and Panagiotopoulou 2015a); and a factor that has been given less attention on the expense of comprehending better technological and policy aspects of smart cities (Chourabi et al. 2012). Reaching a *variety of actors' networks* is crucial for: ensuring a rich diversity of views, perceptions, motives, etc.; and

accommodating conflicting interests as to the policy problems at hand in the planning process and outcomes (Stratigea 2015). The higher the diversity of actors' networks the more enriched the decision-making process and the policies emerging out of it.

- With regards to the *mechanisms* available for engaging actors in governance processes, a wide variety of tools are available, both *offline* (e.g. policy exercises, consensus conferences, planning cells) and *online* (e.g. crowdsourcing, social media) (Stratigea 2015; Panagiotopoulou and Stratigea 2017; Krommyda et al. 2017; Czepkiewicz et al. 2017), as well as hybrid forms, such as *living labs*. The latter, by combining online and offline tools, seek to formulate innovative policy outcomes to urban problems, based on the shared power of various actors engaged (Steen and van Bueren 2017).

The *second layer* of organizational attributes—*assets*—involves *funding, technology and human capital*. More specifically (Przebylovicz et al. 2017):

- Smart urban governance initiatives depend on *financial resources* for e.g. deploying the necessary ICT infrastructure or implementing participatory processes. Scarcity of resources is a significant *barrier* to following smart governance pathways.
- *Technology* is another critical asset, establishing the ground for actors' interaction and e-engagement in policy making procedures (Panagiotopoulou and Stratigea 2017). Tools exploited should be user-friendly and easy to handle by participants. A useful option for ensuring high usability is to develop the necessary governance tools through *co-creation processes*, taking into account different users' profiles, specific requirements etc. of each single urban context.
- *Human capital* refers to technological capabilities, skills and competencies of human staff of local public administration as essential elements for progressing towards smart urban governance.

The last layer of organizational attributes relates to *management*. This incorporates (Przebylovicz et al. 2017):

- *Legal and political context*: that frames the decision-making context, i.e. norms and rules of both internal (city at hand) and external environment, within which smart urban governance can be planned and implemented. Inefficiencies or absence of such a context (e.g. lack of a legislative framework that enables participatory practice in smart urban governance) can place *barriers* to fulfillment of smart governance objectives.
- *Vision/leadership*: an issue of pivotal importance for paving the way towards smart governance is the setting up and effective communication of a vision for guiding decision-making processes towards this desired end state. Mayor and city council have a crucial role as leaders of both vision-building processes and the consistent implementation of this vision through targeted policy actions (Mooij 2003; Chourabi et al. 2012; Barber 2013). The effectiveness of city leaders in such a role is assessed through the way they succeed to motivate actors and broaden their engagement in planning and implementing this vision. As stressed by Heinelt et al. (2006: 15), "... leadership plays a crucial role as

*enabler of community involvement*”; and successful initiatives of urban governance tend to be “*sealed by a leader’s commitment, dedication and visibility*” (Heinelt et al. 2006: 17).

- *Strategy for implementing vision*: relates to the governance model used for implementing the vision. This can be grounded on various *principles and projects’ design* in pursuing smart urban governance; which in turn implies a different level of commitment of those engaged at the stage of implementation.
- *Communication*: addresses the variety of *means* used for interaction between government and actors of the local ecosystem. A pool of options is available in this respect, addressing *one way* (from government to local actors e.g. means for broadcasting information) or *two ways interaction* (from government to local actors and vice versa e.g. use of social media) (Stratigea 2015; Panagiotopoulou and Stratigea 2017; Afzalan and Muller 2018).
- *Organization cultural aspects*: various organizational principles are falling into this category, largely bound to cultural aspects. As such can be referred flexibility, interactivity, transparency, adoption of participatory democracy etc. Cultural aspects can to a large extent determine inclination of organizational structure to change, i.e. move away from traditional routines and values; and thus positively or negatively affect the way to smart governance.

Having conceptualized smart governance as an *innovative urban governance approach* for coping with contemporary urban challenges and sustainability objectives, in the following section, an attempt will be made to assess efforts of a specific case study, the Korydallos Municipality—Greece, towards smart governance.

### 4.3 Smart Governance in Korydallos Municipality—Tracking Organizational and Societal Attributes

#### 4.3.1 Setting the Scene—The Korydallos Municipality Context

Korydallos Municipality is an urbanized area, a suburb of the Athens metropolitan region. The city is located in the neighbourhood of the industrial zone of Western Attica and Piraeus, the biggest port in Greece.

A major landmark of Korydallos Municipality is the location of the *largest state prison complex*, somehow “sealing” past and current developments of the locality; and raising negative psychological, security and aesthetic concerns for the local society. Degradation of the city’s image due to the location of this complex has favoured affordable housing opportunities for low income population. This, coupled with its location next to Piraeus port and the Western Attica industrial zone, has throughout the years led to the attraction in the area of a large and rather diversified number of rural immigrants and later on foreign migrants, marking thus a

continuously increasing population trend (Stratigea et al. 2016a). This trend has been reversed during the last decade, following the population decrease pattern of both the Greek state and the Attica Region. The population decrease has definitely revealed the municipality's low *resilience* with regards to the deindustrialization wave, beating the Greek economy in general and the city of Korydallos in particular during the '90s and the beginning of 21st century. The situation has been further worsened due to the economic recession and austerity stress, experienced by Greek cities and regions during the last decade.

*Future trajectory* of Korydallos municipality in a recession era is fraught with difficulties, but also challenges and opportunities that originate from the structure of both the local population and the economy. Indeed, economic stagnation has had severe impacts on employment opportunities of the low skill and educational profile population in the study region. Noticeable outcomes during the years of stagnation, such as high unemployment rates, rising social inequalities and steady increase of NEETs' population, reveal the inherent weaknesses of the local society and its limited capacity to cope with changing skills' demand of the new reality. The local economic structure has also been affected by recession stress, with important sectors of the local economy, such as retail trade, being considerably shrunk (Stratigea et al. 2016a).

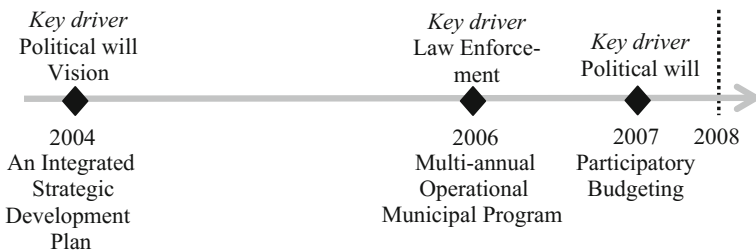
On the other hand, the different origins of Korydallos population that are due to certain migration waves, directed to this area, have given rise to the establishment of a distinct *cultural environment*. Within this environment, a number of cultural associations are activating, in an effort to preserve and promote culture of their place of origin. Throughout the years, cultural associations and related activities as well as cultural infrastructure have matured; and have built up an important element of the city's identity. This sets the ground for the creation of a favorable environment, a comparative advantage of Korydallos municipality, capable of supporting the flourishing of a *Cultural Creative Economy*.

*Planning and implementing future smart and sustainable pathways* for recovering social cohesion and restructuring/reorienting local economy towards more dynamic sectors in an environmentally friendly way in the Municipality of Korydallos seems to be a rather tricky and difficult task. Such a task has to be carried out within: (i) an environment of economic recession, implying severe municipal budgetary constraints; (ii) an institutional context for local government in Greece that has evolved from a centralized to a decentralized one, setting up new challenges for local governments; and (iii) a fastening Europeanization pace (Kyvelou and Marava 2017), deriving from European decisions and impacting policies as well as political and administrative structures at the local/national level (Héritier et al. 2001). Moreover, accomplishment of such a task calls for *smart governance approaches* that are capable of identifying *strengths* of the region at hand as well as building up *consensus* on a *shared vision*; and motivating local population and stakeholders for reaching this vision through the establishment of durable multi-actor partnerships and networks for planning and implementing *co-operatively designed policy decisions* (Stratigea et al. 2015c, 2017b).

Based on the specific case study context, but also the conceptualization of smart governance discussed in previous sections—*governance, assets and management as decisive layers*; and the *interplay among technology, people and governance* –, the trajectory of Municipality of Korydallos towards this end is explored in the following. The scope of this exploration is to identify inefficiencies and barriers as well as gaps in terms of the above described interplay. This will support more informed and knowledgeable decisions of local government with regards to the steps needed for the transition to a more successful and smart governance model. The *time span* of this exploration expands from 2004 to 2016. During this period, Greece has entered in a prickly pathway, marked by the economic recession and austerity, strongly affecting all different levels of government. Taking this into consideration, exploration of the Korydallos trajectory towards smart governance is split into *two distinct periods*, the one before recession and the one falling into the turbulent period of the socio-economic crisis, aiming also to identify the impact of austerity in such an effort.

### 4.3.2 Smart Governance Pace Before Recession—Key Attributes

Year 2004 can be perceived as the point of departure of the first major participatory initiative in Korydallos city, which originated by the *vision and leadership* of the Mayor at that time, who envisaged a more *strategic approach* for managing local affairs. During his term, and following his own vision, radical government transformations took place, which are summarized into (Fig. 4.3): (i) the drawing up of the first *integrated strategic development plan* of the city (Municipality of Korydallos 2004), in absence of any kind of relevant legislation at that time, an endeavor that has signaled the lurching of participatory approaches in local decision-making processes; (ii) the development of *Multi-annual Operational Municipal Programs* (MOMPs) emanating from law enforcement (2006); and (iii) the introduction of the concept of *participatory budgeting*, a pioneer movement



**Fig. 4.3** Before recession—key milestones of participatory strategic management in Korydallos municipality

of Korydallos municipality for setting up policy priorities and managing local resources in alignment with societal expectations.

Speaking of the *governance* layer during that particularly time span (2004–2008), it could be noticed that this was driven by *political will and vision*; and was inspired by the concern of strengthening citizens and stakeholders' engagement in co-defining strategic priorities for the future of the municipality. This is more distinctly noticed in 2007 (participatory budgeting initiative) (Alexopoulos et al. 2011), where participatory approaches were used for decision-making with regards to the prioritization of city's interventions and respective public resource management to the benefit of the local population.

More specifically, the drafting of the integrated strategic development plan in 2004 has conducted a grid of participatory actions. The *mechanisms* utilized at that time incorporated *surveys* on: (i) a sample of *households* in selected neighborhoods of the city, which was organized and carried out by a municipal expert and a team of external experts; and (ii) a sample of *local businesses*. The main aim of these surveys was to gather information on the: perception of participation by local population and businesses; problems they face in their neighborhoods; proposed priorities in key sectors of the locality, etc. Moreover, *three Focus Groups meetings* were organized, elaborating on aspects of the local economy and entrepreneurship, environmental and cultural issues as well as life-long learning and education themes. These were attended by representatives of local authority's institutions, social actors and active citizens.

Rate of participation in both households and businesses' survey was lower than expected. In the case of *household survey*, half of the respondents (154 out of 310 households selected) refused to engage. Although the research group had emphasized the scope and importance of participation for setting up municipality's strategic directions, household population was disputing the way their views could be handled by local leaders in the planning process and outcome, revealing thus a *deficit of trust* between citizens and municipal authority. *Entrepreneurial survey* has depicted more promising results with respect to participation, although still a significant percentage (35% of respondents) denied engagement, citing either *lack of time* to do so or *dissatisfaction* to municipal authority actions. These results demonstrate a certain reluctance for a more formal and structured way of engaging, reflecting preferences of the entrepreneurial community (and at that time current practice) for more interpersonal, informal interaction with local leaders.

In spite of the shortcomings of this first initiative, it is important to acknowledge its contribution to the inauguration of participatory endeavours and a more strategic approach to local policy making. This has been considered as an *innovative pilot action* both at the Korydallos municipality level and the realm of local authorities at the state level, taking into consideration that strategic planning at the time was not institutionalized. As such, this initiative has been acknowledged by the Greek Ministry of Interior and the Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government (EETAA); and has been incorporated into a guide for drawing up municipal operational programs (EETAA 2007).

Moreover, it has prepared the ground for the accomplishment of the first obligatory *Multi-annual Operational Municipal Program* (MOMP), the *second important initiative* of this period, emerging as a *law enforcement action* in 2006 (Law 3463/2006); and establishing as *key consultation mechanism* for drafting MOMP, namely the *online engagement* through municipalities' websites. In addition to the online engagement option, *consultation mechanism* in MOMP preparation was, in Korydallos municipality, enriched by a leaflet, addressed to 10,000 households. In this leaflet, the main axes of the strategic plan were presented, coupled with a short supplementary questionnaire, inviting citizens to express their views as to the key municipal priorities set up in MOMP (Municipality of Korydallos 2008). Response rate was lower than expected, but better than the one in previous initiative; while municipality's strategic priorities were communicated to a larger audience. Questionnaire was also uploaded to municipality's website alongside with the strategic MOMP document. The latter has received no comments from citizens or social partners.

Last initiative during this period, led by *political leadership and will*, was an endeavor to develop an innovative practice for engaging local community in a *strategic participatory budgeting process*, feeding the preparation of Korydallos annual technical program. By this process, citizens and local stakeholders could influence decisions on environmental, social or other projects for further implementation. This practice was applied for a period of five years from 2007 to 2011. As *consultation mechanism*, face-to-face interaction was selected, conducted through a range of neighbourhood (8 meetings/year) and thematic meetings (3 meetings/year). Participation was again lower than expected (e.g. in 2008, 645 citizens had attended neighbourhood meetings and 220 people—representatives of relevant institutions—the sectoral ones) (Alexopoulos et al. 2011).

Obviously, all three initiatives have enriched the way *governance* was implemented in Korydallos municipality (Table 4.1), sharing the concern for scaling up citizens and stakeholders' engagement in setting up commonly agreed strategic future priorities. In the way from the first to the third initiative, *political will and vision* is a key driving force and an important managerial attribute for shifting to smart governance; citizens and stakeholders have gradually been engaged and educated in more *cooperative decision-making processes*; and the role of both *face-to-face and digitally-enabled* means as *complementary participation mechanisms* (Papadopoulou and Stratigea 2014; Krommyda et al. 2017) was fully comprehended.

Speaking of the role of *technology*, it should be noted that the low level of ICT-enabled interaction along all three initiatives of this period witnesses the low level of ICT usage at that time, by both Korydallos citizens and municipal staff. For instance, during the first initiative, no computer network infrastructure (Intranet) or e-portal existed in Korydallos municipality (Municipality of Korydallos 2004). From the first to the second initiative, political leadership realizes the potential of ICT for wider diffusion of information and transparency; and takes steps towards this direction, although relevant skills' availability of local population is still lagging behind.



**Table 4.1** Before recession—organizational attributes of smart governance layers in Korydallos municipality—*governance*

Initiative	Governance		
	Conformation	Partnerships—actors	Mechanisms
An integrated strategic development plan (2004)	Local councillors invite citizens and stakeholders to participate for drafting key policy choices for future strategic development	Citizens, businesses, associations	Online presence of key documents Organization of different face to face workshops in the city Questionnaire survey for engaging a sample of residents' groups
Multi-annual operational municipal program (MOMP) (2006)	Consultation of key strategic priorities of MOMP based on legal prerequisites	Citizens, households, firms, local institutions	Online consultation of the strategic MOMP document Leaflets Questionnaire distributed to 10,000 households Online questionnaire
Participatory budgeting (2007)	A more participatory in nature project Citizens are co-designing the technical program of Korydallos municipality	Citizens, social actors, NGOs, associations, firms and municipal organizations	Thematic meetings for education, sports and culture, local economy and entrepreneurship Eight neighbourhood meetings at different open spaces, following municipal division

Apart from political will and vision, a key common *asset* for all three initiatives was the availability of *financial resources* (Table 4.2). Indeed, initiatives were implemented within a favorable external economic environment, particularly in the Attica Region, where a large share of public funds was available due to the 2004 Olympic Games' organization.

Additional funds were raised in 2004, where the liberal-conservative party won general state elections. The new government had placed emphasis on increasing efficiency of administrative units at all levels, by endorsing strategic public management principles alongside with a more substantial role of local government. Through the enactment of the new Code of Municipalities in 2006 (Law 3463/2006), local powers for serving development objectives were explicitly stated and stressed; while "Thisseas" development programme was financing local authorities' efforts and the drafting of Municipal Operational Programs (Kyvelou and Marava 2017; Law 3274/2004). These resources have supported the handling of the first two initiatives by external specialized staff dealing, in this respect, with a common shortage of the Greek local government (Council of Europe 2015); while these were also supported by European Funds (Operational Programmes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Community Support Framework).

**Table 4.2** Before recession—organizational attributes of smart governance layers in Korydallos municipality—assets

Initiatives	Assets		
	Financial resources	Technology	People—human capital (skills—capabilities)
An Integrated Strategic Development Plan	Availability of financial resources for organizing citizens and stakeholders’ focus groups	Lack of knowledge on particular participation tools for citizens or stakeholders’ engagement City’s ICT infrastructure under development	No ICT skills available by citizens and/or stakeholders Experts hired to draw up and organize participatory events  Municipal staff unfamiliar with ICT or engagement strategies/tools. Staff resistance to ICT—fear of technology
Multi-annual operational municipal program (MOMP)	Significant financial resources from national budget for drafting MOMP	City’s ICT infrastructure was gradually developing Upload of online questionnaire Not well organized web-based information	Municipal staff unfamiliar with ICT or engagement strategies
Participatory budgeting	Availability of financial resources	City’s technology is only used for information sharing and publicity of organized meetings	Gradual development of municipality’s staff expertise in participatory processes Increasing interest of citizens in neighborhoods Familiarization with participation and its value / outcomes

Moreover, common asset in all three initiatives is the limited role of *technology* in public engagement. This period is actually marked by the stepwise deployment of municipality’s ICT infrastructure; and the gradually upgrading of staff’s capacity to use this infrastructure, mostly for spreading information than as an interaction mechanism. Of importance is also the lack of staff expertise as to *participatory processes and related tools* as well as structured methodological approaches for serving participatory planning endeavours. Finally, it is noticeable the gradual increase of engagement through this period, depicting the flourishing of the idea of participation in local affairs; and setting the ground for further participation efforts in the recession period that follows.

### 4.3.3 *Smart Governance Pace During Recession—Key Attributes*

Greece was seriously affected by the financial crisis that has stricken the Euro zone since 2008, which has rapidly evolved into a debt crisis, leading to loans from TROIKA, i.e. European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund. Loans were tightly linked to a range of commitments in relevance to, among others, local and regional authorities, deeply impacting their initiatives and financial state (Kyvelou and Marava 2017). The first impact was a *reform plan* that was put forward and the enactment of a new *law*, known as “Kallikratis” reform, which had radically changed the structure and operation of the Greek governance system (Law 3852/2010; Alexopoulos et al. 2012; Hlepas 2014; Gkekas and Mitsou 2010).

While “Kallikratis” reform was distinguished for the mandatory merging of Greek municipalities in order efficiency and effectiveness, in times of austerity, to be increased, it had also introduced new institutions to the Greek territorial governance system. These aimed at strengthening system’s accountability and transparency. Additionally, it has attempted to broaden *citizens’ participation* in the deployment of strategic planning and Operational Municipal Programs, predicted by this reform for each single Greek municipality. This was pursued through the establishment of a newly emerging body, the *Municipal Counseling Committee (MCC)* (Law 3852/2010, Article 76). This innovation though was perceived by many local administrations as a rather formal arrangement, having as a result, in most cases, a marginal consulting role of MCC to certain decision-making processes. Furthermore, although selection of MCC members was subject to certain objective criteria, in practice transparency of the selection process has been argued. Additionally, the lack of participation culture in the Greek context has led to a rather low interest of selected MCC members’ to engage, even in cases that a truly objective selection process was carried out (Alexopoulos et al. 2012). Despite the weaknesses in practical implementation of MCC selection process and role, participation by law enforcement had established new facts in local decision-making processes for both decision makers and local communities.

Within an environment marked by the above *institutional changes* but also severe *financial constraints* (recession period 2008–2016), Korydallos municipality has continued efforts towards participatory strategic management of local affairs and governance. Indeed, by taking advantage of *institutional developments*, the municipality has attempted to strengthen *participation* in decision-making processes by establishing:

- The *MCC* (Law 3852/2010, Article 76), embedding social partners in the decision-making processes, who have had advisory roles in the preparation of the operational programming procedures (preparation of annual action programs and related budget).

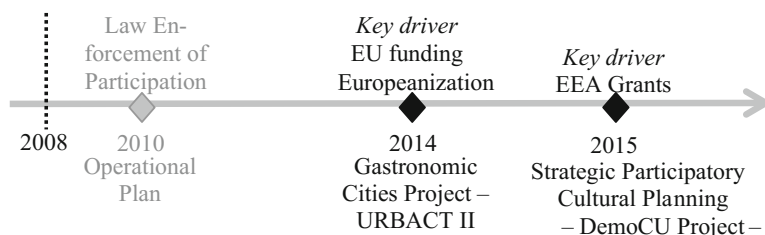
- The *Council of Immigrant's Integration* (CII) (Law 3852/2010, Article 63), following already established immigrants' integration policies in the city. CII had a dynamic presence in local policy making by introducing problems faced by immigrants to municipal leaders until 2015. Beyond this year, CII has failed to keep momentum mainly due to the: barriers inherent in implementing participatory processes for immigrants (e.g. language and time obstacles); and decrease of municipality's permanent full-time personnel as a corollary of economic constraints, implying a certain deficit to staff engaged in providing administrative and scientific support to CII.

Severe *financial constraints* throughout the years of economic recession have largely affected local government affairs. Visions of local leaders had to be pursued in an environment sealed by drastic cuts in municipalities' personnel and budgets. Furthermore, the Medium Term Fiscal Strategy Framework in 2012 (Law 4046/2012) introduced various provisions for local government, which once again had strongly affected staff availability and local government finances (Kyvelou and Marava 2017). Alongside with central control of municipal budgets and the continuous escalating national debt, essential funding of local development initiatives and infrastructure had further diminished. Possible options for raising municipal financial resources were external funds through e.g. competitive European programs.

Within this *austerity era* and the new reality this has set, leaders of Korydallos municipality and advisory staff had tried to leverage such financial resources. More specifically, two important *initiatives* were implemented by use of such funds, namely the *Gastronomic Cities Project*—URBACT II (2014–15) (<http://urbact.eu/gastronomic-cities>), raising European funding; and the *DemoCU Project* (2015–16), raising funds from the European Economic Area (EEA Grants) (Fig. 4.4).

During this particular time span (2008–16), *governance* seems to follow different paths from the previous ones explored. Indeed, taking advantage of prior experiences, partnerships created in both initiatives had a more substantial and thus decisive role in respective decision-making processes.

In the *first initiative*, i.e. the *Gastronomic Cities' Project*, the establishment and functioning of the URBACT Local Support Group (ULSG) has inaugurated a novel style of local decision-making by deepening participation and enabling private



**Fig. 4.4** During recession—Key milestones of participatory strategic management in Korydallos municipality

partnerships to co-shape local strategy for gastronomy and culture sectors at Korydallos premises (Table 4.3). Towards this end has also contributed the fact that ULSG was a formal requirement and a prerequisite for funding in the context of URBACT projects (Sirše 2014). Nevertheless, and despite the fruitful and creative interaction that took place among ULSG members, the functioning of ULSG was actually brought to standstill after the end of the project, in March 2015. The municipal authority’s intention and efforts towards a durable engagement of ULSG members in gastronomy and culture local decision-making did not have the desirable outcome (Municipality of Korydallos 2015). Reluctance of ULSG members to keep track with work in this Committee was mainly attributed to the unstable political scene (local elections in 2014, two national elections in 2015) and the economic uncertainty (enforcement of capital controls to Greek economy), both altering their priorities and attitude to engage. Of importance in this respect was also the lack of entrepreneurial cooperation culture.

Worth noting also was the *participatory methodological approach* and the utilization of both *online* (Web-based) and *offline* (face-to-face) *participation mechanisms* followed by this project (Table 4.3). More specifically, it envisaged a participatory methodology and a feasibility study for transferring good practices, placing great emphasis on communication and dissemination tools (Sirše 2014). A thorough use of *web and social media* took place in this respect, alongside with dissemination of locally-organized events. Clearly, *social media* was the most

**Table 4.3** During recession—organizational attributes of smart governance layers in Korydallos municipality—*governance*

Initiatives	Governance		
	Conformation	Partnerships—actors	Mechanisms
Gastronomic Cities URBACT II (2014–15)	Establishment of the URBACT local support group (ULSG) Collaboration in drafting a local strategic gastronomy plan for Korydallos City	Actors’ engagement based on leaders’ informal links Broadening of actors engaged (businesses, local authorities, associations etc.)	Thorough use of online participation and social media alongside with traditional ones
DemoCU project (2015–16)	Establishment of cultural consultation committee (CCC). collaboration in drafting an integrated strategic cultural plan Engagement of previously created committees (MCC and CII)	Broadening of actors engaged (Citizens’ groups, cultural & sport associations, local authorities etc.) Particular emphasis on vulnerable groups (youth, elderly etc.)	Structured participatory methodology for collaborative development of a strategic cultural management plan Use of face-to-face and Web-based participation tools

preferable mechanism for dissemination and communication purposes due to their resonance and the low or zero costs involved.

With regards to the *second initiative*, i.e. *DemoCU Project* (2015–16), as *key asset* is considered the funding by the EEA Grants, in the context of the NGO Programme “We are all Citizens” (Table 4.3). The goal of DemoCU was the promotion of *smart participatory governance and democracy* in decision-making processes at the Municipality of Korydallos, having as pilot application the cultural/sports sectors (Marava et al. 2016).

DemoCU can be perceived as the most mature and integrated initiative, touching upon all three distinct dimensions of smart governance as defined by Przeybilovicz et al. (2017), namely *governance, assets and management*. This has largely been the outcome of the DemoCU *trilateral partnership*, establishing collaboration among: an *NGO*, facilitating engagement of less privileged societal groups in local decision-making in recession times; a *university* as a consultant for spreading knowledge on *well structured participatory approaches* and related *offline/online participation tools*; and *leaders* of Korydallos municipality for bridging consortium efforts to local society as well as supporting the broadening of participatory processes. Such collaboration has ended up with a *strategy* and related *policy options* that could strengthen the role of culture/sports into city’s *vision and future development*.

*Participation* in DemoCU was carefully designed, tackling barriers of actors/citizens’ engagement; and took place at all different stages of strategic cultural planning endeavour. In contrast to all previous experiences, DemoCU has carefully designed a *strategy for participants’ selection and recruitment*, elaborating on selection criteria relevant to the context of the planning effort (Stratigea et al. 2015b); while participation tools were deliberately chosen in order to best match participants’ profiles (Stratigea et al. 2015c). Furthermore, a *Cultural Consultation Committee* (CCI) was established, consisting of 18 members, which represented different community stakes (municipality agents, cultural associations and citizens). CCI has acted as a consultant of the project’s team; and has contributed to getting deeper insight in the studied sectors, mapping and creating content with regards to the cultural/sports profile of the city (Stratigea et al. 2016a, b).

*Technology* has played a decisive role in the DemoCU cultural planning participatory endeavour (Table 4.4), steering the functioning of an *e-cultural platform* in which *e-engagement tools*, such as “*tell us your opinion*” or the “*forum*” were used for spreading information on the DemoCU activities and goals; and motivating engagement at critical stages of the project. Moreover, *e-participation* was used for communicating a strategic cultural plan proposed by the project’s team; and engaging local community in expressing views and opinions with respect to this plan for its further improvement and finalization (Stratigea et al. 2015c, 2017b).

*Participants’ engagement* in DemoCU has proved rather promising. Face-to-face participation has engaged 372 participants in 16 workshops in two years’ time; while e-participation for commenting on the strategic cultural plan has engaged 160 participants in two months’ time. Additionally, more than 1000 people established interaction with DemoCU endeavour through the homonym e-platform,

**Table 4.4** During recession—organizational attributes of smart governance layers in Korydallos municipality—*assets*

Assets initiatives	Financial resources	Technology	People—human capital (skills—capabilities)
URBACT II, Gastronomic Cities Project (2014-15)	EU Funding	Improved city’s ICT infrastructure in comparison with the previous period Thorough use of the municipality’s Website for dissemination purposes; social media extensively used as part of the dissemination strategy	Municipal staff and local actors partly familiar with engagement strategies through previous participatory endeavours
DemoCU project (2015–16)	EEA grants	More mature knowledge on (e-)participation City’s ICT infrastructure in place—Interaction through municipality’s social networks City’s technology is used for information sharing and publicity of organized meetings Establishment of a dedicated e-platform for citizens and stakeholders’ engagement	ICT skills available by municipality’s staff, citizens and stakeholders Municipality’s staff partly familiar with participation strategy—Training of staff in structured participation methodology and tools People more familiar with participation—Training to offline—online participation tools

dedicated to cultural/sports themes. Most importantly, it was realized that existing barriers to participation could be overcome by means of a well-structured and coordinated *communication/engagement strategy* (Stratigea et al. 2015b).

The step-by-step participatory building of the strategic plan has had multiple effects on the establishment of *communication/trust* among cultural/sports associations, citizens and local administration; while it has led to win-win solutions. These fall into *short term*, related to the structuring of an Integrated Participatory Strategic Cultural Management Plan, informing future policy options and the DemoCU Platform as the city’s permanent digital cultural pole; and *long term*, associated with the positive experience gained by the DemoCU participatory planning exercise and the establishment of a mutual learning process that has broadened *skills and capabilities* of human capital (municipality staff and local community), opening thus up new ways for future smart governance endeavours.

Finally, in recession times it should be stressed the important role of *vision and leadership* for overcoming difficulties and exploring new, smarter ways of accomplishing tasks. The presence of a delegated leader, the Mayor of Korydallos Municipality, was a key influential factor for successfully implementing participatory processes and motivating partnerships’ creation; while he has contributed to the strengthening of the *credibility* of the participatory exercise by fully integrating strategic guidelines produced to the operational plan of the municipality.

## 4.4 Discussion

Today, the concern about smartening up management of urban environments for achieving sustainability objectives lies top on urban agendas; and the number of cities joining the ‘smart city’ race is rapidly increasing. However, successful outcomes of smart efforts are, in many cases, disputed (Komninos et al. 2015; Stratigea et al. 2017a), stressing: the lack of a *strategy/vision* and an *integrated approach*, taking into consideration cultural aspects, city- and citizen-specific challenges and start line of sustainability (Stratigea and Panagiotopoulou 2015a, 2017a); and the concentration on purely technological aspects as well as the use of technology in pursuing fragmented urban management purposes. This was noticed also by Nam and Pardo (2011) as well as Meijer and Bolivar (2016), who claimed that cities should follow *progressive steps to smartness*, elaborating on *smart technology, smart people and smart governance*; and taking into consideration structural and cultural attributes, historical context and trajectory, peculiarities and needs, future expectations as well as specific challenges ahead.

In the present paper, conceptualization of smart cities and smart governance, grounded on literature review, has given rise to certain *organizational attributes* that can provide a “*guide*” for riding the smart governance wave, as a global trend attracting the interest of city leaders. Keeping these attributes in mind, paths undertaken by a specific case study, Korydallos Municipality—Greece, i.e. a typical medium scale city in the Greek context, were explored in order gaps and inefficiencies to be identified; and local government’s future policy actions to be guided. These paths were studied in a time span of thirteen years (2004–2016), covering both the pre-recession (2004–08) and the recession Greek context (2008–16), thus illuminating also recession/austerity impacts on municipality’s smart governance trajectory.

Efforts of Korydallos municipality towards smart governance in the *pre-recession period* (2004–08) are carried out within an institutional environment characterized by the: lack of providence with respect to participation and governance; and state funding of local governments’ initiatives. Within such an environment, as a key attribute of the paths followed by Korydallos municipality towards smart governance is considered the *pioneering spirit* of its leaders. They had early enough realized the potential of communities’ participation in policy choices; and have empowered local community actors to engage through innovative, for that time, initiatives (e.g. participatory budgeting), taking into consideration the limited participatory culture and the lack of relevant institutional arrangements. These initiatives though were lagging behind in terms of: a long term vision and strategy, a far reaching and integrated way of coping with city’s comparative advantages, problems and strengths; sound methodological approaches and participation tools increasing effectiveness and efficiency of relative resources; use of technological advances in support of wider inclusiveness of these initiatives; and staff skills, facilitating planning and implementing of participatory endeavours.



This gradually evolving trajectory towards smart governance seems to be partly disturbed during *recession period* (2008–16). Key issues marking this disturbance were two critical, but also contradicting developments for local government's service delivery, namely the: change of the institutional environment, enriching responsibilities of local government and endorsing participation in local decision-making processes; and the considerable shrinkage of the Greek economy and respective budget cuts for, among others, the local government. Recession and its impacts on the Greek economy in general and Korydallos municipality in particular have also negatively affected the local socio-economic status; and have altered community's priorities as well as trust to political system in general and, as a result, willingness to engage in local affairs. Moreover, recession has further complicated local government's tasks and priorities. At the same time, it has also given, more than ever, meaning to smart governance processes for gaining efficiency, promoting transparency and trust, favouring solidarity and establishing smarter and more collaborative ways to cope with negative consequences of this turbulent time span.

Speaking of smart governance efforts of Korydallos municipality during this period, these have shifted to a new reality, introducing the need to: fulfill more tasks under lower budgets; cope with a new imperative, i.e. capacity building for seeking external funding sources through competitive processes; and deal with the deepening social stress, mistrust and frustration. In response to these pressures, new collaborative and creative ways, capable of coping with difficulties in the new era, were sought (e.g. solidarity actions, innovative social policy forms); while it was also pursued the establishment of a deeper and more durable cooperation between local government on the one hand and the local ecosystem and the academic community on the other. The latter has resulted to the leverage of funding resources from other sources (EU, EEA Grants), which have broadened *scope* and existing *knowledge/skills* of municipal staff with regards to more sound participatory exercises and tools; and have *trained* local society to more collaborative schemes of policy design. Moreover, based on the focus point of these initiatives (culture), they succeeded to re-motivate local community and stakeholders to engage in opening up new opportunities for the city. Nevertheless, the still fragmented character of these initiatives has to be noticed, steering developments in directions that are largely defined by scope and rationale/priorities of funding organizations.

To the positive outcomes of smart governance efforts in Korydallos municipality in the recession period fall the revocation of inefficiencies of pre-recession times, following the course of developments of the external environment, but also new opportunities emerging from extroversion and experience gained through competitive programs. These have led to the gradual strengthening of collaborative capacity of local decision-making bodies, municipality's staff and local community; the step-by-step establishment of legitimacy and trust between community and local leaders; and the deployment of effective interaction mechanisms for implementing well structured participatory governance initiatives.

In conclusion, distinct steps undertaken by Korydallos municipality towards more *inclusive governance* depict signs of a *gradual transition* to a new, more

mature and responsive, decision-making and governance model. This is grounded on cohesive as well as methodologically ripe and structured participatory tools and approaches, upgrading the essence of citizens' engagement in the participation ladder (Arnstein 1969) and their role in the decision-making process. With regards to the position of Korydallos in the model of governmental structures and processes towards smart governance, presented by Meijer and Bolivar (2016) (Fig. 4.1), it could be stated that the municipality has shifted to the stage of smart decision-making, having also undertaken efforts falling into the stage of smart administration. This somehow not clear and consistent trajectory with regards to the distinct smart governance stages presented in Fig. 4.1 can be partly attributed to the impacts of recession, which have changed priorities and have interrupted the momentum that could eventually had led to more advanced stages of smart governance. Within such an environment, setting up a *strategy* and related *plan* for its implementation; and keeping track with it in a consistent and cohesive way, seems that has not yet been fully grasped by local leadership. This effort can actually be regarded as a rather complex task within a recession-marked environment, with austerity and its socio-economic impacts largely affecting local government's priorities; while disempowering local administration from valuable human and financial resources.

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