

**transformative
social innovation
theory**



TRANSIT WP3 deliverable D3.4 – consolidated version of TSI theory

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1 Introduction and reading guide

The purpose of this deliverable (D3.4) of the TRANSIT research project is to report on the development of a consolidated version of a middle-range theory of transformative social innovation (TSI). Deliverable D3.3 presented prototypes of elements of a middle-range theory of TSI (Haxeltine et al 2016a, and the TRANSIT working papers Haxeltine et al 2016b, 2016c). The version presented here has been further developed based on the following research steps:

- The meta-analysis (see deliverable D5.4; Pel et al 2017) which explored the ‘CTP database’ for each of the TSI propositions presented in Haxeltine et al 2016b; this research step provided an opportunity to further empirically substantiate the TSI propositions and develop findings on the need for refinements and amendments, and in some cases for new propositions.
- Following the completion of the meta-analysis, we held a weeklong workshop of the team most closely involved in the theory development to bring together the essential elements for a final version of the theory (held in Belgium during the week of 3-7 April 2017). Here we brought together the findings of the meta-analysis with the TSI theory development. We also brought in several other research outputs from across the TRANSIT project in order to develop a presentation of the middle-range theory, in the form of a final set of propositions on the agency and dynamics of TSI, that reflected all relevant research that has been conducted in the project.
- Following this workshop there followed an intensive research process of both developing the final set of TSI propositions and developing an overall synthesis presentation of the TSI theory.
- A third “theoretical integration session” was held on Wednesday 17 May 2017, as part of the Budapest partner meeting, here feedback and further empirical evidence was gathered for the final set of TSI propositions, based on the inputs of all of the research team in attendance.

This research process also involved refining the theoretical and conceptual framework originally presented in D3.3 and a subsequent working paper on the ‘TSI framework’ (Haxeltine et al. 2016b). The central part of this deliverable presents both the final set of propositions and a summary of the eventual theoretical and conceptual framework that was co-designed alongside them. Together they represent a presentation of an ambitious and wide-ranging body of empirically-grounded theory development on social innovation and transformative change: a middle-range theory of transformative social innovation. A next step is to develop a succinct presentation of the central elements of the resulting middle-range theory in the form of a key journal article; chapter 8 of this deliverable presents a draft of such an article.

The deliverable is structured as follows. Chapter 2 provides an introduction to the original methodology that we employed in developing a middle-range theory of TSI. Two submitted journal articles that further present and evaluate our theory-development methodology, are included in Annexes to this deliverable. Chapter 3 provides a brief presentation of the consolidated version of the theoretical and conceptual framework for TSI that has been developed in the project, and used in developing the set of propositions on the agency and dynamics of TSI that are presented in chapters 4-7. Chapter 8 draws upon this set of propositions to present a synthesis of the resulting middle-range theory of TSI. Finally, chapter 9, presents a brief overall conclusion to the deliverable, including some reflections on avenues for future research.

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2 Methodology for developing a new theory of TSI

In TRANSIT, we are interested in *how social innovation contributes to transformative change*. To this end, we explored many literatures for relevant concepts and theories and engaged in original empirical research on some 80 social innovation initiatives and 20 related transnational social innovation networks (Jørgensen et al. 2016, Pel et al. 2017). We looked at their transformative aims, how they are organised, how they interact with other actors and institutions, their use of resources, what role empowerment plays in social innovation, and how they learn across their journeys. The development of a theory then involved confronting our conceptual understanding of social innovation with the empirical examples, and based on that arriving at insights about how, and under what enabling conditions, social innovation might lead to transformative change.

In developing a theory of social innovation, we believe that it is important to acknowledge the fundamental non-determinacy of social life. This does not imply an absence of patterns, but rather that in attempting to discover patterns, we must pay attention to properties such as intentions, interactions and institutions, and how these play out in particular circumstances, giving rise to outcomes that are *only partially* predictable.

Consistent with this view, we are developing a process theory rather than a variance theory. Whereas variance theories provide explanations for phenomena in terms of relationships among dependent and independent variables (e.g., more of X and Y produce more of Z), process theories provide explanations in terms of the sequence of events leading to an outcome (e.g., do A and then B to get C). A variance theory seeks to explain and predict observed outcomes with the help of explanatory variables, whereas a process theory seeks to explain how outcomes develop over time: outcomes are understood as partially predictable, based on a knowledge of process.

We are also developing a *middle-range* theory of transformative social innovation. Middle-range theory is a well-established approach in the social sciences, that starts with a specific empirical phenomenon and tries to develop more general statements about it, that can then be further verified by data. The term ‘middle-range’ refers to the insight that in explaining social innovation we need not only to explain what is happening within an initiative, but also the enabling and constraining relations to the society that it operates in. But we can’t include everything, so a balance has to be struck where we try to include the minimal amount of social complexity required to explain how social innovation contributes to transformative change.

The middle-range theory presented here was developed using a research design that combines deductive theoretical steps with inductive analysis of fresh empirical data, and our methodological choices regarding the development of a new middle-range theory were presented in the previous deliverables D3.2 and D3.3 (Haxeltine et al. 2015, Haxeltine et al. 2016a). We have subsequently developed and submitted a journal article (Haxeltine et al. 2017b) to the *European Public and Social Innovation Review* that presents and evaluates the bespoke methodology that we developed and applied in building the middle-range theory of TSI presented in this deliverable. The article presents our novel hybrid approach to middle-range TSI theory development as a suitable response to three stylised challenges or ‘pitfalls’ that any new theory on social innovation must confront. The current version of this journal article is included in Annex 1 of this deliverable. Included also in an Annex 2 of this deliverable is a related journal article (Pel et al. 2017), also submitted to the *European Public and Social Innovation Review*, that further explores the research methodologies developed and applied in the TRANSIT project.

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3 Overview of the TRANSIT framework for TSI

In this section, we provide an overview of the theoretical and conceptual framing of TSI that was used in developing the consolidated set of TSI propositions presented in this deliverable. The underpinning theoretical and ontological framing for a new middle-range theory of TSI was presented in the previous deliverable D3.3 (Haxeltine et al. 2016a) and subsequent working paper (Haxeltine et al. 2016b). The commitment expressed therein to developing a middle-range theory with a relational ontology and a focus on process-relations has been carried through in the consolidated version of a 'framework' for TSI as presented in this chapter. This chapter begins with a succinct introduction to the framing of TSI developed in the project (3.1). Next we present the main entities and interactions that are addressed in the propositions (3.2). Finally we describe and justify how we have made use of an extensive range of existing theoretical resources in developing a new middle-range range theory of TSI (3.3).

3.1 Introducing the TRANSIT conceptual framing of TSI

In this section we present a very short overview of the TRANSIT approach to theorising TSI, adapted from a recent TRANSIT briefing on the TSI theory (Haxeltine et al. 2017a), and following the three themes of: i) how we understand social innovation; ii) how we understand transformative change, and iii) how we understand the interactions between social innovation and processes of transformative change.

3.1.1 Social Innovation

A key feature of the TRANSIT approach is to view social innovation (SI) specifically in terms of how it leads to the creation of new *socio-material relations*, both between the members of an initiative and between members and any aspect of society with which they interact. With this emphasis on *socio-material relations* we place the relational firmly at the centre of how we conceptualise social innovation. For instance, when citizens in a *Transition initiative* organise themselves into a cooperative who jointly own a wind turbine, they create new social relations between citizens, energy users and producers, as well as new relations between people. An initiative in which there are new social relations for doing things differently, can be considered 'socially innovative'.

The actors in an initiative will engage with, and innovate, different *doings*, such as engaging in new ethically-motivated lifestyles, pioneering a new approach to social care, or producing energy in different ways,. As the initiative develops, they will also engage in different *ways of organising* themselves and their actions, and develop new understandings, *framings* and meanings about their world (as issue definitions, visions, imaginaries). At the same time, new knowledge comes about in the form of cognitive resources, competencies, types of appraisal, etc. (new *knowings*). We use the term *co-production* to describe how diverse actors engage in activities of 'producing together' new ways of doing, organising, framing, and knowing, including how a specific SI initiative engages with diverse other actors in activities of 'producing together'. Furthermore, new social relations are understood as emerging together with the emergence of new ways of doing, organising, framing, and knowing.

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A particular initiative is made up of, and operates through, the web of social and material relations that it is part of. Social innovation both acts on the surrounding context and is produced by it. The agency (capability to be the producer of change) of social innovation must be understood in terms of the relations that it is embedded in. Agency is in a sense *distributed* and an emergent property of the web of relations that it is a part of. This *relational* framing of social innovation emphasises the embedded and context specific nature of social innovation, and leads to an interest in how and why an innovation may take a certain form at a certain time and place in history.

In TRANSIT we approach **social innovation** as a process and as a qualitative property of ideas, objects, activities, and different groupings of people. We define a **social innovation initiative** as a collective of people working on ideas, objects or activities that are socially innovative and a **social innovation network** as a network of such initiatives. Two other important concepts that we use are social innovation *actor* and social innovation *field*. We refer to **social innovations actors** as any collection of individuals, initiatives, or networks that engage in social innovation, and the **social innovation action field** as the web of constantly changing actors and social-material relations through which a social innovation takes place.

3.1.2 Transformative change

Social innovation takes place within a broader context that is made up of the sum-total of all actors and the different social and material relations between them, as well as the institutional arrangements with which a social innovation interacts. We call this setting the social-material context (hereafter referred to simply as ‘the context’). Transformative change also occurs within this broader context, taking the form of a persistent adjustment in societal values, outlooks and behaviours of sufficient ‘width and depth’ to alter any preceding situation in the context. Broad societal transformations such as the industrial revolution, European integration, or the rise of the market economy and ideology of economic liberalism, have historically transformed the context. Change in only one dimension is not considered to be a societal transformation. There have to be related changes in several dimensions in the context, and they have to happen simultaneously and across an array of places.

In this research we set out to learn about the role of social innovation in transformative change by studying actual empirical cases, and to do this we needed to approach transformative change in a way that could be readily identified and assessed in these empirical cases. We did this specifically by focusing on transformative change as *institutional change*. The Oxford English Dictionary defines an institution as “An organisation founded for a religious, educational, professional, or social purpose”, but also as “An established law or practice” such as the institution of marriage, or “A well-established and familiar person or custom”. We are interested in both *formal institutions* in the sense of the first definition above and also *informal institutions* which may take the form of norms, rules, conventions or values. We claim that *both* can be involved in the types of change brought about by social innovation. Institutions are conceived of as rule-like ‘social facts’ – as arrangements of established social rules that structure social interaction. They provide: *prescriptions, cognitive models (frames with tacit assumptions and schemas), identities and roles, and arrangements (family, clubs, work organisations, platforms, communities) that help us to make sense of the world, identify options, and take action*. Institutions vary greatly in how tractable or intractable to change or replacement they are.

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Social innovation initiatives have complex relationships with established institutions: they can be constrained or enabled by them, they can be reproducing some established institutions, while at the same time challenging, altering or replacing others.

3.1.3 How social innovation interacts with transformative change

Social innovators seek to develop new practices that address an identified need or vision. In doing so they make use of available resources and are also conditioned by sets of institutionalised traditions or rules (that both enable and constrain their actions). Institutions have a shaping role in human action but at the same time are constituted through human action. This interplay between actors and institutions, referred to as the *process of structuration*, accounts for the stability and continuity of social life—but actions that change or modify existing structures are also possible.

Actors may find ways to use existing institutions and resources in novel ways, leading eventually to transformative change in the form of new institutional structures (see table 1). Actors may also find ways to create new resources or new ‘proto-institutions’. In these ways, social innovators have the potential to create novelty in existing structures—and this is the key to how social innovation leads to transformative change.

The concept of *institutionalisation* describes the process by which changes in institutional structures emerge and become more widely embedded. It refers to the process of embedding some aspect of social life (which can be e.g. norms, rules, conventions and values, or a mode of behaviour) within an organisation, a wider field of social relations, or within the context as a whole. There can be differing ‘degrees’ of institutionalisation at different times and in different parts of the context—or in other words, transformations can occur at different speeds in different places.

As a social innovation develops over time and space, it challenges, alters, or replaces established institutions, while at the same time it also inevitably reproduces established institutions. The notions of “challenging, altering and replacing” include and refer to a diverse range of other verbs and acts, including resisting, protesting, providing alternatives, adapting, moderating, improving and so on. A social innovation process is made up of the actions of a variety of different social innovation actors, who interact through a social innovation field in which their actions collectively lead to changes in the structuration of local practices. In other words, *transformative* social innovations interact with and influence the processes of *institutionalisation* by which changes in institutions emerge and become more widely embedded. The transformative impact of a social innovation can be empirically assessed by identifying the degrees of institutionalisation of its core elements.

Transformative social innovation (TSI) can now be understood as a process by which social innovation challenges, alters or replaces the dominant institutions in a specific context. Rather than as a ‘type’ of innovation, we consider TSI as a particular ‘process’ that contributes to transformative change in the existing institutional arrangements in the context.

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3.2 Main entities and relations addressed in the propositions

In this section, we present an overview of a conceptual framework for TSI, that is consistent with the TSI propositions presented in this deliverable (it is consolidated version of the prototype presented in Haxeltine et al. 2016b). The key concepts and units of analysis used are as follows:

Main relational entities identified (section 3.2.1)

- **Social innovations promoted (SI)** – including ideas, objects, activities that are socially innovative i.e. changing social relations, involving new ways of doing, organizing, framing and knowing (DOFK)
- **Social innovation actors (SI actors)** – actors that are engaged in social innovation, including individuals, groups/organisations, local initiatives, and translocal networks.
- **Institutions, resources and practices** – following the concept of structuration, actors reproduce practices and in doing so combine existing institutions and available resources.
- **Social innovation action field (SI action field)**– the ‘web’ of relations with other related actors and institutional arrangements through which the unfolding of a SI process takes place.
- **Institutional Logics** – logics, which both regularize behaviour and at the same time enable agency and change; may be contested, multiple, and/or overlapping
- **Social-material context** – set of relevant contextual factors that includes actors, institutions, resources and practices; and their processes-relations. Includes ‘dominant’ institutions.

Main process-relations and change processes identified (section 3.2.2)

- **Structuration** – Institutions have a shaping role in human action but at the same time are constituted through human action, this interplay is referred to as the process of structuration.
- **Institutionalisation** – describes the processes by which changes in institutions emerge and become more widely embedded.
- **Network formation** – expresses the fact that neither SI individuals nor even SI initiatives travel their TSI journey alone, but that rather TSI agency tends to be distributed over networks.
- **Coproduction** – describes how diverse actors in the *action field* engage in activities of ‘producing together’ both new and existing ways of doing, organising, framing, and knowing.
- **Transformative change (TC)** – change that challenges, alters and/or replaces established (and/or dominant) institutions in (parts of) the social-material context.
- **Transformative social innovation (TSI)** – process, through which social innovations challenge, alter and/or replace established (and/or dominant) institutions in the social-material context.
- **Coevolution** – a meta-process occurring between some form/s of situated novelty (e.g. SI) and (parts of) the social-material context.
- **TSI-agency** – capacity of SI actors to contribute to transformative change.
- **Transformative impact, potential and ambition** –different levels in the extent to which SI actors contribute to transformative change.
- **Narratives of change** – sets of ideas, concepts, metaphors, discourses or story-lines about (transformative) change and innovation.
- **(Dis) Empowerment** – process in which SI actors gain a sense of autonomy, relatedness, competence, impact and meaning.
- **Motivations and psychological needs** – motivations for joining and maintaining involvement in SI initiatives over time are essential to an understanding of human agency in TSI processes.
- **Reflexivity and social learning** – processes of collective experimentation and reflection by which initiatives reach new shared understandings, which in turn become situated in practice.

The following sections briefly articulate each of these central conceptual elements.

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A simple visualisation of the interaction between TSI processes and the context is given in Figure 1. TSI processes exist in a two-way relationship with the context: the SI actors involved, and the social relations between them, undergo change for example as a result of voluntary interactions with new partners (such as social impact investors) or due to specific demands imposed upon them by government and judges through legal rulings. TSI processes will also be affected by broader processes of cultural change entering TSI projects. TSI processes can be understood as contributing to change in the context, but equally as reproducing the institutional make-up of the context and/or as an emergent property of the context. A TSI may exhibit a degree of autonomy from the context, implying that it is, in part, able to influence the structuration of local practices. In developing propositions on the agency and dynamics of TSI we identified four ‘clusters’ as follows: Cluster a) On the social relations within individual SI initiatives; Cluster b) On the network formation of SI initiatives (the relations between initiatives); Cluster c) Relations of SI initiatives to institutional change processes; and, Cluster d) Relations of SI initiatives and networks to the broader social-material context (see figure 1). These four clusters structure the presentation of the propositions in the following chapters.

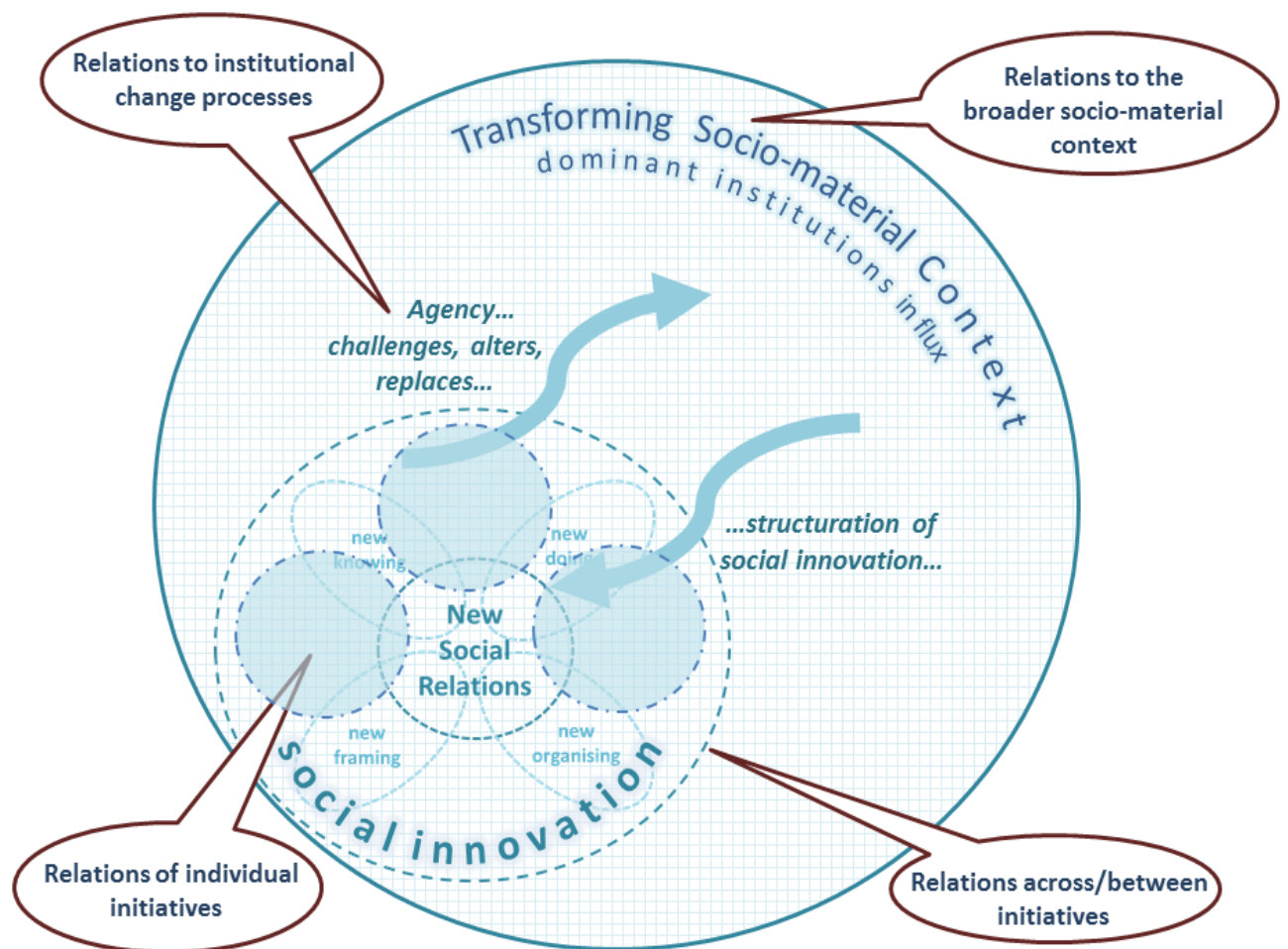


Figure 1. A schematic visualisation of a mutual influence model of TSI and the socio-material context; also illustrating how propositions on TSI agency and dynamics were developed around four clusters.¹

¹ The so called ‘petal diagram’ showing the dimensions of DOFK is adapted from Chilvers and Longhurst (2014).

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3.2.1 Main relational entities identified

Consistent with a relational ontology, a careful distinction is made between the phenomena of social innovation itself and the actors, organisations and other ‘actors’ that create and further a social innovation. The distinction is clarified in the following working definitions.

Social Innovation (SI) = A change in social relations, involving new ways of doing, organising, framing and/or knowing. We approach SI as a process and as a qualitative property of ideas, objects, activities and/or (groups of) people. All of these can be (or become) *socially innovative* to the extent that they engage in/ contribute to a change in social relations, involving new ways of doing, organising, framing and/or knowing. Combinations of ideas, objects and activities that are considered to be socially innovative, can be referred to as ‘social innovations’. (Groups of) people that are considered to be social innovative, can be referred to as ‘social innovators’ or ‘social innovation actors’. In the following we use the term ‘SI’ when we refer to SI as a process.

SI is conceptualised as a phenomenon that involves diverse **actors of social innovation (SI actors)** that can be considered as being ‘socially innovative’ or contributing to ‘social innovation’. Starting from a framing of the agency characterizing TSI phenomena as being a *distributed agency*, our ontology of TSI agency includes different (groups of) people (e.g. individuals or communities) and various combinations of objects and ideas (e.g. narratives of change, theories, discourses, products). It also includes multiple functional, temporal, social and/or spatial delineations of combinations of ideas, objects, activities and/or (groups of) people that can be considered to be socially innovative: organisations, places, projects, fields, (local) initiatives, (transnational) networks, discourse coalitions, alliances, and (social) movements.

The theoretical focus of the TSI framework is primarily on the agency of individuals, initiatives, networks and fields, and how those engage with ideas, objects, activities and (groups of) people that engage in a change in social relations, involving new ways of doing, organising, framing and/or knowing (DOFK). We conceptualise a **SI initiative** as a collective of people working on ideas, objects and/or activities that are socially innovative. We conceptualise a **SI network** as a network of initiatives working on ideas, objects and/or activities that are socially innovative. As a general category, we refer to **“SI actors”** as any collection of individuals, initiatives, networks and/or action fields that engage with SI processes. The Actor Network Theory (ANT) inspired concept of network formation (see below) is used to explain how the relational entities listed here are involved in process of network formation that involve distributed agency

SI involves different types of actors interacting together in groups, networks and other organisational forms to innovate new social forms, but also in the process, necessarily and unavoidably, enacting or reproducing current social ‘forms’ and ‘patterns’. This definition includes as part of the changes in social relations also changes in the dimensions of doing, knowing, organising and framing. It foregrounds the view that SI refers to new social relations, associated with new productive activities aimed at satisfying one’s needs and those of others; but also that the ‘innovation’ may be in terms of social relations, irrespective of whether or not they are productive in instrumental terms.

In this framing then, ‘social’ relations are understood then as both the object of social innovation and the means by which it is achieved. Interpersonal relations are defined as one particular aspect of all social relations: we adopt a psychologically-informed definition of interpersonal relations, as a connection or an association between two or more people that can be either fleeting or enduring, based on a certain type of social commitment, and formed in the context of social, cultural and other influences.

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Interpersonal relations are regulated by law, custom or mutual agreement, and are considered to be the basis of social groups and society as a whole.

We acknowledge that different SI initiatives will place a greater or lesser (explicit) emphasis on change in interpersonal relations (i.e. while in all cases changing them is a pivotal way in which dominant/established institutions are challenged, altered or replaced, for some initiatives, intensive attention to them derives from placing them at the core of their theory of change). Ideas about 'what needs to change' may include an analysis of different ways of relating, and SI initiatives may experiment with how novel or desired interpersonal relations can be supported and nourished by the right internal organizational structures; over time this may also lead to awareness then of the role of 'wider institutional arrangements' in supporting (or not) desired interpersonal relations. Fostering new interpersonal relations then will normally entail and require strategies for reflexivity (on interpersonal relations), both individually and collectively.

Social innovation action field (SI action field) = the 'web' of socio-material relations and institutional arrangements through which the emergence and unfolding of a T/SI process takes place. Institutional changes associated with any particular SI processes 'play out' through the SI action field, understood as the 'mesolevel' social order where the field's 'rules' (institutions) are both reinforced and contested (SAFs; Fligstein and McAdam 2011). The field's 'rules' may be temporally differentiated from the broader context as a SI process unfolds over time and space. We need such a concept because, in line with other theories and frameworks for systemic change (including SAFs, Arenas of Development and transitions/MLP), we postulate that explaining how SI interacts with institutional change requires that we explain the relations between different actors through which change processes unfold. We draw upon, and combine elements of, both the Arenas of Development approach Jørgensen (2012) and Strategic Action Fields (SAFs; Fligstein and McAdam 2011) within our overall relational approach to a concept of SI action field. Our concept of SI action field is further unpacked and explored in proposition B5 and in the overview text for the 'cluster C' chapter 6 and in several of the cluster C propositions.

Institutions, practices, and resources = following the concept of structuration, we conceptualise actors as engaging in the reproduction or performance of practices and in order to do so they combine existing institutions and available resources. Practices can be most simply understood as the activities that actors engage in. In the TRANSIT framing both institutions and practices are conceptualised in a way that is consistent with the use of a concept of structuration, so that institutions are "both the medium and the outcome of the practices which constitute social systems" (Giddens 1981, p27: in Sewell 2005, p127). Both institutions and practices can be resolved in terms of doings, organisings, framings, and knowings.

Institutions = we start from the observation that "[s]tructures can be viewed as a set of institutionalized traditions or forms that enable and constrain action" (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014: p47), and adopt an initial working definition of formal and informal institutions as "norms, rules, conventions and values..." (Cajaiba-Santana 2014, p46) that both constrain and enable social relations and established patterns of doing, organising, framing and knowing. Dominant institutions can be viewed as the dominant ways of doing, organising, framing and knowing, that have been established in the social-material context. Institutions are understood as rule-like 'social facts', as: "systems of established and embedded social rules that structure social interactions" (Hodgson, 2006, p. 18). They provide: "prescriptions, cognitive models, schemas or scripts for making sense of the world, identifying options and taking action. (Meyer, 2008, p. 790). From the perspective of a relational framing they can be understood as "shared cognitions in the form of taken-for-granted, phenomenological processes the power of which is not to be underestimated yet rarely made explicit" (Zucker in DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Institutions vary greatly in how tractable or intractable to change or replacement they are. They exhibit varying degrees of 'depth'

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and ‘stability’ and a conceptual language for describing such properties needs to be articulated in developing a theory of TSI. The assumption is that actors follow rules, either consciously by imitation or coercion, or unconsciously by tacit agreement (Fligstein and McAdam 2011, p21).

Resources = Actors make use of both resources and rules (or institutions) as they perform specific practices. Originally, resources were conceptualised as *“the media whereby transformative capacity is employed as power in the routine course of social interaction”* (Giddens’ 1979; p92; quoted in Sewell 2005, p132), or as Sewell reformulates it: *“resources are anything that can serve as a source of power in social interactions”* (Sewell 2005, p132). We distinguish between non-human resources such as physical infrastructure and objects *“that can be used to enhance or maintain power”* (Sewell 2005, p133) and human resources, such as *“physical and mental attributes, knowledge and expertise that can be used to enhance or maintain power”* (Sewell 2005, p133). Resources can also be understood as qualities of social relations, such as connections, privilege, titles. How resources are used in practice is dependent on the interpretation given to them by actor-networks embedded in specific social-material contexts.

Established (and/or dominant) institutions = both formal and informal institutions that constrain and enable social relations and established patterns of doing, organising, framing and knowing. The co-productive relations of SI initiatives/networks operating in the context can be understood as both reproducing institutions and being constrained and/or enabled by them—and also, to the extent that they are socially innovative in a transformative sense, working to challenge, alter and/or replace them.

Institutional Logics (ILs) are defined as *“the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality”* (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999, p. 804). Institutional Logics conceptualise how processes of institutional change, such as those associated with SI processes, are structured by the social-material context in which they unfold. They represent different arrangements or structures of established and dominant institutions covering e.g. market, state, and community.

The socio-material context (the context) = the set of relevant contextual factors within which SI takes place and a SI-actor must operate. Conceptualized from a relational perspective, the context is understood as the sum total of the actors and their social relations, as well as the institutions and the resources (including physical structures and artefacts) with which a SI interacts. It therefore includes: i) established institutions, as norms, rules, conventions and values (Cajaiba-Santana 2014, p46) and established institutional structures or arrangements, ii) other individuals, initiatives, networks and fields, and iii) the ‘broad societal framework conditions’ which can be characterised in terms of e.g. an institutional logics approach. Social-material relations are relations between any of the contextual factors outlined above, e.g. between individuals working within an initiative, or the relations between physical infrastructures, artefacts and the actors in a SI initiative.

In the theory-building in TRANSIT we have tried to maintain a broad enough framing of this background socio-material context to allow a dialogue between research (and researchers) that focuses on the importance of interpersonal relations in SI initiatives – as explored in particular in Cluster A propositions that draw upon theoretical resources and further concepts from social psychology in particular—and research that emphasises more the distributed nature of agency and role of socio-material relations in particular – as explored in particular in the cluster B propositions, drawing upon theoretical resources and further concepts from Actor-Network-Theory in particular (see below). This was the justification for using such a broad and encompassing framing of the background ‘context’ within which TSI takes place.

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3.2.2 Main process-relations and change processes identified

Structuration = social innovators seek to develop new practices that address an identified need or vision. In doing so they make use of available resources and are also conditioned by sets of institutionalised traditions or rules (that both enable and constrain their actions). Institutions have a shaping role in human action but at the same time are constituted through human action. This interplay between actors and institutions, referred to as the *process of structuration*, accounts for the stability and continuity of social life—but actions that change or modify existing structures are also possible.

Institutionalisation = the process by which changes in institutional structures emerge and become more widely embedded. It refers to the process of embedding some aspect of social life (which can be e.g. norms, rules, conventions and values, or a mode of behaviour) within an organisation, a wider field of social relations, or within the context as a whole. There can be differing ‘degrees’ of institutionalisation at different times and in different parts of the context—or in other words, transformations can occur at different speeds in different places.

Network formation = expresses the fact that neither ‘SI individuals’ nor even SI initiatives travel their TSI journey alone, but that rather TSI agency tends to be distributed over ‘networks’. The ‘network formation’ concept complements the TRANSIT ‘(dis)empowerment’ concept, emphasising that the empowerment of SI initiatives (as collectives) relies not only on the optimal satisfaction of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness of their constituent individuals but also on the SI initiatives’ access to resources that are possessed by other actors in the social-material context. Processes of (dis)empowerment on the collective level involve a wide array of actors and quasi-agentic objects. In keeping with a relational framing of agency (Latour, 2007; Sayes, 2014), objects are acknowledged as crucial parts, carriers, instruments and media in the (dis)empowerment of SI initiatives. Considering that the spreading of new framings and knowings are important dimensions of SI, especially communication infrastructures, texts, symbols, and discourses are important examples of such non-human elements of network formation. The concept of network formation provides a focus for the use of theoretical resources from especially Actor-Network-Theory then, which is consistent with the overall adoption of a relational ontology in TRANSIT, and that was used most prominently in ‘cluster B’.

Transformative change (TC) = change that challenges, alters and/or replaces established (and/or dominant) institutions in a specific social-material context. TC can be understood as a persistent adjustment in societal values, outlooks and behaviours of sufficient ‘width and depth’ to alter any preceding situation in the social-material context (see Haxeltine et al 2015). Change in only one dimension of the social-material context (such as XYZ) not considered to be a social transformation or transformative change. There have to be (related) changes in several dimensions; they have to happen simultaneously and across an array of places. Broad societal transformations such as the industrial revolution, European integration, or the rise of the market economy and the ideology of economic liberalism, as described by Polanyi (2001) have historically transformed the social-material context, and these types of transformations form a backdrop to our work in TRANSIT, and to the development of a theory of TSI. However, in looking for relationships between SI and TC in contemporary empirical cases we need a more tractable notion of TC, hence our conceptualisation of TC as change that challenges, alters and/or replaces dominant institutions in the social-material context. Inspired by McFarland & Wittmayer (2015) we further specify the differences between challenging, altering and replacing as follows: to ‘challenge’ refers to questioning the legitimacy or existence of dominant institutions (as ways of doing, organising, framing, and knowing); to ‘alter’ refers to changing and or supplementing (parts of) dominant institutions; to ‘replace’ refers to replacing (parts of) dominant institution(s) with new institutions. This definition expresses TC in terms of institutional change, and leads to a further set

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of questions concerning how processes of institutionalisation are constituted and vary across the context. Institutional change is a necessary but not sufficient condition: all institutional change can be considered 'social change' but not all is institutional change can be considered as TC. If a new law is introduced to supplement an existing set of laws, such change does not need to be transformative. This is why it is important to add that 'dominant institutions' are challenged, altered, or replaced. Further articulation of what constitutes a 'dominant institution' is then framed as an empirical question for case study analysis.

Co-evolution = refers to developments in different subsystems, which are interlinked *and* partially independent. Co-evolution is a special type of interdependency: A influences but does not wholly determine B and C, which in turn influence but do not determine A, although all of A, B and C change irreversibly in the process. The different evolving units enjoy relative autonomy in development (Kemp 2007). When technical change co-evolves with institutional change (within systems of governance and organizations and culture) both processes mutually influence, but do not determine each other. We are interested in the co-evolutionary dynamics between some form/s of situated novelty (e.g. SI) and the social-material context. Coevolution is considered a *metaprocess* – *and* it is important that coevolving elements are identified in terms of the varying degrees of institutionalisation with which they can be *empirically associated*, and not in terms of 'technologies', 'actors' or other 'social identifiers'.

Transformative social innovation (TSI) = process in which social relations, involving new ways of doing, organising, framing and/or knowing, challenge, alter and/or replace established (and/or dominant) institutions in a specific social-material context. Rather than as a 'type' of innovation, we consider TSI as a process that alters existing patterns of structuration (in local practices) resulting in varying degrees of institutionalisation as a *TSI journey* unfolds across time and space.

TSI-agency refers to the capacity of SI actors to contribute to transformative change. Use of a relational ontology leads to a perspective on agency as distributed; SI actors can include individual and collective human actors but also ideas, objects, activities, discourses and narratives of change. Although we acknowledge agency as a distributed phenomenon that is not confined to human actors but also includes ideas, objects, activities, discourses and narratives, we are particularly interested in understanding the agency of *human* actors – individual and collectively – to co-produce SI with transformative potential and impact. Types of SI actors identified include: SI-individuals, SI initiatives, SI networks and SI-fields. Understanding the processes through which SI actors contribute to transformative change, requires an acknowledgement that there are different ways and degrees of contribution. We distinguish between: **Transformative ambition** to signify when a SI-actor holds a vision or ambition to achieve/contribute to an identified transformative change. This may be through the formal vision, aims, or mission statement or it may be more implicit; **Transformative potential** to signify when an object, idea, activity or SI-actor displays inherent and/or intended qualities to challenge, alter and/or replace dominant institutions in a specific context; and, **Transformative impact** to signify when a SI-actor shows evidence of having achieved a transformative change. In TRANSIT, we hypothesise that SI actors with transformative ambitions can increase transformative potential by 'playing into' the co-evolutionary interactions between the different meta-processes of change and innovation in the social-material context (Avelino et al. 2016). For instance, by linking with multi-layered 'narratives of change' in both mainstream and grassroots movements, by couching their initiatives in a discourse that aligns well with other SIs (Pel & Bauler 2015), or by playing into the 'game-changers' of their times, while also connecting to political changes or reform.

Narratives of change refers to "*sets of ideas, concepts, metaphors, discourses or story-lines about change and innovation*" (Wittmayer et al. 2015: 2). We distinguish two types. Firstly, those on the level of society, e.g. the narrative of change on the 'social economy', which can be considered 'generative' in the sense that actors can draw upon them to give meaning to specific physical or social phenomena (cf. Murray et

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al. 2010). Secondly, those brought forth by SI actors themselves to frame their own practices, and these may aim towards countering existing framings and discourses. A social (counter-)movement such as the anti-globalisation movement, attempts to create a narrative of change that counters dominant discourses, and co-evolves with new paradigms on how society approaches processes of globalisation (cf. Polanyi 2001). Related to narratives of change, some of the propositions (see proposition B3) also work with a concept of 'discourse' understood following Martin Hajer as "an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices." (Hajer and Versteeg 2005:175).

Motivations and psychological needs. Motivations for joining and maintaining involvement in SI initiatives over time are essential to an understanding of human agency in TSI processes. Involvement is sustained often voluntarily and stems out of a desire to create an alternative to existing social and economic arrangements, by changing the core of our social organization and aligning both relations and practice with a different set of values. As transformative change requires an (often radical) departure from existing social relations and practices, self-determined motivation and action become relevant for an explanation of human agency. We use concepts from self-determination theory, such as basic psychological needs and autonomous motivation to understand agency and (dis)empowerment, and look at role of interpersonal relations in SI and transformative change. The quality of basic need satisfaction influences the types and levels of motivation individuals experience (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b) which are posited on a continuum that ranges from amotivation (or no-self-determination) to intrinsic or self-determined motivations. We argue that SI initiatives experiment with creating spaces, organizational structures and relations that contribute to basic psychological need satisfaction and in turn support autonomous or self-determined motivation, which in turn entails an internal alignment between values and action and is connected to wellbeing and a sense of free choice and meaning.

(Dis)empowerment refers to process through which SI actors (both individually and collectively) gain (or lose) the ability to act on goals that matter to them and develop effective strategies to do so. We consider the process by which this ability is gained or lost as entailing both psychological dimensions and socio-material components, and a set of diverse disciplinary perspectives are used to understand these dimensions for TSI. The psychological dimension of empowerment can be described as the belief in the capacity to act on goals that matter to them, and understanding it is best achieved through theoretical perspectives from social psychology (Thomas & Velthouse, 1999, Ryan and Deci, 2000). The socio-material dimension of empowerment, which refers to enablers such as alliances and interactions with other collective actors, can be better understood from the perspective of Actor-Network Theory and public administration based theorizations of networked agency. Previous conceptualizations of empowerment have pointed to the fact that the process through which actors gain or lose the capacity to mobilize resources and institutions to achieve a goal require that actors gain: access to resources and institutions, strategies to mobilize resources and institutions, and the willingness to do so (Avelino, 2017).

The propositions developed in 'Cluster A' (in chapter 4) uses social psychology perspectives to unpack the psychological dimensions of empowerment in SI and focuses on the willingness and belief that goals that matter can be reached. From a psychological perspective, empowerment relies on the optimal satisfaction of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness and on the development of autonomous motivation that is sustained over time (Ryan and Deci, 2000). This leads to pro-active and shared strategies for change that are considered important and/or become an integral part of the self, also contributing to meaning-making. Empowered human actors can challenge, alter or replace elements of the socio-material context that thwart the satisfaction of these basic psychological needs, and, as a consequence, lead to passivity and alienation, as well as to social relations and institutions that do not support the natural human potential for growth, integration and pro-active,

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engaged and committed behaviours. Their absence leads to disempowerment and the lack of energy or willingness to engage in efforts towards transformative change. Beyond the satisfaction of these basic psychological needs, the belief in the ability to achieve goals, and especially transformative goals, require the actual experience of overcoming challenges and achieving some degree of impact, which is incorporated into an individual or collective identity that supports it (see chapter 4 for further details).

In Cluster B (chapter 5), and from an actor-network perspective, ‘empowerment’ is used somewhat differently to describe the various ways in which SI initiatives, as collective actors, can gain the ‘ability to act on goals that matter to them’ through alliances and interactions with other collective actors. That ability is shown to rest on access to various resources, legitimization and identity construction through discourses, exchanges and co-production convened in various spaces, connections and visibility through communication infrastructures, and ultimately the tensions in action fields that both increase and constrain this collective ability of SI initiatives. Cluster B thus focuses on the processes through which actors gain access to resources and institutions and develop strategies to mobilize them in pursuing goals.

Reflexivity and social learning. SI initiatives experiment with alternative ways of doing, organizing, framing and knowing and with the most effective ways to engage with dominant institutions, other actors in the social innovation field and the broader socio-material context, including prevailing discourses. We conceptualize reflexivity as including two dimensions: self-confrontation (Beck, 2003), and reflection. SI initiatives consciously set up spaces and tools for reflexivity. Through experimentation with new social relations, social interaction and conscious reflection, members of SI initiatives learn about how to both develop internally and engage in effective strategies for transforming existing practices and institutions outside of their own boundaries. We define social learning as the set of processes of interaction, collective experimentation and reflection by which SI initiatives reach new and shared understandings, which in turn become situated in shared norms and practices (Reed et al. 2010). Strategies for reflexivity and social learning are key to the capacity of SI initiatives to contribute to transformative change.

3.2.3 The propositions make use of a range of existing theoretical resources

TRANSIT brought together researchers from a range of disciplines and backgrounds, and in adopting a relational ontology for the TSI theory (see Haxeltine et al 2015, 2016a, 2017) we aimed to address certain pitfalls involved in the theory development (see Haxeltine et al 2017) and also to provide a framework that would allow an inter-paradigmatic interplay between the different theoretical perspectives represented in the project: this has proven largely successful, as evidenced by the diverse set of TSI propositions presented in this deliverable, that nevertheless recognisably use a common conceptual language. Previous WP3 deliverables have reported on research findings and literature reviews concerning on a wide range of social science theories applied to TSI, and the main theoretical resources and key concepts that we used in developing the propositions are further outlined in each of the four ‘cluster overview’ texts (chapters 4-7). The use of a range of different theoretical resources in the propositions has certainly resulted in certain differences of interpretation of the empirics. This is to be expected given the still formative state of the SI field, and the still provisional nature of the explanations of TSI agency and dynamics put forward in the propositions. In some cases the research has put forward integrative concepts and in other cases it has uncovered the differences between how different social science approaches understand and explain SI and TSI. In summary: the propositions on TSI presented in the following chapters, all make use of a relational theoretical framing and the common conceptual language that has been outlined in this chapter, but they also represent and illustrate the diversity of theoretical explanations that is the current ‘status of the art’ in SI theory-development more generally.

4 Cluster A propositions: on the social relations within SI initiatives

4.1 Cluster A overview

This cluster focuses on the formation and evolution of SI initiatives. As already mentioned, we have defined a SI initiative as a collective of people working on ideas, objects and/or activities that are socially innovative, and this chapter zooms into the motivations of individuals starting and joining SI-initiatives, the interpersonal relations and organizational forms they experiment with in advancing transformative change goals, and the psychological dimensions of (dis)empowerment. The following questions guide the propositions in this chapter: what drives people to join SI initiatives, and how is motivation supported over time? How do SI initiatives experiment with interpersonal relations, and how are they constituted as both socially-innovative and as means by which social innovations are realized? What are the psychological dimensions of empowerment in SI initiatives and how do members co-shape them to feel empowered, both individually and collectively? What role does reflexivity play in the shaping of SI initiatives and in enabling agency for transformative change? This cluster unpacks the dynamics and relations within SI initiatives, as key aspects in both their survival and their transformative potential.

In developing a middle-range theory of SI, we have argued in TRANSIT for the need to understand the micro-level processes involved in the formation and development of SI initiatives as experiments in transformative social innovation. SI initiatives are the contexts in which social innovations are developed, through experimentation with, and reflection upon, new social relations. These contexts are co-shaped by the people participating in SI initiatives. The reasons they have for coming together, the visions of change they pursue and develop, and the ways in which they shape this context to support the development of a social innovation that is transformative have implications for the agency of SI initiatives and for the empowerment of individual members and the collective they form. The following micro-level aspects are tackled in this chapter:

- 1) Motivations to start join and persist in, a SI initiative. SI initiatives are contexts in which new values and principles are promoted and aligned with new ways of doing, organizing, framing and knowing, in a process of experimentation. SI initiatives have a vision for change in society and they search for ways to do so. The motivations that are behind the creation of social innovation initiatives inform us about the transformative change sought and can contribute to explaining important aspects in the development of SI initiatives, such as *how individual and collective empowerment is enabled from within, what keeps individual members involved over time, certain tensions they encounter, and some of the decisions initiatives make in terms of rules of engagement and internal governance.*
- 2) Rules of engagement and internal governance. As SI initiatives are promoters of particular social innovations, the decisions they make regarding the rules that govern interpersonal relations and internal organization shape the form that the social innovation they work on will take and contribute to their success and endurance, or failure and dissolution before achieving their objectives.
- 3) Experimentation with interpersonal relations, as both the object of social innovation and the means by which social innovation contributes to transformative change.
- 4) Dynamics of individual and collective empowerment. Although we define both agency and empowerment as relationally constituted, we also consider that empowerment cannot exist in

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the absence of the belief and feeling of empowerment, as well as a collective identity that supports the freedom to choose goals that matter to an individual or a collective and organize action to achieve them. An empowering identity would, for example, include both psychological (interpretive) and action (behavioural) strategies to overcome obstacles and set-backs. We consider these to be the psychological dimensions of empowerment and a necessary, although not sufficient condition for SI initiatives to be empowered to contribute to transformative change. Chapter A also looks at how empowerment is enabled or hindered through interpersonal relations, intergroup dynamics and internal organization. Chapter B then focuses on the socio-material dimensions of empowerment within SI networks.

- 5) Reflexivity. As experiments in transformative change, social innovation initiatives are charting new territory. This is only possible through reflexivity regarding alignment between values and practices, ways to deal with internal tensions, and finding effective ways to engage with the socio-material context, and especially dealing with obstacles and set-backs, while also preserving their novel character.

The concepts of basic psychological needs, interpersonal relations, and empowerment are central to this chapter. Would people strive for transformative change if needs were adequately satisfied by existing institutions and practices or persist in their involvement if the initiative does not provide ways of achieving better satisfaction of needs? Research in psychology has extensively documented the importance of psychological needs satisfaction for human wellbeing. In TRANSIT, we find evidence that suggests that experimenting with better ways to satisfy basic psychological needs is a driving factor behind the formation of SI initiatives. For transformative SI, involvement needs to be sustained over time, and a theory of TSI should provide an account of the process through which involvement and persistence is achieved, and of the contextual elements that support motivation for action, which is currently missing in the literature (Reznickova & Zepeda, 2016). While motivated members are important for social innovation, we have argued that a TSI theory would need to provide explanations for the trade-offs between keeping members motivated and the ability to articulate effective collective action that successful initiatives display. Members start out with enthusiasm for the novelty the SI initiative proposes in terms of different values, relations and practices, and keeping these original intentions alive and, to a certain extent pure, is important both for motivations and for the initiative's transformative potential. However, pursuing their transformative goals entails facing and dealing with external pressures and making compromises, which in turn has an impact on motivations, interpersonal relations and (dis)empowerment.

Based on extensive and cross-cultural empirical research, self-determination theory is particularly appropriate for an understanding of motivations and empowerment (Alkire, 2007). It posits the existence of three innate psychological needs, which are considered basic for optimal human functioning and for the actualization of potentialities for growth and creativity. In order for pro-active behavior to be possible, satisfaction of needs for *autonomy*, *competence* and *relatedness* are necessary, and the quality of their satisfaction provides an explanation for both positive and negative outcomes. *Autonomy* refers to the ability to choose one's own acts and to act in line with personal values and identity, *relatedness* is about feeling connected and part of a social group, as well as receiving support and recognition from it, and *competence* is related to developing mastery and the perception of effectiveness in carrying out actions to achieve one's goals, and entails stimulation and developing the abilities to overcome obstacles (Bidee et al., 2013).

The quality of basic need satisfaction is related to the types and levels of motivation individuals experience (Ryan & Deci, 2000b) which are posited on a continuum that ranges from amotivation (passivity, no-self-determination) to intrinsic or self-determined motivations. Intrinsic motivation is

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considered to be innate and refers to a sense of pleasure or delight in doing certain things (i.e.: our “natural” interests). Intrinsic motivation can be supported by contexts that allow for the pursuit of such interests. However, the theory also points out that the majority of human endeavors require organization and doing things that are not pleasant or intrinsically rewarding. Collective action is also possible when people share a set of values and internalize collective goals. Through a process of internalization, elaboration of, and identification with values and goals, we make them our own and create our unique combination, which is then experienced as an important part of our identity. Self-determined motivation thus refers to striving for values and goals that come to be experienced as our own, even if they originated from a social context or collective. By providing an account of how external drivers become internalized and integrated into motivations for carrying out action and also by showing how contextual factors stimulate, hinder or block the natural propensity towards growth, integrity, intrinsic motivation and wellbeing (Ryan and Deci, 2000b), SDT is particularly well-suited to explain the dialectical relationship between human agency and structure in SI processes. It is the theory’s account of the contextual factors that enhance or undermine intrinsic motivation, self-regulation and wellbeing, which provides a compelling explanation for why people can be pro-active, engaged and constructive or passive and alienated. It thus also provides a framework for the understanding of how these conditions are co-created within SI initiatives and how they contribute to sustained engagement and empowerment of members across the different stages of a TSI journey.

Failing to provide supports for competence, autonomy and relatedness contributes to alienation and ill-being, while success in providing them leads to self-determined behavior and well-being. We thus argue that empowerment relies on the adequate satisfaction of basic psychological needs, leading to autonomous motivation and behavior that is self-determined, as well as outcomes such as wellbeing, creativity and commitment, which are essential for innovative ideas to arise within SI processes (e.g. Slow Food, Reznickova & Zepeda, 2016).

We also adopt a psychologically-informed definition of interpersonal relations, as a connection or an association between two or more people that can be either fleeting or enduring, based on a certain type of social commitment, and formed in the context of social, cultural and other influences. Interpersonal relations are regulated by law, custom or mutual agreement, and are considered to be the basis of social groups and society as a whole. An extensive body of psychological and sociological theorizing and research has provided empirical support for the importance of interpersonal relations in human health and wellbeing, the structuring of the self and identity, and the functioning of human groups, communities and organizations.

Empowerment is conceptualized as the ability to act on behalf of goals that matter personally or collectively and we follow Alkire in considering it as a subset of agency, which implies that increases in empowerment would be reflected in an increased sense of agency but agency is not entirely dependent on empowerment. We consider agency to be the dynamic, relational and constantly evolving process through which actors transform themselves, their relationships and the social context in which they exist. SI initiatives are many times motivated by a sense of the dominant social institutions thwarting one’s ability to act in accordance with one’s values and beliefs, and thus to be able to fulfil the need for autonomy, and a feeling that an alternative space is needed where, together with like-minded others one can transcend the internal and external constraints of the social context and create an alternative. Becoming autonomous requires a relational context in which alternative ways of being, relating and doing are co-produced with others sharing visions, values and goals. The creation of a context in which reflexivity contributes to the reshaping of dominant ways of doing, framing, organizing and knowing is both a result and a key part of processes of agency.

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Empowerment relies on enabling and constraining conditions. The context created within the initiative needs to support autonomous functioning in the sense described above, for members to maintain motivation and feel empowered to contribute to the social innovation on the one hand, and to engage in intentional processes of transformative change (when there is such an aim). Furthermore, initiatives need material and symbolic resources that enable empowerment, and chapter B analyzes these in detail.

For further specification and operationalisation of empowerment, we build on self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000) and intrinsic motivation theory (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). We conceptualize *six dimensions of empowerment*: First, empowerment involves psychological need satisfaction and thus an experienced sense of (1) *relatedness*, (2) *autonomy* and (3) *competence*. But need satisfaction is not sufficient. Individuals and collectives also require a sense of efficacy or mastery over carrying out action that fulfils goals. A sense of efficacy is developed as a result of overcoming challenges and achieving some degree of impact, which is incorporated into an individual or collective identity (i.e.: a definition of the self or of a collective) that supports it. Individual identities are expanded to incorporate membership in SI initiatives and are changed by participation in them. Collective identities created either support or hinder empowerment. For example, empowering elements of collective identities will support the reformulation of goals or changing strategies when they do not prove effective. *Impact (4)* refers to the effect of actions in achieving goals and bringing about the change sought. (Lack of) impact is a key element of (dis)empowerment, as actors need both success and failure experiences in order to maintain a sense of it. *Meaning (5)* refers to cognitive processes enabled through e.g. narratives, theories, and assessments, and is an important dimension of wellbeing. We consider meaning to be a result of psychological need satisfaction, in line with self-determination theory proponents, and of the experience of having a sense of impact. Last but not least, *resilience (6)* refers to the experienced capacity to learn, adapt and recover, even after set-backs.

Starting from this conceptual framing, cluster A is divided among five propositions:

Proposition A1: On involvement in SI initiatives. Describes as the driver of starting a SI initiative the desire to create an alternative to existing institutionalized social relations and experiment with ways to put certain values into practice. It also states that motivational persistence is achieved when there is support for the basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence. Their satisfaction is a condition for the development of self-determined motivation. It also argues that, while providing support for these needs is important in supporting motivation, initiatives also need to achieve collective impact and have a degree of success in the pursuit of their objectives in order for members to keep motivated. At different stages of development, this entails experimentation with different rules and practices and learning from mistakes and failures, which in turn might lead to changing course, re-shaping rules and practices etc.

Proposition A2: On dealing with tensions. As SI initiatives experiment and go into uncharted territory, and through different stages of development, they encounter multiple tensions, from both internal and external sources. Internally, tensions can arise from differences in motivations, relational skills, and perceptions of best courses of action, among other things. External challenges are also manifold, and part of a dynamic and constantly changing socio-material context, which includes other actors who pursue their own agendas and react to the SI initiative's actions.

Proposition A3: On interpersonal relations. Focuses on the role of interpersonal relations in TSI, arguing that experimentation with new ways of relating at an interpersonal level is in itself transformative, and, as such, a way to challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions. It is based on the observation that members of SI initiatives bring with them schemas and a familiarity with practices that reproduce institutionalized social relations and embedded understandings of power. Through engagement with

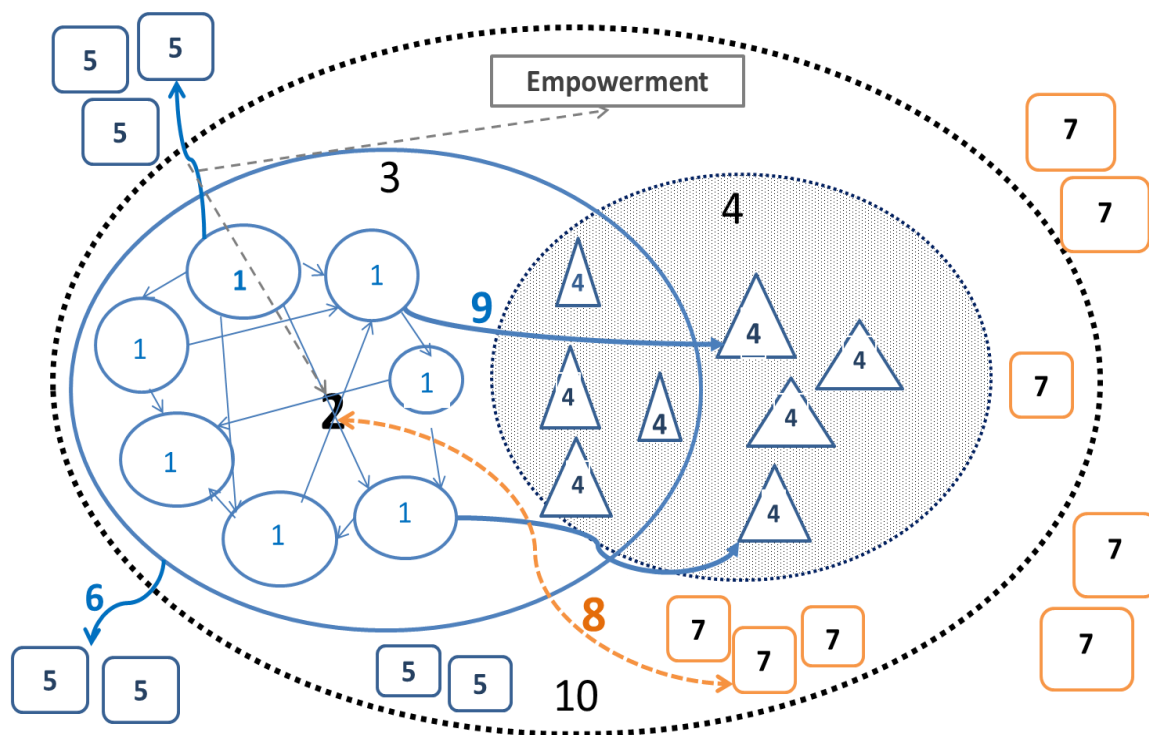
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relational change at an interpersonal level, and the use of self- and group-reflexivity strategies, they work on changing them and create the supportive structures that further promote such change.

Proposition A4: On translocal empowerment. Focuses on the processes involved in achieving empowerment for members of a SI initiative. It focuses on the psychological dimensions of empowerment (on “power within” – cf. Narayan, 2002), without ignoring the political dimensions of it. It addresses the ways in which rules of engagement and decision-making structures within the initiative, and the new interpersonal relations they support and shape, create the conditions for empowerment.

Proposition A5: On learning/reflexivity in TSI. The final proposition of this cluster focuses on the importance and role of reflexivity and learning in SI initiatives. SI initiatives experiment with new social relations and novel practices, and they need to set up strategies and tools to ensure that they develop and adapt their practices and strategies for transformative change in response to the constantly changing and dynamic realities they face. Otherwise, they risk becoming disempowered, losing their transformative potential or disappearing altogether.

Figure 4.1.1 illustrates the different entities and relations among them that we focus on in this chapter. We look inside the social innovation initiative (3) to the interpersonal relations between members (1, 2) and to the social innovations they promote, including new doings, organizing, framing and knowing (4). We also represent other initiatives within the same network and the relations the focal SI and individual members have with them (5,6). SI initiatives we studied have ambitions of transformative change, and they interact with institutions (7) in the SI action field (10), to which they direct action to challenge, alter, replace them or produce alternatives to them, through the creation of proto-institutions (9).



1. SI initiative members (individuals). 2. Interpersonal relations 3. Focal Social Initiative. 4. Social innovation/s promoted (new ways of DOKF.) 5. Other SI initiatives within the same network . 6. Translocal relations with other SIs 7. Institutions, including dominant institutions . 8. CARPIng dominant institutions through experimentation with interpersonal relations 9. Protoinstitutionalisation. 10. Social innovation action field.

Figure 4.1.1 Visualisation of the main entities and relations addressed in chapter A propositions.

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References (for cluster A overview)

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4.2 Presentation of Cluster A propositions

4.2.1 Proposition A1 : Maintaining involvement in SI initiatives

SI initiatives are created out of a desire to put certain values and principles in practice and transform particular institutionalized social relations. Maintaining motivation for involvement in the SI initiative over time requires support for autonomy, relatedness and competence while also achieving collective impact and members experiment with appropriate organizational rules and practices to achieve both.

4.2.1.1 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition refers to the following units of analysis: SI individuals, SI initiatives and SI networks; interpersonal relations.

The proposition deals with the emergence of TSI initiatives and takes as a starting point the fact that, before striving to achieve transformative impact, social innovations need to self-perpetuate and attract a sufficient number of members that dedicate their resources such as time and energy to developing it. For transformative social innovation, involvement needs to be sustained over time, and a theory of TSI should be able to provide an account of the process through which involvement and persistence is achieved, and of the contextual elements that support optimal motivation for action in SI, which is currently missing in the literature (Reznickova & Zepeda, 2016). Beyond the achievement of optimal motivation as a precondition for effective action, we also strive to provide explanations for the trade-offs between maintaining motivation for individual members and the ability to articulate effective collective action that successful initiatives display. Understanding motivations thus becomes important in order to account for the conditions under which members feel empowered to act and to develop strategies that lead to the attainment of the objectives the SI has established for itself. We draw, among others, on theoretical resources from the field of social psychology to unpack this concept and in particular on a body of related theories that have come to be known as self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

In order to unpack how human actors co-produce SI with transformative potential and impact by asking the questions of what drives human agents to start and join social innovation initiatives, what elements influence their motivation sustenance over time and persistence in the face of obstacles, and what types of contexts they strive and need to create through the exercise of agency in order for collective action with a potential for transformative impact to be possible. Although SI initiatives vary in the concrete goals they pursue, they all have in common a search for contexts that can better satisfy needs and that better align with sets of principles and values that are perceived as not aligned with current institutionalized rules and practices.

Self-determination theory (SDT) was considered as particularly appropriate for constructing an account of motivations (Haxeltine et al., 2016). The three basic psychological needs SDT postulates are autonomy, competence and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the ability to choose one's own acts and to act in line with personal values and identity; relatedness is about feeling part of a social group, and competence is related to the perception of effectiveness in carrying out action to achieve one's goals and involves a search for stimulation and optimal challenges (Bidee et al., 2013). The quality of basic need satisfaction has relevance for the types and levels of motivation individuals experience (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

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In pursuing a collective goal, SI initiatives need to strike a balance, over time, between maintaining individual motivations for involvement, and operating effectively in practice. Motivations need to be aligned to the ethos and values of the social innovation that the initiative promotes and co-shapes, and this alignment is not achieved spontaneously, but is rather steered through organizational rules and practices. Beyond support for autonomy, relatedness and competence, a sense of collective impact, which is achieved by being successful in reaching collective goals, is also important in maintaining motivation. Experimentation with organizational rules and practices that support both individual motivation and are conducive to effective strategies for achieving goals enables common identities, which are a key element of collective agency.

4.2.1.2 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

Through the different empirical iterations in TRANSIT, we have found considerable evidence on what motivates people to start or join a SI initiative as well as what supports members' motivation over time. Through the different stages of their development, the interplay between keeping members motivated and achieving collective goals, as well as the tensions and compromises that characterize them are recurring themes in the case studies. Searching the database of critical turning points, which involved research on 80 SI initiatives across the globe, we found 241 CTPs with keywords such as motivation, values, identity, emergence, compromise, re-orientation (out of 389, Pel et al., 2017 D5.4). Claims in this proposition are also supported by in-depth case studies carried out in WP4 (see Jorgensen et al., 2015, 2016 for overviews of case studies).

Evidence supports the claim that members come together in an attempt to find better ways of pursuing certain values/ideals/ principles, and align them to specific (novel) practices and behaviours. Members are attracted to the freedom to pursue certain ideals, to new forms of relatedness based on equality, inclusiveness and fairness (to name just a few examples), and search for ways to align them to new practices and behaviours. However, there are also differences between members' motivations, as well as understandings about which particular ways of doing and organizing would be most appropriate for achieving goals, and these are not always made explicit from the outset. When they are made explicit, they can be openly negotiated and workable compromises can be found. When they are not made explicit, it can lead to chaos, lack of effectiveness in organizing and pursuing collective goals, as well as disenchantment and loss of membership.

The relational changes that initiatives pursue sometimes come into conflict with the diversity of motivations members bring. Not all of those motivations are aligned with, or support, the initiative's goals. The interplay between individual motivations, and practical forms of organization within the initiative, can lead to outcomes that either support the development of the initiative or hinder it. Motivations influence and are also influenced by the organizational forms that the initiative promotes, and this relationship also changes at different stages of their development. Leaders and founders are aware of this interplay and use different strategies to shape spaces and rules of decision-making and participation in ways that support the types of motivation fitting the organizations purpose and values. In other cases, they become aware of the importance of shaping adequate contexts to both support motivations and achieve a good level of organizational functioning of the initiative by learning from experience and mistakes and re-shaping the direction of the organization. When the latter is the case, the way this process is handled seems to be the differentiating factor in the initiative moving forward successfully or not. However, this process is not necessarily smooth or linear.

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Different stages in the development of an initiative come with different tensions around motivations. For the first stage of setting up an initiative, challenges revolve around bringing different motivations into workable compromises and divergence around different understandings of how goals are best pursued, which in turn has consequences on motivations. The second stage revolves around setting up an organizational structure that reflects the initial values and objectives while being effective in dealing with practical and organizational challenges- members differ, for example, in their understandings of how freedom should look like in practice, have different preferences for self-direction when it comes to shaping the initiative's rules or in their perspectives on the pace and style of growth. At this stage, initiatives sometimes learn that motivations need to be made explicit, or that communication and other organizational strategies need to target the right kind of motivation in members. The right kind of motivation refers to clearly understanding what the initiative is about, what members can expect, and what is expected from them when they join. Thus members' motivations sometimes need to be brought more in line with the initiative's objectives. Leaders and international networks create flexibility in organizational forms as a way to promote inclusivity, and use strategies for equality as a way to ensure that crises do not lead to a loss in membership or that motivation does not dwindle.

Evidence provides some support for the fact that motivations are supported over time by the satisfaction of the psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence. Maintaining the autonomy of different groups is recognized as important in order to maintain motivation and align practices with the ethos of the movement, as the case of Slow Food Mexico signals. Originally, the Mexican initiative attracted upper class chefs who got together for experiences of slow food enjoyment food and to promote it in their businesses. Other groups such as indigenous food producers in different regions felt alienated by this, and providing a supportive context for the movement to accommodate different values and interests was very important in the growth and expansion of the initiative. Motivation is also supported by meeting others in contexts where members feel engaged and involved, and where a sense of belonging is experienced. Co-founders and leaders of initiatives also understand the importance of providing practical support to members, which in turn can help develop competences and thus stimulate and maintain motivation. The importance of practical support is highlighted by the initiative Magház-Seed House, when discussing the publishing of the report on "Practicality of Seed Saving": *"It promotes agricultural diversity around the globe and explains the history of the Hungarian seed maintaining efforts. It also encourages novice gardeners to try themselves as breeders" (IN 17, CTP 232). Beyond the satisfaction of these psychological needs, we find evidence that being effective, and being successful, thus demonstrating collective capability, plays an important role of keeping members motivated. If individual needs are satisfied, but collective goals are consistently not reached, motivation also diminishes.*

The satisfaction of the need for autonomy seems to play an important role in maintaining intrinsic motivation, and in dealing with tensions at different stages. Support for new forms of relating and finding a sense of belonging and meaning in new relations appears to support the satisfaction of the need for relatedness. Receiving support to develop new competences and skills also seems to contribute to maintaining motivation for involvement. Different initiatives place different emphasis on the needs: support for developing competences is more important in the Fablabs and Credit Unions than in Slow Food for example. However, as the exploration of the relationship between psychological needs and motivation of members were not among the initial objectives of the project, the contexts and rules of organization that best support such needs, as well as the potentially different reactions to de-motivation remain as open questions for future research.

The analyses for proposition 1 draw more heavily on the following initiatives: Magház Seed House, Red de Semillas, Fiare, Ecovillage Sieben Linden, Ecovillage Findhorn, Anamuri (Via Campesina), Transition Town Ry, several Slow Food initiatives (Mexico, USA, Araba-Vitoria), Pro-specie Rara, Fablabs (North-East

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England), Volunteer Labour Bank (a time bank initiative in Japan), BIEN-Suisse, Participatory Budgeting in Fortaleza and Porto Alegre, Impact Hub London, and Hackspace 1 (North of England). These contained the most relevant evidence for the content of this proposition. This does not mean that others do not include relevant evidence, but rather that the research methods employed have not included an in-depth exploration of these dimensions of TSI.

4.2.1.3 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

This proposition focuses on the reasons for involvement in transformative social innovation initiatives and the conditions under which motivation of members is maintained over time and across different stages of development and expansion of SI initiatives. Understanding why people join SI initiatives and what supports dedication over time, in the face of obstacles and set-backs, is an important part of explaining how social innovation initiatives contribute to transformative change. Both individual and collective agency relies on motivations.

Initiatives experiment with and reflect upon the rules of organization, contexts and interpersonal relations that best represent their values and support the change they want to bring about. They adopt organizational forms and practices that support autonomous forms of motivation, instead of coercive or controlled forms of motivation, and this is a core part of the relational transformations they aim to bring about. By providing an account of motivations, and of the characteristics of interpersonal relations and contexts that support involvement, we contribute to the understanding of SI initiatives' agency. The relationship between maintaining high levels of motivation and enthusiasm with what the SI initiative is trying to achieve, and the compromises they need to make in order to achieve goals in practice will have an impact on the transformative potential of the SI initiative. The alignment between the initiative's principles/values and the practical forms of organization, as well as how crises and tensions are handled, will have an influence on the extent to which they actually overcome and transform dominant institutions.

The dynamics of individual, interpersonal and group processes in SI initiatives are important in understanding the characteristics of different SI initiatives and the extent to which they become creative entities with a potential for transformative change. These processes will also help explain the different organizational forms and pathways they take, including their failures (where the case) to bring about change. Focusing attention on the nature of motivations and the relationship between them and experimentation with new social relations and new ways of doing, organizing, knowing and framing to bring about societal change is an important contribution to the field of social innovation, in which the psychological processes and dynamics of the formation and evolution of SI initiatives are generally ignored. Further questions regarding the characteristics of group dynamics, identity formation processes, and collective empowerment at different stages of evolution remain unanswered. Further research into the organizational arrangements and interpersonal relations in SI initiatives that best support psychological needs satisfaction, as well as the relationship between them, is also necessary. Although there is a lot of research on dynamics of different types of groups, there is very limited research available on TSI initiatives as particular types of groups, experimenting with novel social relations. The nature and characteristics of leadership in such initiatives also need additional research and theoretical articulation. We find empirical evidence of the importance of leadership in SI initiatives, especially in the first stages of their development and in overcoming obstacles and crises related to both internal and external dynamics.

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4.2.1.4 Relations to others propositions

A2: On dealing with tensions. Motivations are affected by tensions at different stages in the evolution of SI initiatives, and the ways in which tensions are dealt with has implications for member's motivations.

A3. On interpersonal relations. Motivation, and especially the autonomous type, needs certain characteristics in interpersonal relations. The search for transformation of interpersonal relations and the experimentation with them has implications for need satisfaction and thus for motivation.

A4/B1/B2/B5. On (translocal) networks, alliances and empowerment. Motivations for involvement are intimately connected to a sense of empowerment. The satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence are part of processes of psychological empowerment. Translocal connections contribute to maintaining and/or renewing motivations, through a sense of common identity, a sense of meaning – as contributing to wider movements and causes, and the exchange of lessons learned and strategies to pursue goals and deal with obstacles.

A5 On learning/reflexivity. An important aspect of social learning especially in the initial stages of SI initiatives has to do with how to support, enhance and maintain members' motivation over time.

B3/D3. Articulating the discursive dimension of SI network formation. Discourses of SI initiatives are important motivational and empowerment tools.

C1/C5. On the dialectic relation between SI and dominant institutions. In aligning motivations with the objectives and values of SI initiatives, people overcome internalized dominant institutions, such as a preference for guided action, instead of self-determined action.

C2. On strategic actions. In attempting to strike a balance between strategies to achieve institutional change and maintaining core intentions, they reflect on the effects these have on levels of motivation.

C3. On institutional accommodation. Responding to dominant institutions over time has effects on motivations and whether the original ethos is maintained. The ways in which they respond also has an impact on motivations. When motivations also change due to generational change of membership for example, this also influences the types of institutional change strategies they might pursue and accept.

D1/D2. On the social material evolution out of which TSI emerges. Motivations for starting SI initiatives are driven by wider historical changes in expectations and meaning, partly as a result of disillusionment with how psychological needs are satisfied by existing lifestyles and forms of economic organization, and how human wellbeing and self-actualization is supported or hindered.

D5. On the construction of crises. The discursive ways in which crises and problematic trends are constructed influences motivations. Most likely, there is a recursive relationship between them, as motivations for participation in a SI initiative also affects how crises are constructed.

4.2.1.5 References

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4.2.2 Proposition A2: Dealing with internal tensions

4.2.2.1 Short statement of the proposition

In order to survive and thrive SI initiatives require engaged people, responsive rules of engagement and decision-making structures, especially for coping with inherent tensions. For setting up resilient approaches to challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions, SI initiatives need to balance the expectations and needs of individuals (members) with their values and ambitions.

4.2.2.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition is focused on the following units of analysis: SI actors; SI initiatives and internal group-dynamics; and, interpersonal relations. In the TSI framework, this proposition appears for explaining the internal group dynamics and relations between individuals within an initiative. It is at the heart of personal interaction between members of an initiative. At the level of individuals, socio-psychological aspects like motivation, individual intentions, and needs for relatedness, autonomy and competence play a major role. In all the SI initiatives the group level is influenced by informal dynamics of social relations, emotional bonding, and degree of familiarity and trust, especially in community-oriented initiatives like ecovillages, transition towns, or Slow Food. These internal dynamics do not only have a reverse effect on individual motivations to stay in the initiative, but influence the competences, professionalization and impact – and finally the resilience and sustainability of the initiative.

Personal social relations are the central core of social innovation. To be able to distinguish what is innovative about social relations, we need to know the status quo of existing social relations. This status quo is based on cultural norms and societal context which a *sociological perspective can help to understand*. In addition to the introduced socio-psychological approach in proposition A1, a sociological perspective *can help* to interpret the internal dynamics and external ambitions due to underlying cultural patterns identifying that social behaviour arises from everyday interaction and living together, subsequently creating communal structures (Coleman 1994). From this perspective, social innovation initiatives can be seen as fields where communal structures are permanently created. Nevertheless, this turns out as innovative in nowadays cultures when analysing the historical developments. One of the founding fathers of sociology, Ferdinand Tönnies (in 1887; 2002) has distinguished two modes of social relation – ‘community’ as personal bonding and ‘society’ as purpose-driven, institutionalised and formal interaction based on impersonal roles. In the changing process ‘community’ has lost its dominance to societal institutions (Weber 1978). The ‘institutionalisation’ started in medieval times in Europe later influencing its facts to other parts of the worlds latest in the early modern time through colonialization and globalisation. The major social infrastructure changed from small-scale, personal systems of trade to larger, anonymous economic organizations. This process progressed rapidly with modernity; the traditional community that lived and worked together was substituted on the one side by private nuclear families in reproductive households and on the other side by forms of official employment in commercial enterprises. The modern ‘loss of community’ has produced ambivalent results between freedom and alienation and has furthermore led to the *colonialization of the life world* (Habermas 2014).

Based on modern societies with its zeitgeist and ambivalent outcomes of individualization, the social innovation initiatives of today seem to herald a revival of community. Looking from a sociological perspective we discover a new mode of internal organization and community as new institutionalisation

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logics in a 'post-individualised' manner in the TRANSIT data. The empirical findings show how SI initiatives struggle to find new ways for balancing individualisation with communal responsibilities and ambitions in comparison to dominant institutions.

Concerning personal relations and internal group dynamics, SI initiatives emerge as a reaction or 'revitalization' (Brown 2002) of social values like commitment and community in late modernity. They are emerging attempts to 'heal' the ambivalent results of modernity with e.g. socio-economic and socio-ecological innovations. The following discussion of empirical results will have a closer look on this.

Furthermore, a study on the evolution of innovative organisations can help to understand internal dynamics in relation to cultural changes of organisational development (Laloux 2014).

4.2.2.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

All SI initiatives have to deal with inner dynamics, tensions and re-structuring processes in order to survive and thrive. *Due* to external or internal changes like game changers (e.g. food scandals attract new members to Slow Food) or conflicts (e.g. the management acted controversial) the SI initiatives are challenged in their resilience. They are compelled to adapt, renew or transform their strategies or (infra)structures over time to sustain and thrive the initiative, meet the needs of members, keep the motivation and the ambitions of the initiative. *The empirical analyses showed that a high amount of SI initiatives have experienced* internal crises in their history for instance around leadership, power, finances, aims or values (out of 480 critical turning points, 47 are explicitly named as internal crisis).

Internal tensions in SI initiatives can appear in form of conflicts – explicitly or implicitly. Further effects can occur like members leaving the initiative, setbacks or standstill. The tensions emerge first between individual members, second, between individual needs and the initiatives' aims to challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions. Tensions were observed to **occur in the areas** of (1) commitment, growth and integration, agreements and responsibility, (2) conflicts, community and leadership and (3) acknowledgement, management, and professional actions. *Eight kinds of tensions could be identified (commitment, social classes, generations, responsibility & power, ideals & reality, competence & professionalization, openness & protection, governance & leadership, and growing).*

Dealing with the tensions is often a process of seeking and experimenting between trial and error. The clearer the starting impulse including common ground, formulation of purpose and aims, financial resources, governance and management system – the better the initiatives seem to be able to handle the tensions. Dealing with tensions mostly encompasses some kind of reflection process on the internal dynamics and social relations from an individual and personal point of view. It challenges the social competencies of the members and demands more personal communication. Overcoming tension and internal crises results in re-invigoration of the initiatives' identity (as 19 search results show). For solving tensions between individual needs and the external ambitions, initiatives often actively create space for communication and diplomatic negotiation with the aim of win-win-solutions for which a range of elaborated methods like personal sharing, mediation and other conflict solving methods are applied, in some cases on a regular base.

These **negotiation processes for solving tensions**, creating balance and providing a resilient space for the initiatives' ambitions is expressed and manifested:

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(1) as **protecting and enabling structures of exclusion and inclusion**. The tensions between inclusion of new members and protecting the initiatives' values are balanced by membership rules e.g. for protecting the initiatives' equipment in the case of LivingLabs, in months and yearlong newcomer processes in ecovillages or shareholder fees and personal membership commitments in case of many cooperative and association-based initiatives. The challenge to integrate new members and ensure their motivation and behaviour according to the initiatives' values, 'conscious growth control' had to be introduced and organized in the case of co-housings and ecovillages to insure identification and responsible behaviour of members. The point of reference for individual members is the core values of the initiative, expressed for instance as common ground or constitution in relation to the legal frame of the initiative.

(2) as **governance, leadership and internal structures**. The empirical data shows for instance, changes of leaders, team change in two cases, murder of the leader in one case, withdrawal of entire board in one case, and various kinds of changes in governance, management or business methods and structures in the majority of cases (Slow Food Mexico, ecovillages Tempelhof, Findhorn and Bergen, ImactHUB, Part.Budg., Transition Town, DESIS, Hackerspace, LivingKnowledge, FEBEA, ICA, Credit Union). Ideally, governance provides a frame to negotiate and integrate the personal needs for autonomy, co-creation and social relation with the initiatives' external work of challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions. Transparent communication and the option of being included in decision making keep members motivated as FEBEA, ImpactHUB, ecovillages, Transition Towns show. SI initiatives need to set up organisational structures in order to create sustainable frames to challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions while providing space for member motivated action. *Sustainable solutions need to be focused on solving the tensions through well governed processes. In the end these solutions are often balanced combinations of continuist approaches (when the initiative is going back to its roots and core values) as well as incremental approaches (when the initiative is making radical change of organisational structures due to the roots and original intention and values).*

Triggered by changes and tensions, initiatives develop over time and thereby encounter different stages ((1) foundation and orientation, (2) professionalization, (3) waxing and waning, (4) re-organisations and adaptations). Development and 'internal' gave the large amount of 49 hits in the data base. The transition from one stage to another is often experienced as critical turning point. The pushing force to evolve into another stage comes mostly with tensions. Thereby, the stages are not fixed entities but rather fluid qualities; an initiative which has transformative ambitions in various external and internal areas may find itself in different stages at the same time or may develop repetitively through the stages while growing, differentiating and maturing. Initiatives are often started by charismatic founders led by idealistic visions which often conflicts later in maintaining the initiative (1). In the next stage of professionalization management skills are needed (2). *Processes of internal differentiation can solve the challenges around growth and integration of new members (3). Re-orientation becomes important not only in the case of shrinking and stagnation but also due to an evolutionary drive of members or due to external change (4).*

Sustainable solutions have developed organically or need to be well planned. Ideally, governance provides a frame to negotiate and integrate the personal needs for autonomy, co-creation and social relation with the initiatives' external work to challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions. Building a solid social-material context with institutional frames, membership rules, event. property and a local, spatial manifestation which is co-owned and created by the SI actors is a strong aspect to support the resilience of SI initiatives. Some initiatives have managed to create activities that combine outer ambitions and inner dynamics like 'a visual one page strategy' of Transition Town Tooting which is both a map for internal understanding of dynamics and external presentation. Another way of balancing the inner and outer requirements is an iterative approach by shifting the focus of development from outside ambitions to inner group processes and competence development. Appropriate forms of participatory governance structures have been developed and established to deal with tensions.

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4.2.2.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

The empirical analysis for proposition A2 on tensions of internal group dynamics has revealed two ambivalent dynamics concerning social relations of societal transformation to which SI initiatives are responding. This seems to be an underlying cause of the observed tensions. First, the cultural tendency in individualised, late modern societies with a high degree of formal, anonymised and institutionalised relations in dominant institutions seems to partly miss out or contradict the need for social relations. SI initiatives use social relations and personal bonding as a part of their success. With SI initiatives we can observe that in a highly formalised societal system, personal social relations in itself appear as social innovation. To ensure social innovative spaces for social relations, the SI initiatives have to create a certain degree of protective social spaces to allow new modes of community, social norms and social innovation to grow and thrive within their social context. Second, individual members mirror dominant institutions through their socialisation and are constantly confronted with and tempted by dominant institutions in their life outside the SI initiative. This proposition explains how SI initiatives and single SI actors create new ways of DOFK to challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions by balancing these tensions through internal dynamics and governance structures. They work with internal processes towards being resilient in their values and ambitions and create new, more cooperative cultures.

SI initiatives need to constantly evolve to be sustainable and resilient due to individual needs and incentives and to stay responsive towards societal transition and transformation processes. They experiment and live transformative change as small group models according to their ambitions. Their survival and success is dependent on their ability to internally adapt and evolve with motivation, professionalization, integrated and conscious growth, differentiation and internal re-structuring in the sense of organisational learning.

While there is data on the governance transformation processes and developmental stages, the influence of personal relations and conflict on the stability of initiatives is difficult to estimate. The emotional and intrinsic motivation of members and its importance for the resilience of SI initiatives stay vague. It is challenging to measure underlying conflicts and personal relations by expert interviews. Only long-term participant observation in combination with historical analysis of initiatives could reveal these details.

Proposition A2 reveals the importance of internal dynamics in SI initiatives, its maintenance and resilience through internal structures. The internal dynamics – including personal social relations and group dynamics within initiatives – are essential for social innovation. The internal group dynamics mirror societal and cultural transformation processes of how SI initiatives struggle and succeed to implement their values of collaboration and sharing on the basis of principles of equality, inclusion and transparency. A major precondition for the social innovative potential of initiatives is framed by democratic, individualised and liberal societies where individuals can choose on a voluntary base in which kind of community they want to live and be involved. With this background intrinsic and often voluntary engagement of members is an important source of social innovation. SI initiatives are of special relevance for a theory of transformative social innovation because the internal dynamics and structures of the initiatives function as an arena where new social relations and innovations are tested for resilience. These dynamics are the incubators and laboratories for social innovations in diverse areas like governance, community, and social relations in general.

Understanding linkages and dynamics of tensions within SI initiatives is an essential aspect for a middle range theory of transformative social innovation, because it provides not only an indication for thriving and potential success for some initiatives, but furthermore can mirror dynamics of how new social relations culturally establish in 'small scale societies' or 'social experiments' of SI initiatives.

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4.2.2.5 Relations to other propositions

This proposition relates most clearly to the following propositions in the following ways:

A1: On involvement in SI initiatives – Prop. A1 introduces the starting impulses to motivate and recruit members – prop. A2 elaborates the resilience of initiatives by setting internal structures and group bonding.

A3: On Interpersonal Relations. A3 describes interpersonal relations and its transformation through SI initiatives – Prop. A2 relates these social relations to the organisational developments, the group dynamics and resilience of the SI initiatives.

A5: On Learning/reflexivity in TSI A5 describes learning and reflexivity processes, and A2 states findings on group development processes as manifested dynamics and outcomes of constant learning processes of internal governance as a necessary condition for empowerment and resilience.

C1 On institutional abundance in which SI emerges and develops/ C2 On the strategies of SI initiatives. A2 describes processes of how SI initiatives set up internal governmental frames and structures for their thriving, using existing institutional abundance. On the other hand group dynamics and tensions in SI initiatives show how social innovations reclaim space from institutionalised contexts of modern societies. A2 reveals the strategies of SI initiatives to create social relations according to their values, and prevent colonialization by institutional logics while they learn and actively borrow from different institutional logics: hence the insight from within initiatives for C1.

C3: On the construction of institutional existence. Proposition A2 describes the organisational development SI initiatives go through to become resilient. They enter developmental stages and evolutionary processes of professionalization, differentiation and re-organisation through internal processes – their basis for institutional existence.

D1/D2: On the social-material evolution out of which TSI emerges. Inner group processes as discovered in prop. A2 are a precondition and fundament for SI initiatives to motivate and commit members for social-material evolutions. Trustful social relations and community bonding (as described in A2) appear for SI actors most likely as essential to be ready for long-term social-material commitment and interaction (a basis for the resilience of SI initiatives). This is manifested as membership commitment, shared property and/or financial investments and bonding.

D3: On Narratives of change. Internal organisation, governance and group dynamics of prop. A2 are the most direct and obvious step for SI initiatives to proof their narratives of change in reality. A2 describes the potential pathways of SI initiatives to live their narratives of change internally in their initiatives.

D6: The SI-discourse in Europe. The dominant discourses on SI rather emphasis institutional logics and purpose-oriented relations. Prop. A2 shows the importance of 'community' for social innovation. The basic sociological category of personal relations, intrinsic motivation and a new mode of community is motivated from love and altruistic values. It provides a frame for interpreting the motivation of SI actors which cannot be reduced to approaches of homo oeconomicus and strategic behaviour. SI is a counter-movement toward the economisation of social and ecological areas of society.

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4.2.2.6 References

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4.2.3 Proposition A3 : Interpersonal relations in SI initiatives

4.2.3.1 Short statement of the proposition

One pivotal way in which SI actors challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions, which are manifested in institutionalised social relations, is by reinventing, experimenting and consolidating new interpersonal relations within SI initiatives and SI networks.

4.2.3.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition is focused on the interpersonal relations between and within the units of analysis SI actors, SI initiatives and SI networks, and how these interpersonal relations in turn relate to dominant institutions as manifested in institutionalised social relations.

The assertion is that dominant institutions are, *inter alia*, manifested in mainstream ‘institutionalised social relations’ which shape and constrain how people relate to one another. By reinventing, experimenting with and consolidating interpersonal relations that embody a set of different values and principles from the mainstream within initiatives and networks, SI actors are inherently challenging, altering and possibly replacing such institutionalized social relations. The concept of ‘interpersonal relations’ serves to specify that we are here focusing on a specific scale and scope of ‘social relations’, namely the relations between individual human beings.

An importance source of motivation for SI actors to challenge, alter and replace dominant institutions arises out of dissatisfaction with, among others, the quality of social relations as institutionalised in the social context. SI actors are motivated by a search for contexts that support need satisfaction, and strive to create such contexts in their SI initiatives and SI networks. This is not only a matter of increasing a sense of relatedness (compared to a social context where there may be a sense of alienation, too much individualism or solitude) but also of *improving the quality* of relatedness, which in turn requires competences for building and maintaining relations. Satisfying basic psychological needs requires contexts and relationships that support it. New interpersonal relations that are based on values of trust, intimacy, connection, satisfy relational and belonging needs, while also supporting autonomy. Organizational structures and rules that support new practices, more in line with the values SI initiatives endorse support the need for autonomy. Developing mastery over challenges, including relational ones, contributes to the satisfaction of the need for competence. This is why and how SI actors reinvent, experiment with and consolidate new interpersonal relations, trying out different relational values and practices, and developing the necessary group competences to build and maintain such relational values.

4.2.3.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

Many of the SI initiatives and SI networks under study seem to promote and consciously work on new interpersonal relations and aim to develop the necessary competences to maintain such relations. A total of 268 critical turning points (CTPs) (out of 389) are reported to have involved one of the following keywords: Inclusiveness, Internal decision-making, Competence development, Identity and Values (Pel et al. 2017). A total of 125 CTPs include at least one of the following relational value concepts in their textual descriptions: trust, reciprocity, equality, collectiveness, cooperation, sharing, solidarity, inclusion,

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transparency, openness, connectedness etc. (ibid). There is also considerable information on changing social relations in the in-depth case-study reports of 20 networks and 40 initiatives (see overview in Sjøgaard Jørgensen et al. 2015, 2016). Also in our comparative analyses of multiple case-studies (e.g. Avelino et al. 2015, Wittmayer et al. 2015, Weaver et al. 2017), we observe that the changing and improving of relational values underlies many SI initiatives, and often provides commonalities across initiatives in translocal networks as well as across different networks. Further confirmation was received from case study researchers in the theoretical integration workshop held in Budapest, for the following cases: Shareable, Science Shops, Living Labs, Credit Unions, Time Banks, Ecovillages, Impact Hubs, DESIS, Via Campesina, Co-housing.

Many of the social innovation initiatives under study promote shared, co-produced learning, collective entrepreneurship, and active engagement and space for the uniqueness of individual preferences and values, instead of standardization. These thereby help satisfy the need for competence understood here as being effective in dealing with the environment or context. Nearly all SI initiatives under study promote connectedness and relationships based on trust and authenticity. Some emphasize direct interpersonal relationships of higher (ecovillages) or lower intensity (DESI, Credit Cooperatives), while others emphasize connectedness through sharing of goods or of physical and virtual spaces (Fab Labs, Impact Hubs, Shareable etc). All case study initiatives promote norms of collaboration and sharing on the basis of principles of equality, inclusion and transparency (Avelino et al. 2015).

One specific way in which SI initiatives experiment with interpersonal relations, is through the legal forms which initiatives choose to formalise themselves. These legal forms often have specific interpersonal rules designed in to them (e.g. the 'cooperative' predetermines a certain equality amongst member: 1 member, 1 vote, regardless of the amount of shares). Such legal forms also explicitly affect how the initiative relates to external institutionalised relations in the social context (e.g. by allowing for specifically different tax regimes and activities, e.g. cooperatives can make profit unlike non-profit associations).

There seems to be explicit awareness about the importance of interpersonal relations, also as a basis for contributing to societal change. Such awareness manifests in explicit strategies to work on interpersonal relations and relational values. Such strategies include choosing specific legal forms (see above) and decision-making methods, as well as the (re)framing of relational values (e.g. 'paid volunteerism' in response to traditional values of reciprocity in the case of Timebanking). Such strategies that are developed as tools to deal with internal and interpersonal dynamics, often travel to other initiatives at different scales (both local and translocal). It also seems that several initiatives were made possible by strong prior socio-material personal relations. Initiatives often emerged in existing networks of socio-material relations (e.g. family connections, technology communities, mailing groups, swimming clubs, protest groups, etc.). It is also clear that many initiatives struggle with the dynamics and challenges of interpersonal relations, and that this is one of the main source of conflicts and tensions.

It is also important to note that there is a whole range of institutionalised social relations from the social context that are reproduced and remain unchallenged by many of the SI initiatives under study (whether willingly or unwillingly). Relations between men and women, or other issues related to gender or sexuality, are one example of relations that seem to be relatively unchallenged and unproblematised across many initiatives as described in the CTP database. While there are examples in the in-depth case-study reports that focus very strongly on issue of gender and sexuality (e.g. Tamera ecovillage, Kunze & Avelino 2015), this topic is mostly absent in the CTP database: a full text search on words such as 'men and women', feminism, gender, homosexuality etc. appear little to zero times. The same applies to other issues of identity politics: the words racism, discrimination, or emancipation do not appear one single time across all descriptions of initiatives and CTPs.

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4.2.3.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

This proposition emphasises the role of *interpersonal relations* in transformative social innovation, which is a vital dimension of our relational TSI-theory. The relational and co-productionist perspectives as inspired by science & technology studies lead to a conceptual broadening of ‘social relations’ as ‘socio-material interconnections’, not only between people, but also between material objects, practices, narratives, resources, and so on (see Haxeltine et al. 2016). Although this broad socio-material understanding of social relations is an important ontological starting point of our TSI-theory, we should also remember that *interpersonal relations between people* are (also) a crucial dimension in their own right. That is what this proposition contributes.

Our conceptualisation of social innovation as changing social relations, and the empirical evidence demonstrating how SI actors explicitly work on reinventing, experimenting with and consolidating new interpersonal relations, is one of the main contributions to the state-of-the-art on social innovation and transformative change. While the importance of social relations in social innovation may seem obvious or even tautological to some of us (by now), it certainly is an insight that still needs to land in both academic and public discourses, and it might be one of the most important contributions of TRANSIT’s TSI-theory academic and public thinking on social innovation.

Although there is plenty of empirical evidence on the role of interpersonal relations in the SI initiative and SI networks under study, the majority of the empirical data-collection has not been focused on changing interpersonal relations from psychological or political perspective. It is clear from the empirical data in the CTP database that interpersonal relations were not an explicit topic in the interviews that were held: full text searches on ‘interpersonal relations’, ‘social relation’, or ‘bonding’ receive very few results (1-5). Also in the in-depth case-study reports, most of the data-collection and analysis has not focused on unpacking how people under study themselves perceive and experience interpersonal relations and power dynamics (with a few exceptions). This might also explain the relatively low attention for issues of inequality and oppression in relation to gender, sexuality, racism, discrimination, emancipation and so on. As such, this is one of the remaining research questions and challenges for future research: diving deeper into the psychological interpersonal relations and micro-political power dynamics as experienced by SI actors, and study how these interpersonal processes affect the success of actors in challenging, altering and replacing dominant institutions. This would also be an important aspect of ‘politicising’ our TSI-theory, in terms of analysing how structures of domination and oppression (in a Foucauldian sense) are either reproduced, embodied or fundamentally challenged within SI initiatives and SI networks.

4.2.3.5 Relations to others propositions

This proposition relates most clearly to the following propositions in the following ways:

- **A1: On involvement in SI initiatives.** It seems that proposition A3 takes one element from A1 (relatedness) and further elaborates that in terms of how interpersonal relations affect the relation with dominant institutions/ institutionalized social relations.
- **A2: On dealing with tensions.** Working on interpersonal relations is a crucial aspect of dealing with tensions and internal governance.
- **A4/B1/B2/B5: On (translocal) networks & alliances.** Translocal connections enable an increased and improved sense of relatedness. They also enable SI actors to share their experiments with new interpersonal relations across initiatives, and to consolidate interpersonal values at the network level.

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- **A5: On Learning/reflexivity in TSI.** Improving interpersonal relations is both a topic of reflexivity and learning, as well as process requirement for learning and collective reflexivity.
- **C1/C5: On dialectic relation between SI - dominant institutions & On institutional logics:** When reinventing, experimenting with and consolidating ‘new’ interpersonal relations, SI actors draw on existing institutionalised social relations from different institutional contexts.
- **C2: On the strategic actions of TSI initiatives.** Reinventing, experimenting with and consolidating ‘new’ interpersonal relations can be seen as a particular strategy towards challenging, alternating and replacing dominant institutions.
- **C3: On the construction of institutional existence.** The ways in which SI initiatives are themselves institutionalised (e.g. formalisation in specific legal forms) can have specific interpersonal rules designed in to them that reflect particular views and values of desired interpersonal relations. If this is not the case, i.e. if SI initiatives and networks are institutionalised in such a way that is not in line with the views of SI actors on desired interpersonal relations, this can be particularly disempowering, threatening the sense of relatedness, competence and autonomy.
- **D1/D2: On the social-material evolution out of which TSI emerges.** The search for relatedness and appropriate interpersonal relations has existed since the beginning of humanity. Historical patterns in terms of marketization, bureaucratisation, relocalisation, etc. help to explain the types of relatedness that SI actors are (dis)satisfied with.
- **D3: On Narratives of change.** Changing interpersonal relations is an important element of the theories of change held by many SI initiatives and SI networks, as manifested in their narratives of change. These narratives of change help us to compare and generalise the different ways in which SI initiatives and networks look at the role of changing interpersonal relations in transformative change.
- **D6: The SI-discourse in Europe.** There is not “one” SI-discourse in Europe, rather, there are various SI-discourses and story-lines. There does seem to be, however, a dominant/hegemonic discourse on SI that is very much characterised by an instrumental view of social innovation, in which there is very little to no explicit attention to changing interpersonal relations.

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4.2.4 Proposition A4 : Translocal empowerment of SI actors

4.2.4.1 Short statement of the proposition

SI actors are empowered to persist and to challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions through an increased sense of relatedness, autonomy, competence, impact, meaning and resilience, which they primarily acquire through multi-layered community building in both local SI initiatives (deepening community) and translocal SI networks (expanding community).

4.2.4.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition focuses on the following units of analysis: SI actors, SI initiatives and SI networks, and dominant institutions. It unpacks the relations between these units in terms of empowerment through local and translocal community building, primarily from a psychological perspective, and – to a lesser extent – a political perspective. Scholars distinguish between territorial (based on a particular geographical scale) and relational communities (based on sets of interests – e.g. professional, spiritual). (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). It includes a set of shared values, a shared emotional connection, a sense of belonging and a common identity. The latter provides a sense of being part of a group of like-minded others, providing validation and a protective buffer against the pressures for conformity that institutions and more powerful actors exert.

The starting point of the proposition is that the mere process of ‘facing’ dominant institutions is a very demanding process, whether it is in terms of challenging, altering or replacing institutions, or just in terms of existing and surviving despite of them. This demanding process requires SI actors to be particularly motivated and empowered so as to persist in their position towards dominant institutions. This includes not only the *willingness* to exercise power (i.e. to mobilise resources and institutions to achieve a goal), but also the *belief that one is able* to exercise power (Avelino 2011).

As mentioned before, we distinguish six dimensions of empowerment: in order to be empowered, actors must have a sense of (1) relatedness, (2) autonomy, (3) competence, (4) impact, (5) meaning and (6) resilience. For a definition of each of these dimensions, see section 4.1.

The main assertion in the proposition is that all these dimensions of empowerment are fulfilled primarily (or at least to a great extent) through a process of multi-layered community-building in both local SI initiatives and translocal SI networks. Even if community-building is not an explicit end goal in itself (in some cases like Shareable, community-building is a goal in itself), it is almost always a means towards achieving a diversity of goals. In local SI initiatives, the dimensions of empowerment are *deepened*, while in the translocal SI networks, the dimensions of empowerment are also *expanded*. It is this particular *combination* of local deepening and translocal expansion that is specifically empowering: one without the other could significantly threaten one’s *overall* sense of impact, meaning and resilience (e.g. having a lot of translocal impact but zero local impact, might be particularly disempowering). Table A4.1 below specifies the different mechanisms through which each power dimension is strengthened both at the local and translocal levels.

The translocal network is a crucial and unique way for SI actors with transformative ambitions to experience an expansion of their impact, including an increased access to resources. This is unique and necessary because SI actors with transformative cannot gain such impact and access within dominant institutions (from which they – by definition – wish to deviate).

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Table A4.1. Dimensions of empowerment in relation to local and translocal mechanisms

Dimension of Empowerment	Individual Sense	Local mechanisms for deepening	Translocal mechanisms of expanding
Relatedness	<i>I am related to others</i>	Deepening local community relations	Relating to others in other places
Autonomy	<i>I can determine what I do</i>	'We can do things differently in line with our values'.	Together we can do things differently. Creating larger supportive contexts for autonomous action – e.g. by pooling resources together and creating alternative markets; facilitating autonomy by engaging with systemic obstacles.
Competence	<i>I am good at what I do</i>	Developing & sharing local skills & expertise	Sharing and learning from each other and thus developing skills and expertise
Impact	<i>I can make a difference</i>	Tangible impact in local context.	Increased access to resources and legitimacy, based on the evidence that there is not only local but also global impact on wider-scale.
Meaning	<i>I believe in what I do</i>	Local sense-making and collective identity.	Translocal confirmation of certain shared values through e.g. shared narratives of change.
Resilience	<i>I can adapt & recover</i>	'Our community can survive crises/ pressures'.	Sharing & learning from each other's failures & challenges, how to overcome.

4.2.4.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

SI initiatives and SI networks under study demonstrate a clear and conscious focus on community-building – both at the local and translocal level – as a pivotal condition for being able to persist in the face of dominant institutions. Such translocal community building is not confined to formalised network organisations, but can also refer to loose networks or broader social movements. The translocality of community relations blurs the distinction between 'internal' (initiative) and 'external' (context). The cases demonstrate various examples where a translocal network is perceived as being more 'internal' to

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the local initiative than the local, regional or national surrounding of that initiative. While the translocal network may not qualify as internal to the local community, they are internal to the translocal community of a particular movement that is internalised in the local initiative, such as the organic farming movement (RIPESS IN12) or the ecovillage movement (GEN IN94). This embedment in a global and translocal network confirms the participant's confidence in the face of a critical and sceptical local context.

In some cases we clearly see how negative pressures from dominant institutions (e.g. eviction from property) seemed to have a positive and empowering effect in terms of strengthening the internal group bonding, taking a next step, discovering and developing the groups resilience (e.g. Ecocitrus RIPESS IN12, Ecodorp Bergen GEN IN94 CTP57, Impact Hub Amsterdam, IH IN21 CTP47). There seems to be a strong and explicit awareness about the importance of community building as a condition for not only making the initiative survive, but also as a condition for contributing to positive change as well as for facing external challenges and pressures. This is also manifested in individuals emphasising the need to consciously work on community building, both locally and translocally, including dealing with negative external or internal pressures in such a way that the group prevails and becomes resilient. Such a strong group bonding does not occur automatically, and requires a lot of conscious work.

A very specific illustration of local and translocal empowerment through community building, can be found in the case of the Impact Hub (Avelino et al. 2015), in terms of people gaining a sense of:

- Being welcome and feeling at home at inspiring spaces in one's city and across the globe;
- Being locally active while also globally connected and working towards a common purpose;
- Belonging to a community and having the collective strength of a group of like-minded people;
- Gaining access to shared resources and a global and local pool of people with different sets of competences, knowledge and experiences,
- Legitimacy and visibility through a common brand, vision and network, which may help to profile one's own enterprise and mission;
- A podium for one's skills and one's enterprise through online and offline possibilities;
- Freedom and independence as a self-employed entrepreneur.

During the empirical feedback session at the theoretical integration workshop in Budapest, several case-study researchers indicated that these mechanisms of translocal empowerment were also manifested (in different forms) in various other cases (Shareable, Slow Food, Credit Unions, Transition Towns, Ecovillages, Via Campesina, Ashoka). However, the cases differ in terms of the extent to which the translocal empowerment comes from the formalised international network organisation and/or more from being part of an informal global movement as a whole. For instance, in the case of Participatory Budgeting Amsterdam, translocal empowerment is not so much a matter of being part of the international OIDP organisation (under study in TRANSIT), but more a matter of being part of the phenomenon of the broader participatory budgeting movement across the world.

4.2.4.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

This proposition emphasises the empowerment of SI actors through local and translocal community building, as an important way in which SI actors are enabled to persist and challenge, alter and replace dominant institutions. This is a crucial contribution to the middle-range TSI-theory in that it explains how SI actors develop TSI-agency despite of the unfavourable power dynamics that they face in relation to dominant institutions. This insight also contributes to the state of the art on innovation and change (in

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e.g. transition theory), which often tends to focus on the socio-technical relations between innovations vs. incumbent institutions, alternative vs. mainstream, niches vs. regimes. A sole focus on this bifurcation underplays the power of translocal connections as an opportunity for ‘up-scaling and institutionalisation through other means’. Community building in translocal networks is not just a way for replicating innovations to diverse contexts, but also a matter of (1) distributing access to resources and institutions, (2) up-scaling, normalising and institutionalising social innovations and (3) psychologically empowering a growing number of actors through an increased willingness and belief that they can and want to exercise power to realise alternative goals.

Our empirical evidence of how local SI initiatives are embedded in translocal networks is in itself an invaluable contribution to the academic and public discourses on social innovation and on political change more generally. Many people seem to be convinced that SI initiatives like ecovillages, Transition Towns, social entrepreneur collectives or other such alternative and innovative local initiatives have no transformative ambitions, no interest in wider impact and no international connections. When informed about the international networks that they are part of, many people are surprised. There is a very persistent dichotomous view of ‘local’ versus ‘global’ in the public and political debate, as also manifested in recurring references to the segregation between ‘somewhere people’ (local) versus ‘anywhere people’ (global) as an explanation for the recent ‘populist revolt’ and the current political climate (e.g. Goodhart 2014). As such, the translocal dimension in our middle-range TSI-theory, both in the empirical evidence as well as in the explanation of how this enables transformative change, is not only a crucial contribution to the academic state-of-the-art, but also to the public and political debate on globalisation and marketization.

This proposition has a strong foundation in psychological theory, and the empirical data on the initiatives and networks under study provides indirect/implicit empirical evidence to confirm the assertion that SI actors are empowered through local and translocal community building. However, the majority of both the in-depth case-studies as well the CTP-cases, have not been analysed in explicit psychological terms, nor has there been an empirical unpacking of the different dimension of empowerment (relatedness, autonomy, competence, impact, meaning and resilience). As such, we can draw no generalisations on the relative weight of these different dimensions, nor on the importance of psychological empowerment compared to other forms of e.g. political empowerment as manifested in actual and perceived access to resources and institutions.

The two main challenges for future research, would be to collect and analyse empirical data along (1) more explicit psychological categories and methods, and (2) more explicit political perspectives, by comparing access to resources and the extent to which power relations change within and across SI initiatives, translocal networks and dominant institutions. In a recent special issue on “Transformative and innovative power of network dynamics” in *Organization Studies*, power expert Clegg et al. (2016: 281-282) has argued that “networks, because they provide access to resources necessary for the concretization of ideas, are central to innovation”, “networks can play a role in shifting the flows of power” and “we still know very little about how power relations play out in networks or their outcomes in terms of social change and innovation”. Interestingly, that special issue on network dynamics takes networks as the objects of change and primarily analyses to what extent actors have agency to transform networks, because networks in themselves are also structures in which dominant institutions and existing power relations are reproduced. This particular side of networks – how dominant institutions are also connected and empowered through translocal/transnational networks – has remained underdeveloped in the TRANSIT project. A systematic analysis of power and empowerment dynamics in TSI-processes would require us to compare the power/empowerment of SI initiatives and SI networks, in relation to not only dominant institutions but also in relation to *dominant translocal networks that reproduce dominant institutions*.

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4.2.4.5 Relations to others propositions

This proposition relates most clearly to the following propositions in the following ways:

- **A1: On involvement in SI initiatives** – Prop. A1 introduces the dimensions of empowerment in terms of basic motivation for change – prop. A4 elaborates these in relation to translocal networks and dominant institutions.
- **A2: On dealing with tensions** – Prop. A2 explains the importance of community-building in a more basic sociological sense in relation to internal governance. Prop. A4 elaborates community-building in relation to local and translocal empowerment, and makes the link to dominant institutions.
- **A4/B1/B2/B5: On (translocal) networks & alliances.** Proposition A4 approaches translocal networks from the perspective of psychological empowerment, hence focusing on what happens in the heads of SI actors: this distinguishes A4 from other propositions on translocal networks.
- **C5 On institutional logics.** Translocal connections enable SI actors to (literately & figuratively) travel across different institutional contexts, and to learn and borrow from different institutional logics.
- **C2: On the strategic actions of TSI initiatives.** Local and translocal empowerment can be seen as a specific strategy for challenging, alternating or replacing dominant institutions.
- **C3: On the construction of institutional existence.** Local and translocal community building empowers actors to challenge/resist unwanted institutional accommodation. The translocal connection also enables SI actors to learn how SI initiatives in other institutional contexts have approached the issue of institutional accommodation.
- **D3: On Narratives of change.** Translocal community building is a necessary condition for developing shared narratives of change across networks, and the other way around, narratives of change are a necessary condition for translocal empowerment (collective sense of relatedness, impact & meaning).

4.2.4.6 References

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4.2.5 Cross-cutting proposition on learning and reflexivity in TSI

4.2.5.1 Short statement of the proposition

One pivotal way in which SI initiatives enable and increase their transformative capacity is through reflexivity on the alignment between their values and their practices, as well as on engaging effectively with dominant institutions in order to achieve their goals. Reflecting on their ways of doing, framing, organizing and knowing are important tools for empowerment and engagement with transformative change.

4.2.5.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition focuses on the role of social learning and reflexivity in SI initiatives, as a key dimension of transformative social innovation. SI initiatives experiment with alternative ways of doing, organizing, framing and knowing and with the most effective ways to engage with dominant institutions, other actors in the social innovation field and the broader socio-material context, including prevailing discourses. In their journey, and through different stages in their development, they face different challenges and obstacles, both internally and externally. Moreover, the context in which they operate is also characterized by constantly changing and dynamic circumstances/contexts, which requires effective and flexible adaptation strategies. Reflexivity in SI initiatives includes two dimensions: self-confrontation (Beck, 2003), and reflection. They consciously set up spaces and tools for reflexivity. The manifestation of reflexivity on the group level is expressed as organisational learning. SI initiatives often start out with an idea about what they want to change, a set of principles and values founders co-shape and endorse, as well as a narrative of change, or set of ideas about how to bring this change about. These initial ideas are further shaped over time.

Because SI initiatives experiment with radically different ways of doing things and have ambitions to achieve change in society, social learning is of paramount importance. Through experimentation with new social relations, interaction and conscious reflection, members of SI initiatives learn about how to develop, thrive and engage in effective strategies for transforming existing practices and institutions. They experiment with and develop new interpersonal relations/new ways of relating and strategies for interacting with existing institutions, practices and relations of power. In their development, SI initiatives have to grapple with many challenges. These include maintaining motivation and enthusiasm among members, solving tensions and contradictions in relations, and developing effective strategies that take advantage of opportunities and manage obstacles, while not losing their initial values and appeal.

A theory of social innovation has to be informed by an understanding of how individuals organized in groups imagine, experiment with and promote alternative ways of knowing, organizing, framing and doing; and how they organize action in ways that challenges, alters or replaces dominant institutions in the (socio-material) context. Experimenting with new ways of knowing, doing, organizing and framing entails a deconstruction of assumptions and values underlying current societal arrangements; the imagining and construction of an alternative, which includes the articulation of a coherent discourse to express it and the pathways to reach it, attracting and maintaining membership, resolving difference and conflict. Finally, organizing action relies on the capacity of effective adaptation to complex and dynamic circumstances, which requires reflexive adjustment of strategies in response to these. Social learning is an important pre-condition of both individual and collective agency.

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4.2.5.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

SI initiatives and networks consider reflexivity and learning to be very important in achieving goals and effectively dealing with tensions and challenges. Through the several iterations of empirical research in TRANSIT, we have found substantial evidence on the types of learning at different stages of development, on the contexts and spaces created to promote reflection and learning, the learning methods they experiment with, as well as the outcomes of learning. The evidence on social learning from the in-depth case studies in TRANSIT has been synthesized in D.2.3 (Dumitru et al., 2016). The meta-analysis carried out in WP5 on 80 SI initiatives also contains significant empirical data on reflexivity and learning.

The empirical analysis in TRANSIT reveals four types of learning that play a role in SI initiatives' efforts to reach their goals of bringing about change: cognitive; inner emotional, relational and strategic/political. Cognitive learning refers to the acquisition of new theoretical or conceptual knowledge which is required for meaningful participation in the social initiative. Inner learning refers to self-reflection processes that lead to personal transformation on a subjective level. Relational learning involves supporting high-quality motivation of members, capacities for participating in cooperative decision-making, intercultural learning, as well as developing communication and leadership skills. Strategic and political learning, which refers to the knowledge and skills required to increase the political and social influence of the SI initiative, and increasing their potential and ability for transformative change. It is manifested as organisational learning when the initiative evolves in its governance and organisational structures.

The central role accorded to social learning in SI initiatives is well summarized by a member of the Impact Hub Amsterdam, and represents a good example of how reflexivity and learning are understood in most initiatives:

“Learning for us really occurs on a daily base. I think the main learnings are when something doesn't go according to plan, or when you set goals and it doesn't work out, and it's really a culture of sharing that and learning from each other. So it's not necessarily that all of the start-ups or everyone within the team you have to make all the mistakes that someone made before you. It's about actually setting a culture that you can also share the failures so that you can actually understand, 'hey that's an interesting learning path'. And there is a lot of reflection moments built in, in our team meetings” (IH IN21, CTP43).

The empirical evidence points to three different types of learning that SI initiatives and networks acquire, which refer to instrumental, relational, political, and communicative aspects of developing a social innovation and bringing about transformative change. The examples of Slow Food and ecovillages are used to illustrate empirical findings. In order to articulate a coherent vision and theory of change, and build an alternative to existing social and institutional arrangements, members of SI initiatives need to:

- acquire specific knowledge about how particular institutions and systems work and how they perpetuate values and practices that are not desirable;
- develop competencies for cooperation and dealing with tensions in order to create new social relations and maintain motivation in the face of obstacles; and
- develop effective strategies of engagement with other relevant actors and institutions, in order to achieve their goals.

In their efforts to build particular projects or alternatives, initiative members first have to learn a lot about the workings of specific systems and institutions. The Slow Food movement defends local products, practices of production, landscapes and the enjoyment of food. Practitioners acquire knowledge about the why and how of producing “good, clean and fair” food, food sovereignty and the negative impacts of

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the current food system on biodiversity, rural areas and cultural and community traditions. They learn about the relationship between current food production and distribution and climate change and what makes food environmentally sustainable and healthy.

SI initiatives actively experiment with new forms of relating, and, as they develop over time, learn how to grapple with tensions and contradictions and acquire a shared understanding about enacting such new relations. Each becomes a 'micro-cosmos' of experimentation. The principle of "fair food" sets new bases for the relationship between producers and consumers in Slow Food. Consumers share the burden and learn about fair treatment of producers. They also endorse cooperation as the basis for new relations, by which responsibility for protecting biodiversity and the uniqueness of each community's identity and history is shared, and benefits and burdens are fairly distributed.

Building new identities that unite rather than divide and the emphasis placed on an ethic of responsibility contributes to the facilitation of cooperative partnerships. Slow Food managed to bridge previously existing divides between community actors and broker agreements and cooperation between them. Motivational discourses in Slow Food, for example, stress elements of a common identity, or the feeling of being part of a global community that dreams and works together.

Changing existing social relations is not always easy or free of tensions however. Sometimes, members have different ideas about which principles to endorse or which action to take to achieve their mutual objectives. Like any other human endeavor, SI initiatives are not free of power struggles. For these reasons, many SI initiatives put special emphasis on educating their members for cooperation, conflict resolution and gaining social competences. Social learning on these competences is an important part of the survival of social innovation projects. Ecovillages have invented or elaborated on a range of innovative techniques for fair and participatory decision making processes aiming to avoid conflict over power imbalances. A lot of time is spent on community and relationship building processes in ecovillages, as these are considered fundamental for decision-making. Learning new emotional communication and conflict-resolution skills is a pre-condition for social learning of new relations, based on transparent communication and trust.

Part of the social learning that takes place in SI initiatives has to do with how to foster relationships and environments that contribute to the satisfaction of these psychological needs and thus provide an alternative to existing arrangements that can contribute to collective growth and thriving. Experimenting with setting up an initiative leads to learning about how to accommodate multiple and diverse motivations and finding the best organizational structures to do so, while still being able to organize effectively in order to pursue their goals. Leaders and founders cultivate tolerance and openness to diverse motivations, and understand the importance of de-centralized structures, while also acknowledging the practical difficulties of such forms of organization. Experimentation is possible in spaces that enable emergent, spontaneous interactions that lead to learning and at the same time are experienced as natural, fun, non-constrained, and autonomous. SI initiatives provide a space where practitioners feel free to start or participate in meaningful projects and which create the conditions for self-determined, autonomous action. They promote an experimental culture that provides opportunities for trying out new and "utopic" alternatives.

Effective strategies of engagement with dominant institutions include: cultivating a position of inclusiveness and learning to engage community actors widely; reframing discourses in response to new challenges and gaining reputation and legitimacy.

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Slow Food members point to the importance of being inclusive and “not be too radical or strict” in their positions. Inclusiveness is not achieved at the expense of bending principles, but rather by cultivating a space where common ground can be found, where connections can be established among different sensibilities. This is done by providing opportunities for relaxed and spontaneous interaction, sharing activities, having fun and by supporting people and projects that embrace and show commitment to the principles of the initiative, even if they cannot fully implement them in practice.

Networks play a key role in reflexivity and learning. By facilitating interactions, they provide opportunities for enhanced learning, practical support, the experience of belonging and connectedness, and contribute to creating an identity of being part of a movement, and having a sense of increased impact as a result. They provide opportunities for inspiration, through exchange between practitioners in different parts of the world, who might confront similar problems. Also, they play a key role in establishing collaborations at wider scales with actors that work towards similar goals, or that have the necessary leverage for achieving change, thus becoming a tool for empowerment of local initiatives, communities and individual members. This is further unpacked in Cluster B (Chapter 5).

The experience of co-shaping and participating in the building of a social innovation initiative, learning from experience and witnessing the different impacts that it can achieve, is considered by members to be deeply empowering. When a collective manages to transform ‘utopia into reality’, as a member of Slow Food put it, and contribute to a community in meaningful ways, the result is a sense of personal and collective power.

We identify four main categories of outcomes of social learning in social innovation initiatives and networks: (1) changes in understandings and framing that lead to their causes and their solutions; (2) changes in the quality and characteristics of social relations; (3) empowerment; and (4) changes in behaviours and strategies for action.

4.2.5.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

This proposition focuses on the role of reflexivity and social learning in social innovation, and their relationship to empowerment and the transformative potential of SI initiatives and networks. Although social learning has become a buzzword in academic and practitioner circles (Dumitru et al., 2016), almost no research exists on the role and organization of learning in SI initiatives, or on how reflexivity is embedded (or not) in the practice of these Si actors.

In the context of transformative social innovation, social learning goes beyond a change in understanding that becomes situated in wider social units, as social learning has been defined in other contexts (Reed et al., 2010), to include a change in the quality and type of relations among actors, which encompasses changes in collective meanings/understandings, the reshaping of identities, and new rules and norms of interaction. What follows from this addition is that contexts of learning thus need to facilitate experimentation with, reflection on, emotional learning and personal growth, and negotiation of new relations; the types/objects of learning have to include the development of relational and strategic/political types of knowledge beyond theoretical/instrumental and communicative forms, and the analysis of social learning outcomes would shift from an emphasis on new understandings and capacities for action, to the establishment of new relations between different societal actors.

The relationship between social learning, empowerment, and the development of effective capacities for engagement with transformative change makes an important contribution to the understanding of

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agency in transformative social innovation. In developing the theory, we developed a conception of agency as distributed and relational, and we also aimed to understand how collective agency is enabled. Evidence on social learning allows us to articulate a set of processes by which collective agency is constituted, through the experimentation with, sharing, and negotiation of new ways of doing, organizing, framing and knowing, and through which SI initiatives develop transformative potential (or fail to do so).

SI initiatives and networks also assume the role of educators in their communities, at local and translocal levels, and they actively share and communicate their ideas through a variety of outlets. Although we have some evidence on how they attempt to promote wider societal learning, we did not gather evidence on whether such wider learning actually occurs. Consistent with the TRANSIT co-production framework, wider societal learning is likely to be pluri-determined, an outcome of the actions of multiple actors. Looking at wider societal learning would allow us to better understand the actual transformative impact of social innovation initiatives and networks. Future research should focus on what is being learned by the communities in which local initiatives operate, and what outcomes such learning has.

4.2.5.5 Relations to others propositions

As this is a cross-cutting proposition, it is related to all clusters. Reflexivity and learning are important dimensions of how to motivate people to join and maintain their involvement, or how to achieve certain compromises between purity of values and adapting to practical realities in pursuing goals (A1); of effectively dealing with tensions (A2), or of building new interpersonal relations, aligned with different values (A3). They also play an important part in the shaping of translocal networks, which act as contexts of empowerment (A4, B1, B2, B5).

Discursive, or communicative learning appears as an important category of social learning in SI initiatives. Narratives of change develop over time in response to changes in socio-material context, other framings and issues gaining prominence, and learning. Discourses are also part of the strategies of engagement with dominant institutions (B3, D3).

SI initiatives are reflexive about their relationship to dominant institutions, and the ways in which they either reproduce or transform different institutional logics (cluster C, chapter 6). Finally, reflexivity plays a key part in understanding and framing broader historical socio-material trends and developments, and their relationship to the change particular initiatives propose. The socio-material context and the different crises out of which the social innovation is borne, or the crises it encounters along the way are framed reflexively within narratives of change (cluster D, chapter 7).

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5 Cluster B propositions: on the network formation of SI initiatives

5.1 Cluster B overview

This chapter describes the processes of network formation that SI initiatives tend to be involved in. It addresses the basic but important fact that SI initiatives seldom travel their TSI journey alone. The chapter casts the previous chapter in a broader perspective: it is crucial for TSI that motivated individuals manage to organize collective agency and sustain situated SI initiatives, but these initiatives tend to become key SI actors only by virtue of their embedding in and empowerment through various kinds of networks.

The two main concepts that organize the TSI insights in this chapter are networking and (reciprocal) empowerment. The great importance that we accord to these concepts reflects the relational, co-productionist ontological assumptions through which TSI has been theorized, the particular research interest in the empowerment of situated SI actors that has guided TRANSIT as a project of practically engaged research, and in particular the TRANSIT methodology of studying SI initiatives as *embedded* focal actors. As will become clear throughout this chapter, it is crucial to use relational vocabularies to describe the dynamics of TSI processes, and the agency of collective actors therein. The basic issue is that it is easy to agree that it is desirable to support and develop somehow empowering knowledge for certain SI actors, yet beyond this practical commitment it is not obvious which (constellations of) actors to consider as 'SI actors'. *Who to empower?*

In Pel et al. (under review) it is pointed out how different accounts of SI bring forward clear but not satisfactory portrayals of 'the innovating actor'. In technological innovation, the firm and the technological inventor are the obvious lead protagonists, in accounts of public innovation there are the policy entrepreneurs, in social entrepreneurship literature there are the cooperatives and the social entrepreneurs, and furthermore there are the various SI accounts in which 'communities' or 'groups with unmet needs' are presented as key actors to observe and to empower. These reductionist understandings of SI agency do not do justice to the TSI realities we have observed, however: TSI revolves around changing social relations and changes in dominant institutions, and is therefore a *collective* process. SI initiatives tend to be weakly institutionalized, lack resources because of this, and will generally need allies as they can't afford to pursue go-alone strategies. Furthermore, we have seen a great variety of ways in which TSI was contributed to, and even if the SI initiatives that we identified as focal actors were often key trailblazers of innovation – they seldom acted alone.

For these reasons it is important to use network formation as the overall guiding metaphor that expresses distributed agency. Likewise, the circumstance that SI initiatives tend not to travel their SI journeys alone points to collective processes of 'empowerment' (Cf. section 3.2.3) in which SI initiatives, as collective actors, can gain the 'ability to act on goals that matter to them' by gaining access to resources. In accounts of network governance, this access to resources is the key rationale for network formation (cf. Koppenjan and Klijn 2004). This collective empowerment and network formation should be thought of as a two-way process between the various actors involved in TSI processes – and not as something that is unilaterally received by SI initiatives. Drawing on actor-network theory (ANT) insights, the issue is not so much how the empowering 'ability to act on goals' is increased for a particular SI initiative or one of their constituent members, but typically how several SI initiatives and other interested parties can empower each other through network relations, and ultimately how these network structures can gain ability to collectively

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act on certain collective purposes. With regard to the distributed agency that allows local initiatives to collectively achieve transformative impacts, we follow McFarlane (2009) and Scott-Cato & Hillier (2011) amongst others -- recognizing the need for a vocabulary and conceptualization of SI agency in terms of SI networks.

Our insights into networked SI agency and empowerment have been iteratively developed from initial assumptions and theoretical understandings of co-produced agency into theoretically informed but strongly empirically grounded statements. Theoretically, we have selectively drawn from and sought to combine the abundant resources already available on phenomena of networked agency and processes of network formation. In conjunction with our overall theoretical framing of TSI in terms of the co-production of social order and the relational nature of social relations and institutions, we have invoked insights from actor-network theory, governance studies, innovation theory, Third Sector Studies, social movement theory and social innovation literature. All of these strands have brought forward insights that help to clarify particular aspects of SI network formation and empowerment, such as the transnational networking and local embedding of SI initiatives, the travelling of ideas and the formation of discourses, the kinds of empowerment that can be distinguished, the relevance of communication infrastructures, the emergence of spaces for co-creation, the politics and tensions of network relations, and the relevance of SI action fields. These theoretical resources have been invoked to specify our basic vocabulary of networking and empowerment – typically clarifying the resources and mechanisms through which networks form and SI initiatives increase their (collective) capacity to act.

Other than providing theoretical ‘building blocks’, the aforementioned theoretical resources have mainly served as sensitizing concepts and analytical refinement of empirical findings. Actor-network theory (ANT) has been of particular relevance for its methodological sensitivity towards the *embeddedness* of local SI initiatives, their *fluidity* and intertwinements with other actors and entities, and the altogether *provisional* status of the entities and essences we distinguished as units of analysis in our empirical explorations. In Pel et al. (under review) it is described from a methodological angle how this helped to critically question the agency of local SI initiatives, specify the relevance of transnational SI networks, unpack the different dimensions of empowerment, and explore the kinds of network configurations and action fields that form the immediately relevant environments to local SI initiatives. To understand the key aspects of empowerment discussed above it is also necessary to understand the significance of agency and objects for ANT. As agency in ANT is anything that makes a difference for another actors, the objects in their social-material context are not reduced to passive ‘background’ but rather appreciated as significant mediators² of network formation and empowerment.

This chapter presents our findings through five propositions that each articulate particular aspects of the network formation and associated empowerment processes that SI initiatives are involved in. In line with Avelino et al. (2017), this also includes challenges of empowerment and *disempowerment*. Their coherence can be understood as follows:

Proposition B1 (section 5.2.1): About the formation of translocal SI networks. SI initiatives are locally rooted and translocal connections among local initiatives are important for the diffusion of SI networks. This occurs through different process patterns of co-evolution of networks and local manifestations. The network formation entails spreading of SI that for mutual benefit.

² We deliberately avoid the provocative ANT vocabulary of ‘actants’ and ‘non-human agency’ and the ensuing abstract debates about what agency is – whilst making use of the basic ANT insight that social innovation, and SI network formation, is a social-material process that human actors do not travel alone.

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These insights on SI networking are visualized in diagram 5.1.1. It displays the local SI initiative as focal actor (nrs. 1, 3,4) that is involved in various processes of network formation, empowerment, and interaction with other actors, organizations and institutions. The social-material context (Ch. 7) is relevant here for the discourse formation and communication infrastructures that shape the networking. Not displayed but nonetheless relevant processes are the internal dynamics of SI initiatives (Ch. 4) and their interactions with dominant institutions (Ch. 6).

This chapter's overall contribution to explaining TSI resides in the unpacking of the networking processes involved. Local SI initiatives can be considered the central actors 'driving' TSI, but they tend to exist in various network constellations. Without a good understanding of these different kinds of constellations and the associated processes of (dis)empowerment, the agency of local SI initiatives and the spreading of the new social relations that they promote remain mysterious. In the following we present five propositions, as solid insights that could be distilled from extensive empirical research into international SI networks and their local manifestations and theorizing through relational perspectives. We will also indicate various inconclusive parts of the analysis however, and relevant avenues for further research beyond the scope of TRANSIT. The presentation of propositions thus brings out substantial insights, whilst also being generative for further research.

Taking stock of overall findings, the following picture arises:

- The networked character of TSI agency and dynamics have become evident.
- Solid and detailed insights have been developed on the different kinds and dimensions of empowerment that occurs through the formation of transnational SI networks.
- Solid yet rather general insights have been developed on the process patterns through which transnational SI networks emerge and develop.
- The relevance of discourse formation and evolving communication channels for SI network formation and identity construction has been demonstrated and detailed. The work on this proposition has been generative for further research, identifying leads for further specification of these important dimensions of SI network formation and TSI processes in general.
- The relevance of co-creation capacity has been established and detailed, articulating a key aspect that distinguishes SI as a particular kind of political agency and as a set of innovations in governance.
- The tensions of network formation and the instability of SI action fields has been explored, and articulated as an aspect of SI network formation that is as important as it is difficult to gain solid insights into. The proposition is formulated to generate more specific questions, and to inform empirical research that investigates SI processes in truly co-productive mode, beyond the narrow focus on SI initiators and their allies.
- We know as yet quite little on the convergences, linkages and overlaps between SI networks – which calls for dedicated data gathering but also for further theorization of the fragmentation and convergence between the 'diverse transformations' (Cf. chapter 7) involved.
- The main research challenge is the following: More systematic insight is needed on the different kinds of network constellations through which SIs are co-produced and carried. The relevance and shapes of the SI action fields, arenas, and co-creation capacities have been charted only to some degree. Important follow-up questions arise on SI networks in the extended sense, i.e. on the ways in which new social relations are carried, transmitted, translated and anchored in action fields in which the studied SI initiatives can take either nodal or very peripheral roles.

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5.2 Presentation of Cluster B propositions

5.2.1 Proposition B1: The formation of translocal SI networks

5.2.1.1 Short statement of the proposition

SI initiatives are locally rooted and translocal connections among local initiatives are important for the diffusion of SI networks. This involves different process patterns of co-evolution of networks and local manifestations and entails spreading of SI that stems from local initiatives, network organisations being significant, or local initiatives creating network organisations by joining together for mutual benefit.

This proposition describes how SI initiatives & networks co-develop over time. In keeping with a relational framing of agency, this proposition articulates the agency for empowerment that results in network formation. It is important to understand that the SI initiatives might pre-date the networks they later become part of, and that the emergence of establishment of a network can happen in a multitude of ways. Accordingly, this specification of network formation *processes* signals that the definition and nature of SI 'networks' and 'initiatives' are complex. These actors are not clear-cut entities that retain a fixed form over time.

5.2.1.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

The proposition expresses how SI initiatives and SI networks (see figure 5.1) are key collective actors in TSI processes. It brings insight on the patterns of development and expansion of SI initiatives and networks over time and space in relation to organisational forms and methods of interaction between network members and external actors.

The **key aspect for this proposition is temporality**. As can be seen on the diagram in the next subsection, networks develop and change over time. The most common pattern for the evolution of a social movement into one or more specific networks and how they expand is **A->B->C**: first independent entities form a network, then networks start expanding without support from a network organisation, and lastly a network organisation develops that is active in establishing new SI initiatives. However, not all cases have developed to stage C or even stage B and some never will, a network like Hackerspaces is barely in category A. It is important to note that category C is not an end result, and not all networks aim to ever turn into that kind of network, like Shareable that aims to forever stay a loose network. Moreover, the pattern has also changed over time. This pattern has been the "traditional" development, but for very new networks like Transition Towns the emergence of a strong network comes very quickly, sometimes even preceding any local initiatives beyond the very first SI initiative. There is thus both a large variation within the sample and changes of patterns over time generally, and changes within specific cases due to development and maturity over time of networks. Generally, all three categories apply to most of our cases at different points in time and space. The interesting insight is how what type of organisation and expansion strategy fits different situations and contexts. This is not fully developed here, but is the topic of working papers and other propositions.

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Typology of network formation:

A) Pre-existing local networks merging, condensing or joining

This category refers to SI initiatives that exist before they become members of a network, either because the network did not exist at their inception or because they developed independently before joining. Networks often emerge by existing SI initiatives coming together to form an organisation or network. There is no network initially and thus no central entity that can have agency, prior to network formation. However, the complete absence of any *primum movens* seems unlikely. In some of the old cases, like Living Knowledge, there was no interaction between SI initiatives initially. However, they had heard about the idea/concept of a science shop which somehow affected their emergence, if in nothing else then in the name they adopted, which then implies some kind of agency even though it might be negligible. The emergence of a network is thus a gradual process, and it is as yet undefined when it is merely an unformalized social movement and when it can be regarded as a formal SI network. The crucial point though is the lack of any agency that can be prescribed to a network, either distributed or centralized agency.

This category focuses on the emergence of the networks and not the local initiatives that is the focus of category B and C. The critical point here is the lack of interaction internationally with a network and other SI initiatives that become part of the emerging network prior to joining together. Simply speaking, some SI initiatives pre-date the networks that we have studied as cases as mentioned under the temporality aspect. This can imply three different scenarios.

- Either the SI initiatives have been part of a common social movement or stem from specific societal narratives and discourse that has gradually condensed into a more formal network, as seen in the diagram in D4.4 (Jørgensen et al., 2016, p. 25).
- Alternatively, existing SI initiatives adopt new labels, join new networks, depending on opportunities or local developments. Being a FabLab or a Living Lab might offer specific funding opportunities, give legitimacy, visibility, or other types of empowerment. These networks might then comprise members that have not been related previously. A new label for a SI initiative might steer activities in specific direction or imply a change in focus, i.e. funding and other types of empowerment come with strings attached.
- Lastly, before-unconnected SI initiatives might form up around a common cause and create a network, like Desis Labs that bind Design Faculties at universities around the world together that previously had no or few social relations with each other.

B) Spreading without international support

This category relates to loose networks, i.e. the agency of the international network is so distributed among initiatives that no agency can be prescribed to the network. These networks have few resources or materiality, i.e. the network is merely an umbrella representing all the SI initiatives it is comprised of. Typically, all these networks have is an online portal and a member-list. As the umbrella is thin, all activities, all agency, stems from the individual SI initiatives. This is a common characteristic for older SI networks like Living Knowledge or Basic Income, as the possibilities and costs of having an international network were much higher before the advent of ICT. This type of network is often gradually moving to category C.

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C) International networks are key in spreading through application and use of resources

This category relates to tight networks, i.e. the network organisation is endowed with resources and agency to a degree that enables it to represent the network and can take actions on its own to help establish new SI initiatives or other activities to strengthen the network. In some cases the international networks has developed as a separate organisation, like in Time Banks, and is not a mere representation of the SI initiatives that it is affiliated with, and thus has its own source of agency separate from that of the network.

The process of network formation, developing from a category A to a B network, can entail objects like online-portals slowly accumulating resources like case studies, reports, tool-kits and other forms of codified knowledge, whereby they gain some agency of their own. There are also examples of SI initiatives that are given authority on behalf of a network in some areas, like one SI initiative is chosen as the international contact point. Networks may also over time gain legal formalisation, staff, a secretariat and other resources. The critical question here then is if these objects & actors that emerge in the network play a part in why and how new local initiatives emerge, i.e. gain sufficient agency to have an impact.

The **second key aspect here is degree of distributed agency**, going from complete distribution in loose networks to complete centralisation in tight networks. This is one of the central differences uncovered when the typology were constructed, and although these are ideal types they are easily recognizable in our cases.

- **Loose networks** have no organisation and few resources representing the “international” network, agency is distributed among local SI initiatives. Agency can develop over time through the objects, mostly knowledge objects, that are constructed in the network. This is a gradual process of going from loose networks with no organisation to more centralized agency invested in objects or actors. The critical point is the amount of influence the objects and actors emerging over time get in the network.
- **Tight networks** on the other hand have a separate organisations and resources for the network itself, separate from the LMs. For a case on the extreme opposite end the network organisation would directly fund and own local SI initiatives, or retain managerial control over them. A more common picture is a semi-democratic structure where the network organisation retains some ownership over the brand of the network and the direction they develop in. In these networks, there can be some contentions between the original founders and SI initiatives.

5.2.1.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

This is a proposition developed from empirical work taking place both in WP4 and WP5 (Jørgensen et al., 2015, 2016; Pel et al., 2017). Condensing the 4 typologies and 15 categories of D4.4 into one typology of 3 ideal types, solidified by D5.4 (Pel et al., 2017, p. 69), is a strong generalisation. The trajectory of analyses leading to this proposition stems from batch 1, the first 12 cases studies, and their comparative analysis in D4.2 (Jørgensen et al., 2015, pp. 29–30). Proposition B1 is based on diverse empirics as seen in the overview of network formation processes (see Jørgensen et al., 2016), and has also involved synthesizing and condensing more fine-grained distinctions made in earlier stages of the theory building process.

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As with most ideal types, none of the categories in the typology are to be found in their pure form in the empirics (Halkier, 2011), few networks or social movements conform to just one type of emergence and development, but there are some pertinent exemplar cases:

Exemplars:

Living Knowledge – Initially new SI initiatives heard about the concept through word-of-mouth, which combined with societal discourses at the universities in northern Europe at the time, led to many new science shops. In the late 90'ties and early 00'ies projects began to run in under the label of Living Knowledge, and some project directly funded establishment of new science shops. The science shop in Bonn was also designated as the international contact point, and conducted many activities to expand the network on its behalf. Here there is a clear change in how new SI initiatives emerge and what part the network plays, even though it is still a comparatively loose network.

Impact Hub – the network started from the first SI initiative in London and initially spread from local to local. However, the founding of the network and establishment of governance structure went very fast (2-3 years from the first SI initiative, older networks took decades). The network can be seen as starting in category C. The initial founder retained formal ownership and attempts were made to open shops in other countries under a franchise model. The early years were tumultuous though; the network went to be an association owned by the members and is now a semi-centralised democratic organisation. The network thus became less centralised.

Schloss Tempelhof as a young *ecovillage* was based on learning from other ecovillages from the beginning on. Building on these established experiences Tempelhof has extraordinarily fast developed a successful community-based ecovillage in just a few years. Additionally, a (small) number of community experienced people have lived in other intentional communities before which caused a peer-learning effect amongst the members. Tracking back Tempelhof learning, it can be identified that the early ecovillages have mainly developed as bottom-up projects without a 'guiding plan' or network to build on.

Examples of broader variety:

Time Banks – A very old innovation from the 18th century with SI initiatives starting independently. In recent years several national and international organisations were established and has evolved simultaneously. In Spain, however the state funded establishment of many new time banks through the Spanish network. While the different parts of the movement conform to the typology, there is contextual variety.

GEN – An old network that has traditionally developed as described in A. In recent years an international network were established, which were running projects in Africa and other places, and thus co-opted or established new eco-villages. However, the members of GEN are estimated to only represent a small minority of all eco-villages. How the network interact and expand is thus not uniform.

To see more examples of how the categories relates to specific networks, see D4.4 where cases have been listed for each category in all the typologies, especially the typology on "Initiation & Start-up Patterns of local initiatives" that most closely relates to this proposition (Jørgensen et al., 2016).

5.2.1.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

The biggest take-away from this proposition is that agency in TSI does not stem from either a network or the local initiatives, it is very context and network dependent. This relates both to changes in context over time, and to maturation of the networks themselves. The empirics represented here however has a

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wide contribution to the middle-range theory through the development of a common network-vocabulary for TSI, the distributed and networked agency involved, the co-production of SI etc.

Relevance for a middle-range theory: This proposition brings insight on where agency stems from in the emergence of social innovation, relating it to different types or organisational network-forms and shifts over time in the patterns we see globally and in networks specifically. A tripartite categorisation is very crude, and it is important to understand that how local LMs emerge today, both relates to general changes in how interactions take place in the world, as well as maturity and changes over time in the networks. Relevance for a theory that has practical implications, is then to understand in a specific situation the particular kind of networked agency in play with a particular phenomenon of TSI, i.e. is the agency distributed or centralized, is there a network that can be acted through or not, what interactions are taking place. This has implications for how the SI initiatives can be empowered, i.e. which kind of resources are needed and where do they have the most impact.

Solidity and future research: The three categories are solid based on 20 cases studied on 60 initiatives from WP4, and has been cross-checked by the case researchers multiple times, not to mention the large amount of CTPs from WP5 that has further solidified the typology. The typology might be too generalized, each category could be a typology in its own right, detailing the types of organisations and contexts relating to the different types of agency and empowerment, to be of more practical use for practitioners and funders. Different types of SI, or different types of societal challenges, might also relate to specific categories. The different types or emergence might also relate to the types of social relations and actors involved. In short, more characterisation, pattern-finding, is necessary to see the full implications. This level of generalization however is a consequence of the limited space available to present it, see Dorland (in progress) for a more full representation.

5.2.1.5 Relations to other propositions

This proposition is strongly tied to proposition B2. While this proposition discussed where agency is located and how networks develop over time, B2 discusses the distinct forms of interactions and the process of empowerment observable in the cases and how this affects agency. B2 thus has a process perspective on empowerment while the current proposition has a temporal perspective. There are interesting links to C5 that explore the institutional logics in which networks/initiatives emerge (organization, geographic, functional, temporal), which links to network formation.

5.2.1.6 References

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5.2.2 Proposition B2: The different forms of transnational SI networking

5.2.2.1 Short statement of the proposition

A local SI initiative's participation in transnational networking can empower aspects of both the SI initiative and the SI network in a two-way process through access to various types of resources. These resources range from the concrete (like funding and access to infrastructure) to the more intangible (like legitimacy and knowledge exchange).

5.2.2.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition, through the use of a process perspective, specifies the kinds of empowerment and resources that SI network formation consists of. Network formation is understood as a *socio-material* phenomenon, and the 'empowerment' process of networking is unpacked through a four-fold typology.

The typology presents the key aspects of empowerment as observed in the empirics, (see the cluster B overview for definition of empowerment) and is broadly based on the main deliverables in WP4 and WP5 and the data they are based upon, but also informed by the transversal themes of governance, resourcing, learning, and monitoring from WP2. The themes informed the research questions for the first and second batch of cases. The typology is empirically based though and only roughly correspond to these distinctions. Empowerment has been analysed through a focus on objects and interactions based on the perspective that SI is necessarily a 'socio-material' phenomenon, and to trace it and uncover the social relations being created these objects needs to be followed. It is critical to identify the objects through which empowerment play out to arrive at a theory of practical relevance. As explained in the overview text empowerment is to endow an actor with agency to reach their goal. The difference is that agency is not merely something bestowed from one actor to another, and giving agency is not easy as it might structure or even limit the possibilities for SI of an actor. The typology presented here is thus about how to obtain and give agency, and where it is located. This relates to all the aspects of DOFK. Framing might be affected by funding, as it comes with strings attached nudging initiatives in new directions. Doing and organising might be affected through the knowledge sharing and learning from older initiatives to new ones etc.

A: Funding: Funding is a basic requirement for many initiatives and networks and funding can go both ways depending on network and context. In both cases funding can be given directly, or actors can empower other actors to obtain funding from 3rd parties. However, the exchange of money can alter the power-dynamic between actors, leading to disempowerment as well as empowerment: when enabling agency through funding, changes may be imposed that structure or limit the SI process.

B: Legitimacy: Legitimacy is a crucial aspect for starting an initiative, and can be viewed as a resource that is often transferred through a brand or objects signifying association with a network. The structuring and limitations comes through the conditions to be fulfilled to become a member. Often it relates to funding, as many actors would be reluctant to donate money to an unknown SI initiative, but it can also relate to many other types of resources, or to processes of identity, ambitions, visions of change etc. D4.4 analysed this aspect in more depth with three sub-categories (Jørgensen et al. 2016: 37).

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C: Knowledge sharing, learning, and peer support: The most prevalent empowerment process empirically is the sharing of knowledge and support from peers, usually taking place during meetings, conferences, but occasionally also via ICT. This category covers many aspects of intangible empowerments, like knowledge, support, and identity, which are all hard to quantify. This relate broadly to both framing, knowing, doing and organising. Framing through the equilibrium networks try to reach about their ambitions, goals, and common discourse at various events and meetings. Knowing through the exchange of experiences, and often creation of knowledge objects and network repositories. Changes in organising and doing often comes as effects of new knowledge and framings. To obtain new knowledge is often also to change though (Carlile, 2004), and will affect how initiatives view the world, and thus also what SIs it will result in.

D: Visibility and Identity: Visibility, which is somewhat connected to legitimacy, is a very basic requirement for many SIs. Basic income for instance needs wide public support to be successful, they need to disseminate their ideas, they need to be visible. Slow food is a bit similar, they want to help local food products, commercially, and so also need to give such products visibility. Sometimes prominent head figures in a network visiting is enough to cause widespread media-coverage locally, resulting in increased visibility. A secondary effect is often increasing legitimacy and funding. Recognizability & identity is another aspect emphasised by some networks like Shareable. This has a connection to motivation as well. Identity has in several case studies, like the Living Knowledge case, been mentioned as the driving force for motivation and involvement in SI. This category potentially has the least impact and structuring effect on the actor being endowed with agency.

5.2.2.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

This proposition developed from empirical work taking place in WP4 and WP5 (Jørgensen et al., 2015, 2016; Pel et al., 2017). The typology is based directly on the meta-analysis in D5.4 (Pel et al. 2017: 86). The comparative analysis of the 20 cases in D4.4, informed by the 4 transversal themes, also brought insight on the empowerment (Jørgensen et al., 2016), although it was not as explicit in any of the typologies. However, the typology *Characteristics of the expansion - describing why and how local initiatives are joining* analyses the motivations and benefits for SI initiatives to join (ibid 52). To understand the key aspects of this proposition it is also necessary to locate the agency for empowerment in the networks. This takes outset in the typology on the manifestations of SI initiatives in D4.4 (Jørgensen et al., 2016: 56–58), and sub-question 1.1. and 1.3 for proposition 4 in D5.4 (Pel et al., 2017: 73–83).

Exemplar cases of funding dynamics:

Funding from networks to SI initiatives: Receiving funding is for many SI initiatives a basic requirement, even for volunteers. Funding can come from the international network or outside sources, but the international network is then crucial in giving them the legitimacy or visibility necessary to attract or be eligible for such funding. **Slow Food Araba-Vitoria** gained local funding after a visit of prominent people from the network garnered media attention. **ENoLL** offers brokering services for project acquisition (typically focus on testing and knowledge development) and membership in thematic groups (for knowledge development) to effective members (high-fee payers) and innovation partners. **Living Knowledge** enabled its members to apply for EU funding that they could not have done individually.

From SI initiatives to networks: In some networks, the SI initiatives fund the network organisation, enabling it to run projects, activities, to expand the network, offer services etc. Membership fees is a formalized way of funding, but it may also take the form of donations, funding of staff, donation of man-

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hours, infrastructure, projects etc. for the international network. **Slow Food** and **ENoLL** are both partly funded through membership fees, which enables them to offer services and run projects and events. **Living Knowledge** do not pay membership fees but contribute with work-hours to the different activities taking place. Notably Science Shop Bonn spends time on the Living Knowledge newsletter and webpage.

Changing power dynamics through funding: Differentiated membership fees, like in **ENoLL** (Living Labs), can separate members into first and second grade, giving them different levels of support and benefits. Some networks also resist having membership fees, like **Desis**, as it would enable the members to demand services, i.e. members gain power over the international staff through the obligation they get from receiving money. This can hamper the motivation for volunteer work that the international networking runs on. There is also a sentiment to “to keep the network free and thus accessible”. The downside is less resources for building a strong brand/label, which ENoLL is able to do.

Exemplar cases of empowerment through legitimacy:

Strength in numbers: Some SI initiatives need a critical mass to be effective, like **Time banks** or **Credit unions**, and so have a natural inclination to join in national or international networks. Networks that act as service organisations are often of this type, and typically emerge when a critical mass of local initiatives exist. Here the label or brand is a necessity for being part of the network, which is a necessity for the functioning of the SI.

Umbrellas: Some membership affiliations give the possibility for funding and other resources, like the European Commission would not fund individual **Science shops** but do fund a **Science shop network** (Living Knowledge) even though the network is thin. These SI initiatives often exist before a network is formed and join to get access to resources from 3rd parties. **FabLabs**, **Living Labs**, **Impact Hubs**, **Hackerspaces** are all examples of umbrellas.

Branding and Blueprints: Some network organisations operate as a form of license owners with legal control of their brand, and provide blueprints in the form of documentations, handbooks, operational guidelines, legal disclaimers etc. Some networks also provide such blueprints without any “brand” or legal requirements for their use. SI initiatives join to get access to resources in the network. The brand is in itself a resource bestowing legitimacy and attracting members and clients. It can however be expensive to build and maintain a strong brand, and it can reduce flexibility, and the membership fee system that is often the basis of the resources also have disempowering consequences. **The Living Lab in Sfax** is located in a politically unstable country, and thus needed the label of an international organisations to be considered legitimate, and ultimately become accepted in the **Living Lab network (ENoLL)**. Membership gave them access to resources in the network, but also resulted in more funding from local actors. New **science shops** have often faced challenges in convincing university management to get funding for establishing. The legitimacy offered by Living Knowledge both through visits by prominent actors for workshops or other events, as well as knowledge objects like letters of recommendations, has been important to several new science shops. **ESSRG** (a Hungarian science shop) succeeded in opening a science shops at Corvinus university through such help from the network.

Exemplar cases of empowerment through visibility and identity: **Impact Hub** had a distinct challenge in relating to visibility, in that they were not distinct enough from other similar named initiatives, and so made a rebranding to get a distinct and visible brand. **BIEN-SUISSE** received attention because of events organised by the inter- or rather transnational BIEN network. The interviewee states that the local group was “*riding on the back of the international congress*” and she is convinced that the start of the Swiss branch would not have received as much attention otherwise: “*We would not have had the same visibility if we had just done it out of the blue.*” **Slow Food Araba-Vitoria** gained recognition when a member

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became prominent in the international network. For the local SI it was important, for their visibility, because people talked so much about their group, it made those in the group feel very flattered and very comfortable – i.e. it was important or had an impact for their identity.

Exemplar cases of empowerment through learning, knowledge sharing, and peer-support: Tempelhof ecovillage: The first learning outcome was that the group shifted the focus of development from outside search to inner group process development and clarification of the common ground. This learning caused a new start with regular meetings for community building processes and visions on how to organize decision making. The group started visiting existing communities like Schloss Glarisegg, Sieben Linden, Auroville, Damanhur and others to learn from their experiences. **Credit Union Merkur Cooperative Bank** - According to the interviewee it is highly inspiring for practitioners to collaborate with similar grassroots cooperatives or sustainable banks in both Europe and worldwide. Also, Merkur shareholders and clients find it motivating to know that they belong to a global movement. Being aware about what banks do with their money has become something estimable.

Objects facilitating interactions leading to empowerment: As mentioned different forms of knowledge exchange is the most prevalent of all interactions. This sub-section gives a concluding overview of objects used to facilitate these interactions. The knowledge is often about the dissemination of the basic idea and how to start and operate an SI initiative. Conferences, meetings, workshops, lectures etc. is important both for knowledge sharing, but also relate to visibility, legitimacy, and sometimes funding. The second most prevalent form is the exchange or travel of knowledge objects, texts, disseminated both in physical form and through ICT. While the two forms overlap the travel of “bodies” is sometimes important, physical meetings/conferences.

Knowledge objects might be identical but sometimes need to be escorted by actors to gain the necessary impact, i.e. the agency endowed in them is in some circumstances insufficient. This is especially true for disseminating new ideas and the emergences/establishing of new SI initiatives, while the unescorted exchange of these objects is more common between established initiatives. Other objects that are critical carriers of agency for empowerment can be tools or specific artefacts created in networks. Empirical examples of important objects that facilitate interactions: **Time Banks** – the software that facilitates buying and selling time for time banks programmed by the network organisation. **FabLabs** – blueprints made at MIT, the digital fabrication equipment for FabLabs and Hackerspaces like the open-source hardware platform ANDUINO. **Seed movement** – the seeds themselves. **INFORSE** – the wind turbines. **Living Knowledge** – the Web portal or platform is an object that empowers the network. It tells specific narratives, support specific discourses, through the construction of the text and/or media embedded in it. These objects also structure the networks by giving some opportunities at the cost of others. For instance, the platform ANDUINO platform meant that a FabLab in South England pursued a specific pathway, focusing on IoT (internet of things) instead of numerous other innovations, and mentions that the ANDUINO platform “drove much of the emerging ‘maker’ scene”. The point is that objects are a necessity for facilitating interactions and empowerment processes, but they also structure reality.

5.2.2.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

The proposition shows the importance, or relevance, of international networking for SI initiatives - why do they join? Moreover, just as importantly, it shows how networks depend on SI initiatives. The distribution of resources is also network-specific, i.e. depending on whether they are centralized or distributed. There are different kinds of networks, as discussed in depth in proposition B1 that distinguishes between loose and tight networks. Thus, some network organisations need empowerment

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from SI initiatives to work on changes in international or national institutions, while in other networks SI initiatives depend on empowerment from the network. This proposition shows that it is a two-way process, and brings specific insight on what type of empowerment is important, through which interactions it is brought about, and which objects/actors is bestowed with the agency to facilitate this empowerment. These specificities of the objects and actors in play, the form they take, how they travel, and which interactions they are part of, is critical to forming a theory of practical relevance. This proposition is an important contribution especially as 1) the (dis)empowerment is crucial for TRANSIT (Avelino et al. (2017) the 4 transversal themes developed in WP2 and how this typology substantiates it despite not aiming to do so (which itself is a crucial insight), and 3) the clarification of how TSI is a socio-material process. Further work is necessary to analyse these specificities, as our cases have often not delved to these levels of detail, and the limited space available here have necessitated a stronger generalization, and many of the specificities are more developed in other papers (Dorland, in progress). Another task is to further correlate the different types of empowerment, interactions, and objects to the types of networks and SI in the cases, to further enhance the practical relevance, i.e. how practitioners or policy makers can help empowerment of SI depending on its characteristics.

5.2.2.5 Relations to other propositions

This proposition is tightly connected to B1. The types of interactions and empowerment taking place between SI initiatives & networks changes as the networks construct new objects over time and accumulate resources that can be part of empowerment processes. This relate to the temporal perspective presented in B1. Tensions around funding, resources, and particular aspects of network formation is also related with cluster A that looks into what motivates people to join and persist in SI initiatives. Proposition A2 address multiple tensions from both internal and external sources, which in this proposition is especially linked to the dynamics of receiving and giving funding. Paying membership fees will also affect the networks in terms of interpersonal relations, the topic of proposition A3 that is based on the observation that members of SI initiatives bring with them schemas and a familiarity with practices that reproduce institutionalized social relations and embedded understandings of power. There is also a strong link with proposition A4 on 'translocal empowerment' that however focuses on the processes involved in achieving empowerment for members of the SI initiative, as a collective, focusing on psychological aspects. There is obvious overlaps but the focus lies on different aspects, cluster B for instance focuses more on the network and initiative levels and not on the individuals.

5.2.2.6 References

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5.2.3 Proposition B3: Discourse formation and communication infrastructures

5.2.3.1 Short statement of the proposition

The collective identity of social innovation initiatives and networks and the travel of their social innovations is crucially shaped by their discourse work and by the communication infrastructures that carry, mediate and accelerate processes of discourse formation.

5.2.3.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

One crucial way, in which SI actors change social relations and challenge, alter and replace dominant institutions, is by developing and adopting both new and existing narratives, ideas, metaphors and discourses. In doing so, they make strategic use of (changing) communication infrastructures and specifically the internet, which increased both velocity and mass of information available (cf. Castells 2010). This shapes their **collective identity** and the travel of their social innovation, specifically of their ideas, which is a crucial dimension of SI network formation.

SI comprises new ways of doing and organizing but also of framing and knowing. SI actors strategically relate to existing narratives, ideas, metaphors and discourses (or create/contribute to newly emerging ones) to position themselves vis-à-vis other actors and to shape and express their collective identity implicitly and explicitly (cf. Polletta and Jasper 2001). This **discourse work** is crucially co-produced with **communication infrastructures** (i.e. communication and information technology) that continue to evolve at a fast pace. As communication infrastructures evolve, they carry, mediate and accelerate processes of **discourse formation** that accordingly unfold through new dynamics and patterns (cf. Castells 2010; Ezrahi 2004). This proposition addresses discourse formation to show how SI actors strategically use the (changing) communication infrastructures and engage in discourse work to articulate their collective identity – it thus scrutinizes their networking and the travel of ideas across different places and contexts.

In doing so, this proposition provides insights both into TSI agency (as distributed phenomenon) and TSI dynamics, by pointing to the fact that while involving strategic moves, discourse formation is mediated through both (existing or emerging) discourses and the material dimensions of ICT. This helps explain the relations and interactions between SI initiatives and other actors (e.g. other SI initiatives, dominant institutions).

5.2.3.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

Discourse formation is relevant as it helps to shape and express **collective identity**, which we understand as *“a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly”* (Polletta & Jasper 2001: 285). The building and sharing of such collective identity can be a dispersed process in which individual SI actors, situated at different geographical places, engage in making use of ICT's. In actively building a collective identity, SI actors draw upon specific existing ideas, metaphors, narratives and/or discourses (rather than others) and engage with certain new or emerging narratives, ideas, metaphors and/or discourses (rather than others) – this means they also actively *avoid* connecting to certain ideas, metaphors, narratives and/or discourses that they consider (could) have

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(dis)empowering effects³. In doing so, they also express their belonging to certain groups and distance themselves from others. Discourse formation is thus crucially related to network formation by providing a 'shared' or at least the perception of a shared identity and how this can be (dis)empowering.

Focusing on the actual activities of SI actors, we suggest distinguishing between two ways through which SI initiatives engage in discourse work, relate to public discourse formation and thereby actively shape their collective identity. Firstly, they draw upon, appropriate and work with *existing (i.e. more stable) ideas, metaphors, narratives and/or discourses*. This also includes fundamentally reinterpreting and twisting these. Secondly, they engage with *new or emerging narratives, ideas, metaphors and/or discourses*. Such discourse work has temporal aspects – in that SI actors draw on different discourses throughout time to build their collective identity based on adaptive narratives of who they are, what their alternative consists of and how they practice it (cf. Proposition D3). Around the 2008 economic crisis, the Transition Network started reframing their collective identity by drawing less on discourses around 'Peak Oil' and focusing more on narratives around 'local economy'. Such discourse work is mediated through elements of the social-material context, and specifically communication infrastructures. ICTs (or concretely, website, social media such as facebook, twitter, and other digital means, such as film, pictures) have increased the speed with which ideas travel across the globe and the sheer amount of information that is accessible at any point in time from behind a mobile device. While they bear the advantage of being widespread, they tend to be accompanied with exclusionary tendencies – for example considering that not everybody can use them (e.g. for reasons of accessibility, capability) and that especially social media tends to keep people within a certain group think or information bubble. The importance of the use of ICTs as communication channels for SI initiatives and networks is not to be underestimated as they mediate discourse work and thereby the collective identity of SI actors. Empirically, we have seen SI actors shifting their efforts from using conventional media to social media instead (Jørgensen et al. 2016).

Discourse formation is relevant as it allows insights into the (dis)empowering effects of the collective identities shaped by it. In the following, we provide some more empirical insights into these:

Firstly, ICTs and the discourse work they mediate play a crucial role in increasing the **visibility of an SI initiative and the alternative it provides** – which in turn increases their legitimacy, credibility and viability. In engaging with *new and emerging* narratives, ideas, metaphors and/or discourses, SI actors play an important role in spreading and stabilizing these, thus reinforcing their potential for being an alternative. Drawing upon the discourse of the 'sharing economy' allows for example Shareable to play into the awareness and hype around the idea of sharing goods and services. Simultaneously, Shareable aims to redefine this discourse (through publications and local narratives) to relate to ideas of cooperative platforms, commons and social good rather than (only) to for-profit ventures such as Uber and AirBnB, which is considered a rather disempowering version of that discourse. As another example, Ashoka claims to have stood at the cradle of the narrative of 'social entrepreneur' and the collective identity that comes with it: "*Social entrepreneurs have existed throughout history, but the identity is constructed. The historical achievement of Ashoka over thirty years is to have created an identity and a term for something that was happening in our societies, for something that has always been in our societies. You can look back over 100 years to Maria Montessori, for example; but then it happened accidentally*" (Ashoka Interviewee quoted in Wittmayer et al. 2015: 14). Building such a collective identity provides a home for different individual SI actors working in a comparable way and thus provides with a sense of relatedness as well as access to resources. By drawing upon specific *existing* ideas, metaphors,

³ See also D4 on diverse transformations and the co-existence of them in parallel worlds.

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narratives and/or discourses (rather than others), SI actors connect with broader discourses and movements. Such reference to more widely subscribed-to visions and goals also adds to the legitimacy, credibility and viability of their SI activity and has consequences for network formation. An example are current day BIEN activists, who *“can be seen to rely heavily on the discursive archive and the evidence basis created by decades or even centuries of social critique, scientific underpinning and policy analysis insights”* (Pel & Backhaus submitted). In terms of visibility, websites can show the initiative ‘exists’, its activities as well as its linkages with other actors. One of the selection criteria for social innovation networks and initiatives to become a TRANSIT case study was the fact that a network needed to have an online presence in the form of a website. Having a website (rather than any other form of online presence) thus provided an initiative with enough credibility to be part of a long-list of initiatives to be considered for the TRANSIT work. However, such websites at the network level also allow prospective and existing SI initiatives to connect (CTP Discovering other Ecovillages). Online presence and visibility also adds to the proliferation of ‘hype’, in that SI initiatives may gain an enormous and disparate ‘body’ online. For example, one enthusiastic individual behind a dedicated website mapping numerous sharing related initiatives all over Melbourne suggesting a movement essentially drives Shareable in Melbourne.

Secondly, ICTs and the discourse work they mediate have a crucial relation with **resources**. ICTs are low-cost means to communicate one’s ideas and activities, to share experiences and lessons learned and to provide resources to others. Transition Norwich, for example, set up a collective blog, where people could share their experiences of trying to live a low carbon life. (CTP Transition Circles Project). Ecovillage Bergen draws on ideas of the Transition Network in their community building work (CTP Reshifting focus from physical land to group of people). Discourse work is also crucial in securing access to resources. FabLab 4 in the UK has distanced itself intentionally from Hackerspaces and FabLab identities being aware of some of the negative connotations of the terms ‘hack’ and ‘hacker’. Rather, when aiming to secure a physical place the co-founders took a conservative approach and drew on legitimizing aspects such as their background as engineers and issues of safety and security. As put by themselves: *“We emphasized that we were non-profit, aiding unemployed people, and so we got the premises without rent, or for peppercorn rent”* (CTP No red flags). Thus, being strategic in framing their collective identity allowed them to access resources to which they otherwise would not have access, such as a physical place at a university. Actively distancing themselves from certain discourses, allowed a positioning that is helpful in the relation with prospective funders, members and users.

Thirdly, ICT’s are providing **new means for (discursive) action** through the possibilities they offer. Current day BIEN activists are using ICT enabled means, such as crowdfunding, internet activism and civic petitions to reach out and further their social innovation (Pel & Backhaus submitted). Moreover, the video-blogs of recipients of a crowd-funded basic income help people to relate to the basic income concept through experiential evidence, rather than through the scientific reports and expert analyses that had left the concept rather abstract and hypothetical. This aspect of connection with new actors was also the result of the creation of a mailing list and a IRC channel by one of the co-founders of Hackerspace South-Central England about their new hackerspace (CTP Tapping into existing communities).

5.2.3.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

This proposition draws attention to the important role of strategic discourse work and its mediation through ICT’s for network formation. It sketches how SI initiatives interact with the broader social-material context in an attempt to change its dominant institutions focusing on the discursive aspects thereof: narratives, ideas, metaphors and/or discourses. Eliciting the shaping of discourse work through

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ICTs, this proposition substantiates the importance of a social-material understanding – 30 years ago, TSI discourse formation developed rather differently. The proposition also provides insights into the (dis)empowering aspects of collective identity, and the various concrete implications of discourse work, such as visibility, legitimacy and stabilisation of ideas and alternatives, resources and new means for (discursive) action.

This proposition can be further developed through further empirical as well as theoretical grounding. The latter specifically related to the work of Manuel Castells and others investigating the impact of ICT. Other interesting concepts from actor-network theory are the travels of ideas, (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996), ‘immutable mobiles’ (Michael 2016) and ‘mobilities’ (Urry 2007) as ways to articulate this mobility as an important aspect of SI.

5.2.3.5 Relations to other propositions

This proposition is closely related to B2 but focuses on discursive aspects and their mediation and includes ‘other’ actors rather than focusing on ‘intra-network’ dynamics only. It shows how SI initiatives and networks are entangled in more extensive communication networks and discursive webs through which situated SI actors/initiatives seek to empower themselves and each other. It also relates to B5 building some ground for the understanding of the strategic action field. It relates to D3 and D6, both also focusing on discourses. However, D6 provides insights on the heterogeneity of SI discourse and practices on a European level. D3 focuses on the diagnosis of the social-material context by SI actors and how these are expressed in their narratives of change. Instead of focusing on the (dis)empowering effects of these narratives, which are of course part of SI actors’ collective identity as focused on here, D3 is focusing on problem framings.

5.2.3.6 References

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5.2.4 Proposition B4: Co-creation spaces for knowledge and practices

5.2.4.1 Short statement of the proposition

SI initiatives organise ‘co-creation spaces’ that facilitate the development of new knowledge and practices, both within and across the boundaries of state, market and civil society. The spaces are co-produced over time in interaction with existing institutions and contribute to empowerment through the creation of shadow provision systems, enhanced knowledge resources, and civil society participation in new governance structures.

5.2.4.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

The inspiration for this proposition comes from the observation that several of the SI initiatives studied are based on creation of spaces for cooperation between actors; i.e. a science shop and a DESIS Lab is a space, which organises university researchers’ and students’ cooperation with civil society. The knowledge developed within such spaces can sometimes be characterised as developed together by university actors and civil society actors. It is not just university researchers disseminating their research findings to civil society actors. Furthermore, the cooperation can empower both the civil society actors and the university actors. The university actors can argue for new fields of research and education with reference to civil society’s knowledge needs, and civil society actors can influence societal development based on documentation of problems or new ideas developed through the cooperation. These observations led to a more thorough analysis of different types of SIs organised as spaces for development of new knowledge and practices with respect to the purposes of the spaces, the involved actors and the roles of the spaces in empowerment processes. We call these spaces ‘co-creation spaces’ in order to emphasize the networking among actors within the space. This networking can include both development of **new** knowledge and practices, like the design of a new facility in an eco-village, and joint activities as part of the day-to-day activity of the ‘co-creation space’, like the daily food production in an eco-village. These co-creation spaces can be seen as a co-creation capacity, as shown in figure B.1.

The term “co-creation” is often referred to as developed by Ostrom (1996), who understood co-creation as a process “...where inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed to individuals who are not ‘in the same organisation’”. Actually, Ostrom (1996) used the term “co-production” about such relations across organisations or between different types of actors, when she analysed the interactions between state actors and civil society actors in public services and wanted to emphasise that public services should not be seen as service provision but as a co-produced service building on cooperation between a public institution and citizens. The terms “co-creation” and “co-production” are often used in interchangeable ways about the same processes by different scholars (Voorberg et al, 2015). Ostrom’s understanding of co-production is different from the understanding of co-production developed by Jasanoff et al (2004), who more focuses on the on-going, long-term dynamics of co-shaping of scientific ideas and beliefs and associated technological artefacts in interaction with the representations, identities, discourses, and institutions that give impact and meaning to the ideas and objects. Often the two strands of literature are not referring to each other. Since the term co-production in TRANSIT mostly is used about the on-going interactions between SI actors and dominant institutions, the term ‘co-creation spaces’ is used about the processes **within** the identified spaces and co-production is used about the dynamics over time, which give impact and meaning to these ‘co-creation spaces’.

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A number of types of co-creation spaces, with different objectives and different organisational characteristics and involving networking among different actors, have been identified through the analyses of the TRANSIT case studies. Six types of co-creation spaces are in the following characterised by the **actors** who are involved, the **activities** the actors carry out within the space and the **resources** the actors get access to or develop together through the space (inspired by (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995) and their concept for analysis of networking between organisations):

- Spaces organised as **housing facilities** with cooperative ownership: eco-villages and co-housing
- Spaces organised as **physical and virtual facilities which can be shared**, like Fab Labs, Hacker Spaces and Impact Hubs, and organised around different schemes of users and members and facilitated by professional managers. Sometimes co-design activities are part of these spaces.
- Spaces organised as **co-creation of service**: time banks facilitating exchange of time as a resource and credit unions facilitating exchange of money (capital) as a resource.
- Spaces organised as an **intermediary actor** beyond the triad of producer, user and regulator (Guy et al, 2011) and sometimes co-designing production and consumption. These spaces are often organised within areas of sustainable resource management, including food and energy, and organised around secretariats with staff and/or volunteers providing services for members and/or for the general public.
- Spaces organised around **co-design of knowledge and practices**, like science shops and DESIS Labs, which often have universities or other higher education institutions - and their teachers and students - as the organiser of the space and targeting civil society or local communities. Also living labs are spaces for co-design of knowledge and practices.
- Spaces organised as a **public governance structure** spanning the boundaries of civil society and the state (local government): Participatory Budgeting and also in some other types of SI where local government participates.

Several of the identified spaces have a local focus and are developed by and targeting local or regional actors, e.g. eco-villages, and the branches of the Transition Network and of the Shareable network. The concept of 'co-creation space' is not just referring to the daily sharing of a physical facility like in the secretariat of an agro-ecology initiative. The focus in the concept 'co-creation space' is on the creation of a physical and/or virtual space where actors interact, like when farmers and agricultural advisers together develop knowledge about how to do agro-ecology farming. However, sharing of physical facilities might enable formation of a co-creation space, like in an Impact Hub.

The analyses of the co-creation spaces identified processes of empowerment on the collective level of civil society actors. Three 'mechanisms' of empowerment have been identified:

- **Creation of shadow (alternative) provision systems**, where SI initiatives provide services parallel to existing public or market-based systems whereby civil society actors can shape provision systems according to their values and needs. E.g. through eco-villages, co-housing, time banks, and the seed movement.
- **Enhanced knowledge resources enabling civil society actors to utilise existing governance structures for influence on societal development**, e.g. enabled by using knowledge developed through cooperation between science shops or DESIS Labs and civil society in negotiations with other actors, like local government or local businesses, about mitigation of problems.
- **Improved civil society influence through new governance structures** within participatory budgeting and sometimes also based on local government's cooperation with or participation in spaces like living labs, Shareable, Transition Network, and DESIS Labs

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5.2.4.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

Table 5.2.4.1 shows the six types of co-creation spaces described in the previous section (column 1) and provides an overview of the TRANSIT cases associated with each type of co-creation space. Furthermore the table provides an overview of the activities and the type of empowerment process within each case. Within 17 of the 20 TRANSIT case studies a type of co-creation space has been identified: for the cases of Basic Income, Ashoka and RIPESS, a co-creation space does not seem to be part of the SI they analyse.

Table 5.2.4.1. SI initiatives with formation and use of spaces

Type of space	TRANSIT case	Characteristics of activities within the space	Aspects of empowerment
Housing facilities	Global Ecovillage Network	Local spaces and physical places for creation of facilities and services among residents	Building shadow systems for local social and economic development
	International Co-operative Alliance (Co-housing)	Local places and spaces providing and enabling facilities and services in housing communities	Empowerment through development of local affordable housing
Physical and virtual spaces for sharing	Hackerspaces	Spaces for exchange of experiences and knowledge development among peers	Development of shadow systems for knowledge development and exchange
	FabLabs	Public or private places with facility sharing among users	Empowerment of individuals through access to equipment that is too expensive and too complex to buy for an individual
	The Impact Hub	Local spaces for facility sharing and local and virtual platforms for knowledge sharing which in some cases include co-design of knowledge among individual entrepreneurs	Empowerment depends on the focus of the activities enabled through use of a hub as a co-design place and space
Spaces for co-creation of service	Time Banks	Spaces for development and exchange of resources among the involved actors through the specific local interactions	Improving social conditions of actors involved in this kind of shadow exchange system
	Credit Unions	Spaces for exchange of capital between actors with deposits and actors in need of loans	Credit union financing might enable financing of civil society activities that might not otherwise have been able to obtain economic support
Intermediary actors co-designing	Transition Network	Local spaces for creation of plans and new practices among citizens, civil society	Enabling local sustainable development through collective plans and changes

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production and consumption		organisations and sometimes local government	
	INFORSE	Local and national spaces for cooperation among citizens and sometimes with local government about sustainable energy transition	Enabling development of sustainable energy provision and consumption systems
	Slow Food	Spaces for creation of changes in local food provision and knowledge hereabout	Influencing local food provision systems through creation of linkages among practitioners or between practitioners and citizens
	Via Campesina	Spaces for creation of strategies and knowledge for small-scale agro-ecology farming	Empowerment of small farmers through formation of social movement
	Seed movement	Spaces for cooperation about seed sharing among citizens	Protection of traditional sharing practice through formation of social movement
	Shareable Network	Local spaces and platforms for development of plans for new local practices among citizens, civil society organisations and sometimes local government	Some initiatives influence local development through cooperation with local authorities. Some influence local development through development of shadow systems
Spaces for co-design of knowledge and practices	Living Knowledge Network	Spaces for knowledge production in cooperation between researchers, students and civil society	Development of scientific knowledge about civil society problems and possible solutions. Building on empowerment through scientific knowledge
	DESI-network	Spaces for cooperation between university and local community about local development projects	Development of knowledge about problems and solutions. Building on empowerment through development of local capability
	Living Labs	Spaces and places for cooperation among different actors about development and test of solutions	Might include element of governance innovation, depending on the connection to different systems of public and private decision-making. Empowerment of civil society unclear.
Spaces for public governance	Int. Obs. for Part. Democracy	Spaces for dialogue among citizens and between citizens and local government about local public budgeting	Governance innovation enabling citizen participation in local public budgeting

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5.2.4.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

The proposition and the analyses behind the proposition contribute to the middle-range theory about TSI with identification of six different types of co-creation spaces, which themselves are SIs, as detailed in the previous section. By understanding and describing these different initiatives as co-creation spaces the proposition contributes to theory development about TSI. The contribution to the middle-range TSI theory can be summarised as follows:

The role of translation and co-production processes. From a relational perspective it is expected that the different types of spaces are characterised by translation processes with different obligatory passage points (Callon, 1986) and different boundary objects (Star & Griesemer, 1989), which shape each type of space and facilitate interactions within the space. The case study about science shops in Denmark shows how this type of space for university – civil society cooperation is based on translation of civil society's knowledge needs into knowledge needs, which are suitable for research and education and how this kind of space can contribute to reciprocal empowerment of university researchers and civil society. The case study about eco-villages shows how the specific eco-village is shaped in interaction with the local municipality and other local actors (Jørgensen et al, 2016).

Ostrom's perspective on co-creation of public services was an effectiveness perspective on co-creation, but within the literature about co-creation Ostrom's perspective has been added a democracy perspective, sometimes referred to as New Public Governance (Pestoff, Brandsen, & Verschuere, 2012), which could be seen as the type of perspective related to a SI like participatory budgeting.

The analyses of the case studies show that a co-creation space not necessarily get stabilised, understood within an actor-network theory perspective (Callon, 1986). The objectives of a co-creation space and the roles of the involved actors should be seen as co-produced over time in interaction with other actor and institutions. The case study about science shops show how a Danish science shop was co-produced overtime in interaction with changes in the societal roles of the university and of different types of civil society organisations (Jørgensen et al, 2016). Similarly, the case study about the Danish branch of the sustainable energy organisation INFORSE shows how an intermediary organisation has been able to - but also was forced to - co-produce its roles and activities in interaction with sustainable energy transition in Denmark where renewable energy and energy savings have been mainstreamed as elements in the national energy system and as profitable investment areas. Also the Participatory budgeting case study shows examples of such co-production over time of a co-creation space (Jørgensen et al, 2016).

The role of intermediary organisations within different domains. As indicated in table 5.3 the TRANSIT case studies include two different types of intermediary actors: i) Local branches of a social movement, like INFORSE and its local energy offices, Via Campesina and its agro-ecology family farming organisations, Slow Food and its local and regional chapters, and organisations within the seed movement like the Seedy Sunday events, ii) Local branches of the Transition Network and the Shareable Network focused on sustainable urban development. Intermediary organisations within sustainable urban development are well described in the literature (see for example Guy et al, 2011). However, the TRANSIT case studies contribute with examples of intermediary organisations within other fields of sustainable natural resource management, like renewable energy, Slow Food and seed exchange, which could contribute to further development of the theory about intermediary organisations. The role of co-creation spaces based on intermediary actors are characterised by Smith & Stirling (2016) as contributions of grassroots to innovation democracy based on more democratic innovation practices and based on innovations that support citizens and activities, which contribute to wider democracy.

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The role of co-design of new knowledge and practices. One aspect of the middle-range theory concerns the role of co-design of knowledge between different types of actors involved in a co-creation space, where co-design of knowledge is different from knowledge transfer or knowledge provision, like dissemination of knowledge from a university to civil society (Jørgensen et al, 2016). The case study about science shops in Denmark shows the importance of awareness about co-design of knowledge in cooperation between academic actors and civil society actors within this type of space (Jørgensen et al, 2016). This type of co-design processes characterises several of the co-creation spaces (besides science shops also DESIS Labs, living labs and it might also be part of the development of guidelines and advice about agriculture practice in Via Campesina). The knowledge developed in TRANSIT about such co-creation spaces contributes to the field of participatory action research and its concept of “collaborative forms of action inquiry” (Heron & Reason, 1997). The co-design of knowledge in co-creation spaces like Fabs Labs and Hacker Spaces contributes more to the development of knowledge about some new types of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).

Further development of this proposition. Since not all TRANSIT case reports apply a relational perspective on the shaping over time of the type of co-creation space that is analysed, not all case studies contribute to a thorough understanding of the relational dynamics of the space. Further analyses could include an analysis of the co-creation of the activities within shared facilities like Fab Labs and Hacker Spaces and to what extent knowledge is co-created within these spaces, to what extent the services are co-designed through interactions between users of the spaces and to what extent and how they are empowering involved actors (Smith, 2017). A part of the co-creation literature focuses on co-creation of value propositions in cooperation between suppliers and customers in business value chains (Voorberg et al, 2015). Further analyses of time banks and credit unions might benefit from theories about value co-creation in customer – supplier interactions. In a Jasanoffian perspective on co-production, national similarities and differences within the same type of co-creation space could contribute to further development of this aspect of the middle-range theory. In Jørgensen et al (2016) similarities and differences within a number of SI cases are identified, including the differences in time banks in the UK and Spain, science shops in Denmark and Romania and the energy movement in Denmark and Flanders. In a further development of the proposition these national similarities and differences could be analysed in depth to develop the co-production aspect of the proposition.

Bovaird and Toeffler (2012) mention that a barrier to a co-creation space that involves boundary work across the boundaries of civil society and government might be civil servants’ “political and professional reluctance to lose status and ‘control’”. Further research of co-creation spaces involving governmental actors like participatory budgeting and living labs could develop this dimension of such co-creation spaces further, including whether and how this reluctance influences empowerment of civil society actors participating in the co-creation spaces.

5.2.4.5 Relations to other propositions

Where B1 addresses the formation of networks among SI initiatives, and B2 the formation of translocal relations among SI initiatives, B4 addresses networking aspects of the single local or regional SI initiative. The proposition complements the cross-cutting proposition about learning in cluster A since this cross-cutting proposition focuses on learning within SI initiatives, which is one of the roles of some of the co-creation spaces discussed in B4.

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5.2.4.6 References

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5.2.5 Proposition B5: Tensions and instability of action fields

5.2.5.1 Short statement of the proposition

Beyond the development of empowering alliances, the network formation of SI initiatives extends towards the broader actor constellations in action fields, comprising both challenging as well as incumbent organizations. The transformative impacts of SI initiatives depend greatly on the changing tensions within and stability of the action field(s) that they operate in.

5.2.5.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

The proposition completes the cluster B account of network formation in TSI, and its basic but important insight that SI initiatives seldom travel their TSI journey alone (Cf. section 5.1). Asserting the crucial importance of the action fields in which SI initiatives operate, the proposition underlines that SI initiatives may indeed be considered initiators and trailblazers leading the way through their promotion of transformative ambitions - yet that transformative impacts are co-produced by the actor networks that SI initiatives are in various ways connected with, and by the institutional environments that they operate in. Asserting the crucial importance of action fields, the proposition makes a further move in the *de-centering* (Fligstein & McAdam 2011:22) of the SI initiatives as key protagonists.

The 'action field' denotes the institutional environment in which SI actors operate, comprising the constellations of organizations that together form a recognized area of institutional life (Cf. Haxeltine et al. 2016: 14 for detailed theoretical backgrounds of the concept). In the context of TSI theory, and with specific regard to the network formation processes addressed in this chapter, the 'action field' denotes the embeddedness of SI initiatives in broader actor constellations beyond the formation of SI networks (B1 and B2) and co-creation arrangements (B4). As displayed in diagram 5.1, the action field surrounding local SI initiatives (and the SI they promote) comprises the following kinds of (collective) actors: other SI initiatives (within the same transnational network, but also outside it), dominant institutions, intermediary actors/organizations, and arrangements of co-creation (with discourse formation/communication infrastructures as particularly important mediation of network relations). Other than the 'broader social-material context' (Chapter 7), the 'action field' thus indicates an immediate institutional environment for SI initiatives, the arena in which it promotes certain new social relations.

Having specified how the 'action field' extends well beyond the network formation with immediate allies into (transnational) SI networks, the proposition on the relevance of 'action fields' explains the following about TSI agency and dynamics:

- **SI network formation involves not only empowering alliances with 'challenging', socially innovative, actors.** The empowering kinds of network formation, in terms of access to resources, shared identity and co-creation capacity, have been highlighted in propositions B1-B4. In line with what Clegg et al. (2016) discuss, network formation is not only a 'tool' however, as it also indicates how rules and norms become established in action fields, and how positions of dominance are played out. This also reminds of the insight that networks revolve around interdependencies and diverse interests and ambitions (Koppenjan & Klijn 2004) – interdependencies that easily entail tensions and disempowerment for the weakly positioned actors that SI initiatives tend to be. The proposition follows Fligstein & McAdam

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(2011:6) in underlining how action fields involve very diverse network constellations comprising both challengers and incumbent actors, as well as various intermediary, controlling and balancing organizations that are not simply dominant 'incumbents', but nevertheless tend towards maintaining the prevailing structure of the action field.

- **The socially innovative agency of SI initiatives takes place in actor networks involving tensions.** The stated operation in 'action fields' highlights the myriad of ties that SI initiatives may have with other actors, beyond the most central ones and the consciously chosen ones. The extensiveness of the networks entails in turn that SI initiatives operate in very diverse 'arenas', characterized by ongoing negotiation over social relations – even if they may appear well-established. This continuous - even if not always manifest - tension is typically emphasized in relational views on institutional life (Emirbayer 1997; Mahoney & Thelen 2010; Jørgensen 2012).
- **The opportunities for transformative change fluctuate along with the changing stability of action fields.** Action fields are always in flux. The important process insight conveyed by the proposition is that this instability changes over time. Beyond the ever-present possibility to play into the permanent tensions of seldom fully balanced-out network relations, actions fields can go into 'episodes of contention' or longer periods of widespread uncertainty (Fligstein & McAdam 2011:9). These episodes are often overcome by various actors' efforts towards rebalancing, but sometimes they do lead to transformative change.
- **SI initiatives tend not to be tied indefinitely to one particular action field.** The proposition indicates how SI initiatives may operate in *several* action fields. The diagram in the introduction therefore indicates the 'action field' with a dotted line. This raises attention to the insight underlined in the 'arenas of development' account of Jørgensen (2012) and the 'strategic action field' account of Fligstein & McAdam (2011): Action fields tend to have very porous boundaries, they overlap and intertwine with other fields, they receive change impulses from adjacent fields whilst also being stabilized by them. This situation of *overlapping* and *interconnected* fields is very important for SI initiatives: there is no obvious field or arena in which to promote their new social relations, and therefore there may be choices to make in terms of relative opportunities offered by the one action field or the other.

5.2.5.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

The proposition has, other than other propositions within this cluster, not been developed through extensive analysis of case study data. The proposition stems first of all from theoretical synthesis, integrating the insights on network formation on the one hand with the relational understanding of institutions and institutionalization (cluster C in next chapter) on the other hand. Its empirical underpinning consists mainly in the consideration of exemplar cases that substantiate the stated relevance of tense and unstable action fields, and in rough, preliminary typologies that chart the broad variety of ways in which SI initiatives can be seen to operate in 'action fields'.

A key exemplar for the proposition is the case of Dutch Basic Income association (BIEN/VBI), and its positioning in the social security/employment policy action field. The case shows 1) a well-established action field in which allies were hard to find for the initiative, amidst the vast network of 'incumbent' and intermediary organizations that kept the action field on the course of 'workfare' (creating income security through provision of work, training and mandatory re-deployment), yet also 2) enduring tensions within this well-established action field over the precise ways of dealing with unemployment and the

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unemployed, 3) a fluctuating stability of the action field, wherein episodes of serious contention and crisis arose in times of high structural unemployment only for the action field to stabilize and consolidate again in times of economic recovery, and 4) the rise of subsidized jobs (social and sheltered work places) as part of the ways to release the mounting pressures in the action field, strike a balance across political divides, and avoid the more fundamentally transformative change of basic income arrangements. An overcoming of an episode of contention/instability that 5) also indicates the presence of other SI initiatives (such as those associated with the RIPESS network, whilst also the Timebanks are active in the same action field). Finally, the example shows an SI initiative that can be seen to 'float on the tide' of the action field, rather than being able to influence its evolution significantly. In this respect it is an exemplar case that elicits what also goes for many other situated SI initiatives – even if they develop networks of allies, and some co-creation spaces, they still tend to be quite peripheral actors in action fields in which they are 'challengers' running up against a maze of various 'incumbent' actors, prevailing rules, established trust relationships and patterns of interaction – the 'network rules' described by Koppenjan & Klijn (2004).

Considering the broader set of TRANSIT empirics, the following observations are relevant:

- The relevance of the fluctuating instability of action fields, and the periods of contention, speaks from many cases. The contestations and the uncertainties in action fields are recognizable throughout the TRANSIT empirics.
- Some SI initiatives are focused on particular well-established action fields and policy sectors (INFORSE on the energy sector, BIEN on social security, ICA on housing sector, Credit Unions on finance, Science Shops in education), and some of them have gained even good positions towards co-shaping these action fields.
- Quite some SI initiatives address *several* action fields (RIPESS as it seeks to unite/connect between many different 'diverse economies' that develop in different action fields, Transition Towns for the multiple kinds of SI promoted, Ashoka and Impact Hubs for the different markets that their members are entering, Timebanks as versatile, polyvalent institutional arrangements that as such can fit in with various policy domains such as work insertion, re-integration of offenders, integration of immigrants.)
- For some initiatives it's not so clear what action field they are operating in, partly as they don't seem to be wanting to maintain that intensive external relations. When focusing on their internal operations and the practicing of the new social relations they stand for (Ecovillages, for example), the action field operated in gets a rather secondary meaning – very different from the earlier described basic income initiatives, for whom the eventual transformation of the action field is their main concern.
- There are several SI initiatives *around which action fields seem to be emerging*: Shareable as actor in the sharing economy (itself spread out over multiple action fields yet also integrating into an action field of its own, if only through governmental responses). The Hackerspaces, FABLABS, DESIS, Science Shops could similarly be seen as parts of emerging action fields, or if not, as trailblazers of reconfiguration processes in longer existing action fields in which contention has mounted about the position of science and technology in society.

5.2.5.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

The main contribution of the proposition to TSI middle-range theory is that it provides a bridge between the clusters A +B (on formation of SI initiatives and their empowering network formation) and C+D (on

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the broader context of institutionalization and societal trends). The proposition is particularly explicit about the general TSI insight (Cf. Ch. 2-3) that there is no sharp dividing line between SI initiatives and other organizations. In line with Fligstein & McAdam (2011), the 'action field' concept helps to avoid this dichotomous, essentializing view on 'initiators' versus 'resisters' of change, focusing instead on the processes through which institutional change is co-produced, and on the concrete multi-actor arenas in which it is played out. A second and related contribution is the nuancing of the rather instrumental view on network formation presented in this chapter. Network formation is indeed key to empowering SI initiatives, which generally cannot afford to travel their TSI journeys alone – yet in doing so they unavoidable encounter not only allies, and more generally become entangled in diverse and potentially tense actor constellations.

The proposition can be considered quite solid, as far as it integrates and connects analyses articulated in various other propositions (see below), and as far as it builds on state of the art insights in institutional change and network formation. The general formulation of the proposition reveals at the same time however that there is still significant room for deepening and elaboration. The broad-brushed distinctions presented merit more detailed empirical substantiation, to begin with. Important topics for such empirical refinement seem to be the particular kinds of action fields that SI initiatives tend to thrive in, and the particular ways in which they can not only play into episodes of contention but also can become key players in newly emerging action fields. A further promising avenue for research, well beyond the scope of the TRANSIT project with its focus on SI initiatives, would be to shift perspective and focus instead on the roles of 'incumbent actors' and the various intermediary, stabilizing actors. As argued, the latter category of neither challenging nor incumbent actors can also be considered for their share in the co-production of social innovation.

5.2.5.5 Relations to other propositions

As indicated earlier, this proposition complements the other network formation insights in this chapter in indicating how it extends beyond the development of empowering alliances between SI initiatives. In doing so, it also adds nuance to the altogether rather bright and harmonious picture of co-production and collaboration sketched.

Asserting the relevance of (unstable) action fields, the proposition has also a bridging function towards cluster on institutionalization process. The account of action fields adds further substance to the assertion of institutional abundance (C1), and to the paradoxes and dialectics of TSI institutionalization strategies (C2, C3 and C5). Moreover, it indicates how SI networks – in the extended sense presented here- are inherent parts and media of the processes of institutional isomorphism discussed in cluster C.

Finally, this proposition provides a relevant background to the diversity of transformative processes and narratives of change (D3 and D4) that characterizes TSI. As far as contemporary SI initiatives with transformative ambitions operate in a diversity of action fields, and largely in parallel rather than in concerted or converging ways, it becomes evident how TSI is difficult to make sense of in terms of large-scale and coherent 'system shifts'.

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5.2.5.6 References

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6 Cluster C propositions: on SI initiatives and institutional change processes

6.1 Cluster C overview

Main aspects of TSI addressed in this cluster

This cluster addresses the specific types of institutional change process that the SI initiatives that we studied are engaged with:

How do SI initiatives and networks engage (individually and collectively) with processes of institutional change? What relations are important in achieving institutional change?

In TRANSIT, we have chosen to define transformative change in terms of institutional change processes, hence the topic of this cluster is quite fundamental to the development of the middle-range theory on how social innovation interacts with transformative social change.

In essence the conceptual framing that informs this cluster starts with the observation that social innovators seek to develop new practices that address an identified need or vision. In doing so they make use of available resources and are also conditioned by sets of institutionalised traditions or rules (that both enable and constrain their actions). Institutions are understood as having a shaping role in human actions, but at the same time are constituted through human actions. This interplay between actors and institutions, referred to as the process of structuration, accounts for the stability and continuity of social life—but actions that change or modify existing structures are also possible. Actors may find ways to use existing institutions and resources in novel ways, leading eventually to transformative change in the form of new institutional structures. They may also find ways to create new resources. In these ways, social innovators have the potential to create novelty in existing structures, and this is the key to how social innovation contributes to transformative change. The actions of social innovators include the direct provision of alternative arrangements as well advocacy, lobbying, and campaigning for institutional change.

The concept of institutionalisation is key for this cluster and describes the process by which changes in institutional structures emerge and become more widely embedded. It refers to the process of embedding some aspect of social life (which can be e.g. norms, rules, conventions and values, or a mode of behaviour) within an organisation, a wider field of social relations, or within the context as a whole. There can be differing 'degrees' of institutionalisation at different times and in different parts of the context – transformations can occur at different speeds in different places.

As a social innovation develops over time and space, it challenges, alters, or replaces established institutions, while at the same time it also inevitably reproduces established institutions. A social innovation process emerges through the actions of diverse social innovation actors, and collectively their actions lead to changes in the 'structuring' of local practices. In other words, transformative social innovation processes interact with and influence the processes of institutionalisation by which changes in institutions emerge and become more widely embedded. The (transformative) impact of a social innovation process (across time and space) can therefore be empirically assessed by identifying the differing degrees of institutionalisation of its core elements.

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Key concepts and framing metaphors used in the cluster C propositions

As set out in the earlier chapter on our conceptual framework for TSI, we employed a relational approach and a focus on the processes of TSI in developing a middle-range theory of TSI. Developing the propositions presented in cluster C has involved using theoretical resources from several fields, and in all cases we have combined them with the relational ontology and commitment to explaining TSI process-relations. Several framing metaphors have been trialled in our research on TSI and institutional change: those specifically addressed in this presentation of a consolidated set of cluster C propositions are:

- **The metaphor of ‘institutional abundance’** which articulates a basic characteristic of the relations of SI initiatives to institutional change processes, and of TSI in general, namely that these initiatives emerge in institutionally abundant contexts (rather than ‘voids’).
- **The metaphor of a ‘field’ or ‘arena’** within which institutional change processes play out, and that involves contestation and conflict, but also sometimes cooperation, between the actors supporting *transformative SIs* versus those supporting dominant institutions.
- **The metaphor of ‘bricolage’** which describes how the actions of SI actors are conditioned by both history (path dependence) and present circumstances (access to resources), but, at the same time, SI actors can access an ‘institutional abundance’ in engaging in various acts of improvisation and creative assemblage.

We have adopted and adapted these metaphors to develop our theoretical insights into how SI interacts with institutional change. Each proposition in cluster C makes use of, and further develops, one or more of these metaphors, as explained in the following section. In the remainder of this section we provide a short further unpacking of each of these three metaphors.

The metaphor of institutional abundance (as opposed to institutional voids). This metaphor articulates a basic characteristic of the relations of SI initiatives to institutional change processes, and of TSI in general, namely that these initiatives emerge in *institutionally abundant* contexts. We have come to see this is an important basic insight on TSI dynamics, as it articulates first of all that it does not take place in pristine or empty environments for which new things (social relations, and institutions as formalizations of those) need to be created – similar to the ways in which new technologies can be seen to introduce something entirely new to the market, or to meet a demand not yet met. The insight of institutional abundance also articulates how contemporary SI develops in institutionally quite mature and path-dependent contexts, which through their path dependency may display problems of institutional overcrowding and inertia, i.e. problems of too much institutions or institutionalization of undesirable kinds of social relations. This metaphor confronts the (commonly held) view that SI must necessarily tend to emerge in ‘institutional voids’, i.e. in contexts in which institutions are lacking or weak. A particularly important point that can be developed through application and substantiation of the ‘fit’ of this metaphor is that the institutional context to SI consists not only of formal institutions, but also of informal institutions (an observation we make in our empirics, but that is in line with much of contemporary institutional theory, see e.g. Lowndes & Roberts 2013). As SI consists of new social relations, the further institutionalisation of those can take place through either formal or informal institutions – and consequently there is a rich institutional context to consciously draw upon. This metaphor then can be employed to frame an important property of the basic condition of the ‘field’ within which TSI processes unfold. Finally, a closely associated notion, and one in line with our use of the framing of structuration, is the (perhaps surprising) importance to TSI of the conscious reproduction of institutions and the creative recombination of institutions. Thus this metaphor fits very well with, and complements, accounts of ‘bricolage’ as introduced below.

The metaphor of a social innovation ‘action field’ or ‘arena’. We need such a concept because, in line with most other theories/frameworks for systemic change (including SAFs, Arenas of Development and

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transitions/MLP), we postulate that explaining how SI interacts with institutional change requires that we explain the 'web' or 'network' of relations between different actors through which change processes unfold (Fligstein and McAdam 2011). Our concept of action field was introduced in Haxeltine et al (2016), and is developed further in proposition B5, and in propositions C2 and C4 especially. For conceptual inspiration we draw upon, and combine elements of, both the Arenas of Development approach Jørgensen (2012) and Strategic Action Fields (SAFs; Fligstein and McAdam 2011) within our overall relational approach to TSI. Jørgensen (2012, p1001) in defining the arenas concept says "It emphasises the temporary and actor-dependant character of the fields that hold social ordering..." and in our interpretation it is essentially one version of a 'field' framing of social change.

The metaphor of a field can be used to indicate the spatial and relational temporality of the ways in which the actions of SI-actors lead to change in the field specifically, and possibly eventually in the wider socio-material context. The SI action field as we define it then includes: basically actors, practices, institutions, resources (including material resources and relations) and the 'visions' held either singly or collectively by actors; and also the relations between all of these things. The SI action field is relationally defined and includes the process-relations between these entities: in particular processes of structuration ('structuring') and institutionalisation. The boundaries of the field are fluid and dependent on the exact issue being addressed; "*actors can have multiple identities and can thus be engaged in more than one set of actor-worlds at the same time*" (ibid: p1001): actors can be involved in multiple fields. Of interest then is how the boundaries of a field are constructed "through the sense-making activities by the actors involved...". This social constructionist perspective applies also to how we interpret the further properties of the field: actors within the field have perceptions of the 'stability' of dominant institutions, and also on their 'fit' with 'basic needs' and desirable arrangements. Thus in our approach, in developing a TSI theory, we emphasize the importance of actor-perceptions of both the 'fit' and 'stability' of current institutions, and are interested in how this informs their vision and actions. Further clarification of what is meant by the 'stability' of a dominant institution is then an empirical question in the first instance.

The wider socio-material context contains many fields; and the boundaries of each field are fluid and dependent on the exact issue being addressed. What we call 'transformative change' can involve all of: transformation of the field; the emergence of new fields (that may involve the 'breakdown' of old ones); and, 'transformations' in the relations between fields (within the socio-material context).

The metaphor of 'bricolage' or 'institutional bricolage'.to describe the ways in which the actions of social innovation actors typically involves various kinds of improvisation and creative assemblage. We did not start out by using the metaphor of bricolage but have selected it based on fit with what we have observed in the empirics. It can be used to frame the observation that SIs typically involve the recombination of pre-existing and new ideas, concepts or technologies to form something novel (Murray et al. 2010; quoted in Olsson et al 2017), with the creation of a single new 'invention' being the exception rather than the rule. Such acts of recombination have been termed 'bricolage', a metaphor drawn from the junk collectors in France and defined as making creative and resourceful use of whatever materials are at hand, regardless of their original purpose (Westley 2013). Our use of the metaphor of bricolage in this sense is complemented with the metaphor of 'institutional abundance'. It refers not only to acts of creative selection but also to advocacy (connecting ideas, raising awareness, etc) and the making of new connections between actors, and between issues and institutions.

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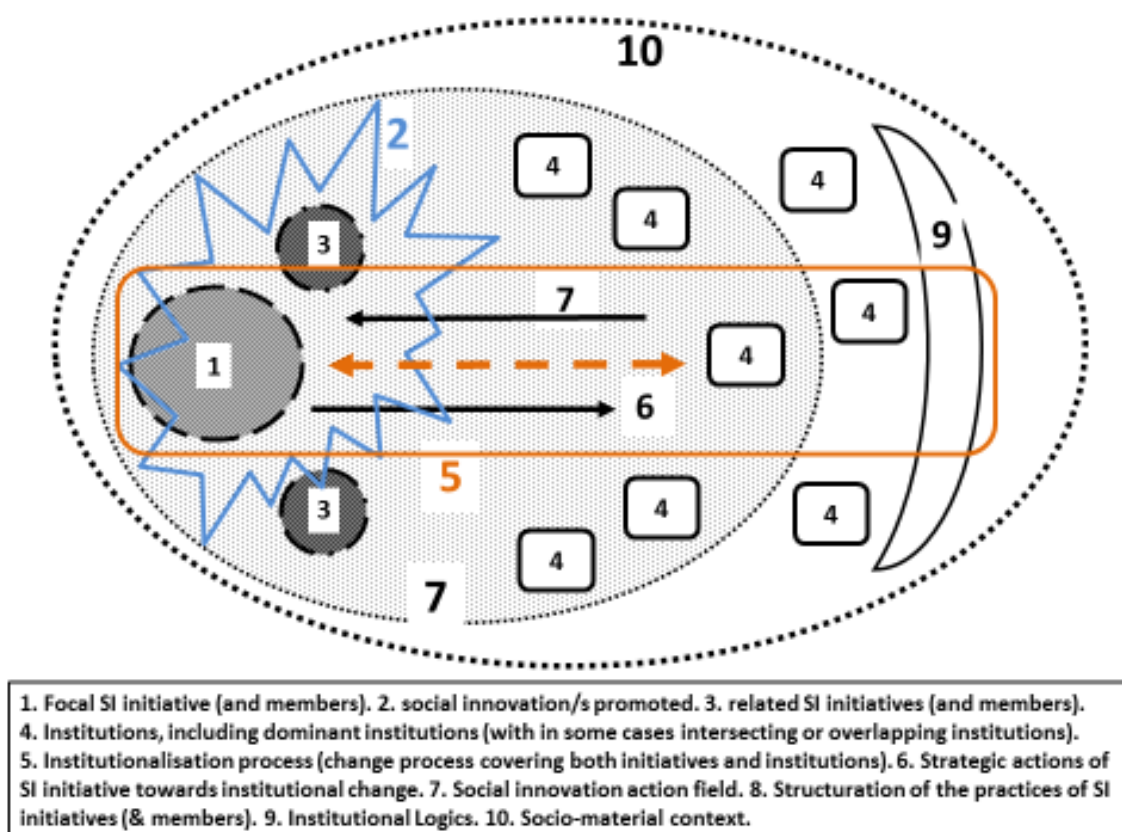


Figure 6.1.1. Visualisation of the main entities and relations addressed in the cluster C propositions.

The main entities and relations shown in the diagram and addressed in the cluster C propositions are:

1. Social Innovation initiative and network – the SI initiatives and networks under study, develop strategic actions according to identified visions and needs.
2. Social innovation/s promoted – including ideas, objects, activities that are socially innovative.
3. Related SI initiatives – related initiatives within the focal social innovation action field.
4. Institutions – the “norms, rules, conventions and values...” that enable and constrain action; *dominant institutions* support the dominant forms of doing, organising, knowing and framing.
5. Institutionalisation process – describes the processes by which changes in institutions emerge and become more widely embedded.
6. Strategic actions towards institutional change – SI actors are able to develop strategies for institutional change, but their actions are conditioned by history and present circumstances.
7. Social innovation ‘action field’ – the web of relations with other related actors and institutional arrangements through which the unfolding of a TSI process takes place.
8. Structuration of the practices of social innovation actors – Institutions have a shaping role in human action but at the same time are constituted through human action; actors reproduce *practices* and in doing so combine existing *institutions* and available resources.
9. Institutional logics – “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality.” (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999, p. 804). Box 6.1.1 contrasts Action Field vs. Institutional Logics.
10. Socio-material context – which is itself undergoing change. Set of relevant contextual factors that includes actors, institutions, resources and practices; and their processes-relations.

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Box 6.1.1. Action Fields versus Institutional Logics. In cluster C, we make use of both a concept of ‘SI Action Field’ and a concept of ‘Institutional logics’ (ILs). A note on how we see understand the compatibility of these two approaches is in order here, as they are generally regarded as being from different schools in the literature on institutions and so are not generally be used in combination in the same analysis (see Fligstein and McAdam 2011, p19 for a discussion from one perspective). The first thing to say is that we are using our own bespoke concept of action field, inspired by both the Strategic Action Fields (SAFs) approach (Fligstein and McAdam 2011) and Arenas of Development (Jørgensen 2012), amongst others, and so it’s important to note that integrated conceptual elements form SAFs, into our overall relational framing rather than using the SAFs approach as a ‘theory’ (Haxeltine et al 2016). Basically the ‘SI action field’ concept is an analytical concept that we use to delineate the actors and institutions that are of relevance to a particular transformative social change process (analysed as a process of institutional change), while ‘of ‘Institutional logics’ is an analytical concept that we use to delineate the *configuration* of institutions within a particular institutional context (which in turn we define as part on an overall socio-material context). Thus whereas Fligstein and McAdam (2011) set out to contrast the two approaches, arguing that the SAFs approach is superior to the ILs approach, we rather see the two approaches as defined in our TSI framework as complementary. In principle we can see how we could analyse a particular case study of a SI initiative using BOTH a concept of action field and ILs. In practice it would take a bit more working out of the commonalities and differences to do this, so, pragmatically, for this presentation of a set of cluster C propositions, we delineate these as complementary analytical approaches, that we place in theoretical dialogue with each other—by including both in different ‘cluster C’ propositions—in doing so then we are not claiming to have integrated the two approaches into a common framework, but rather that we have placed them in a theoretical dialogue with each other, which we claim is a useful step in the TSI theory building.

Introducing the five propositions presented in this ‘cluster C’ chapter

Starting from this thematic interest and conceptual framing, we developed five ‘cluster C’ propositions:

Proposition C1: The institutional abundance in which TSI emerges and develops. This proposition articulates a basic characteristic of the relations of T/SI initiatives to institutional change processes, and of TSI in general, namely that these initiatives tend to emerge in *institutionally abundant* contexts. This is an important basic insight on TSI dynamics, as it articulates first of all that it generally does not take place in pristine or empty environments for the filling of which new things (social relations, and institutions as formalizations of those) need to be created – similar to the ways in which new technologies can be seen to introduce something entirely new to the market that was lacking. The insight of institutional abundance also articulates how contemporary T/SI develops in institutionally quite mature contexts. Perceiving institutional deficits and contradictions and aiming for corresponding social transformations, T/SI actors therefore need to consider not only which institutions to challenge, but also how to actively draw upon and recombine them. This proposition therefore provides a foundation for how the other ‘cluster C’ propositions conceive of the context for T/SI.

Proposition C2: The strategic actions of SI initiatives. Starting from the metaphor of institutional abundance (put forward in proposition C2), this proposition makes use of the metaphor the ‘SI action field’, to conceptualise how SI actors are able to forward strategic actions that engage with processes of institutional change in the SI action field. The metaphor of ‘bricolage’ is used to conceptualise how

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strategic actions are formulated in accordance with some identified vision or need, and the limited availability of necessary resources. The proposition characterises the different types of strategic action observed in our TRANSIT cases and proposes that, in order to enable and increase their transformative, SI actors need both a range of different strategic actions, and to continuously update and adapt their actions to changing circumstances, while holding on to their original core intentions and values.

Proposition C3: The construction of an institutional existence. This proposition addresses the key aspect of TSI agency that SI initiatives, and the social innovations that they promote, have a fragile existence in society. As not yet (fully) institutionalized collectives and not yet (fully) normalized social relations, they lack what institutions by definition do have – a stable existence in society, and the empowering resources that go with this such as societal recognition and legitimacy, trust relations with other actors, financial income through market share or eligibility for funding schemes, and capacity for learning and knowledge consolidation. This proposition articulates how SI initiatives need to actively construct this institutional existence, as an intermediate stage between non-institutional and institutionalized existence. This construction of an institutional existence is far from straightforward however. It is challenging as it takes time and the availability of not yet fully secured resources. Moreover, it is challenging due to the dynamics of the action fields (see also proposition B5 and C4) in which SI initiatives operate and due to the dilemmas of satisfying contradictory strivings for stability and freedom. The construction of an institutional existence can be considered as one of the change processes that leads to emergent patterns of institutional change in the SI action field, as addressed in proposition C4.

Proposition C4: Patterns of institutionalisation in the SI action field. This proposition starts from the contention that adequately explaining strategic action in T/SI requires that we situate strategic action within the unfolding dynamics of a wider T/SI action field. Processes of SI play out within a SI action field, and to succeed SI actors must play into the emergent dynamics of change in the action field. This proposition adds to the use of 'bricolage' in propositions C1-C3, by further conceptualising 'bricolage' as a strategy by which "the path-dependence of the system can be altered and wholly new systemic opportunities opened up." (Olsson et al. 2017). Used in this sense the metaphor of 'bricolage' suggests that, in order to achieve a specific vision, SI actors may not only need to attempt to change a dominant institution directly, they may also need to work at the level of the path dependence in the field as a whole, acting as an 'institutional entrepreneur' or 'systems entrepreneur' – in the sense of 'playing the field'. Five different *patterns of institutional change* are identified, and the proposition briefly sketches how each implies characteristic relations to established institutions, and requiring specific strategies of 'bricolage' on the part of the SI actors involved.

Proposition C5: Relations of TSI to institutional logics. This proposition focuses on the relations between SIs, SI actors, institutional logics, and institutions. Institutional logics are understood as 'messy configurations' of various specific and contextual phenomena that influence how things are (de/re-)institutionalised over time in a given context. They refer to specific contextual delineations of units of analysis that have institutional traits, such as organisational, geographic, functional, or temporal. There are two different but related assertions made in this proposition: i) that SI initiatives and SI networks emerge in diverse institutional logics, and ii) that reconsidering institutional logics is a way for SI actors to challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions. In TRANSIT we observed that the SI actors under study tend to question not only specific dominant institutions but also the broader institutional logics in which the dominant institutions are embedded. This proposition addresses how actors (either as individuals or as collectives) question institutional logics in terms of travelling across different contexts, becoming aware of/ critical of/ taking distance from/ reconsidering/ 'transcending' institutional configurations in given contexts, and subsequently reinventing, recombining and transposing specific institutional elements in (other) contexts, often resulting in renewed hybrid combinations.

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Evaluation of what is quite 'solid', and what is the overall contribution of this 'cluster C' to explaining the agency and dynamics of TSI

Proposition C1 contributes to TSI middle-range theory in its synthesizing conceptualization of the institutional contexts that T/SI initiatives find themselves in. The empirically informed claim that the context for TSI is characterised by both institutional abundance and institutional 'contradictions' clarifies why *bricolage* (of existing organizational principles, customs, laws, norms, etcetera) seems to be a pertinent overarching description of the particular kind of political agency at issue in TSI. Proposition C1 also articulates how TSI processes cannot be reduced to struggles between citizens and 'the state' or 'the market', or to attempts at extra-institutional action – underlining that there is no such thing as an institutional vacuum. Articulating how SI is more about working with and through institutions than about working against them, the particularly re-constructive attitude of T/SI initiatives and their particular kind of political agency is clarified. This proposition can be considered quite solid in as far it takes into account the broad diversity of TRANSIT evidence on this topic. On the other hand, the consideration of evidence also reveals how proposition C1 is still a very generally formulated statement, which articulates the ambiguity of institutional voids and abundance only to a certain extent. The proposition as such is therefore generative of several more specific research questions and topics.

Proposition C2 provides a framing of the strategic actions of TSI initiatives, and characterises the observed types of strategic action. Such actions can only be explained in the context of the reactions and counter-strategies from actors supporting established institutions: and how the strategic actions observed form part of a wider transformation dynamic (both within the SI action field and the wider context). One of our starting points in the project was a *working definition* of TSI in terms of the challenging, altering or replacing of established or dominant institutions. In brief, the 'challenging, altering or replacing' dominant institutions has been substantiated in the empirics to a certain extent but we have also observed that 'challenging' may sometimes involve 'resisting' and that altering and replacing often involves strategies that 'provide alternatives to' or 'supplement' existing institutions.

Proposition C3 specifies the overall understanding of TSI institutionalization dynamics in terms of dialectics (Pel and Bauler 2017). In conjunction with this dialectical take on the metaphor of 'bricolage', the proposition also emphasizes how SI initiatives can exert transformative agency through quite modest and subtle acts of creativity, similar to the deceitful simulation of institutional isomorphism through 'institutional mimicry' (Dey & Teasdale 2015), the creation of 'institutional layers' on top of the existing institutions (Mahoney & Thelen 2010), and the re-constructive work on the fine-tuning of institutional hybrids (Avelino & Wittmayer 2016). The proposition can be considered a quite solid element of TSI theory. The stated need for an institutional existence of T/SI initiatives (and the SI they promote) explains how TSI relies on key actors who tend to have a fragile position in society – for the invention of their new ways of doing and knowing it may have helped to assume or retain a certain institutional homelessness, yet for them to spread and live on beyond the ephemeral project they do need some institutional existence – typically through institutional hybrids. The development process of this proposition also displays the typical iterative refinement of middle range theory development: an earlier basic idea that 'an institutional home' was needed has been unpacked into empirical typologies, which in turn have been confronted with theoretical insights and eventually consolidated in the proposition C3 presented here.

Proposition C4 further develops the metaphor of 'bricolage' to include the strategic actions by which T/SI actors attempt to 'play the field' in order to actually influence the development of the action field in ways that are most conducive to their 'vision for change'. This proposition thereby takes another significant step towards an adequate framework for exploring the complexity of the field-environment and action-space in which T/SI agency unfolds. Five different *patterns of institutional change* are identified, and the

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proposition briefly sketches how each implies characteristic relations to established institutions, and requires specific strategies of 'bricolage' on the part of the T/SI actors involved. This proposition provides a bridge between this cluster and some of the work in the 'cluster D' chapter on co-evolutionary TSI pathways. It takes us beyond the limits of what we can say about emergent transformations based on our TRANSIT data, and as such sets the stage for fruitful avenues of future research focused much more specifically on the 'field level' dynamics of transformative social change in the context of TSI.

Proposition C5: The first assertion in the proposition – that T/SIs emerge in the context of diverse institutional logics – is partly a deductive and ontological starting point, following our relational definition of SI. At the same time, it is also a solid empirical observation from our 80+ case-studies. This is a very important dimension of our TSI theory that confirms the relational nature of TSI and emphasises how 'dominant institutions' are NOT the same as 'government institutions', and how the opposition between T/SI and dominant institutions is NOT the same as an opposition between civil society and government. Using the concepts of 'institutional logic' helps to remind us how 'government' represents only one type of institutional logic, and that T/SI can emerge in the context of any institutional logics, and that T/SI actors operate across diverse institutional logics.

Overall then this set of five propositions, and the associated theoretical and conceptual TSI framework, do provide significant steps towards addressing the question framed at the start of this cluster C overview, namely: How do T/SI initiatives and networks engage (individually and collectively) with processes of institutional change? What has emerged from our work is an understanding of what is important about the socio-material context in which TSI must emerge and develop, including the reality of an institutional abundance in the context, the importance of explaining T/SI strategic action in terms of the T/SI action field, and a quite sophisticated unpacking of 'bricolage' as a guiding metaphor for TSI strategic actions. Finally, the work on the relations of TSI to institutional logics provides a basis for adding to TSI theory with explanations of the cross-scale relations and 'couplings' between T/SI actors and the transformations in the wider socio-material context in which they exist and must operate.

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6.2 Presentation of Cluster C propositions

6.2.1 Proposition C1: The institutional abundance in which TSI develops

6.2.1.1 Short statement of the proposition

Social Innovation initiatives seldom emerge in literal institutional voids, but rather in contexts abundant with formal and informal institutions. Perceiving institutional deficits and contradictions and aiming for corresponding social transformations, they therefore need to consider not only which institutions to challenge, but also how to actively draw upon and recombine them.

6.2.1.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition articulates a basic characteristic of the relations of SI initiatives to institutional change processes, and of TSI in general, namely that these initiatives tend to emerge in *institutionally abundant* contexts. This is an important basic insight on TSI dynamics, as it articulates first of all that it generally does not take place in pristine or empty environments for the filling of which new things (social relations, and institutions as formalizations of those) need to be created – similar to the ways in which new technologies can be seen to introduce something entirely new to the market that was lacking. The insight of institutional abundance also articulates how contemporary SI develops in institutionally quite mature contexts. This maturity creates challenges not of too little, but of too much institutions, in the forms of dysfunctional path dependencies, institutional overcrowding and complexity, excessive bureaucratization and ‘colonization of the lifeworld’, inertia, and institutionalization of undesirable yet persistent kinds of social relations. The proposition challenges the idea that SI tends to emerge in *literal institutional voids*, i.e. in contexts in which institutions are lacking altogether (see also Agostini et al. 2016 for a literature review). Such ideas of institutionally empty spaces find their expression in idealistic accounts of self-organizing and freely associating citizens, in accounts of rolled-back government, but also in grim accounts of abandoned citizens and communities that are left to their own devices when only ‘the law of the jungle’ rules. The idea of institutional voids features in various narratives on society, including narratives accompanying social innovation: SI initiatives like Timebanks and social workspaces can be considered to provide the lacking ‘safety nets’ and inclusion arrangements, for example.

A particularly important point made through this proposition is also that the institutional context for SI initiatives consists not only of formal institutions (organizations, rules), but also of informal institutions (values and customs). As SI consists of new social relations, the further institutionalization of those can take place in the form of either formal or informal institutions. Following this broad understanding of what institutions are, there is accordingly a rich, abundant institutional context for SI initiatives to consciously draw upon. The proposition also states the practical implication of this, namely the importance of conscious reproduction and creative recombination of the so abundant institutions – to address the problems and *relative* voids of these institutional constellations. Typical for social innovation efforts towards transformation is the reconstructive, bricolage-type attitude to institutional change, rather than critical challenging and resistance.

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The proposition builds on several theoretical insights to specify our general theoretical understanding of TSI in relational terms. The emphasis on the need for conscious reproduction of institutions is in line with our general theoretical framing in terms of duality of structure, but Mair et al. (2012) is invoked for the more precise understanding of the kinds of institutional contexts in which this conscious reproduction tends to take place. This key article shows how the supposed emergence of SI in ‘institutional voids’ should not be taken literally, but rather that such diagnoses of institutional failures, weaknesses and lacunae are made in institutionally abundant and complex contexts (ibidem: 821 and 842) that as such typically call for active renegotiation, assemblage and ‘bricolage’ of the various formal and informal institutions. The understanding of institutional abundance is also strongly informed by the institutional contradictions discussed by Seo & Creed (2002): the abundance of institutions does not mean that everything’s fine, but is itself a constant source of problems and conflicts. Abundant institutional contexts can thus leave much wanting, and in *that* sense they can be said to contain ‘voids’ and weaknesses in the interstices. Rather in line with such understanding of relative institutional voids, the basic attitude to institutional change and the kind of political agency of SI initiatives is not one of critique and deconstruction, but one of (innovative) *re-construction* (Avelino & Grin 2017; Pel et al. in progress), *cultivation* of alternatives (North 2005) and strategies of institutional ‘layering’ and ‘conversion’ (Lowndes & Roberts 2013:120, see also Mahoney & Thelen 2010), i.e. pursuing transformation by adapting and adding institutions, more than aiming for revolutionary and sudden institutional replacement. Social innovation initiatives cannot be considered to act outside and against institutions: they often resist certain constellations of (often formal) institutions, organizations and rules, but in all cases they also build on, work with, and gain legitimacy and appeal through, a host of (often informal) institutions. Other than is usual in Luddite, iconoclastic kinds of political agency found in counter-movements, radical-political lobbies, or guerrillas for example, SI initiatives are generally a bit less inclined to see institutions as oppressive ‘iron cages’.

6.2.1.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

The proposition states a generic insight based on a broad diversity of case studies on SI initiatives. These SI initiatives hold different kinds of transformative ambitions, however. Moreover, we have studied their emergence and development in a diversity of institutional contexts. This raises obvious questions on the extent to which the stated institutional abundance and need for conscious reproduction holds across initiatives and across institutional contexts. Similarly, it reminds of the tendency in earlier institutional theory to silently work with assumptions of how institutions should work and what they are good for (Lowndes & Roberts 2013), and of the inclination to project insights from exemplar cases onto TSI institutionalization in general (Pel et al. 2017). *What are the exemplar cases for the institutional abundance, and what are the challenging cases in which SI initiatives rather emerged and developed in institutionally sparse environments? Which SI initiatives considered themselves to face an ‘institutional void’ (and what did they mean by this)? Which SI initiatives made sense of their realities in terms of too much institutions (suffocating the social relations promoted), or rather in terms of too little institutions (failing to provide support the social relations promoted)?* The proposition is therefore accompanied by both supporting as well as challenging evidence, so as to highlight the complexity and ambiguity that surrounds the stated institutional abundance and *relative* voids.

Supporting evidence and exemplar cases. The proposition is supported by several exemplars of SI initiatives emerging in and actively drawing upon institutionally abundant environments – showing elements of institutional abundance also displayed more generally across TRANSIT empirics:

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BIEN can be seen to promote the Basic Income as an alternative to the over-institutionalized, hyper-complex and increasingly dysfunctional set of institutional arrangements of Welfare State bureaucracies. It diagnoses certain institutional voids and institutional contradictions to have emerged *within* that institutional abundance: the structural scarcity of paid work is not resolved, certain talents and valuable but non-marketable services are not developed, and inefficiency and alienation are high costs of the set of formal institutions that govern income and labour. Along with the institutional abundance that developed in especially the Rhineland model Welfare states like the Netherlands and Germany, the institutional contradictions are diagnosed to have become abundant as well: the interactions between the various income transfer schemes keep individuals trapped in unemployment (the extra income gained through the newly acquired job being accompanied by a loss of subsidy entitlements and increased taxation), the institutional arrangements meant to serve social inclusion and skills development are at the same time excluding some groups and discouraging the development of certain skills, and the overall insistence on work through income creates interferences with policy objectives in health care, labour market flexibilization, and tax shift operations. In the face of this problematic and contradiction-ridden institutional abundance, the basic income is proposed as way out to simplify the institutional constellation. Other than liberal-right wing politicians who applaud this as a way to ‘roll back the state’ and to a certain extent cancel institutions, BIEN members generally aim to *reconstruct* and reassemble the institutional abundance however. The unconditional basic income arrangement would reorganize/simplify income entitlements, and for the rest be carried by much of the institutional abundance already in place: income taxation and norms of economic redistribution, trust and norms of solidarity and reciprocity, institutions of education, training and re-skilling, and last but not least a culture in which self-realization and development of one’s talents (rather than passivity and free-riding on society) are broadly generalized. Part of the formal institutions serving to enforce conditional income entitlements would thus be replaced by rather informal institutions – which basic income proponents expect to suffice for maintaining overall welfare.

INFORSE and its ambitions towards sustainable energy production exemplifies an attitude to institutional change of *transitioning*, and therewith the reconstruction of a mature, institutionally abundant and locked-in energy system.

The Credit Unions may appear to have emerged as an attempt to fill an institutional void (in the form of lacking options for ethical/responsible banking). Getting the ethical banks organized beyond the informal, small-scale and semi-professional was crucially achieved through conscious and selective drawing on the institutional abundance of a mature financial sector and its associated tools, structures and procedures, the availability of modes of cooperative governance, and cultures and norms of solidarity and trust.

Finally, the evidence of institutional hybridization (see further under proposition C3) further substantiates the stated institutional abundance. The hybridization is arguably only possible thanks to institutional contexts that tend to be abundant.

Challenging evidence and ambiguous cases. The stated emergence of SI initiatives in institutionally abundant contexts (and seldom in literal institutional voids) and the associated need to consciously draw upon them may reflect a certain bias towards the highly institutionalized and prosperous contexts that happen to prevail in the TRANSIT empirics – but not in the world. The following evidence challenges and nuances the proposition, underlining how institutional voids and institutional abundance are relative terms:

There is evidence of SI initiatives emerging in situations of quite literal institutional voids. The social/solidarity-based economy initiatives of RPESS, especially in the global South, often take the form

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of informal economy arrangements in situations of weak or lacking institutions. The Romanian RIPESS member CRIES typically ran up against a lack of trust in post-communist society, and can be seen to fill an institutional void of lacking NGOs and Third Sector organisations between market and state (see also the Brazilian Ecocitrus initiative in the CTP database). Also relevant examples of quite literal institutional voids are displayed in the Latin American evidence of Via Campesina and ICA, in which SI initiatives came up as struggles for basic rights such as access to land and housing – which were insufficiently secured in contexts that can therefore be considered institutional voids. And in line with the Spanish and Greek evidence discussed by Calvario & Kallis (2016): the 2008 financial-economic crisis has led to weakening of institutions in various European countries as well, leading similarly to SI initiatives trying to fill voids.

The ambiguity of institutional voids and abundance speaks in particular from the many TRANSIT cases that display moves towards self-organization. One can think of the Timebanks, as circles of non-market voluntary exchange, or the various commons-oriented initiatives under the Shareable umbrella, or the Ecovillages in which members want to create space for social relations that are more spontaneous, and free from the colonization by market and state logics. These examples of self-organization strivings sometimes reveal desires to roll back overly abundant, colonizing and stifling institutional contexts – appealing to American libertarianism for example, in a Shareable case -, i.e. desires to challenge institutions and get away from them. On the other hand, there is also the Timebanks awareness that these circles are needed to fill a gap in the institutional landscape, namely to find ways of including those falling ‘in between’ the various social inclusion mechanisms in place. The self-organizing ‘light’ institutional structures also display active construction of the self-organizing arrangements, building on and consolidating various customs of voluntary exchange and reciprocity as they have become ingrained through family structures, religion, or cultures of self-providing libertarianism. The aforementioned self-organization strivings thus exemplify emergence of SI initiatives amidst relative institutional abundance, nevertheless displaying certain institutional voids, and the socially innovative activity entails strivings to both deliberately create institutional voids as well as fill them with ‘light’ institutions. The general preference of SI initiatives for ‘light’ institutions (see also proposition C3 on desires for institutional homelessness) signals some tendencies towards replacement of formal institutions through informal ones – but the institutional bricolage of TSI cannot be reduced to that.

6.2.1.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

This stage-setting proposition mainly contributes to TSI middle-range theory in its synthesizing conceptualization of the institutional contexts that SI initiatives find themselves in. The informed statement of institutional abundance and institutional contradictions clarifies why ‘bricolage’ (of existing organizational principles, customs, laws, norms, etcetera) seems to be a pertinent overarching description of the particular kind of political agency at issue in TSI.

The proposition also articulates how TSI processes cannot be reduced to struggles between citizens and ‘the state’ or ‘the market’, or to attempts at extra-institutional action – underlining that there is no such thing as an institutional vacuum. Articulating how SI is more about working with and through institutions than about working against them, the particularly re-constructive attitude of the SI initiatives and their particular kind of political agency is clarified.

The proposition can be considered solid as far it takes into account the broad diversity of TRANSIT evidence on this topic. On the other hand, the consideration of evidence also reveals how proposition C1 is a very generally formulated statement, which articulates the ambiguity of institutional voids and

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abundance only to a certain extent. The proposition is as such generative for several more specific research questions and topics. A particularly promising topic is the more fine-grained articulation of shades and forms of relative 'voids' and 'abundance' - especially the 'institutional contradictions' concept seems a good way of doing so. Furthermore it seems worthwhile to invoke institutional theory insights on endogenous institutional change, in order to specify how SI initiatives are involved in institutional 'layering' and 'conversion', and to specify how they co-produce gradual institutional change together with 'incumbent' actors (Mahoney & Thelen 2010).

6.2.1.5 Relations to other propositions

The proposition literally sets the stage for further propositions on institutional dialectics, and on institutionalization strategies (propositions C2-C5). The active drawing on institutional abundance is further addressed by proposition C3, and also by D2 on the different historical appearances of social innovation. The stated institutional abundance can also be seen in the SI network formation described in proposition cluster B, and especially in the propositions on co-creation spaces (B4) and action fields (B5). Furthermore, the 'reconstructive' attitude that characterizes SI political agency corresponds with insights on motivations for SI agency as described in proposition cluster A: this attitude towards the institutional context can be considered an implication of individuals' quests for autonomy, relatedness and competence.

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6.2.2 Proposition C2: The strategic actions of SI initiatives

6.2.2.1 Short statement of the proposition

To enable and increase the potential for achieving change in established institutions, SI actors need both a range of different strategic actions, and to proactively adapt and update these actions in response to changing circumstances, while navigating contestation with established institutions, and holding on to their original core values and transformative vision.

6.2.2.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition addresses the strategic actions, or strategies, that SI initiatives employ in attempting to challenge, alter or replace established institutions. By strategic actions we imply actions on the part of a SI actor that aim to influence or reconstruct some aspect of social arrangements (Seo and Creed 2002: p230) in the wider field of relations in which they operate. Strategic actions may be directly aimed at challenging, altering or replacing an established institution, but may also be in response to diverse other motivations or responses to external developments, such as manoeuvring for advantage within the field of relations, attempting grow the initiative and gain access to resources, or responding to some local opportunity or threat. Fligstein & McAdam (2011) present an analysis of the relationships between ‘challengers’ and ‘incumbents’ vying for position and influence, and engaging in ‘co-shaping processes’ in the action field. SI actors must similarly engage in strategic actions which will inevitably elicit responses or ‘counters’ from actors supporting established institutions. Examples of such strategic actions include TimeBanks lobbying to create favourable legal arrangements for the SI that it promotes, the Transition movement accessing government grants to develop local community energy projects, and the Slow Food movement working to make ‘Slow Food’ a desirable cultural choice.

This proposition on strategic action in TSI draws directly upon our theoretical framing of the agency of SI actors (Haxeltine et al. 2016). A theory of strategic action in TSI must address the question of how it is possible that institutions are created and changed, given that “actors and their interests are themselves institutionally constructed” (DiMaggio and Powell 1991; quoted in Seo and Creed 2002, p223). A balanced account is required of how both the interests and power relations that inform the choice of strategic actions are also institutionally shaped (see Seo and Creed 2002 for a discussion). Actor preferences and choices regarding strategic actions (Seo and Creed 2002; p223) must be understood in the context of the wider cultural setting and historical period in which they are embedded. The agency of strategic actions for TSI must be understood as an *embedded agency*. The notion of structuration frames a fundamental interplay between actors, resources and institutions that is the backdrop to any TSI process (Haxeltine et al. 2016). In framing how strategic action in TSI can contribute to institutional changes, we learnt from the work of William Sewell (1992, 2005) who explored how structural change is possible, starting from a structuration perspective, he asked: *if actors make use of existing resources and existing institutions in order to perform existing practices, then: why should anything ever change?* His answer can be summarised in the following mechanisms by which SI actors engage with institutional change:

- Enact an (existing) institution in a different way;
- Make (novel) choices about which (intersecting) institutions to enact;
- Use resources differently or use different resources or create new resources; and,
- Take advantage of contingency and context dependence (in resource accumulation).

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These four mechanisms are adapted from Sewell’s work with some additions based on our own empirics. They provide a starting point in developing theoretical explanations of how SI actors are able to achieve strategic action that contributes to wider institutional changes. The hypothesis being that TSI strategic actions should either be explainable in terms of these four mechanisms OR in terms of strategic actions that help the initiative to attain a better position from which to engage with one or more of these institutional change mechanisms. Table C2.1. illustrates these mechanisms for the Transition movement.

Table C2.1. Four generic strategies for institutional change, illustrated for the example of an initiative in the Transition movement.	
<u>Institutional change strategy</u>	<u>New activities that members are engaged in</u>
<i>Enact an (existing) institution in a different way</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questioning conventions around lifestyle and energy use, then promote alternative practices - Subverting norms around use of public spaces (e.g. plant nut trees in the city) - Taking Transition Towns into local schools
<i>Make (novel) choices about which (intersecting) institutions to enact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasise or enact more traditional social practices around making stuff, food growing, sharing, etc. - Choose to buy a veg-box from a community-supported grower scheme rather than a supermarket - Subvert notions of “the good life” and attach social value to low impact lifestyles (e.g. air travel becomes taboo)
<i>Use resources differently, use different resources, or create new resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhance local social networks - Create a local currency - Secure government funding for a community-owned energy project - Turn private gardens into a shared food growing spaces
<i>Take advantage of chance events and context dependence (in resource accumulation)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial crisis makes it possible to grow membership (or the number of Transition Towns) - Take advantage of high oil prices to grow members by presenting Transition Towns as a response to ‘Peak Oil’ - Respond to lower oil prices by re-focusing on the need for local job creation

In their attempts to challenge, alter or replace established institutions, TSI initiatives need to engage with one or more of these generic strategies. This theoretical framing emphasises how strategic action for TSI involves making use of diverse existing institutions, finding ways to combine them differently, or enact them differently, it provides a theoretical underpinning for explaining strategic actions in TSI as acts of ‘bricolage’ that make use of existing resources and existing institutions in novel ways. As explored in proposition C1, SI actors often do have access to an *institutional abundance* in engaging in such acts of improvisation and creative assemblage. The term ‘bricolage’ describes how strategies typically involve the recombination of pre-existing and new ideas, concepts or technologies to form something novel (Murray et al. 2010, quoted in Olsson et al 2017; see also Westley et al 2013), with the creation of a single new ‘invention’ being the exception rather than rule. SI actors are capable of strategic action within a transforming field, they are not simply the product of the field, BUT their actions are constrained by history (path dependence) and by present circumstances (access to resources, including power relations).

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6.2.2.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

The data gathered in the CTP database provided a rich resource for analysing how the strategic actions of the studied SI initiatives relate to institutional change. Of course not all actions relate in an obvious and direct way to institutional change, many strategic actions are related to building the resources base for the initiative and creating a 'platform' for change. Key types of strategic action observed included:

- **the provision of local alternatives** that supplement existing institutional arrangements;
- **advocacy, lobbying, and protesting** to raise awareness and promote reform or replacement;
- **embedding a social innovation into existing institutional arrangements;**
- **growing the initiative, and building a 'platform' and 'movement' for institutional change;**
- **engaging with processes of "deep" cultural change ('scaling deep').**

Next we briefly explore each of these different types of strategic action. A strategy that we observed a lot in our empirics, was **the provision of local alternatives**. Sometimes this takes a form of supplementing existing institutional arrangements (as with TimeBanks in the UK) and sometimes there is an attempt to provide a more holistic alternative that covers multiple aspects of social life and material provision (as with some of the Ecovillages). This is something that we see a lot of in the data, the initiatives come together to provide an alternative "solution" either mainly for themselves in the first instance (like Ecovillages) or from the beginning with the intention to service a wider community (like shareable). Sometimes this takes the form of supplementing existing institutions and sometimes it take the form of attempting to provide an alternative that is outside of, or protected from existing dominant 'formal' institutions in some way. For a Community Supported Agriculture Scheme (CSA) created as part of Transition Town initiative, for example, this involves enacting existing institutions in different ways, in order to make use of land to grow food, but making the consumer also the producer, changing modes of distribution, and creating new social relations, etc. In doing so the SI actors need to also make use of existing resources in (novel) different ways. As time goes by, and across many such CSA schemes, innovations will occur as participants find ways to improve the approach, adapt it to new contexts, or combine it with other SIs, such as e.g. a local currency scheme, that involves creating a new resource. The *provision of local alternatives* leads to further institutional change if new supporters can be recruited and sustained, while also managing to resist and coexist with existing institutional arrangements.

Many initiatives also engage in **advocacy, lobbying, and protesting**, to raise awareness and promote the reform or replacement of established and dominant institutions. Some lobby directly for change in the existing rules: Basic Income proposes a direct change in the rules, but along the way lots of smaller changes are required to 'build a platform' for such a change. Hence they engage in all sorts of activity aimed at fostering a positive discourse on basic Income and building a momentum for change. TimeBanks UK was able to lobby for a favourable legal framework around tax and employment law, which allowed it to better engage in the provision of its favoured SI in the UK. Slow Food provides alternative systems of provision, but also engages in advocacy, lobbying and protest aimed at halting and reversing the spread of modern industrial agriculture. Some SI initiatives also work with dedicated campaigning NGOs, forming alliances and partnerships within the SI action field.

Related to this are strategic actions aimed at **embedding a new idea or social innovation into existing arrangements**. Shareable Melbourne provides a good example of trying to get the ideas and vision of shareable into the municipal vision and planning. In general the shareable examples illustrate how cooperation, and even invitations to cooperation can be part of the interaction. This and many of the other cases raise questions about how to maintain 'integrity' and 'autonomy' in interactions. In this example it can be argued that the initiative finds itself between transformation and capture: it is trying to embed the vision of the sharing economy into the mainstream institutions but in doing so risks being

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captured in various ways. Such ‘capture’ processes may involve the promoted SI also been taken up and integrated into the established institutional arrangements, leading eventually to transformative social change. But such capture processes may also involve the TSI initiative being compromised in a way where the original SI being promoted becomes assimilated and ‘diluted’ by the rules, values and logic/s of the established and dominant institutional arrangements.

Many observed strategic actions relate to **growing the initiative and building a ‘platform’ and ‘movement’ for change**. A part of which is forging ‘productive’ social relations with other actors in the action field. These actions can be understood as being aimed at securing better access to resources, using resources differently or creating new resources. And include building the narrative for change, especially in terms of defining the initiative in relation to dominant institutions, in ways that build a platform for change by e.g. attracting new members or forging new alliances with related initiatives. In doing so initiatives need to take advantage of chance events to enhance and sustain their access to resources.

TSI strategic actions need not only involve engaging with the transformation of ‘formal’ institutions, TSI initiatives may also be engaged with (processes of) change in ‘informal’ institutions. Moore (2015) developed the notion of “scaling deep” to describe such **engagements with “deep” cultural change**. Challenging and resisting dominant norms and values, and either proposing alternatives, or emphasising the importance of traditional values. Deep scaling strategies engage with institutionalisation directly at the level of norms and values, and this then links to choices, lifestyles, practices, etc. Here Slow Food is again a great example with its emphasis on being first and foremost a ‘cultural movement’ and the way in which both its narrative and practices are carefully designed to emphasize the importance of preserving traditional values in connection with food. Social trends involving change in deeply held beliefs and cultural values can also be a motivating or constraining factor in the emergence and diffusion of a TSI process in a particular socio-material context: so there is a mutual influence between cultural change and TSI processes, which is as yet poorly understood.

Different types of *relationship* to established institutions can be distinguished in the TRANSIT cases. Some initiatives can be readily identified as aiming to challenge, alter or replace specific institutions, both in terms of their transformative ambitions and their strategic actions. Examples include, Time Banks, Credit Unions, Transition Towns, and Slow Food. Most use combinations of strategies: promoting and modelling their own solutions while at the same time lobbying for wider systems change. Other initiatives rather understand their role as being to manifest or model new arrangements that better suit their own needs, but without necessarily being concerned about wider systems change (e.g. Hackerspaces, FabLabs, some but not all Ecovillages). Some initiatives seem to start more from basic human values and needs, and aim to fulfil these themselves, not expecting existing institutions to do that. However, such attitudes towards local versus systems-level transformative ambitions can certainly change over time (as with e.g. Global Ecovillages Network). In some initiatives, with Slow Food as a good example, we observe needs and values based motivations being combined with both local solutions and active lobbying for, and promotion of wider systems change. They make use of existing institutional arrangements and, within their remit, create their own rules, while also promoting wider systems change.

Some initiatives have – outwardly at least – benign relations with established institutions (e.g. Time Banks and Shareable and Living Labs as cited above). Such accommodative examples then raise questions about whether the initiative is SI versus TSI, and the extent to which a ‘dynamic of capture’ may lie behind apparently synergistic relations. In an initiative such as Shareable Melbourne leaders have worked directly with policy makers to develop a vision for the city to become a sharing city: so the uptake of the ‘sharing’ model would lead to a different kind of economy BUT the municipality has asked the initiative to help with specific challenges, and may impose its own agenda, and its own rules on how things unfold.

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6.2.2.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

This proposition provides a framing of the strategic actions of TSI initiatives, and characterises the observed types of strategic action. Such actions can only be explained in the context of the reactions and counter-strategies from actors supporting established institutions: and how the strategic actions observed form part of a wider transformation dynamic (both within the SI action field and the wider context). One of our starting points in the project was a *working definition* of TSI in terms of the challenging, altering or replacing of established or dominant institutions. In brief, the ‘challenging, altering or replacing’ dominant institutions has been substantiated in the empirics to a certain extent but we have also observed that ‘challenging’ may sometimes involve ‘resisting’ and that altering and replacing often involves strategies that ‘provide alternatives to’ or ‘supplement’ existing institutions.

An insight arising from the case studies was that quite often, challenging one thing also means reproducing another. It is in fact generally impossible to challenge a dominant institution without meanwhile also reproducing other elements of dominant institutional arrangements. This leads to a central challenge for TSI, namely how to model/create/demonstrate change without simultaneously becoming captured by current arrangements. This leads to diverse dilemmas and choices for SI initiatives at all scales of operation. TSI journeys are generally not frontal oppositions or zero-sum battles against dominant institutions, nor do they develop in complete isolation from dominant institutions. Other than militant social movements, activists undertaking ‘direct action’, or guerrillas, socially innovative agency tends to seek or acquiesce into co-productive relations with the dominant institutions that they challenge, and to be more intertwined with them. SI initiatives and networks (and the socially innovative ideas, objects and actions that they promote) have an on-going, two-way relationship with established institutional arrangements: they both challenge them and reproduce them. Through on-going processes of structuration, they reproduce established institutions, even as they attempt to change them (by challenging, altering, supplementing, or replacing specific institutions). Actions on the part of SI initiatives lead (most often) to responses from established institutions (that exhibit tendencies towards system preservation and stabilisation, and typically wield more power and influence). TSI-agency is possible as existing institutions and resources are used by SI actors to perform practices in novel ways - resulting in a two-way process of change that leads (eventually) to transformations in institutional arrangements.

As TSI journeys co-evolve through a constant interplay with the entities that are supporting dominant institutions, a certain SI concept will tend to change shape over time, sometimes very significantly. Because of these ongoing interactions in co-productive relationships, SI initiatives cannot afford to simply stick to their guns (and principles). Rather they “*must find a way to translate existing rules and resources into the production of local orders by convincing their supporters to cooperate and finding means of accommodation with other groups*” (Fligstein and McAdam 2011: 11). In the face of ongoing confrontations between competing and mutually challenging translations of SI concepts and practices, TSI initiatives need multiple and diverse strategic actions in their interactions with dominant institutions.

6.2.2.5 Relations to other propositions

This proposition builds on SI action field concept developed in proposition B5. The TSI action field, then provides a basis for exploring TSI strategic actions in this proposition. This proposition C2 also draws upon the framing of institutional abundance developed in C1 and that of institutional existence developed in C3. Finally, it directly informs proposition C4, which addresses emergent patterns of institutional change in the SI action field.

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6.2.3 Proposition C3: The construction of an institutional existence

6.2.3.1 Short statement of the proposition

SI initiatives need to construct an institutional existence, to secure stable access to resources for themselves or the social innovations that they promote. This entails ongoing 'bricolage' processes of assembling institutional elements into viable institutional hybrids, and continuous balancing between needs for institutional existence and desires for institutional homelessness.

6.2.3.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition addresses the key aspect of TSI agency that SI initiatives, and the social innovations that they promote, have a fragile existence in society. As not yet (fully) institutionalized collectives and not yet (fully) normalized social relations, they lack what institutions by definition do have – a stable existence in society, and the empowering resources that go with this such as societal recognition and legitimacy, trust relations with other actors, financial income through market share or eligibility for funding schemes, and capacity for learning and knowledge consolidation (see cluster B on network formation as requisite empowerment for SI initiatives). The proposition articulates how SI initiatives need to actively construct this institutional existence, as an intermediate stage between non-institutional and institutionalized existence.

This construction of an institutional existence is far from straightforward, however. It is challenging as it takes time and the availability of not yet fully secured resources. Moreover, it is challenging due to the dynamics of the action fields (Cf. proposition B5) in which SI initiatives operate and due to the dilemmas of satisfying contradictory strivings for stability and freedom. The construction of an institutional existence involves...

- 1) **the need to balance the typical desires for institutional homelessness with the needs for institutional existence.** Next to the securing of resources through the construction of an institutional existence there are also other considerations of freedom, independence, aversions to formalization, flexibility, fatigue and indecision that each in their own ways can inform desires for institutional homelessness. Typical for initiatives towards transformative social innovation is the awareness of the suffocating effects on agency exerted by many prevailing institutions, i.e. the infamous 'iron cages' that they can become. In terms of Habermasian critical theory (see also cluster D and proposition D1 in particular), their transformative ambitions tend to be informed by an acute awareness of 'colonization of the lifeworld'. Scott-Cato & Hillier (2010) have in this regard distinguished between the 'rhizomic' structures typically aspired to by SI initiatives (like Transition Towns, in their example) and the 'arborescent', i.e. tree-like and hardened, structures prevailing in institutional life. The striving for an institutional existence is paradoxical or ambivalent – it tends to be accompanied by opposite strivings towards the creation of an institutional existence, and towards institutional homelessness.
- 2) **the need for creativity and conscious assemblage/bricolage of elements of dominant institutions rather than mere reproduction.** As stated through proposition C1, there tends to be an institutional abundance in which SI initiatives emerge. There are well-proven models out

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there to copy and exploit: entrepreneurial models for keeping in control of the financial 'bottom line', governmental-hierarchical models for control, accountability and coordination, and traditional cultural patterns to secure trust and involvement. Beyond that, there is a much broader repertoire of more specific organizational and managerial formats and concepts on offer, such as LEAN management, GANTT charts and workplace democracy arrangements. As described in literature on institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell 1983), the mechanisms towards emulating existing organizational templates are strong. The crucial challenge for initiatives towards TSI is then to do so, yet creatively and critically. It is a matter of seizing, instrumentalising and playing with institutional elements. As Beckert (2010) pointed out, the same mechanisms underlying institutional isomorphism can very well lead to institutional divergence as well.

- 3) **the need for continuous adaptation to changing circumstances.** The institutional context (the action fields in which initiatives operate) changes, the opportunities for gaining resources change (changing discourses and legitimacy considerations, changing subsidy landscapes and market conditions), and also the prevailing practices and policies change, which lead to changing contexts for the positioning of new social relations. The political cycle, with the associated coming and going of new policy programs, policy discourses and subsidy schemes, is a particularly well-known phenomenon in this regard.

The proposition can thus be seen to confirm the accounts of institutional 'bricolage' (Lowndes & Roberts 2013; Olsson et al. forthcoming) that have earlier been posited against models of institutional design and replacement. It also attempts to specify this 'bricolage' however, articulating in particular how paradoxical it is in the context of TSI. It builds on the emphasis in the overall relational-theoretical understanding of institutions (see chapter 3, Emirbayer 1997) on the ever-presence of contradictions, conflict, multiplicity and room for interpretation in institutions (Cf. Mahoney & Thelen 2010: 9-11 and Seo & Creed 2002). In line with institutional entrepreneurship literature (Battilana et al. 2009), the proposition underlines that rules of the game need to be actively reproduced by actors for them to keep operating as rules – which creates scope for 'bricolage' that does not remain innocuous and confined in the realm of institutional isomorphism. Beyond mere 'home improvement' and survival strategy, institutional bricolage can serve to make a transformative difference.

6.2.3.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

This proposition reformulates the earlier P8 on the 'search for an institutional home', notably through theoretical engagement with dialectical accounts of institutional theory as sketched above. This has allowed for a sharper formulation of the TRANSIT evidence on the various forms of institutional hybridization witnessed across the vast majority of cases. The proposition builds on meta-analysis findings as follows:

First, the general 'need to construct an institutional existence' is substantiated through the overview table of 'states of institutionalization that TSI initiatives are seeking/avoiding' (Pel et al. 2017: 142-144). This rough scan across the (local initiatives associated with) 19 SI networks in the CTP database confirmed and detailed this need: Social innovations like Basic Income, Participatory budgeting and Credit Unions exemplify how some socially innovative social relations cannot exist without firm consolidation in formal institutions like governmental organisations or accredited banks with firm licenses to operate. Moreover, even cases with apparent desires for institutional homelessness and for low degrees of formalization

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(one can think of Shareable, Timebanks, Via Campesina as consciously constructed structures for self-organization) displayed nevertheless the need for some institutionalization in formal institutions, as well as an institutional existence in the form of informal institutions – which are no less important ‘materials’ out of which an institutional existence can be constructed, considering for example how legitimacy and trust are important resources.

Second, the statement that the necessary construction of institutional existence ‘entails the assemblage of institutional elements into viable institutional hybrids’ relies on an empirical unpacking in which three kinds of institutionally hybrid constructions have been identified as main forms (ibidem:145-148):

- a) **Social entrepreneurship.** This is the archetypical institutional hybrid, sustaining SI activities through an existence on the market as well as through embedding in policy programs and civil society initiatives.
- b) **Participative governance.** This is also a prominent institutional hybrid through which SI activities are institutionalized. Just like social entrepreneurship, it stands for many different variations. Next to participatory budgeting, the OIDP network is not accidentally also involved with other kinds of participative governance.
- c) **Academic shelter.** This is a somewhat less prominent category of institutional hybrids in SI, possibly as specific discourses have become firmly established on the previous two. Acknowledging the dissemination of new framings and knowings as integral parts of SI, the ‘academic shelter’ is an obvious a relatively low-cost institutional shelter however. This is clear from the various ‘lab’-kind of open experimentation explored in TRANSIT empirical research.

Third, the stated ‘continuous balancing between needs for stable institutional existence and desires for institutional homelessness’ has been substantiated through detailed evidence of both empowering and disempowering isomorphism, as well as on ‘institutional mimicry’, i.e. the strategic suggestion of isomorphism that seeks to reap its fruits whilst enjoying the pleasures of (imagined) institutional homelessness (ibidem:148-152). Especially this latter category of TSI empirics expresses SI initiatives’ awareness of the paradoxes involved: strategically taking on institutional forms and identities that make one eligible partners and receivers of subsidies, whilst also giving in to pressures of institutional isomorphism that still may relinquish some of the transformative ideals and quests for autonomy and relatedness (Cf. cluster A). The proposition speaks of ‘desires for institutional homelessness’ to account for many initiatives’ reservations against formalization, against ‘colonization’ by forms of instrumental rationality, and against silent reproduction of dominant governmentalities and quests for control. The ‘continuous balancing’ expresses how this critical awareness makes for dilemmas, tensions and trade-offs. Yet it does not deny the overall need experienced by SI initiatives for an institutional existence – for the SI collective, and/or for the social relations that they promote, there is just a minimum of fuel needed to keep the fire burning.

6.2.3.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

The proposition specifies the overall understanding of TSI institutionalization dynamics in terms of dialectics (Pel et al. 2016; Pel & Bauler 2017), building on insights that earlier have been developed in accounts of institutionalization paradoxes (Seo & Creed 2002), institutional innovation (Hargrave & van de Ven 2006), paradoxes of reflexive governance (Voß et al. 2006), and the paradoxical reproduction of dominant governmentalities through social innovation formats (Swyngedouw 2005; Stirling 2016). In conjunction with this dialectical understanding of ‘bricolage’, the proposition also emphasizes how SI initiatives can exert transformative agency through quite modest and subtle acts of creativity, similar to

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the deceitful simulation of institutional isomorphism through ‘institutional mimicry’ (Dey & Teasdale 2015), the creation of ‘institutional layers’ on top of the existing institutions (Mahoney & Thelen 2010), and the re-constructive work on the fine-tuning of institutional hybrids (Avelino & Wittmayer 2016).

The proposition can be considered a quite solid element of TSI theory. The stated need for an institutional existence of SI initiatives (and the social innovation they promote) explains how TSI relies on key actors who tend to have a fragile position in society – for the invention of their new ways of doing and knowing it may have helped to assume or retain a certain institutional homelessness, yet for them to spread and live on beyond the ephemeral project they do need some institutional existence – typically through institutional hybrids. The development process of this proposition also displays the typical iterative refinement of middle range theory development: The earlier basic idea that ‘an institutional home’ was needed has been unpacked into empirical typologies, which in turn have been confronted with theoretical insights and eventually consolidated in this proposition C3.

Beyond this quite solid statement on TSI, the research on this topic has also been generative in identifying several challenges for further research. The distinctions regarding the institutional existences can be refined, for example, developing a more systematic and empirically more strongly underpinned typology. Furthermore, there is evident further scope for process-theoretical elaborations, identifying for example the typical patterns through which the institutional existence of SI initiatives change over time. Finally, it seems worthwhile to do further conceptual work on the institutional existence of SI: SI initiatives tend to seek such shelter for themselves as collectives, to keep practicing their SI (such as in an Ecovillage). They also tend to be concerned about the sustained institutional existence of the SI promoted, however, quite independently from the fate of their collective. Initiatives like those advocating the Basic Income may be considered as just temporary catalysts, and the various promoters of ‘commons’ can be seen to set up self-organization arrangements that at some point could well live on without their continued involvement. *How to conceptualize the institutional existence of these various kinds of ‘SI initiative/SI promoted’ dyads? Could concepts like for the example the ‘proto-institutions’ (Lawrence et al. 2002) inform more specific elaborations of the proposition?*

6.2.3.5 Relations to other propositions

As indicated earlier, this proposition builds on the institutional abundance and associated ‘bricolage’ activity asserted in C1. It also articulates a particular manifestation of the paradoxical TSI strategies as distinguished in C2. Furthermore, there are clear interlinkages with the internal dynamics of SI initiatives described in cluster A, and notably with proposition A2 on ‘dealing with tensions’. The process of constructing an institutional existence is of course not only a matter of drawing upon, accessing resources through, and positioning amidst well-established institutions (a largely *outward-oriented* activity, reflecting upon one’s position in the institutional landscape). It is also a matter of finding modes of self-governance that meet basic psychological needs of relatedness, autonomy and competence (a more *inward-oriented* activity). Finally, it is worthwhile considering how the construction of an institutional existence is logically tied up with the network formation dynamics described in cluster B. The construction of an institutional existence involves similar considerations of empowerment and access to resources.

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6.2.4 Proposition C4: Patterns of institutionalisation in the SI action field

Processes of social innovation play out within a SI action field, to succeed SI actors must play into the emergent dynamics of change in the action field; different patterns of institutional change can be identified, each implying characteristic relations to established institutions, and requiring specific strategies of 'bricolage' on the part of the SI actors involved.

6.2.4.1 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition starts from the contention that adequately explaining strategic action in T/SI requires that we situate strategic action within the unfolding dynamics of a wider T/SI action field. The concept of an action field in essence provides “a concept of the arena of social action” (Fligstein and McAdam 2011, p20) and as such has similarities with the Arenas of Development approach (Jørgensen, 2012). Such a concept of individual and collective action inside fields is necessary to provide a means to: “...understand if a meso-level social structure is emerging, stable, or in the process of transformation.” (Fligstein and McAdam 2011, p20). The SI action field as conceptualised here includes: the social relations of diverse SI actors, and the activities or practices that these actors are engaged in, as well as the associated institutions and institutional arrangements, that condition both stability within the field and processes of change, and last but not least it also includes the unfolding relations between SI actors and the supporters of established and dominant institutions.

Both the Strategic Action Fields (SAFs) approach (Fligstein and McAdam 2011) and Arenas of Development (Jørgensen 2012) argue that the construct of a ‘field’ should be used to conceptualise unfolding institutional change processes not as fully harmonious and (only) cooperatively shaped journeys, but rather as emergent interactions that are (most often) pervaded by contestation and struggle. TSI theory also needs to account for how contestation and struggle are part of the reality of TSI strategic action. TSI initiatives must engage in an *inherently political* relationship with (the supporters of) established and dominant institutions. A relationship that furthermore takes place within a wider field of relations with other actors, that may have quite different intentions and interests. Fligstein and McAdam (2011) describe this two-way relationship in terms of co-shaping processes, involving challengers and incumbents vying for position and influence: both are constantly engaged in moves that they hope will preserve or improve their position in the existing (and evolving) field of social relations. They suggest that: “These constant adjustments can be thought of as a form of ‘organisational learning’ ...” (p15) and imply a set of tactics that actors will employ. Incumbents will adjust to the tactics of others, both challengers in the form of SI actors, and other incumbents. Tactics for challengers include building niches and taking advantage of the crises of other challengers and playing into ‘crises’ and ‘game changers’. Tactics for incumbents include imitation, co-optation, or merger. As discussed in proposition C2, T/SI actors must similarly engage in strategic actions which elicit responses and counters from ‘incumbents’ in the form of actors supporting established institutions.

The concept of a T/SI action field provides one way to resolve the context as stratified but also intersecting—happenings in one action field may influence happenings in another.⁴

⁴ The wider context contains many actions fields; the boundaries of the field are fluid, and are analytically defined in terms of the relevant change agents in a SI process. ‘Transformative change’ may involve: transformation of the SI

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Olsson et al. (2017) note that the concept of "path-dependence" in systems thinking, in its most basic form, refers to the fact that "history matters" and that there are a limited subset of possible next steps that can be taken based on the history of the system (Arthur 2009). They argue that through the use of bricolage "*the path-dependence of the system can be altered and wholly new systemic opportunities opened up.*" (ibid). In terms of the TSI theory, the metaphor of 'bricolage', used in this sense, suggests that, in order to achieve a specific vision, SI actors may not only need to attempt to change a dominant institution directly, they may also need to work at the level of the path dependence in the field as a whole, and that furthermore requires some degree of analysis or 'diagnosis' of the path dependence in the wider socio-material context. An example being a SI initiative that has the perception and analysis that the capitalist system is not able or willing to change itself from within in response to the 2008 global financial crisis. Used in this sense then the metaphor of bricolage refers further to a notion of the SI actor as an 'institutional entrepreneur' or even 'systems entrepreneur' – in the sense of an actor who is aiming to 'play the field' in order to actually influence the emergence of an action field that is more conducive to her vision for change. In this proposition the metaphor of 'bricolage' is further developed in terms of the implications of path dependence (history) and resource constraints (present) for how SI actors perceive and makes sense of the 'field' in which they necessarily operate, and how their perceptions and understandings of the field then inform their choice of strategic actions.

Previous work by Westley et al. (2013) has developed the idea that 'bricolage' as a strategy or 'mode of engagement' may be both more common and more likely to produce desirable results, when the field is in the right 'phase'. During periods of *reorganisation*, for example, new organisational forms and new linkages between things emerge, creating opportunities for SI actors to engage in bricolage: "connecting ideas and resources strategically through brokered partnerships." (ibid, p27). They find that during such periods of wider change institutional entrepreneurs work to "parlay partnerships into viable alternative configurations. Some ideas will [...] be orphaned, but with successful brokering, resources may be consolidated around a coherent and innovative alternative." (ibid p27).

Similarly an important idea from the SAFs literature (Fligstein & McAdam 2011: 10) is that during periods of *contention* in a field there may be a shared sense of uncertainty regarding the rules (cf. institutions) in the field. This is really important: rules (as one form in which institutions to manifest) are not simply 'dominant' and then transformed, rather they are (in some respects at least) socially constructed and the fracturing of perceptions concerning the solidity of rules, and the arising of commonly held uncertainties about the validity or stability of rules can (we hypothesise) be an important part of the transformation dynamic for TSI processes. This suggests that the choice of strategic action is conditioned not only by vision, institutions and access to resources, but also by the perceptions SI actors have of the stability of the 'rules of the field' and openings or opportunities for change. Fligstein & McAdam (2011: p11) characterise different possible states of the field ranging from unorganized or emerging, to stable but changing, to unstable and open to transformation. (Fligstein & McAdam 2011: p11).

6.2.4.2 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

As a T/SI initiative organises its internal processes (cluster A), links up with other initiatives (cluster B), and formulates strategic actions aimed at promoting the SIs that it is championing (cluster C, C2), it will inevitably be involved with, and caught up in, the wider dynamics of the SI action field. We are interested especially in the relations established with dominant institutions as SI actors engage in a dialectic of

action field; the emergence of new fields (and the 'breakdown' of old ones); or, transformation of the relations between fields (in the socio-material context). This proposition focuses on institutional change within an existing action field.

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change with actors supporting the established and dominant institutions. In this proposition we bridge the level of individual initiative and network and eventual TSI transformation pathway, by looking at the *meso-level* of transformation processes in the SI action field. This proposition really goes somewhat beyond the limits of the data that we gathered in our empirical cases, it is therefore at this stage still quite conceptual but is included here because it addresses a key challenge in explaining the dynamics of TSI, namely how to analyse and explain the meso-level structuring of TSI processes. When we speak of *patterns of institutional change* in the SI action field then, we refer to patterns in *relational terms* with different coherent constellations of the following constituent socio-material entities and relations:

- The **relations between SI initiatives and their supporters and collaborators**, as they join forces around the promotion of particular SIs (or promote contrasting or competing SIs...);
- The **relations between SI actors and (the supporters of) established institutions**;
- The **strategic actions of SI actors and how these play out in the field**, including how they interact with different types institutionalisation process⁵, and the dialectic of response and counter-response between the SI actors and (the supporters of) established institutions.
- **Disturbances or disruptions to the field as created by relations to other action fields** and the influence of the wider context in the form of sustained social and cultural trends, technological change, and socio-economic changes and trends.

SI initiatives will experience and have perceptions of broader trends and changes processes, as mediated through the field and their own contextual position in it. The strategies that they come up with (if they are to increase and realise transformative potentials) need to include ways of working with these trends and change processes and their existing relations to open up new ‘systemic opportunities’ in the SI action field. We have identified five emergent *patterns of institutional change* that provide a means to build upon proposition 2, by characterising how the strategic actions of SI actors can lead to different forms of emergent dynamic within the SI action field as a whole:

- **The mainstreaming of promoted social innovations**;
- **Emergence of hybrid institutional forms**;
- **Continued contestation or conflict** between SI actors and supporters of dominant institutions;
- **The emergence of parallel institutional arrangements or ‘shadow systems’**;
- **Governance interventions by the state** or other supporters of dominant institutions.

One or more of these emergent patterns may be present within the overall dynamic of the SI action field, manifesting to different degrees and in different combinations as the field changes and transforms over time. Different strategies of ‘bricolage’, used here in particular in the sense of *opening up systemic opportunities* in/across the SI action field, can be identified for each of these emergent patterns. Next we very briefly sketch each of these five emergent patterns of change.

The mainstreaming of promoted social innovations: *In this pattern a classic ‘mainstreaming’ institutionalisation process takes root, which leads to the uptake of a particular social innovation across a wider part of society* (but mediated through the SI action field), in the processes the SI initiatives undergo change and may themselves be institutionalised. But irrespective of the outcome for the original initiatives involved, the result is that social innovations take root and become embedded in some aspect/s of social life. In the process the original SIs, undergo ‘translation’ and may become disconnected from some of the original values and social relations associated with them in the beginning. A classic example here would be the uptake of organic food by mainstream food manufacturers. In our TRANSIT

⁵ Referring to the process of embedding some aspect of social life (e.g. norms, rules, conventions and values, or a mode of behaviour) within the wider field of social relations.

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cases it can be argued that a similar mainstreaming process could develop for the case of the Slow Food movement, as Slow Food principles at least become 'cultural desirable' to increasing parts of society. SI actors need to develop strategies of bricolage that allow them to play into the mainstreaming processes while preserving some degree of autonomy and organisational identity and coherence.

Emergence of hybrid institutional forms: *In this pattern both the SI actors and the supporters of dominant institutions take up elements from each other, leading to a pattern of institutional cross-fertilisation and hybridisation between the two 'sides'.* Shareable provides one possible exemplar of this pattern. Balance is not always achieved and such hybrid forms can end up 'tilting' in one direction, often towards the institutionalisation of the SI initiatives, as well as, or instead of, the uptake of the focal SI itself. Genuine forms of cooperation can occur when interests are aligned but there is also often a 'shadow side' to such hybrid forms that involves various types of 'capture' process. SI actors need to develop strategies of bricolage that allow them to influence the actors and structures of dominant institutions, and to *embed* the SIs that they are promoting, while also and holding on to their original core values and transformative vision, and navigating the risks of being themselves institutionalised.

Continued contestation or conflict between SI actors and supporters of dominant institutions: *In this pattern there emerges a sustained period of contestation or conflict between SI actors, and supporters of dominant institutions, including (but not limited to) businesses, governments, political groupings, citizens groups, etc.* SI actors need to develop strategies of bricolage that involve finding ways to translate existing rules and resources into the production of local orders by convincing their supporters to cooperate and finding means of accommodation with other actors in the field. As TSI journeys co-evolve through a constant interplay with the entities that are supporting dominant institutions, a certain SI concept will tend to change shape over time, sometimes very significantly. Because of these ongoing interactions, SI initiatives need to be prepared to adapt and cannot simply 'stick to their guns'.

The emergence of parallel institutional arrangements or 'shadow systems'. Networks of SI initiatives join up to form emergent 'parallel' or 'shadow' systems with new socio-material configurations. In some cases (maybe with Ecovillages as an exemplar) these new configurations do achieve a social-ecologically distinct existence with meaningful implications for energy and material throughputs. But there is a danger that new social relations and a vibrant discourse flourish but remain 'super-material' with little impact on underlying socio-ecological relations (with the Transition movement as a possible exemplar). SI actors need to develop strategies of bricolage that bring together the actors, institutions and resources required to pioneer and provide alternative arrangements. This requires that coherence is achieved in multiple dimensions of doing, organising, framing and knowing, and by finding incentives for members in terms of the resourcing model or other factors (ethics, the 'good life', green lifestyles, etc.). Slow Food is good exemplar, for the way it combines the provision of alternatives with a compelling cultural narrative that also situates it with respect to the current failings dominant institutions.

Governance interventions by the state or other supporters of dominant institutions. *In this pattern, SI is strongly initiated and supported by state actors, or other supporters of dominant institutions.* Proposition C5 convincingly shows that in TSI theory, we should distinguish between relations to government versus relations to dominant institutions, the two things may be different. That being said, this pattern addresses a seemingly paradoxical situation whereby the supporters of established institutions start to see the (imagined/perceived) goals of SI as being aligned (or alignable) with their own vision and interests. We have seen this in the EU concerning the increasing policy interest in SI: Proposition D6 explores the EU-level discourse on SI which in recent years has developed a narrative of the state fostering and supporting SI in order to help address policy challenges, which the state feels unable to fully address on its own. There are many national and regional specificities within the European discourse add additional specificities and complexity, but especially in the UK there are is great deal of

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attention in policy circles in the possibilities of SI for public service delivery. *SI actors need to develop strategies of bricolage* that allow them to ‘play into’ state interests in SI, in order to secure better access to resources, legitimacy, and through this state interest to influence the ‘rules of the game’ in the form of e.g. legal frameworks, tax regulations, funding arrangements, etc. But in doing so, they have to do so in ways that stay true to—or at least successfully navigate changes in—their original core intentions (values and transformative vision). In the Transition movement case for example it was clear that the processes of applying for government funding for community projects can act a ‘disciplining activity’ that has the potential to dilute or even destroy the radical intentions and values amongst members.

Each of these emergent patterns of institutional change implies different opportunities and constraints for a TSI initiative: in order to increase their transformative impact, TSI initiatives need to learn about and ‘play into’ these different patterns. But each of these patterns also has its own hidden traps whereby the fate of the TSI initiative can be to be itself institutionalised, in effect assimilated into the logics of dominant institutions. Various combinations of these emergent patterns will combine over time and space to produce an unfolding dynamic of process-relations that might then be referred to as a TSI ‘journey’ or alternatively a TSI ‘pathway’, hence these ‘patterns’ can be considered as building blocks of eventual TSI pathways, as further addressed in the cluster D propositions.

6.2.4.3 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

This proposition builds upon the material presented in proposition C2 in particular, but also C1 and C3. Taken together the four propositions develop a contribution to the middle-range TSI theory that explains the relations of TSI initiatives and networks to institutional change in terms of the dynamics of the wider SI action field of which they are a part. It thus makes a contribution to explaining the agency and dynamics of TSI in terms of institutional abundance, action field, and bricolage. It provides an avenue for future research that could develop a more sophisticated treatment of scale TSI processes, by explaining how SI initiatives ‘connect up’ to produce emergent patterns of institutional change in the SI action field.

6.2.4.4 Relations to other propositions

This proposition builds directly upon proposition C2 and B5 in particular, but also C1 and C3. Whereas proposition C2 addresses the strategic actions by which a TSI initiative attempts to transform dominant institutions, this proposition focuses on the transformation dynamic in the SI action field as a whole, that usually involves multiple SIs and multiple and diverse SI initiatives linking up in novel (re-)combinations to engage with emergent patterns of institutional change.

6.2.4.5 References

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6.2.5 Proposition C5: Relations of TSI to institutional logics

6.2.5.1 Short statement of the proposition

Social innovations emerge in the context of diverse institutional logics. One way in which SI actors challenge, alter and/or replace dominant institutions, is through reconsidering the broader institutional logics in which those institutions are embedded, by travelling across diverse institutional logics and by reinventing, recombining and transposing specific institutional elements.

6.2.5.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition focuses on the relations between the following units of analysis: Social innovations, SI actors, institutional logics and institutions. For a definition of institutional logics, we are inspired by the following conceptualisation:

“the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality. Institutional logics are both material and symbolic—they provide the formal and informal rules of action, interaction, and interpretation that guide and constrain decision makers (...) (Ocasio 1997). These rules constitute a set of assumptions and values, usually implicit, about how to interpret organizational reality, what constitutes appropriate behavior, and how to succeed (Jackall 1988; March and Olsen 1989).” (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999, p. 804).

We relate this to our own conceptual definition of dominant institutions as the dominant ways of doing, organising, framing and knowing, that have been established in the socio-material context, by defining institutional logics as follows: *The configuration of formal and informal institutions – and the (de/re)institutionalisation processes underlying them – that constrain and enable social relations and established patterns of doing, organising, framing and knowing in a given socio-material context.* Institutionalisation processes include e.g. marketization, privatisation, commercialisation, bureaucratisation, formalisation, communitisation, normalisation, popularisation etc.

Institutional logics are messy configurations of various specific and contextual phenomena that influence how things are (de/re-)institutionalised over time in a given context. Institutional logics refer to specific contextual delineations of units of analysis that have institutional traits: 1) **Organisational:** a particular legal/organisational context (e.g. government, business, non-profit, informal community, or partnerships / hybrids between any of those). 2) **Geographic:** a particular geographic context (e.g. Japan, Brazil, Netherlands etc.). 3) **Functional:** a particular domain (e.g. agriculture, science, housing, health care etc.). 4) **Temporal:** a particular period in history (e.g. before/during/after a war, crisis, election, legislation, etc.).

The concept of ‘transposing’ has been taken from Sewell (1992), who on his turn has taken it from Bourdieu’s use of the term⁶. Sewell argues that ‘transposability’ is an essential dimension of how

⁶ As explained by Sewell (1992:17) “The verb “transpose” implies a concrete application of a rule to a new case, but in such a way that the rule will have subtly different forms in each of its applications. This is implied by three of the Oxford English Dictionary’s (1971, s.v. “transpose”) definitions: “To remove from one place or time to another; to transfer, shift,” “to alter the order of or the position of in a series . . . to interchange,” and, in music, “to put into a different key.” Transposer, in French (which was of course the language in which Bourdieu wrote), also has an even more appropriate meaning: “faire changer de forme ou de contenu en faisant passer dans un autre domaine,” (to cause something to change

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structures – as made up of schemas and resources - can be transformed, and defines agency as “the capacity to transpose and extend schemas to new contexts (...) to put it differently, the actor's capacity to reinterpret and mobilize an array of resources in terms of cultural schemas other than those that initially constituted the array” (18-19). In our conceptual framing, we refer to schemas as ‘institutions’. Following Sewell’s argument, we contend that it is through the transposability of institutions and the ‘remobilization’ of resources that structures can be transformed. By distinguishing different institutional logics, we can then unpack the ‘loci of transposability’, i.e. the different contexts across which institutional elements can be transposed.

There are two different but related assertions being made within the proposition: (1) That SI initiatives & SI networks emerge in diverse institutional logics. (2) That reconsidering institutional logics is a way for SI actors to challenge, alternate or replace dominant institutions.

The second assertion started as a deductive statement about the changing of institutional logics being a pre-condition for challenging, altering or replacing dominant institutions. This followed from an ontological argument about system change being a necessary condition for structural change: as long as the system logic as a whole is not questioned, the structures within that system cannot be fundamentally changed. This argument is inspired by transition theory, the concept of regimes (i.e. ‘institutional logics’) and the premise that regime change is a necessary condition for a transition (i.e. ‘transformative change’) to occur. Empirically, however, TRANSIT has not conducted systematic analysis of institutional logics, and as such, it is not possible to compare and generalise such conditionality. What we have observed, however, is that the SI actors under study tend to question not only specific dominant institutions but also question the broader institutional logics in which the dominant institutions are embedded (see next section). Rather than making linear or conditional claims about SI actors having to question institutional logics, the proposition is now more of a process proposition about actors (either as individuals or as collectives) questioning institutional logics in terms of travelling across different contexts, becoming aware of/ critical of/ taking distance from/ reconsidering/ ‘transcending’ institutional configurations in given contexts, and subsequently reinventing, recombining and transposing specific institutional elements in (other) contexts, often resulting in renewed hybrid combinations.

6.2.5.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

The SI initiatives under study emerge from an immense diversity of geographic places, sectors and domains. When reading a selection of initiatives and their first critical turning points (CTPs) (Pel et al. 2017), it is striking to notice the diversity of contexts and types of people that founded and developed the initiatives, and the forms in which that they did so. For example:

- RIPESS Ecocitrus (RIPESS IN12) started in the 1990s as ‘a partnership between the government of the Brazilian State of RS and GTZ, to stimulate family farming in Brazil’.
- Hackerspace 4 South-Central England (HS IN40) was founded in 2009 as a ‘non-profit company limited by guarantee (CLG)’ by two software developers who ‘had initially imagined HS4 to be a more personal space where they - and people like them - would be able to make things themselves’.
- The Volunteer Labour Bank/Network (TB IN19), described as ‘the world’s first formal TimeBank’ was initiated in the 1970s by a Japanese lady who was born in Osaka in 1920, and who founded Timebanking “for improving conditions for women as carers of the elderly”.

in form or content by causing it to pass into another domain, Le Petit Robert [1984, s.v. "transposer"]). I would like my use of transpose to be understood as retaining something of this French meaning”.

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- Living Knowledge ESSRG (LK IN52) was created by researchers in 2008-9 as an independent limited company in the context of a university in Hungary.
- Ecovillage Bergen (GEN IN94) was initiated by a group of 8 people who purchased a former military terrain in 2013 so as to transform it into an ecovillage in the Netherlands.
- Impact Hub Amsterdam (IH IN21) was founded by three social entrepreneurs in 2009 as a co-working and incubation space
- Participatory Budgeting Porte Alegre (PB IN45) was initiated in 1988 in Brazil by the ‘newly elected mayor, answering popular demands’.
- Living Labs Eindhoven (LLb IN35) was initiated in the Netherlands in 2010 by a local government as a policy to cooperate with other partners to facilitate innovation across the city.
- ShareBloomington (SHA IN70) started in the USA with the ShareFest event, which was organised by a student and ‘a group of friends who he met during the Occupy movement in 2011’.
- Seed exchange ProSpecieRara (SE IN18) started as a network of private seed savers (agronomists) supporting free exchange of materials/genetic diversity and knowledge.
- Slow Food started in a small region in Italy in 1986, initiated by a small group of people who were members of a communist inspired credit cooperative.
- The first initiative that Via Campesina started from, was initiated by a group of peasants that had been displaced from their lands in the rural areas of Latin-America.
- Co-housing started as a cooperative at the beginning of the 20th century (1912), initiated by workers with low incomes with the main goal of gaining access to housing by financing and self-construction, and was inspired by ideals of communism and anarchism.

The **geographic diversity of the initiatives spans a total of 26 countries** (17 in Europe and 9 in other continents). While many of the initiatives and underlying social innovations under study seem to have emerged in Europe, there are clearly examples of SI initiatives that originated elsewhere, such as **timebanking in Japan (TB IN19)** or **participatory budgeting in Brazil (PB IN45)**. Searching the critical turning points (CTP) database also clearly demonstrates the **diversity of the “kinds of actors, organizations and institutional logics interacted with”** across the CTPs. A clear majority is found in **civil society (245), governments (177) and academic organisations (86), followed by business (75) and international networks (58)**. A total of 44 CTPs were tagged as **‘hybrid/3rd sector organisations’** (see D5.4, table 1 on p. 160 for more details). There is also a diversity in functional domains (see table below), albeit with a clear majority in agro-food, housing, science & education, health care and energy.

Full text searches on functional domains of 80+ initiatives under study CTP-database	#
Agriculture + food + agro food	95
Housing services	91
Science + education	83
Health + care	57
Energy	44
Water	13
Arts + architecture	12
Mobility + transport	8

It is striking to notice that several **initiatives were born out of a partnerships or some sort of cooperation between different sectors/ institutional logics, and/or as a hybrid institutional entity in itself**. Several initiatives have also changed and adapted their legal form over time. We clearly see in this in the case of **Ecocitrus (RIPESS IN12)**, which started as a partnership between government and private parties, then

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changed into an association, and eventually settled as a cooperative (CTP356). Or the case of **Merkur Cooperative Bank in Denmark (FEBA IN57 CTP31)**, which changed from its original form as an association into a cooperative bank. The cooperative and other legal forms such as a ‘non-profit company limited by guarantee (CLG)’ (HS IN40) or a limited company within the context of an academic institutions (ESSRG LK IN52) are in themselves inherently transposing different institutional logics and combining elements from different logics into new hybrid entities.

A very different, but relevant, form of transposing and hybridity refers to the **geographic positioning of initiatives. By embedding themselves in translocal networks**, and by visiting and learning from initiatives in other geographic contexts, the initiatives are (implicitly or explicitly) taking a distance from (some of) the institutional logics in their own local, regional or national context, even if just temporarily and partly, which in turn enables them to become aware of and question the institutional context in which they are geographically located, and transposing institutional elements from one context to another. Such **legal/organisational and geographic transposition/hybridity** is not necessarily something that only occurs at the level of the initiatives, but also at the level of the **individuals** who develop these initiatives. Many founders have particular hybrid backgrounds, in terms of having travelled across different geographic locations and multiple organisational contexts and functional domains.

6.2.5.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

The first assertion in the proposition – that social innovation emerge in the context of diverse institutional logics – is partly a deductive and ontological starting point, following our relational definition of SI. At the same time, it is also a solid empirical observation from our 80+ case-studies. This is a very important dimension of our TSI theory that confirms the relational nature of TSI and emphasises how ‘dominant institutions’ are NOT the same as ‘government institutions’, and how the opposition between SI and dominant institutions is NOT the same as an opposition between civil society and government. Using the concepts of ‘institutional logic’ helps to remind how ‘government’ represents only one type of institutional logic, and that social innovation can emerge in the context of any institutional logics, and that SI actors operate across diverse institutional logics. While this may seem obvious or even tautological to some of us (by now), it certainly is an insight that still needs to land in both academic and public discourses, and it might be one of the most important contributions of TRANSIT’s TSI-theory to the thinking on social innovation.

The second assertion in this proposition – on reconsidering the broader institutional logics, travelling across diverse institutional logics and reinventing, recombining and transposing institutional elements – is most clearly manifested in the empirical evidence in that SI actors ‘travel’ across different institutional logics, and that they work with all sorts of hybrid institutional forms. While it seems that this provides them with the capacity to recombine, reinvent and transpose institutional elements from different contexts, we have not really empirically analysed what are the mechanisms and effects of doing so. We have not analysed the different institutional logics, nor have we compared how different SI actors relate differently to institutional logics and how this in turn affects the extent to which they succeed in challenging, altering and replacing dominant institutions. As such, we could argue this to be one of the main remaining research questions and challenges for future research: comparative analysis of the socio-material contexts and institutional logics around SIs, the ways in which SI actors transpose elements across contexts, and how this affects their success in challenging, altering and replacing dominant institutions.

Sewell (1992) emphasizes *intersections* and *transposability* as important conditions for transformative structural change. Structures are conceptualised as “sets of mutually sustaining schemas and resources

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that empower and constrain social action and that tend to be reproduced by that social action. But their reproduction is never automatic. Structures are at risk, at least to some extent, in all of the social encounters they shape – *because structures are multiple and intersecting, because schemas are transposable, and because resources are polysemic and accumulate unpredictability*” (Sewel 1992: 19, italics added). Transformative agency entails “the capacity to *transpose and extend schemas to new contexts*” (ibid: 18, italics added). Indeed, “the same resourceful agency that sustains the reproduction of structures also makes possibly their transformation – *by means of transpositions of schemas and remobilizations of resources that make the new structures recognizable as transformations of the old*” (ibid: 27). The same argument that Sewell makes about schemas, can be applied to institutions. On that basis, there is conceptual and theoretical argumentation for deductively asserting that the reconsideration of institutional logics and the travelling across institutional logics is a precondition for actors to challenge, alter or replace institutions, in the sense that this is what enables actors to *transpose* institutional elements to new contexts, and what enables social action at the *intersections* of institutions.

6.2.5.5 Relations to others propositions

This proposition relates most clearly to the following propositions in the following ways:

- **A4/B1/B2/B5: On (translocal) networks & alliances.** Networking and translocal connections enable and facilitate the travelling across institutional contexts and the transposing of institutional elements from one context to another. In order to challenge dominant institutions and reconsider institutional logics, it is helpful for SI initiatives to develop alternative institutional contexts with alternative institutional logics > SI networks can provide that.
- **C1: On dialectic relation between SI - dominant institutions.** Transposing institutional elements from one institutional logic to another, very much confirms how SI is also shaped by existing institutions.
- **C2: On the strategic actions of TSI initiatives .** Transposing and recombining institutional elements across institutional logics can be seen as a particular strategy towards challenging, altering and replacing dominant institutions.
- **C3: On the construction of an institutional existence.** How SI initiatives themselves are institutionalised depends on their knowledge of and position towards different institutional logics. Knowing how SI initiatives are/have been institutionalised in other geographic, organisational, functional or temporal contexts, influences how initiatives shape their own institutionalisation process. By knowing alternatives, SI initiatives are less dependent on existing institutions in immediate context for institutionalisation options (e.g. legal forms, funding, public support, etc.).
- **D1/D2: On the socio-material evolution out of which TSI emerges.** Institutional logics also refer to temporal contexts. In order to determine what kind of institutional logic characterizes a particular place, sector or domain, it is relevant to have historical insight. Especially as institutional logics refer not only to static institutional elements, but also to institutionalisation processes.
- **D3: On Narratives of change.** Narratives can be seen as institutional elements that can be recombined and transposed across different contexts. Narratives of change are important vehicles for communicating, debating and reconsidering diverse institutional logics, and also, they can provide elements for the creation of alternative institutional logics.
- **D6: The SI-discourse in Europe.** There is not “one” SI-discourse in Europe, rather, there are various SI-discourses and story-lines on SI in Europe across different institutional logics. There does seem to be, however, a hegemonic discourse on SI that is very much characterised by a particular institutional logic of privations in the context of a retreating welfare state (Big Society, Participation Society, etc.).

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6.2.5.6 References

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7 Cluster D propositions: on SI initiatives in the socio-material context

7.1 Cluster D overview

The SI initiatives and networks are part of historical processes of socio-material change. Basically this cluster is about the broad societal trends that form the background to TSI processes. In other clusters the socio-material-context in which new social relations develop is backgrounded. In this Cluster, we *foreground* the dynamics of the context in an attempt to bring out the influence of the (changing) socio-material context on SI and the dialects of change. The background dynamics are many and in the propositions we focus on three types: 1) trends in the market economy, cultural change, demography and technological change that are relevant to TSI, 2) discursive dynamics, and 3) radical events in the economy (such as economic crises) and state politics which are impacting the TSI and occasionally taken up in narratives for change.

For TSI, the *discourse* on social innovation is important and this is why we have decided to pay explicit attention to this, in terms of what the discourse consists of and the agendas and interests behind it. Relevant questions are: What is expected and assumed about social innovation by policy makers, academics and by people involved in social innovation? To what extent do the expectations and assumptions cohere or conflict?

The *transformative goals* of TSI and *narratives of change* offer an entrance point into the link of SI and the wider context. A transformative goal is indicative of a desire to change existing institutions and practices. Narratives of change are discourses on change and innovation that actors engage with and/or that they construct (Haxeltine et al. 2017). More specifically, they consist of “sets of ideas, concepts, metaphors, discourses or story-lines about change and innovation” (Wittmayer et al. (2015). Examples of transformative goals are: rebuilding communities through exchange systems based on time (Timebanks), to ‘re-humanize’ social relations with the help of trustful and community-based forms of living and working (Global Eco-village Network), user- and citizen-centred forms of experimentation (Living Labs).⁷ SI networks with transformative goals often have a narrative of change which is stated on the network website. As put by Wittmayer et al. (2015), “narratives of change are not just ‘stories out there’, rather they recount the theories of change which are practiced and acted upon by the very SI initiatives which propagate them” which is accompanied usually with a diagnosis of what is wrong in the world.

A third contextual element of interest are circumscribed macro-developments that are seen as changing the ‘game’ of societal interaction (in terms of rules, fields and players) in a country or (world) region. In Avelino et al., (2014), the term game changer is used as a label for this. The notion of game changer was ultimately rejected as a foundational element of our theory of TSI for having deterministic overtones, not fitting with a co-production view of the world (as formulated by Jasanoff, 2004), but the phenomenon of macro developments that are seen as necessitating social innovation by social innovators is still part of our theory of transformative social innovation. Marc Swiling, in his contribution to the special issue on game changers of social innovation, speaks of “game-changing dynamics” (instead of game changers)

⁷ More elaborate versions of NoC for Timebanks and GEN can be found in Transit brief 1, Wittmayer et al., (2015) and Kemp et al., (2017)

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which he defines as “complex processes of change that specific actors invoke to justify their particular set of proposed social and system innovations”. Game changers refer to development of great importance to the evolution of a region or initiative. In several SI initiatives under study, the economic crisis is mentioned as an important event (see Avelino et al 2014 and Loorbach et al. 2016). For this reasons, we have decided to have a proposition on the economic crisis as a socio-material phenomenon, which is linked to the narratives of change.⁸

A fourth element for consideration is the role of marketization and bureaucratisation as motivators for TSI.⁹ In the “Humanisation of the Economy through Social Innovation” paper (Kemp et al., 2017) this topic is examined, leading to the notion of humanisation as an overarching term for SI. In the paper it is said that TSI initiatives cater for basic psychological needs for autonomy and integrity, purposeful activities and experiencing sociality for which there is less place in the market economy and public sector. Two relevant questions in this regard are: to what extent are SI initiatives responses to perceived gaps and deficiencies in established arrangements and provisions and to what degree are they based on a demand for autonomy and relatedness? The second question is examined in cluster A and the first one is touched upon in cluster C.

A fifth element for consideration is the degree of re-invention, novelty, experimentation and advocacy in SI initiatives. The advocacy element is clearly an issue of relating to context. Experimentation and citizen-based forms of innovation can be seen as part of broader dynamics such as the growing role of experimentation in society (Gross and Krohn, 2005), innovation becoming more user-centered (von Hippel, 2005) with a greater role for citizens in innovation and governance. Other relevant dynamics are the changing views of “a good life” (less materialist with more leisure and ties of affection and friendship, harmony with nature and autonomy to design a life of one’s choosing) (Skidelski and Skidelski, 2013), emancipation (Fraser, 2013) and the rise of a network society (Castell, 2010). Re-invention is very interesting from a socio-material context point of view. The past is being recreated in a novel form. Re-invention, novelty, experimentation and advocacy differ across networks and local manifestations. They are not exclusionary categories but shades.

Is the transformation that is enacted by TSI in socio-spatial places a diverse transformation? If so what does the diversity consist of? In working paper #3 of TRANSIT (Avelino, et al., 2015), the diversity of SI narratives is packed up in four meta-narratives about a new economy: (1) degrowth & localisation, (2) collaborative economy, (3) solidarity economy, (4) social entrepreneurship & social economy (see also Longhurst et al. 2016). Elements of diversity that are not part of the economy scheme in a visible way are emancipation (which is an important goal of the seed movement in LA), self-development and actualisation (important in GEN), and democracy which is important in all.

Next to the observed diversity in practices and the narratives of change of TSI networks, there is a deal of diversity in the EU policy discourse. The diversity is found to be increasing both in the EU discourse and amongst TSI practitioners. The two discourses are also found to be quite independent of each other, despite some superficial similarities.

⁸ In TRANSIT working paper 1, we examined the ways in which the economic crisis is taken up in various perspectives about societal development.

⁹ Marketization is the use of market principles in public policy and society in the form of property rights, tendering, contracting out, fees for services & privileges, performance-based pay, transactions replacing relations in organisations and the personal realm (mentioned in *The New Culture of Capitalism* of Sennett). Bureaucratisation is the application of bureaucratic rule which is prevalent in the welfare state system (having to do with entitlements of benefit receivers and obligations for them).

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Before turning to the propositions a short discussion on ontology is desirable. In TRANSIT we have adopted a relational perspective which puts the focus on social actors and any aspect of society they interact with (Haxeltine et al., 2017). In the words of Law and Mol (1995), materiality and sociality are viewed as intrinsically related, as produced together. Different from economics, a relational view shuns any suggestion of determination, but this may lead to a view that people can do as they please. The relational view has been accused of voluntarism:

The danger of anti-essentialism is that it switches straight from determinism and reductionism to voluntarism. Extreme versions of anti-essentialism which suppose that anything can happen in any situation therefore render explanation impossible, for there is nothing that theory can say about what determines what (Sayer, 1995, p. 23, quoted in Yeung, 2004, p. 42).

In TRANSIT, such a mistake is not made. Our ontological view is that actors make use of available resources within the context of institutionalised traditions or rules that both enable and constrain their actions. Institutions have a shaping role in human action but at the same time are constituted through human action (Haxeltine et al., 2017). The role of markets (and thus processes of marketization) is given less attention because of the focus on agents and structures. Whereas economists can be criticised for giving too much importance to prices as determinants of action, STS scholars can be criticised for neglecting the role that prices as outcomes of demand and supply play.

In economic traditions, determinants of action are sometimes separated in proximate determinants and distal determinants (Maddison, 1988; Rodrik, 2003; Szirmai 2008, 2012).¹⁰ Proximate determinants have to do with motivations, expectations, resources and situational characteristics (such as local initiatives to join). Distal drivers are the cultural and institutional background factors and processes of marketization, globalization, individualization, environmental degradation and reform of the welfare state that lead people to engage in activities of re-embedding. Proximate drivers are determinants close to action. A relational perspective would not make such distinctions, but in focussing on agency and “agencements” (Hardie and Mackenzie, 2007) it may miss out on the influence of slow moving processes such as the rise of meritocracy, instrumental rationality (Habermas, 1981), marketization (Polanyi, 1944; Sandel, 2012), secularisation (Taylor, 2006) and the condition of constant mobility and change with fluid identities and relationships (“liquid modernity” in the words of Bauman, 2000). At the same time, the focus on artefacts, actors and arrangements offers a useful antidote to reifications of such concepts and simple deterministic explanations based of the role of prices, by inquiring into relational aspects and mechanisms of change in a context-sensitive way.

In TRANSIT, the changing historical context is not an object of direct study, but elements of it are studied and described in the paper “The Humanisation of the Economy through Social Innovation” by Kemp et al., (2017) where an attempt is made to map out the influence of marketization (in a context unspecific way). Trends interact with each other and do not have a singular influence. The creation to a “Me-centered” society stems from various other developments with which it interacts: the rise of meritocracy and competition (in the market place, work place and between consumers), the rise of social media (fuelling comparison in terms of status good) and emancipation. TSI can be seen as a departure from a “Me-centered” society but the importance attached to autonomy (discussed in cluster A) fits with the secular trend of individualisation (Fevre, 2016) and emancipation (Fraser, 2013). The “performative” influence of trends works via material effects (people getting older, richer or poorer when they get unemployed) and via social constructions about the phenomenon at stake.

¹⁰ Distal determinants are sometimes called ultimate determinants.

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In Cluster D, the conjectured interaction of SI and the socio-material context (which includes the economy) is formulated in 6 propositions that cover the following six elements of the socio-material context: 1) External socio-material developments as shapers of SI, 2) The different historical appearances of TSI, 3) Narratives of change and diagnosis of the socio-material context, 4) Diverse transformation, 5) the effects of crisis-events for transformations, and 6) The SI-discourse in Europe.

Each of the six elements about TSI and the dynamics of the broader context is the subject of a proposition. The contextual elements mentioned do not cover every possible contextual aspect, but those we think are most relevant and that have been mentioned in the literature and in our empirical material. In the above text little is being said about: urbanization, changing demographics (such as aging population), digitalization, scientization (the pervading of social life through scientific logic) and changes at work (flexibilisation, financialisation, feminisation, fragmentation (Rubery, 2015), organisations becoming flatter and work becoming more project-based and precarious (see Sennett, 1998 for a critical discussion). This does not mean that they will be excluded from consideration. They will be included where relevant in the 6 propositions about the socio-material context as an enabler, motivator and source of constraints for SI evolution.

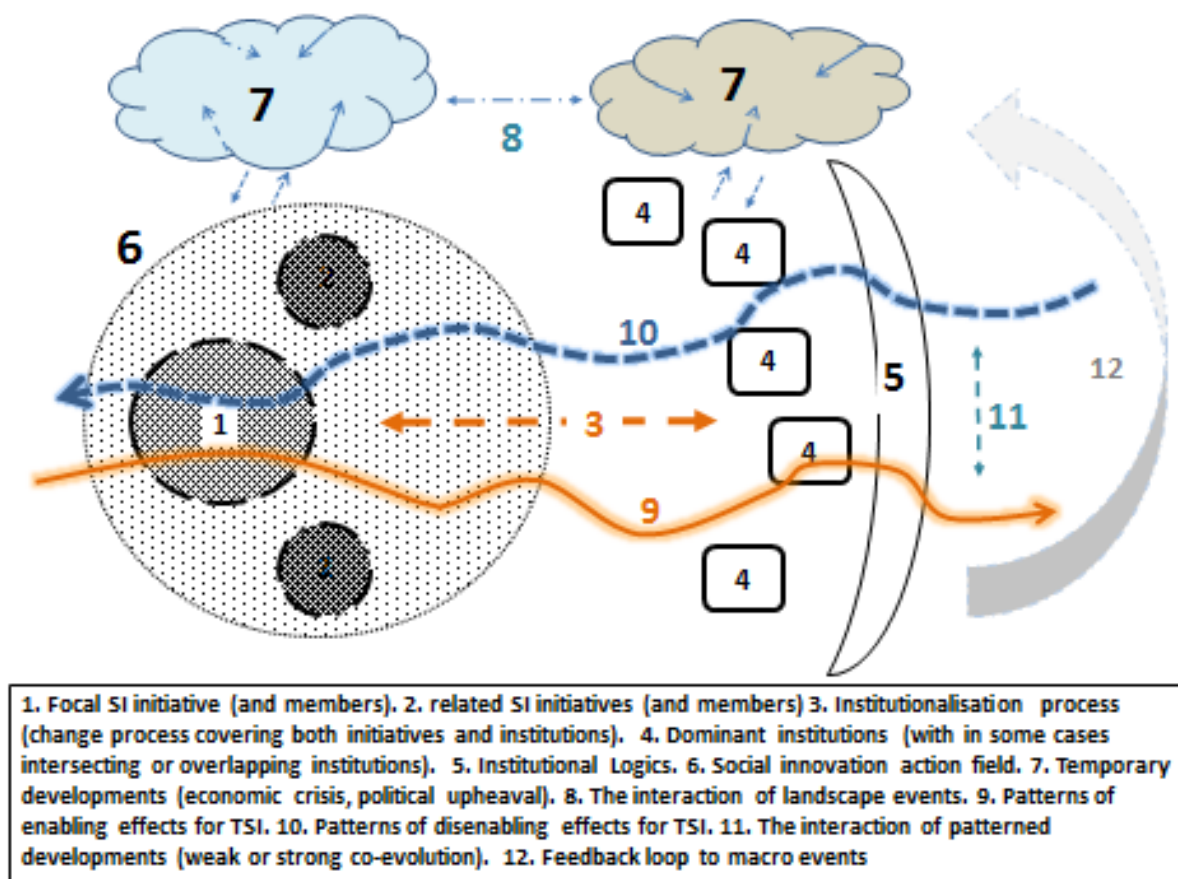


Figure 7.1.1. The relations of SI initiatives to the broader socio-material context.

The following elements are quite solidly determined:

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The transient nature of TSI agency. It is accounted for that TSI is a historically shaped and temporally unstable phenomenon. 'Transformative' and 'socially innovative' can be ascribed to certain activities, discourses, initiatives and actors, but they are not essences but transient and context-dependent properties. By implication, the TSI heroes of today are not necessarily those of future TSI, which may be focused on different sets of social relations, and be driven by different SI initiatives.

Trends that are important to TSI are: the network society based on ICT and horizontal relations, marketization (which is connected with a rise of meritocracy linked to individual performance measurement) and rising demand for autonomy and self-fulfilment. The internet is a big enabler, allowing likeminded people to communicate and associate. There are other enablers, such as liquid modernity and the rise of emancipation, which could be explored in future research.

The transformation enacted is a diverse transformation. The TSI cannot be meaningfully aggregated as the social innovations are based on different DFOK. Even within TSI networks there is diversity..

The degree of novelty varies greatly. The material shows that the social relations are often not new to the world but something that has existed elsewhere, is characterised by re-invention in some cases and advocacy for social innovation and an alternative economy. SI activity can be found in many places and is carried through various activities, beyond the obvious circles of innovation-minded actors, experimenting activities, and future-oriented action (found in living labs for instance).

Crises are not game changers. Crises constructions based on real events or problem diagnoses have little discursive power when it comes to altering and aligning different world views. For those in TSI, crises are a symptom of problematic trends (the instability of capitalism and need for more resilient and inclusive economic systems), they hardly revealed something they did not know already. Rather than affording opportunities, crises may make things more difficult for SI initiatives.

Some narratives of change are subject to change. There is evidence that SI initiatives are adapting their narratives of change to their changing perceptions of the socio-material context. There is the example of Transition Towns, which initially formulated their activities as a response to peak oil and climate change to prepare communities for a future with no or a scarcity of fossil-fuels. After the economic crisis of 2008, a significant reframing took place positing the activities as a response to austerity and possible further financial and currency crises. For the others, the narratives of change are quite stable.

TSI is not a simple response to marketization. At discourse levels (and their interactions with policies, politics and administrative EU practices), a rather more complex image appears to be prevalent: SI-practices appear to be very heterogeneously interpreted and demarcated. Along the hegemonic strand and discourse on SI at EU-level as it is reported upon around BEPA and incumbent actors (Nesta, Young Foundation...) there seems to persist a set of more accessory interpretations of SI (e.g. an entire strand of 'SI for the renewal of the management of public administrations' attracts quite some budgets, but remains relatively invisible in the principal SI-discourse at EU-level).

A quasi solid conclusion is that **SI initiatives are owned by the members.** This seems to be true but some SI initiatives are characterized by a relatively strong influence of leaders (Ashoka, Slow Food Movement, Transition Towns). Sometimes SII undergo a complete overhaul of their membership in the process of institutionalizing. Wikipedia is of that genre. **Cooperation is a core value** which is practiced and valued but some are competing for territory or fishing in the same pond for resources. Likeminded organizations that argue for the merits of cooperation and which have similar transformative ambitions can be highly competitive. A more tentative conclusion in need of further analysis is: **SI are more likely to be supported by incumbents as complementary solutions** than as alternatives for dominant systems of delivery.

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7.2 Presentation of Cluster D propositions

7.2.1 Proposition D1: The socio-material context out of which TSI emerges

7.2.1.1 Short statement of the proposition

The rise of SI initiatives and discourses and the particular transformative ambitions conveyed by them are strongly shaped by the historical paths that their socio-material contexts have taken. Important developments are emancipation, the growing demand for autonomy, network society and negative consequences of marketization, meritocracy and bureaucracy.

7.2.1.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition states the theme that people are part of processes of change, in ways beyond their imagination and choice. This applies to everyone, including great men. Such a view, which is widely shared by social scientists and historians, is stated by Tolstoi in *War and Peace* in the following way:

“In historical events great men—so-called—are but labels serving to give a name to the event, and like labels they have the least possible connection with the event itself. Every action of theirs, that seems to them an act of their own free will, is in an historical sense not free at all, but in bondage to the whole course of previous history, and predestined from all eternity.”

He echoes Karl Marx’s famous statement that:

“Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language.”

TSI people seem to be making their own choices about life, but they are not entirely free in making those, as cultural human beings. Whereas it was difficult for Russian people to reject enlistments into the army at moments of war, today it is difficult to resist temptations from advertising selling goods with the help of images of success and happiness. According to economists, people have a natural aptitude for consumption, wired into their preferences. But psychologists have shown that apart from physiological needs and practical-functional needs people have basic needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence.

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In the market economy as the basis for most work and consumption, there have been a number of changes. One of them is that lifetime employment is no longer a normal thing; a second change is the rise of meritocracy linked to individual performance measurement. There has been an increase in autonomy but this was meant to make people more productive. According to Sennett, the globalization of the economy alienates individuals from one another and is 'de-skilling people in the conduct of everyday life' (2012: x). Short-term jobs and temporary teamwork are said to undermine loyalty to others and sustained relationships in which cooperation is practiced. In TRANSIT wishes for autonomy, relatedness and the pleasure of exercising one's skills are considered as positive motivators in TSI but to exercise these you need opportunities and assets (skills and other resources). The internet is a big enabler, allowing likeminded people to communicate and associate. Two other enablers, which we haven't given much attention is the decline of tradition and rise of emancipation both of which lead people to make their own life choices based on autonomy. People may also be driven to TSI out of material needs rather than by transformative goals and lifestyle choices. In his study of alternative economic practices in Catalonia, Castells and co-workers distinguish 3 types of people: cultural transformatives, alternative practitioners and culturally adapted where the last two groups (and especially the second group) do not have strong ideological positions. The *cultural transformatives* tend to be relatively young and well-educated whose views (especially their attachment to personal fulfilment and fairness) strongly contrast with those of elder generations. Modernisation with its emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship shows up in the empirics as something that is lived in SI initiatives but most SII take a negative stance to marketization for its reliance on competition, element of exploitation (of nature and people) and reliance on managerialism.

7.2.1.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

Timebanks is an interesting case in showing the importance of context and lived experience. The aging of the population was a direct motivator for the creation of Voluntary Labour Banks (VLB), the predecessor of the Voluntary Labour Network (VLN) by Teruko Mizushima in Japan, where the creation of VLB took account of the main features and traditions of Japanese society in the immediate post-WWII period, all of very long-standing, and which are relevant from the TimeBanking perspective such as: 1) A strong separation of male and female social networks (with those of men centred on work and public spaces and those of women centred on the home and private spaces); 2) The idea that aging involves a gradual withdrawal from society and that withdrawal should occur in the confines of home and close family; 3) The assumption that the burden of support of the aged should fall to the wife of the oldest son; and 4) The convention that a woman not immediately giving up all other roles and activities to assume this burden, including paid work, education, hobbies or interests, would be stigmatized in her family and community. Mizushima both pre-empted any state involvement in care provision for the elderly and was foresighted in recognising the problems of an aging society and in designing and establishing a TimeBanking system that might provide for security in old age without relying on family, but would be based, instead, on mutual support and benefit deferral. Her own personal experiences also played a role. Her ideas for a Timebanking system appear informed by her own experiences after WWII, where the breakdown of the economy (because of hyperinflation) and government services led Mizushima to appreciate other exchange systems, in particular those based on time, as a basis for providing mutual support. <http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/sii/ctp/tb-japan-1>

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7.2.1.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

A solid finding is that TSI is shaped by broader contextual developments. Important developments are: network society, negative consequences of marketization and the rising demand for autonomy amongst well-educated people which is linked to emancipation. The influence of slow moving historical processes is more difficult to capture than radical changes such as the economic crisis and radical changes in state politics and government.

An important question from the point of view of socio-material context and TSI theory is: where do the transformative goals come from? They appear related to background processes of emancipation and to social critique, but also to people's own personal development and life histories involving encounters with others and the socio-material context (in a proximate sense and wider sense). Another explanation for the transformative goals is that the market economy and public sector do not cater enough to people's need for autonomy, relatedness and competence. Especially relatedness is being undermined in the market place for those with paid work, as is craftsmanship (Sennett, 1998, 2006).

A complication for the assessment of a changing context is that we lack hard data for some espoused developments such as the growing demand for autonomy. We also lack historical data on the element of self-fulfilment and engagement in work but it seems that there is a growing demand for it rather than a decline of those elements in the market economy. The level of non-engagement with paid work is rather low: "The bulk of employees worldwide -- 63% -- are "not engaged," and 24% are "actively disengaged from the organizational goals" according to a Gallup study under 8000 workers across the world in 2011 and 2012. But whether it is lower than before is unclear.

7.2.1.5 Relations to other propositions

To the proposition on autonomy, relatedness and competence in cluster A it adds the statement that autonomy is increasing in the market economy and more widely in society. The co-dynamics of TSI and the existing institutions are dealt with in cluster C and discussed in D4 about diverse transformation.

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7.2.2 Proposition D2: The different historical appearances of TSI

7.2.2.1 Short statement of the proposition

Socially innovative ways of doing, organising, framing and knowing are only innovative against the background of an evolving socio-material context. Activities of innovating and invention present but one historical appearance of TSI, next to other less conspicuously innovative activities of re-invention, advocacy, and contextual adoption.

7.2.2.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition addresses the historical shaping of social innovation. In line with proposition D1, which unpacked the socio-material trends that shape the emergence and development of SI initiatives, it asserts how contemporary SI initiatives are historically shaped. This proposition articulates an important further implication of this historical shaping, namely that SI initiatives (and the new social relations that they promote) are historical, transient appearances of broader changes in the socio-material context. Specifying on the underlying empirical analysis that the activities of innovating and invention present but one historical appearance of TSI, next to various activities of re-invention, advocacy, and contextual adoption, the proposition articulates several key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics:

- 1) **The transient nature of TSI agency.** It is accounted for that TSI, when defined in terms of new social relations, is a historically shaped and temporally unstable phenomenon. ‘Transformative’ and ‘socially innovative’ can be ascribed to certain activities, discourses, initiatives and actors, but they are not essences but transient and context-dependent properties. By implication, the TSI heroes of today are not necessarily those of future TSI, which may be focused on different sets of social relations, and be driven by different SI initiatives.
- 2) **Unpacking the diverse manifestations of TSI agency.** It is accounted for that TSI agency has various historical appearances. Innovating and inventing are the most conspicuous appearances, and in contemporary contexts characterized by the rise of the ‘innovation society’ (Rammert 2011) also one that tends to receive societal acknowledgement. As the proposition states that re-invention, advocacy and contextual adoption are less conspicuous but also important forms of agency through which TSI is promoted, it articulates that SI activity can be found in many places and is carried through various activities, beyond the obvious circles of innovation-minded actors, experimenting activities, and future-oriented action.
- 3) **Providing elements of TSI process insight.** The fourfold distinction of historical appearances mainly unpacks the various activities, identities and ways of positioning in society that SI activity consists of, next to and in conjunction with the actual innovating in the narrow sense. Next to this systematic distinction, the proposition also provides elements of process theory: the four different historical appearances can be appreciated in terms of development stages, indicating for example how SI initiatives in the course of their innovation journey shift emphasis towards certain activities, change historical appearance, and emerge or fade as socially innovative actors.

The main relevance of this proposition to TSI middle-range theory thus resides in the specification of the historical shaping of SI, i.e. the interactions between trends in the socio-material context and the emergence/development of SI initiatives. This in turn adds reflexivity to TSI theory. To articulate the

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historical shaping of SI initiatives is also to indicate the conceptual instability of the focal actor in our theorizing and empirical investigations. The 'SI initiative' does not simply refer to collectives of innovation-minded individuals but is shown to be at the same time a social construction, an identity acquired through the analysis of researchers but also through the development of SI policy (see D6) and against the background of trends in the socio-material context (see D1).

The distinction of the different historical appearances of TSI has been empirically informed (see section 1.4.3.3), but conceptually it can be retraced to theoretical insights on innovation more generally. The transient, processual nature of innovation phenomena has been underlined in the theoretical framework for TSI by Haxeltine et al. (2016), in turn drawing on process and relational views on innovation such as Pettigrew (1997), Garud & Gehman (2012) and Shove (2012). The proposition also reflects the relational, co-produced view on SI as expressed through Jasanoff (2004), Voß (2014) and Pel & Backhaus (under review), in which it is underlined how the societal acknowledgement (politically, scientifically, in public discourse) is not a secondary result but an inherent part of SI dissemination. In Franz et al. (2010), Rammert (2011), Jessop et al. (2013), Schubert (2014) and Pel & Bauler (2015) it is discussed how acknowledgement as SI is particularly important in current innovation society. Finally, the proposition is inspired by the analyses of Moulaert & Ailenei (2005) on the re-emergences of the Social Economy.

7.2.2.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

The proposition results from a typical iterative process of middle range theory development. The theme developed through several empirical researchers' challenges of first phase propositions regarding the emergence of SI initiatives. The propositions presented early conjectures about the emergence of SI initiatives, in various ways theorizing how they emerged as resistance against, or in reaction to, certain undesirable societal trends (see D1). This logic was challenged notably by the case of the Ecovillages, which a researcher considered to have emerged quite independently from any particular societal development. She rather saw a quite continuous development, involving re-inventions and re-contextualizations across time and space. A similar pattern has later been asserted regarding the Timebanks, undergoing waves of re-invention. Both cases can be considered exemplars for the theoretical theme sparked by the Ecovillage case: The re-inventions and restorations that SI display over time, as pointed out also for the Social Economy (Moulaert & Ailenei 2005) and the associated RPESS case study (Pel & Bauler 2017). Also more broadly, throughout TRANSIT cases, we also encountered evidence of people being ambivalent about the 'innovative' nature of their activities, as shown by the following two quotes from Transition Towns people:

"[Innovation] doesn't in my mind sufficiently reflect the fact that in a lot of cases we're relearning what we've lost, it's not an innovation, it's a relearning, stuff around being hard wired for collaboration rather than competition, doing things around that, is that innovation or is that relearning some things that we've forgotten?"

"I think Transition is an innovation in that it's a new synthesis of different things that have arisen in response to a particular set of challenges...So that felt like an innovation to me, creating that space, bringing in stuff from eco psychology, from a social enterprise, a whole very porous approach to bringing in from all different kinds of approaches."

A second theme is the issue of social innovation not always being recognized and acknowledged as such, or inversely, of activities considered SI whilst actually hardly fitting the definition. In Pel & Bauler (2015) it is described how Social Economy enterprises for the insertion of marginalized groups are currently not

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widely viewed as socially innovative anymore— their initiators and supporters do not mind that much about that definition, though, as their main concern is to keep the social enterprises afloat and to keep their social innovation going – improvising and struggling in the face of adverse societal developments. The case formed the exemplar for the subsequent analysis of ‘shades of innovation’, of restoration and innovation – how general a phenomenon is it, the SI initiatives that are to a large extent involved in the restoration, defense and support of earlier innovations, rather than in activities of innovation in the narrow and direct sense?

The next phase of D2 has been the meta-analysis of the former proposition 11 on ‘the ebb and flow of social innovation’. In Pel et al. (2017: 190-205), it was investigated to what extent the 20 SI networks studied could be considered predominantly ‘innovative’ or rather ‘restorative’, which generated the following fourfold typology of ‘shades of relative novelty’:

- a) ‘Experimenting attitude & innovation society’.
- b) ‘Reasserting practices and values’.
- c) ‘Evangelizing, transmitting and advocating innovation’.
- d) ‘Adopting, importing, recombining innovation’.

Importantly, the initiatives associated with the latter three groups are not always and necessarily considered innovators (by themselves, and by others). They rather act and are considered as activists (b), promoters or advocates (c), or people implementing, following or taking up innovative practices and ideas (d). Importantly, the activities of the latter groups support the dissemination and anchorage of new doing, organizing, framing and knowing in various ways, but their SI activity and position in the socio-material context is not one of innovating in the narrow sense of inventing.

7.2.2.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

Proposition D2 can be seen to establish a relation between two key processes of TSI: on the one hand the evolution of SI initiatives, as theorized in the chapter about cluster A, and on the other hand the broader trends in the socio-material context (this chapter). As a result, the proposition presents a processual deepening and a critical interrogation of the central phenomenon – to what extent, or in what ways, are the SI phenomena we studied to be understood as innovation? Where is social innovation to be found, and who are the ‘true’ social innovators?

The proposition can be considered quite solid, in the sense that the typology is based on a comprehensive comparison of the 20 SI networks studied. This empirical analysis can be deepened though, especially when drawing more extensively on the relevant innovation-theoretical sources as sketched above, to refine the typology as proposed. The solidity of the proposition is obviously partly thanks to the fact that it is modestly phrased. The assertion of the historical shaping and the four historical appearances is relevant, but not very challenging. The sketched implications of the proposition and the cited literature sources already pave the way towards more specific insights and more sharply formulated propositions on this topic, however. A particular promising avenue for further research seems to be the elaboration of the temporal TSI dynamics addressed: *can a specific innovation phase be distinguished in the life of SI initiatives? What typical phase transitions occur, regarding the distinguished historical appearances of TSI? What specific patterns occur in the re-emergences of social innovations, and how can these be explained?* These questions remind of the invocation of the ‘adaptive cycle’ of resilient systems for social innovation research by Moore et al. (2012), in which SI is considered as a phase in system evolution.

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7.2.2.5 Relations to other propositions

This proposition can be considered a specification of D1, and an important background to D6 on SI policy discourses. Furthermore, the proposition complements the insights of cluster A, clarifying how SI initiatives may be joined not for the innovating activities, but rather for activities and identities less oriented towards innovation, invention and the associated celebration of competence, and more towards relatedness and autonomy, for example. Finally, the proposition has intimate relations with proposition B4, which sketches SI initiatives' orientations towards co-creation capacity – a possible historical appearance specific to current socio-material contexts.

7.2.2.6 References

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7.2.3 Proposition D3: Narratives of change and diagnosis of the context

7.2.3.1 Short statement of the proposition

Social innovation actors make a diagnosis of developments in the socio-material context – these become visible in their narratives of change, which express why the world has to change, who has the power to do so and how this change takes place. While there are diverse problem framings, these converge in a number of ideal-type narratives of change.

7.2.3.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition addresses the key aspect of the social construction of the broader socio-material context through focusing on the diagnosis of that context by SI actors. These diagnoses are expressed in narratives about what is problematic about the world, who has the power to change this and how this can be done. We refer to these as narratives of change (Wittmayer et al. 2015) and they can be understood as system framings (Leach et al. 2010). Evoking a sense of time, narratives of change point to how TSI agency is shaped by *“memories of the past, anticipations of the future and attention in the present”* (Garud and Gehmann 2012: 985, building on Ricoeur 1984). Such narratives are a way through which SI actors interact with their socio-material context. They are amongst others contingent on broader discourse activity (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008a, cf. Proposition B3, D6) with which they co-evolve. Rather than stable and accepted, narratives of change and the ideas they bring together should be considered as fluid and contested. Even though, these narratives are more than mere stories, they are a basis for activities of SI actors through which they aim to realize their transformative ambition. As put by Wittmayer et al. (2015: 15-16), *“they recount the theories of change which are practiced and acted upon by the very SI initiatives which propagate them”* (cf. Leach et al. 2010).

7.2.3.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

In an attempt to understand the different conceptual understandings that SI initiatives and networks hold implicitly or explicitly about transformative change, we developed the concept of narratives of change (Wittmayer et al. 2015). It can be used to present the diversity of ways in which context (past developments, current situation and desired future), actors and processes (strategy and activities to arrive at the desired future) are framed, and to make visible the transformative ambitions of SI initiatives.

Such narratives of change are ‘master narratives’. This means, they are abstracted across contexts, thus articulated in various forms and at different instances (cf. De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008b). As such, we do not consider narratives of change to exist as such ‘out there’ – analysts (inside or outside the SI initiative) construct them. However, some SI initiatives and networks have very explicit and developed narratives of change, e.g. the Transition Network has handbooks outlining their problem framing, their desired future as well as the processes and actors through which to achieve it. The better developed the narrative is, the clearer is also the transformative ambition of the SI initiatives.

Narratives of change are not stable through time. Rather there is evidence that SI initiatives and networks adapt and revise their narratives of change to their changing perceptions of the socio-material context as well as to strategically play into dynamics of the socio-material context (cf. Avelino et al. 2017). Such

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revisions allow for maintaining continuity with the past while making sense of the present and new possibilities (Garud and Gehmann 2012). There is the example of Transition Towns, which initially formulated their activities as a response to peak oil and climate change to prepare communities for a future with no or a scarcity of fossil-fuels. After the economic crisis of 2008, a significant reframe took place by positioning the activities as a response to austerity and possible further financial and currency crises. In addition, Ashoka has been changing its narrative of change in terms of the focal actors. While it initially focused on high-profile social entrepreneurs, it more recently expanded its understanding of ‘changemakers’ – those driving the change – to include potentially everyone, because a single person with a good idea and the right strategy, support and networks is believed to have an unprecedented impact on a global level. Such a revision in a narrative of change is also illustrated by the following quote from Slow Food – this quote also shows that narratives of change are not shared unanimously by all members of a SI initiative or by all SI initiatives within a SI network: *“Slow Food Congress signified a change in the philosophy of slow food. It is a pivotal moment. It means the change from being a gastronomic association to becoming an environmental association (...) We are now moving from a focus on good (food) to put the focus on the environment, in the defence of clean and fair (food), prioritizing environmental conservation. We are living now a period of transformation, and all these changes are not understood by everyone”*.

Drawing on our in-depth study into three SI networks (Ashoka, RIPESS, GEN) with very diverging narratives (Wittmayer et al. 2015), we can distinguish three ‘master narratives’. If considering these as ‘ideal-types’, then also other SI networks under study can be considered to relate to these.

“Providing a simulative environment for transformational entrepreneurial activities” This ideal-type is built based on the framings of the Ashoka network. This SI initiative prefers to focus on solutions rather than on general problem framings. The latter are done by individual social entrepreneurs working specific solutions addressing specific problems. Change is brought about by the individual, who – empowered through the right skills, network and (financial) support – can make the world a better place. Therefore, Ashoka focuses on creating enabling environments for such individual social entrepreneurs. Other SI initiatives share a similar narrative, e.g. Impact Hub.

“United we stand/Political institutional reform” This ideal-type is built based on the framings of the RIPESS network. This SI initiative describes the world as struggle for dominance, where the underdogs (in this case various concepts of a social solidarity economy) have to unite to challenge and overcome the adversary (the neo-liberal economy and world order). This is a political framing, showing a strong favour for collectivism and collective action to change structures. The state and governmental actors are seen as powerful actors who can be an ally for social solidarity economy initiatives. BIEN shares elements of this ideal-type narrative, also the Seed Network and in part Credit Unions.

“Living in local, resilient communities” This ideal-type is built based on the framings of the GEN network. This SI initiative frames social alienation, individualization and ecological threats as problematic. It has a strong focus on ‘being the change you want to see in the world’, starting with oneself and one’s community, including daily lifestyle and spiritual growth. The approach to change is one of building new communities from scratch, based on a holistic life philosophy, which then can give rise to alternative markets (based on e.g. ‘gift economy’) and governance structures (based on e.g. ‘sociocracy’). Other SI initiatives share elements of this narrative, e.g. Transition Network, to a certain extent Time Banks and Slow Food.

Considering the TRANSIT cases, at least one additional ‘ideal-type’ can be added (cf. Avelino et al. 2015):

“Democratizing knowledge and production” SI initiatives sharing this narrative in different shades are, e.g. FabLabs, Hackerspaces, EnOLL, Living Knowledge, and Shareable. Generally, many of the

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initiatives related to these networks aim at empowering people through providing access to, opening up and sharing means for the production of knowledge and goods e.g. through opening up universities (Living Knowledge), technologies and workshops (FabLabs) or sharing skills and knowledge in relation to technology in a networked way (Hackerspaces).

Taking a closer look at the different 'master narratives' of the SI networks under study (Jørgensen et al. 2015, 2016, Kemp et al. 2015), it shows that SI initiatives connect their transformative ambitions and their understanding of the socio-material contexts. In doing so, they foreground specific trends, system traits or historical processes (such as those outlined in Proposition D1) while backgrounding others. Broadly speaking, their rationales for change are motivated by their dissatisfaction with the current economic order¹¹, social order¹², the relation with nature¹³ or the fast technological developments¹⁴. The narratives feature actors driving change into the 'right' direction. These are individuals (whether as social entrepreneurs driving change, or working as persons on their inner change), communities (united by values) or networks (with actors from different backgrounds united for a goal). In addition, governments are mentioned, however less so. Especially large businesses are not considered to be driving change. The different processes through which SI initiatives consider that such change can take place include:

- Building shadow systems (GEN, Transition Network, Timebank)
- Providing alternatives for specific institutions (Credit Unions, Shareable)
- Creating mass and political collectives (RIPESS, Slow Food)
- Creating enabling environments (e.g. Applying an entrepreneurial approach to social ills through the creation of an eco-system for entrepreneurs: Ashoka, Impact Hub; for societal actors: DESIS; for civil society actors: Living Knowledge)
- Influencing societal discourse (Ashoka and the Impact Hub on 'social entrepreneurship', Credit Unions on 'ethical banking', Transition Network on 'community-based activism', RIPESS on the 'social solidarity economy', Shareable on the 'sharing economy'; also Credit Unions)
- Fostering personal value change of the individual (Transition Towns, GEN).

7.2.3.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

The analysis of the data in terms of narratives of change brought to the fore the diversity of different problem framings and different framings of desired futures that are taken as entry point for framing a specific theory of change on the basis of which SI initiatives engage into action. It also showed that SI initiatives are holding diverging theories of change, that these are not unanimously shared and changing through time. It would be further interesting to understand how these relate to scientific theories about social change. While there is solid empirical data on the different narratives of change of the individual networks, the formulation of the four ideal-types does need some more scrutiny. In addition, a more detailed look into the processes through which narratives of change develop, what the reasons for changes are and whether these can be related to social learning is another research avenue.

¹¹ neo-liberalism and capitalism (RIPESS), centralized and unified economic system (Ashoka, IH), economic crisis (TT), irresponsible investments (TB), focus on financial profit rather than common good (Ashoka), intensification and grand scale production (SF)

¹² individualisation, fragmentation, social alienation (GEN), social disintegration (TT), community breakdown (TB), growing social inequalities (BIEN), loss of health (SF)

¹³ ecological degradation and climate change (GEN, TT), peak oil (TT), extensive resource use (Shareable), loss of biodiversity (SF)

¹⁴ robotisation killing jobs (BIEN), digital platforms enable sharing (shareable)

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7.2.3.5 Relations to other propositions

This proposition relates to other propositions within Cluster D with their focus on the broader trends in the socio-material context – however, this proposition takes a specific perspective as it focuses on the ways that SI initiatives themselves understand and frame this context. Further work into the degree to which the narratives are shared is needed. They are more likely to be shared by “culturally transformative” people (Conill et al., 2012) than by people from the “precariate” class who are drawn into the initiative for economic reasons rather than value reasons (Standing, 2011). An interesting relation is with Proposition D6 – which focuses on a ‘top-down’ framing of social innovation discourse and practices as related to the European Union, while this proposition focuses on the ‘bottom-up’ framing by SI initiatives and networks themselves.

This proposition also relates to Proposition B3, which focuses on the discourse work of SI actors and its mediation through ICTs. While the focus of B3 is on the discursive activities of SI initiatives and how these relate to their collective identity, empowerment and network formation, this proposition focuses on the actual content of these discursive activities – the actual narratives of change.

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7.2.4 Proposition D4: Diverse transformation processes

7.2.4.1 Short statement of the proposition

Overall, the transformations that are enacted and worked on by SI actors are diverse. Diversity is an integral element of social innovation because social innovation is owned by the people involved in them, leading them to choose institutional forms and strategies that fit with their values and circumstances. SI actors

7.2.4.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

The 20 TSI networks exercise agency and are confronted with it. They all share an interest in social value creation but do so in different ways in terms of social relations and activities. They enact transformative practices and through their narratives of change they hope to influence external actors. Agency also lies in negotiations with dominant institutions and cooperation with organisations who share their transformative goals. An important issue is whether broader, coherent transformative pathways of transformative change emerge out of this, based on interactions with dominant institutions and other TSI networks and actors. In the field of transition studies, Geels and Schot (2007) identified 4 pathways of societal transitions based on combinations between two dimensions: the timing and nature of multi-level interactions. This led them to distinguish four transition pathways: (1) technological substitution, where disruptive niche-innovations replace regimes with the help of landscape changes, (2) transformation, in which landscape pressures stimulate incumbent actors to gradually adjust the regime, (3) reconfiguration, when symbiotic niche-innovations are incorporated into the regime and where landscape pressure cause further (architectural) adjustments, (4) de-alignment and re-alignment, in which major landscape pressures destabilize the regime which eventually gets changed but in which the pattern is one of co-existence of niches and gradual change of a regime (Geels and Schot (2007).

The pathway model of sustainability transition is analytically neat but according to Stirling (2011) fails to bring out sufficiently the plurality of ideas about progress, normative commitments and directionality of the various initiatives towards change, and the diversity of practices and institutional arrangements because of (i) stylised articulations of incommensurable perspectives; (ii) presumed normativities for transition; (iii) spurious reductions of uncertainty; (iv) scalar (rather than vector) representations of innovation; (v) highlighting singular transitions over open transformation; (vi) privileging the most visible actors; (vii) reifying particular notions of diversity itself. In a later publication by one of the authors (Geels et al. 2017) some of the criticism is accepted, where it is said that the transition pathways typology gives too little attention to agency and institutions. In TRANSIT, it is found that the SI networks involve normative diversity (as shown by their narratives of change) and different directionalities (as testified by the broad range of new social relations promoted). Also within the initiatives there is a clear diversity of normative strivings that initiatives try to accommodate (Cf. cluster A/chapter X). But notwithstanding the diversity of transformative ambitions, they also appear to share some elements. One element they share is that the initiatives are owned more by the members than by the leaders as the conflict with a new leadership in the Food movement showed. They also share elements of commitment to collaboration, democracy, active care for others and emancipation as important values. Most of them are critical of capitalism because of the presence of exploitative forms (Ashoka and Living Labs are pro-market). They belong to different movements based on different ideas of progress. As movements they do not

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champion a single cause but practices that are based on different values. As for their strategies, some want to lead by example (eco-villages, Ashoka), others are openly confrontational (RIPESS), as two extremes. Most networks are open to cooperation with dominant institutions but ambivalent about it. All of this suggests that TSI is not about a singular, integrative transformation but about diverse transformations and diverse transformation processes.

The transformations are transformations-in-the-making, they are in *statu nascendi* processes that unfold in time and space in diverse ways, with twists and turns. Empirically, we observe of co-existence, fragmentation, co-evolution, convergence, hybrid forms, mutual alignment and adaptation, confrontation, struggle and imposed change.

7.2.4.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

Each of the SI initiatives is characterised by different DOFK. This means the transformations that are enacted and being sought are diverse. In TRANSIT working paper 3, TSI are aggregated in 4 groups which are: (1) degrowth and localisation, (2) collaborative economy, (3) solidarity economy, and (4) social entrepreneurship and social economy (Avelino et al. 2015). Whereas some TSI (such as Ashoka) clearly fits primarily into one category, others do not. Arguably, Time banks fits with all 4 categories.

A closer analysis of 8 networks of their transformative aims, element of re-invention and background factors revealed the following.¹⁵ For the Global Eco-village, living in harmony with others and with nature are the main motivations. As intentional communities they seek to 're-humanize' social relations with the help of trustful and community-based organization allowing individuals to thrive in a community setting. Re-building communities is also a central aim of Transition Towns, Timebanks and the Slow Food movement. BIEN is not so much concerned with rebuilding relations at the local level but towards allowing people to live meaningful lives free from concerns about income or job security. For basic income supporters the concept is rooted in solidarity. Solidarity is an important value for RIPESS and the International Co-operative Association (ICA). Ashoka and Living Labs are not about solidarity but about collaborative networks and cross-boundary "ecosystems" for social impact. They belong to category 4 (social entrepreneurship and social economy). Emancipation is an important goal of the seed movement in LA, in GEN self-development and actualisation are important, and democracy is important for all, it is connected with relatedness and autonomy. Such elements are not part of the economy scheme.

The ideas about progress are not fully articulated or developed into metrics. It is important to note that various public intellectuals are active on that front, sometimes on the basis of requests by governments. New indicator systems for well-being are under development (an example is the Report by the Stiglitz Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress commissioned by the French government in 2008). In their book *How much is enough?* Skidelsky and Skidelsky (2012) define a good life as consisting of the following seven elements: health and vitality, security from major economic or social upheaval, respect from one's fellows, which may imply personal achievement; ties of affection and friendship; harmony with nature; autonomy to design a life of one's choosing; and sufficient leisure to undertake activity for its own sake rather than because it generates income.¹⁶ In their opinion (as formulated in a review article), "the quest for economic growth under capitalism creates an insatiable

¹⁵ This part is based on Kemp et al., (2017).

¹⁶ Based on <http://www.independent.org/publications/tir/article.asp?a=933>

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demand for superfluous material goods that advertising induces people to want in place of those they need. This system is morally repugnant: it promotes greed, envy, and avarice; it offends our sense of justice; and it leads us away from the good life". A good life might become a banner that people of SI initiatives associate themselves with but they still hold different views about progress and different preferences for social relations in activities of work and living.

Diverse directionalities

Different directionalities of change can be identified: degrowth, localisation, work relations based on collaboration, innovation models based on collaboration (of which Living Labs are a prime example), money less forms of exchange (Timebanks) and social entrepreneurship (practiced by Ashoka and the Impact Hub). Elements that are not captured well in the table are: the role for personal growth, emancipation, democracy, self-organization, the tasks for government (in relation to social welfare policies, regulation and public service provision) and the views of a good life. Moreover, the labels themselves are understood in different ways by SI actors and in academic traditions (Howaldt et al. 2014).

Diverse sources of funding

The networks that we studied have grown into considerable size. In the UK there are 255 timebanks, globally the slow food movement has 1500 convivia and 100,000 members and the global eco-village network estimates the total number of eco-villages at 10,000. Every year, new local initiatives get created but many of them disappear, because of loss of membership and problems of funding. External funding creates vulnerabilities, as shown by the science shops that had a hard time in the 1980s and a990s when funding for them was cut. In the Netherlands, the science shops tried to obtain funding by asking money for their activities as a way of surviving. In this case, as well as in other cases, we observe a great deal of variety in terms of institutional forms and sources of funding. The autonomy of local manifestations means that everyone is free to opt for a funding model of its own choice. According to Marks and Weaver (2017) SI initiatives can opt for the following pathways for funding:

- **External Funding Pathway:** this is a pathway that seeks investment and/or income by delivering services to external sponsors, especially services that help reduce costs on public sector agencies. It involves developing and delivering services of interest to the external sponsor. Contracts are established over the terms and conditions of receiving investments and/or income. The performance of the social innovation is measured and monitored in relation to designated target outcomes. This pathway is beginning to be supported by social finance, including through innovative 'pay-for-performance' financing instruments.
- **Autonomous Funding Pathway:** this is a pathway through which a social innovation organisation seeks to develop an own-income stream to self-finance its activities and fund continuity and growth. There are different ways of doing this. Evidence from the case studies shows that this can be achieved by establishing a separate social enterprise activity that generates a surplus, part of which can be returned to the social innovation organisation. Examples include restaurants, cafes and thrift shops.
- **Embedding Pathway:** this pathway involves the social innovation organisation partnering with an existing larger organisation that is wealthier or better funded and with which there is some complementarity of mission. The case studies show, for example, Time Banks that have embedded with Medical Insurers, Hospitals, large faith organisations (Catholic Diocese) and large charities as partners. Each of these partners is wealthier and has recurrent income streams. The social innovation receives financial support for helping the wealthier partner deliver its mission.

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The funding issue is a contentious issue because funding comes with ties. We should expect different choices to be made. Having diverse source of funding contributes greatly to survival (Marks and Weaver, 2017) but the point is that there always will be diversity as to the sources of funding used, which is part of the overall evolution.

Diverse forms and names. The initiatives are likely to adopt different forms and names. In the Netherlands, the science shops differed with respect on the degree to institutional position within the university system, their reliance on students or professionals, the nature of their activities (brokering, research, mixed) and the degree to which they focused on deprived groups or social groups more generally (Walchelder, 2003). Most science shops disappeared but they sometimes re-emerged under different names (such as the green office of Maastricht University, a student-run sustainability unit which spread to 25 higher education institutions across six countries). Elements of science shops also entered into regular programme (when students offer informational services to social action organisations in the course of an internship or as part of their thesis work). The latter could be called mainstreaming and the first institutional rebirth. Science shops are shown to be subject of a process of variation, selection and retention in which not only practices but also institutional forms and names changed. Timebanks also exist in different institutional forms. This is normal for a phenomenon where the people involved own the initiative. There is a co-evolution with context but the nature of the co-evolution differs from case to case. Growth may occur from cooperation with like-minded organisations that share the philosophy (such as credit unions) or from cooperation with incumbent actors. All of this (the different institutional forms and trajectories) is part of what we call “diverse transformative processes”.

Patterns of interaction and evolution. Cooperation with incumbents comes with ties but also offers opportunities to influence dominant institutions. Timebanks UK was granted a tax exemption and permission for benefit claimants to work via a Timebank, which were extremely valuable, but constituted a small change in the dominant institutions. In the UK, Timebank leaders are presently working closely with health and healthcare experts in efforts to offer change received understandings about how individual and societal wellbeing and health are secured and to promote an indicator set that better reflects the different sources and components of good health and good health care, where the proposed indicators include the contribution of strong communities as part of a preventative infrastructure that can maintain good health and high levels of wellbeing and can also be mobilised to deliver self-help, mutual help and community-based care. They are also negotiating with the ministry of justice and those responsible for security and immigration, possibilities for receiving payment for offering re-integration benefits. When granted, this changes the dominant institutions in a significant way. Internally this creates challenges of monitoring and acceptance.

There is collaboration across TSI networks. Transition Town groups are active on multiple fronts: a Transition group in Brixton created the UK's first inner-city, community-owned power station, consisting of 82kW of solar panels on top of a council estate, a group in Derbyshire created a food hub that sells food grown in back gardens for sale, as an affordable alternative to supermarkets, and groups in Totnes, Stroud, Lewes, Brixton and Bristol launched their own local currencies.¹⁷ Here we observe convergence between SI at the local level but also a preservation of autonomy and identity.

As for historical patterns, Timebanks in Japan had a heterogeneous evolution with different forms, as shown by the following text from CTP1.

¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/jun/15/transition-towns-way-forward>

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Th[e] first network of TimeBanks in Japan paved the way for other networks of TimeBanks and variant forms of TimeBanking to emerge in Japan in and after the 1980s. In turn *these later networks have operated more to challenge and change traditional institutions of Japanese society and have been able to play into societal changes being driven also by socio-economic and demographic pressures, such as more women in the workforce, earlier male retirement (through economic recession and redundancy), longer life expectancy, and an aging population*¹⁸. By the late 1980s and 1990s pressures were already forcing a re-thinking of traditional societal roles and interpersonal relationships in Japan that were becoming increasingly untenable in the face of such pressures.

In Denmark, INFORSE actors refocused their activities in the course of time. According to the case study report, INFORSE organisation VE [VedvarendeEnergi] is ‘de-mainstreaming’ itself, in the sense of “returning to basics: more focus on sustainability, democracy and local projects”. In 2001, renewable energy in Denmark encountered a big setback when in November 2001, a new Danish Government stopped all national funding of ‘green’ initiatives (Elle et al., 2015). The overall process of evolution of renewable energy in Denmark is described as “a constant manoeuvring [of renewable energy actors] in relation to other actors; in relation to conflicts; in relation to opportunities and in relation to the development of the energy system” (Elle et al., 2015).

7.2.4.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

There is agency in broader development processes, but this is brought about by special actors and discourses in special socio-material/spatial circumstances with the help of resources, artefacts and institutional change. The following contextual dynamics have been identified as important to TSI: demand for autonomy, fairness, cooperation and democracy, demand for environmental protection, the desire to create an alternative economy and the rise of network society. TSI are entangled with them: the demand for autonomy and cooperation and respect for nature is enacted in the TSI networks and local manifestation in various ways and to different degrees. Diversity of directionalities, institutional forms, ways of funding and collaboration are an integral and inherent element of the transformations that are enacted and aspired. The diversity element is solidly determined: TSI involves not a single transformation but diverse transformations based on different social relations, values and ideas of progress. This insight is the main insight of D4.

The diversity also applies to the transformation processes. Over time SI actors come into contact with other actors (where the interaction may be desired, actively or passively sought or imposed). In developing this proposition the following interaction patterns (as process relations) were being conceived as distinct patterns of interaction: co-existence, co-evolution and dialectical change with an important role for hybrid forms combining different logics (in incumbent-dominated systems and the TSI initiatives with a grassroots basis). Further analysis is needed on the usefulness of those concepts, whether we can consider the interaction pattern with dominant institutions as co-evolution or co-shaping, the degree to which the convergence of TSI leads to a shadow economy, involves patterns of mainstreaming and de-mainstreaming, and is subject to imposed change and dialectics. At this point we feel unable to do so, for three reasons: 1) the broad plurality of new social relations (and normative ends),

¹⁸ In Japan in the 1950s average life expectancy was 50 and families were large. Relatively few women would therefore be called to take on the burden of an aging in-law. But by the 1990s, average life expectancy had extended to 80, family sizes were smaller, and women were more likely to be highly educated and to have careers. Those retiring at 65 could expect to live for a further 15 years on average. Source: <http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/sii/ctp/tb-japan-1>

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2) the empirical observation that we are dealing with transformations-in-the-making, even for the actors concerned, and 3) the lack of a historical analysis across networks and regions which provides us with data about outcome-based patterns. The pathways are likely to differ across time and space and are unlikely to perfectly fit observed patterns which may consist of a combination of pathways.¹⁹

Empirically, in the TSI cases, the dominant pattern of development seems to be that of co-existence of networks with a “constant manoeuvring” over time. The maker movement, food sovereignty, cooperatives and self-organizing structures, commons-movement and the Lab & experimentation movement share certain values but organizationally they are separate. As for the interaction with the dominant institutions, we observe some fights but as the evidence of cluster C shows, overall we don’t see very strong dialectics. This may change once TSI are targeted by incumbents (especially government) in the pursuit of their agendas for change (such as big society and welfare state reforms). Alternatively, dominant institutions may also come to accept alternative logics and merge these with other logics (either as hybrid forms or through a layering of institutions).

An open issue is whether the observed patterns can be integrated into distinctive pathways of transformation based on types of interactions, the extent to which different logics are involved and certain outcomes (hybrid forms, mutual alignment, imposed change, regime logics giving way to new logics, turns in the direction of development because of changing circumstances).

7.2.4.5 Relations to other propositions

D4 is related to D1 (about socio-material trends), D3 (about narratives of change), D6 (about the heterogeneous discourse on SI) and to C4 (about different types of institutionalisation process and transformative change pathways) and C5 (about interaction with the broader institutional logics in which those dominant institutions are embedded). There are also links with cluster A and B regarding the diversity of values and the degree to which TSI with diverging values and NoC are willing and able to collaborate with each other. To the other propositions, D4 shows the diversity in values/normativities and directionalities of innovation, diversity in institutional forms and forms of funding and diversity in the changes over time, in terms of convergence, persistent fragmentation, exit and entry and shape shifting. The influence of marketization (as a macro-development discussed in D1) is shown to be diverse: it is a direct motivator for the seeds movement to counter the disappearance of traditional seeds in the market economy; the commodification of people and land is resisted as an idea by many TSI networks and many of the are active in creating an alternative economy, with a great role for autonomy, relatedness, democracy, responsible behaviour and purposeful work with an important role for cooperation. The different practices reflect different values, identities and directions for innovation. All of this leads to the conclusion that transformative social innovation cannot be viewed as a unified field and transformation but consists of diverse transformation processes which are reflected in the different narratives of change and fragmentation of activities.

¹⁹ It bears noting that the energy transition processes in Germany and the UK changed shape. They no longer fit with the theoretical interpretations offered in earlier studies by Geels and co-workers (Geels, et al., 2017). ,

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7.2.4.6 References

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7.2.5 Proposition D5: The role of crises

7.2.5.1 Short statement of the proposition

Crises constructions based on real events or problem diagnoses have limited discursive power when it comes to aligning different world views. For those in TSI, crises are a symptom of problematic trends (the instability of capitalism and need for more resilient and inclusive economic systems), they did not reveal something they did not know already. Rather than affording opportunities, crises may make things more difficult for SII.

7.2.5.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

Differently from what we expected, crises constructions have little agency, the main influence of economic crisis appears to be through material effects. The effects fall into 3 categories:

- *By bringing people into states of unemployment and situations of economic hardship*, which leads them into practices of sharing and cooperation in SII, for economic reasons of access to goods and services.
- Through the *effects of economic and financial crises on government policies*, such as austerity measures and banking regulations, turning people to Credit Unions (cooperative banks) as safe and more responsible banks. Interestingly, Credit Unions also suffered from the economic crisis through a greater influx of savings and difficulties of lending out. Whilst they were able to increase their customer base, they experienced increased competition from normal banks who charged lower interest rates for loans because they were able to lend money from the European Central Bank at a very low rate.
- Through *experiences of people who lived through a serious economic crisis*, stimulating them to set up SII, because of lived experiences that are being reflected upon. An example of this is the creation of the Voluntary Labour Network in Japan by Teruko Mizushima, who experienced the effects of economic breakdown after WWII, when Japan suffered shortages of basic material goods (food, clothes, shelter) in relation to a breakdown of the economy and a breakdown of government services.

Crises do not come out as important game changers but as something which has positive and negative impacts on SII through the material effects of unemployment and reduced government spending (although there may be special SII promotion policies). Crises often deepen political conflicts within society.

7.2.5.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

The following crises are being referred to in the CTP (studied in Dec 2016 - Febr 2017): the economic/financial crisis of 2008 (8 network initiatives), the economic crises in Argentina (5 network initiatives), Uruguay (4 network initiatives) and Brazil (4 network initiatives), a housing crisis (1 CTP) and internal crises (6 CTPs). Internal crises occurred in Ammerlake an eco-village initiative , PB in Brazil ,

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Omstilling Ry a Transition Town in DK) , a Ouishare initiative in Athens and Ecocritus). Internal crises were related to external events but not to external crises.

In Europe, the economic crisis of 2008 affected cooperative banks in several ways. The crisis contributed to an enlargement of their customer base and to increases in their liquidity position. During the global financial crisis, Merkur client numbers increased from 10.000 in 2008 to more than 25.000 in 2015 as a consequence of increased social awareness about the negative aspects of the financial system, in particular the speculative activities. But the crisis negative affected Merkur's profits, because of a decline in the loan activity. The influx of money could only be used at later times. Material effects were also visible during the economic crisis of Argentina in the beginning of the 2000s, when many of the members of ICA/CVCQ lost their jobs or began to have subsistence problems, led the housing cooperative ICA/CVCQ to engage in all kinds of activities. The projects included an artisan bakery, a textile workshop, a nursery kindergarten, a community library and a small factory for the production of concrete slabs for road paving. Five families participated in the execution and support of this project, including the paving of the roads. Road paving with the help of slabs was extended to other areas through services-sharing agreements. Other projects that were promoted by the cooperative were a community farm and a waste recycling project. The farm sought to ensure self-sufficiency of food, while the recycling project emerged as an economic alternative for many of the unemployed associates. The projects offered services and a source of income to the members of the cooperative. It is unclear from the CTP what happened to those activities when the economy improved.

In case of Denmark, a local "crisis" in the form of the closure of the slaughterhouse (a mayor employer of workers on the Island of Samsø) sparked a local debate concerning the island's future: whether to specialise in agricultural products, in tourism or something else. This issue of the future of the Island was discussed at a conference with the relevant actors, including the unemployed workers from the slaughterhouse. This debate paved the way for the public involvement in Samsø Sustainable Energy Island.

In the CTP, we came across a few successful attempts to seize a crisis. The first case is the recognition of CCVQ by the government. CCVQ is a cooperative for tenants and squatters who occupied buildings in Buenos Aires, fighting for the self-building of homes and against evictions of squatting families. The second case is also from Argentina and consisted of the adoption of resolution 525 that involved the granting of loans - with a mortgage guarantee - to finance the purchase, building, extension or refurbishment of housing for the benefit of families with limited resources. The resolution offered a partial solution to the problem of eviction that 150,000 people were facing in Buenos Aires.

In Uruguay, in 1983, in a context of inflation and indexation of mortgage fees, FUCVAM organized a mortgage rent payment strike. After numerous meetings and discussions about the strategy to follow, the cooperative movement suspended payment of mortgage rents to the state bank. This policy was the main strategy to fight against the newly installed military government seeking and the economic crisis. Opposition was aimed at the military government that responded with a policy to convert commonly owned buildings into private owned one. Individual ownership would allow the government and banks to identify cases of non-payment and make eviction judgments faster.

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7.2.5.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

It seems that SIs are not so much concerned with exploiting crisis in a more structured way. This holds more true for Europe than for Latin America where economic recessions sparked organised protests and advocacy for certain institutional changes. It is unclear whether the SI initiatives could have utilised external crises more to their advantage. Whilst this is a possibility, they may too weak to do so. In Latin America, cooperatives were able to achieve concessions from the government. In Europe there is less evidence of this happening.

Crises constructions offer justification for the transformative goals and strengthen the identity. They do not come out as important game changers. The transformative goals are more related to persistent problematic trends (marketization, environmental degradation, loss of community life) than to crises events.

More research is needed to investigate what happens AFTER a crisis. In particular, are SI able to keep people in SI in a growing economy?

7.2.5.5 Relations to other propositions

TSI have positive and negative motivations. Positive motivations are discussed in Cluster A (especially in proposition A1) and the negative ones in D3 (about narratives of change). Transformative goals are related to both positive and negative motivations. Crises are shown to bring TSI in interaction with incumbent institutions (something dealt with in cluster C). The element of co-shaping is discussed in D4. The element of increased conflict can be expected to contribute to dialectic change.

7.2.5.6 References

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7.2.6 Proposition D6 : The complexities of the SI-discourses at EU level

7.2.6.1 Short statement of the proposition

At the level of the European Union’s institutions, over time, discourses about Social Innovation exhibit increasing complexity and heterogeneity. The fragmented character of SI-practices, and the diversity of their embeddedness into SI-policies, facilitates this evolution. As a consequence of these evolutions of the discourses, the governance models and SI approaches appear to co-exist rather independently, and are not streamlining over time.

7.2.6.2 Key aspects of TSI agency and dynamics addressed by this proposition

This proposition explores the nature of the Social Innovation discourse(s) as they exist(ed) in the institutions at EU-level. Discourses are interdependent with social practices, and can indeed be taken as images of their discursive objects. As a consequence: a discourse on Social Innovation at European level resonates with the way actors envision the governance approaches and policy practices with respect to Social Innovation at European levels. A discourse frames policy, as well as actor interplay within the respective policy arena, as well as knowledge production to support the policy object.

For the purpose of the present proposition, ‘Social Innovation’ is both a concept and a series of practices. SI practices and the SI concept – again, at European level – have been identified (see Longhurst 2016) as being originally grounded in either of 3 particular institutional logics (see proposition C3): i) retreat of the welfare state, or ii) sociologisation of innovation (increasing attention to the social nature of innovation in terms of actors involved and the social issues that get accommodated and not accommodated), or iii) open, participatory societies. The proposition focuses on the EU-level, i.e. discourses, practices, policies that are generated in the vicinities of or by the EU-level institutions and by EU-level actors (whether these are within or outside of the institutions themselves). The proposition is also blind on the formation of the discourse, i.e. how the EU-level discourse on SI formed over time, under which forces and constraints, and under which actors’ wings. And in particular how the SI actors “on the ground” intend to contribute to the formation of the EU-level discourse²⁰. While these dynamics – and indeed interdependences between practice and discourse - are acknowledged, the proposition is following the overall setting of Cluster D which foregrounds the evolution of the socio-material context (which we assume to be coming to life via discourse) and its impacts and influences on SI (as a policy concept and as policy practices).

The proposition is developed in particular against a set of fundamental assertions about the dynamics between discourse and practice, which are leaning on scholarship in the realm of Interpretive Policy Studies (Fisher 2003; Hajer 1997) which are - more widely - in line with basic Foucauldian perspectives (Feindt&Oels 2005; Callon, Lascoumes&Barthe 2009).

- SI discourse and SI policy practices co-evolve with SI policy configurations and SI politics. These mutual influences and co-evolutions mean that discourse is performative on practice, and that actor interactions – and their political struggles – are reflected in the discourses themselves.

²⁰ Our empirics revealed (see D3) that at least some of the SI-networks have in their genes some forms of influencing institutional discourses.

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- SI discourse and policy practice are coproduced against the configuration of the policy context, the societal configuration, the economic context, the ethical and moral underpinnings, the democratic infrastructures they are operating in (Jasanoff 20014). Discourse and practice are reflecting, mirroring society and its institutions, and these reflections are in particular mediated (e.g. magnified or distorted) by (scientific) knowledge. The framing of policies and governance by discourse is thus also dependent on knowledge (and knowledge actors, knowledge institutions, knowledge intermediaries, knowledge infrastructures...) (Voss&Freeman 2016) .
- Adopting such a perspective of mutual interdependencies and evolutions implies that there is a “natural” level of complexities to be discovered in the interstices of practice and discourse in terms of diverse meanings and non-linear developments.
- This inherent vagueness of the concept of social innovation exacerbates complexities and interdependencies and co-evolutions further.

7.2.6.3 Articulation of the proposition in terms of the relevant TRANSIT empirics

Proposition D6 is mainly derived from a particular empirical exercise exploring the discourses at EU levels (see Longhurst, 2016. *The Rise of Social Innovation*. Included as annex to deliverable D3.3). The proposition is to a lesser extent grounded in empirics at case-study level as developed during WP4 and WP5. The CTP database was scanned for occurrences of ‘discourse’ + ‘policy’ (free search), subsequently refined by adding ‘Europe’ to the search string, and finally with a sole search on ‘Europe’. In a second iteration, the CTP database was consulted along the fixed keywords of theme 3 (Theme 3: Ways of relating to the social- material context & dominant institutions).

The European discourse – as explored and analysed via the particular discourse analysis at EU-level – and its on-going consolidation/institutionalisation that EU-level actors report upon is quasi-visible in its most explicit terms at the levels of the SI networks. Discourses solidify – in particular if they are rendered in highly technocratic policy contexts such as at the EU-level – in documents, notes, reports, speeches, media, minutes of meetings and events. Actors refer also to them via mentioning these discourse containers. There is however no obvious mention at the level of the CTPs of – for instance – the reported all-so-important BEPA report or the SIX network or NESTA or Young foundation, nor of the Vienna Declaration or initial European-wide SI conferences. It is of note that declarations about social innovation by the participating EU-level actors which can be viewed being seen as constitutional for the EU-level SI discourse are not recognized by SI networks as being critical to their own developments. While discourse and policy practice – at EU-levels – seem to co-evolve clearly in other fields, there is no obvious evidence of co-evolution between discourse (and its constituents in terms of policy practices) and SI-practice on the ground. Put differently, actors manoeuvring within SI-practice do not seem to attach prominent importance to the elements that forge the EU-level discourse evolution. At the level of the networks, our empirics show a clear prevalence of what we labelled “narratives of change” (see proposition D3), and – in terms of content of these narratives of change and content of the prevailing EU-level discourse(s) there are quite strong similarities (in terms of master narratives of dealing with societal challenges for instance) which hide from view differences in normativities.

Empirically we observed certain waves, moments of consolidation of SI as a policy domain for the EU-level. At least 2 recent waves have been identified in accounts of the historic development of SI (see Moulaert et al. 2013): during the 1990s there is constitution of SI-discourses and SI-practices within specific member states (in particular in the UK with the creation of Nesta/Young foundation and in Germany with the creation of science capacities via institutions such as ZSI). Then as from the mid-2000s,

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a EU-level discourse and policy practice is emerging and consolidating in terms of its content and definition of SI. An obvious milestone in the second wave was the BEPA report (2014), which clearly identifies SI as 1° an opportunity to encounter negative side effects of retreating national welfare states (e.g. as a consequence of the implementation in some member states of the principles of new public management and the marketization of public services) and the consequences of the financial crises on member states' capacities to preserve their very basic functions as providers of public goods & services; 2° an opportunity to intensify a new pillar of economic development (and job opportunities and occupation) in a world of post-industrialism; 3° an opportunity to raise the importance and show due respect to citizen-level innovativeness, engagement and entrepreneurship.

The consolidation and institutionalisation of the SI-practices at EU-level has been driven by a set of "strategic actions" by SI actors, including: *"Incorporation in to key policy documents and frameworks; Reports and publications; Development of European social innovation networks; Social Innovation prizes; Financing social innovation initiatives; Measuring social impact; Funding academic research"* (Longhurst, 2016). On stage appears a limited number of institutional SI actors (e.g. BEPA, NESTA, SIX...), which have even been personified: e.g. G. Mulgan, A. Hubert, D. Vasconcelos, and who are claimed to have played particularly important roles in profiling, suggesting, implementing these "strategic actions". Beyond the evidence of the formation of a limited group of actors/people around the object of SI at EU-level, these actors & peoples' affiliations hide a shared characteristic: they are **hybrid institutions**: BEPA is both political and administrative, D. Vasconcelos is politician and social entrepreneur, NESTA is administrative and quasi-political. In turn, one could speculate whether it is the **hybrid nature** of SI (e.g. in terms of being both a 4th pillar AND not, of being entrepreneurial and not, of developing an alternative to incumbent actors and not) that resonates particularly well with hybrid people/institutions/actors. Or vice-versa: could the hybrid nature of SI be explained by the hybrid characteristics of its main actors? Analyses of these dynamics have recurrently identified SI as a **boundary** process, institution, object or concept, which by its very nature has mediating characteristics between actors and institutions.

The empirical explorations of the SI-discourses show that the incumbent EU-level SI actors are convinced that both the EU-level discourse and the EU-level SI-policy are fundamental drivers of the consideration given currently to SI. While acknowledging that SI-action and SI-activity is per definition happening on the ground, "locally", the interviewed EU-level SI actors give the credit of the current attention given to SI in policy spheres to the European level polity. Interviewed SI actors assert that this influence is exerted both within the EU-borders and also globally. While there is indeed report and account of a wealth of activities and evolutions of SI-practices on EU-level, the interesting element for this proposition is that this self-assessment by (mainly institutional) actors is the only proper empirical account of an influence of the SI-discourse on the wider socio-material context's evolution. Within the EU-territories, hence not globally, the EU-level SI-discourse – in all its diversity and heterogeneity – seems indeed to interplay and co-evolve with different institutional levels, in particular as SI actors from the institutional EU-level identified that the particular EU-level SI-discourse is resonating within the level of the member states.

Whether the somewhat cacophonous SI-discourse could be interpreted as a sign of a field in the early stages of consolidation (with its foundational complexity and initial diversity), or should rather be interpreted as a set of fields (to account for its heterogeneity), or potentially something else than a field, is not really of importance to the present proposition (see cluster B for an account of SI as an action field). What we do see as being important is that SI actors are not (yet?) rallying behind a single discourse. What's more they do not seem to be of the same opinion whether there should be a strive for unity/homogeneity or not. The reported discourses are showing elements of both; calls for more "unity" as well as argumentation for keeping the natural "heterogeneity" of SI (e.g. via the argument of heterogeneity being functional to the resilience of the field itself). The discourse exploration identifies

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thus a potentially important question: should there be some form of unity and of singularity in definition and in circumscription of the field of SI? E.g. could the discourse be oriented in a way as to provoke such unity? Or is the disruptive nature of SI implying necessarily that non-unity, heterogeneity are natural consequences out of the very characteristics of SI, i.e. allowing for more resilience and diversity? Or, allowing for more experimentation & contextualisation? In other words, the EU-level discourse reveals some fundamental fragmentations on the meaning of the concept, its definition, its actors. One consequence thereof might be the current calls for a certain heterogeneity in governance models and approaches to SI.

7.2.6.4 Clarification of contribution to the middle-range theory of TSI

The starting point of D6 is that discourses exert influence on policy activities as well as on policy practice. This assumption led us to examine the dynamics at play between discourses on SI and the adjacent policy practice. While quite some of our empirical efforts show 1° a relatively clear (while often ambiguous) evolution to institutionalisations of SI, and 2° instances of the formation of an SI field, and 3° of a certain level of homogenisation in practices, the present proposition – by placing itself on the EU-level only and by placing discourse on the forefront – shows a different image. In particular, there continues to persist a wide **heterogeneity of SI policy discourses**. On the EU-level, SI discourses are linked to disparate policy agendas such as the tackling of the retreat of the (national) welfare states, the innovation & research agenda, the democratisation of public policy making, the proliferation of alternative economic models (e.g. sharing economies). More recently – and hence not emulated by our empirics – SI discourses at the level of representatives of EU-institutions have come to include discussions in the perimeter of the migration crises (i.e. SI as a practice which enables migrants to step into European societies and employment situations), administrative simplification and de-bureaucratisation (i.e. SI as a practice to ensure some basic functions of informing and communicating to citizens), open-source knowledge and more widely the governance of the (knowledge) commons (i.e. SI as a practice that could help to experiment with governing and sharing knowledge rights). And actually, many more.

More subtly, while there is establishment/consolidation/alignment at EU-levels, there is no clear evidence from “the ground” that this second short wave would also entail an alignment of SI discourses and SI policies and SI politics more generally, i.e. beyond the corridors of the EU institutions. Indeed, heterogeneity in terms of concept and governance models seems to increase rather than to deflate. Along the hegemonic strand and discourse on SI at EU-level as it is reported upon around BEPA and incumbent actors (Nesta, Young Foundation...), there seems to exist a set of more accessory interpretations of SI (e.g. an entire strand of ‘SI for the renewal of the management of public administrations’ attracts quite some budgets, but remains relatively invisible in the main EU SI-discourse).

We have also experienced (see the results of the “Monitoring & Resourcing”- workshop in Maastricht, organised early 2017) that the SI-discourse at the level of SI actors “on the ground” and at the level of SI-experts can partly follow an additional track in diversification: SI has been argued to embrace social value creation more than anything else (e.g. instead of creating innovation, or creating social care, or...).

For TSI-theory formation the observed heterogeneity, diversity and discrepancies in SI-discourses - as well as the ambiguous relationships between actors of the SI-discourses and public authority institutions –poses a series of foundational questions to the dynamics of co-production. Evolutions are not at all linear, single-tracked and evident to distinguish. While in TRANSIT we pose a clear relational perspective on studying linkages between policy, practice, experience and discourses, the serious level of

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complexities does on the one hand confirm us, but on the other hand does induce a future research agenda which should put more emphasis and focus on policy actors.

It should be noted though that the present exploration of discourses is focusing only on the EU-level and that the proposition is somewhat unidirectional as it ignores to identify how the formation of the SI discourse(s) is shaped and influenced and triggered by the evolution of policy practice and policy activities²¹. National and regional specificities add additional specificities and complexity. Specifically, in the UK there are is great deal of attention in policy circles in the possibilities of social innovation for public service delivery more than in other countries.

7.2.6.5 Relations to other propositions

Against D1 (long waves of socio-economic evolutions), there is evidence of **short waves in the evolution of SI-practices and SI-discourses at EU levels**. The discourse exploration undertaken revealed that during this second wave of consolidation there is strong evidence of the fact that the actors that were created during the first wave (and stemming from member states' levels) manoeuvred successfully to the EU-levels in order to establish SI as a policy field and a policy practice at the EU-level. The consequence was (and is) the establishment at EU-levels of a set of European SI policy practices, e.g. RTD-projects (such as TRANSIT), policy papers (such as BEPA's) and reports, speeches by high-level members of the institution. The **shades of innovation** reported in D2 is reflected in the discourse with some networks and innovators labelled by us as social innovators preferring to speak of social value creation and re-invention. The narratives of change of EU actors are diverse. The narrative of social entrepreneurship of Ashoka and Impact Hub fits with the narrative of citizen-level innovativeness, engagement and entrepreneurship which is stated in the BEPA report. The BEPA report also mentions SI as a strategy for dealing with the negative aspects of a retreating welfare state.

7.2.6.6 References

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²¹ By extension, the influence of the discourse on actual practice as it occurs and is enacted at the level of social innovation initiatives or social innovation networks is outside of the scope of the present proposition. There could indeed be an exploration on how discourse formation is entering in resonance with personal motivation or with leadership formation (as developed in cluster A), or on the linkages between discourse and network formation (as developed in cluster B).

8 Synthesis: TRANSIT's middle-range theory of TSI

Purpose and scope of this chapter: This chapter of deliverable D3.4 provides a synthesis of the central elements of TRANSIT's middle-range theory of TSI, organised around the presentation of a set of key insights that draw upon the TSI propositions presented in the previous chapters (though not with a one-to-one correspondence). The range of findings covered by the TSI propositions presented is large, and so this synthesis focuses on what we see as the central concern of a theory of TSI, namely to explain how SIs interact with transformative change. The next step will be to develop this synthesis into a research article.

8.1 Introduction

There has been a rapidly growing interest in social innovation (SI) in both public and academic discourses during the last decade or so (Adams and Hess 2010, Avelino et al 2017, van der Have & Rubalcaba 2016). A key idea manifested in policy discourses, across the EU in particular, is that SI can make a significant contribution in dealing with urgent societal challenges. Illustrative is former EU president Barroso's statement that: "*if encouraged and valued, social innovation can bring immediate solutions to the pressing social issues citizens are confronted with*" (Hubert 2012, p. vi). Such optimistic assumptions of meeting major societal challenges merit scrutiny, however, as they may underestimate the complexity of many of the challenges currently faced. Current societal challenges are interlinked and systemic in terms of their reach and impacts, and are characterised by the features of wickedness and persistence (Mannheim 1940; Rittel and Webber 1973; Schuitmaker 2012). Systemic, transformative change has therefore been identified as necessary to tackle such challenges (Loorbach 2014, Grin et al. 2010; Rotmans & Loorbach 2010). Piecemeal, short-term focused, and partial solutions easily turn out to have unintended side effects, reinforcing persistent societal challenges, or even creating new complexities. Considering the persistence and complexity of current societal challenges, the transforming potentials of SI are not self-evident: hence it is crucial to better explain how SI interacts with transformative change. Currently both SI in general, and the mechanisms and processes by which it interacts with institutional change, are not well understood. SI is not yet a fully developed research field, rather it is an emerging body of theory and practice that has its roots in a number of social science disciplines (Westley 2013): to some extent, the boundaries of scholarship are still porous and "*characterized by conceptual ambiguity and a diversity of definitions and research settings*" (van der Have & Rubalcaba 2016: 1923). Considering the nascent state of the field, the diversity of manifestations and the high expectations placed on SI, there is now widespread agreement that there is a need for new SI theory to inform research, policy and practice (Westley 2013, Haxeltine et al. 2013, Cajaiba-Santana 2014, van der Have and Rubalcaba 2016). In this paper we present a new middle-range theory of *transformative* social innovation, that advances a new framework for explaining how SI interacts with transformative change.

The remainder of this chapter is organised as follows. First we evaluate recent articles that address the need for new SI theory, and identify the set of theoretical challenges to be addressed. Section 8.3 presents the meta-theoretical considerations that informed our development of TSI theory and their implications in terms of our research design and research methods. Section 8.4 presents the central elements of the TSI theory, organised around four sub-sections that each present a different *relational dimension* of the socio-material relations that constitute the agency and dynamics of the TSI process. This account of the theory is deliberately presented in a narrative style: aiming to present a theoretically-grounded and evidence-based narrative account of how SIs interact with transformative social change. Section 8.5 provides a brief conclusion that details what we consider to be the contribution of this work to existing frameworks and literatures on SI.

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8.2 Social innovation and the need for a new theory

We identified several theoretical needs or challenges, based on both an evaluation of recent review and agenda-setting articles in the SI field, and theoretical debates in fields addressing transformative change:

A need/opportunity to bring resources from institutional scholarship to bear on the construct of SI, with the aim being to better address *“how social innovators adapt their strategies to cope with the constraints of the institutional environment”* (van der Have and Rubalcaba 2016, p1933), and how social-value creation opportunities are constructed through multi-stakeholder and multi-level settings (ibid, p. 1933). There is furthermore a need/opportunity to use concepts from institutional theories to theorise how SI interacts with transformative change. And related to this point, and recognising that SI is multi-level phenomena, the contribution of research fields specialised in all relevant ‘levels’ should be explored (Van der Have and Rubalcaba 2016, p. 1933) in developing new theory on T/SI.

A need to account for patterned realities and path dependence thereby allowing the possibility of generalisation from (otherwise isolated) TSI case studies, and therefore a greater potential for relevance to policy (cf. the multilevel perspective and transition pathways; Geels 2002, 2007, 2010); balanced against this, however, explanations of TSI also need to account for the sometimes highly contingent and fluid social realities of TSI processes (phenomena which tend to be more emphasized in the STS literature). There is also a need to account for the diversity of possible transformations (cf. Stirling 2011). Van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016, p. 1933) identify some *“rudimentary linkages”* with socio-technical (sustainability) transitions in the SI literature, but note that more research is needed to understand what causal role SI plays in shaping, accelerating or decelerating trajectories.

A need for a balanced account of T/SI agency that is able to account for both leadership and the constraining and enabling influence of context: but without a misplaced emphasis on one or the other. Prominent in the current SI discourse, are accounts that attribute SI agency to certain actors (grassroots, social niches, citizen’s initiatives etc.) rather than to others. Explanations of TSI agency require a rich ontology of agency, locally rooted and globally connected, and active in porous fields of action rather than well-demarcated systems (cf. Nicholls & Murdock 2012). Agency needs to be understood as being distributed across webs of social relations, as developed in ANT scholarship. Similarly, explanations of TSI agency need to account for the recursive relations between agency and structure (Cajaiba-Santana 2014), whereby institutional practices shape the actions of SI actors, that, in turn, confirm or modify the institutional structures that they encounter (Cajaiba-Santana 2014: 47).

A need to account for the motivations of individuals and groups in SI, and the processes by which their agency is empowered or disempowered. SI discourse is pervaded with hopes of, and assumptions about, the possibilities to empower (marginalized) individuals through SI. Too narrow a focus on such a discourse can neglect disempowerment processes, that might manifest, for example, in attempts by external actors to construct ‘empowerment instruments’ for marginalised groups. There is therefore a need for a balanced account of cooperative versus contesting relations between the actors and institutions involved in TSI, and to account for the underlying politics and power struggles.

A need address the current profusion of normative assumptions about the ‘ends’ of SI, based on overly simplistic conceptions of the agency of SI actors. We agree with Cajaiba-Santana’s (2014, p. 44) assessment that SI has been *“frequently presented as a normative instrument used to resolve social problems through the creation of new services or new products...”* (ibid, p. 44) but that presenting SI in such a normative light is a teleological mistake, that commits the error of assuming that because we see a particular outcome to a process in one instance, the process must always have that result.

These needs framed the research agenda that we set out to address in developing a new theory of TSI.

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8.3 Methodological considerations

8.3.1 Meta-theoretical perspectives on innovation and change

Given our interest in developing a theory of *transformative* SI that addresses how SI influences social transformation and transition processes, we drew inspiration from recent theoretical debates in the field of socio-technical transitions, especially in terms of the tension between the ANT-type relational approaches, and the ‘levels’ approaches of the Multi-Level Perspective (see Geels 2007, 2010). Here we found the work of Garud and Gehman useful who distinguish three metatheoretical perspectives: evolutionary, relational and durational, each with a useful contribution to make to policy, strategy and research. For the TSI theory development, a key insight—and our **first theoretical-methodological choice**—was that a relational ontology could be used as a meta-theoretical platform, providing a theoretical basis from which to integrate and/or organize paradigmatic interplay between evolutionary, relational and durational theoretical perspectives. It then became possible to develop a TSI framework that adapted insights and conceptual framings from each meta-theoretical perspective:

From a relational perspective we framed the theory development in terms of a relational ontology and choice to focus on (changing) social relations. A relational ontology (Emirbayer, 1997), emphasises the distributed and networked nature of agency, emphasizing the embedded and context specific nature of a SI, and allows to understand how and why a SI may take a certain form at a certain time and place. It emphasizes how activity is produced through social connections, how “*Social things organized in configurations ... are transformed through the action of other configurations...*” (Schatzki 2002). A particular SI initiative will be productive in association with and through the web of socio-material relations that it is part of. The actors in an initiative will engage with, and innovate, different doings, such as producing energy in different ways, engaging in new ethically-motivated lifestyles or pioneering a new approach to social care. As the initiative develops, they will also engage in different ways of organising themselves and their actions, and develop new understandings, framings and meanings about their world (as issue definitions, visions, imaginaries). At the same time, new knowledge comes about in the form of cognitive resources, competencies, types of appraisal, etc. (new knowings). From a relational perspective, the term co-production describes how diverse actors engage in activities of ‘producing together’ new ways of doing, organising, framing, and knowing.

From a durational perspective, we made a commitment to develop process-theoretical explanations of TSI, which implied discovering patterns in sequences of events in observed SI processes (in contrast to variance theories). Together with the relational approach, a process theoretical-approach aims to challenge substantivist understandings of SI realities and attempts at explanation in terms of simplistic causal relations. We also make use of narrative approaches as they draw attention to temporal and relational properties. Narratives can be considered vehicles that help meaning-seeking agents to define “*who [they] are*” and “*what [they] know*” in relation to the ever-changing actor-networks they themselves, their identity and their agency are entangled with (Garud & Gehman, 2012, p. 983). In TRANSIT, we develop insights on ‘narratives of change’ and the role that these play in an unfolding SI process (Wittmayer et al 2015). Narratives of change are discourses on change and innovation that actors engage with and/or that they construct. They allow the analysis of the entanglement of actors with a broader social-material context. This fits with the choice to develop a process theory rather than variance theory, emphasising that while we may study the ‘narratives of change’ associated with empirical SI processes, we are engaged in developing a process theory—not simply ‘narrative accounts’ of SI processes.

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From an evolutionary perspective, we recognise coevolutionary relationships as ‘metaprocesses’ between interacting elements or ‘sub-systems’ in a social-material context. Such metaprocesses and associated elements are identified empirically in terms of variations in patterns of local structuration. In this way the theory may be *informed* by complex systems, transition studies and evolutionary economics, while at the same time being *grounded in* a relational ontology. The term coevolution is therefore used here in a less restrictive way to describe developments in different elements of the social-material context that are *both* interlinked *and* partially independent. In TRANSIT, ‘selection’ (of e.g. a law, organisational form or working principles) is viewed as the outcome of ‘generative processes’ and subject to processes of adjustment and elaboration.

A second theoretical-methodological choice that we made was to employ a middle-range theory-development approach. Middle-range theory is an approach to sociological theorizing aimed at integrating theory and empirical research. The middle-range theory development approach (Merton, 1949; Hedstrom, 2005) provided us with a tried, tested and widely-used method for building a new social theory. It firstly helped us to clarify that, with our focus on explaining how SI interacts with transformative change, there was a need to study how relations to external actors and events shape the agency and dynamics of transformative SI processes. Secondly, it helped to clarify that in developing a theory of SI we need to abstract and generalise observations from multiple cases using a mix of different methods. The middle-range approach then guided a research design that involved confronting successive versions of a conceptual and theoretical framing for TSI with the findings of successive rounds of empirical case study research on contemporary examples of SI initiatives and networks (Haxeltine et al 2017; also see Jørgensen et al., 2015; Haxeltine, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c). The development of a theory then involved confronting our conceptual understanding of SI with the empirical examples, and based on that arriving at insights about how, and under what conditions, SI interacts with transformative change (see Haxeltine et al. 2017).

A third theoretical-methodological choice that we made was to address transformative social change specifically in terms of institutional change (Haxeltine et al 2017). In this framing, SI is understood to take place within a broad social and material context (socio-material context) that is made up of the sum-total of all actors and the different socio-material relations between them, and crucially shaped by and shaping its institutional environment. Transformative change also occurs within this broader context, taking the form of a persistent adjustment in societal values, outlooks and behaviours of sufficient ‘width and depth’ to alter any preceding situation in the context. Such transformative changes necessarily involve transformations in institutions, and in most cases will also involve concomitant changes in social relations, practices, and the allocation and availability of resources. Institutions are conceived of as rule-like ‘social facts’ – as arrangements of established social rules that structure social interaction, and in terms of how they are experienced by SI actors include: norms, rules, conventions and values (Cajaiba-Santana 2014). They provide: prescriptions, cognitive models (frames with tacit assumptions and schemas), identities and roles, and arrangements (family, clubs, work organisations, platforms, communities) that help us to make sense of the world, identify options, and take action. Institutions vary greatly in how tractable or intractable to change or replacement they are. SI impulses can induce changes in them, but are at the same time also inevitably reproducing them. **Transformative social innovation (TSI)** can then be conceptualised as a *process* that transforms existing institutional arrangements, by challenging, altering or replacing the established, and sometimes dominant, institutions in a specific context. Following the work of Sewell (2005) on social transformation and ‘third phase’ institutionalism (Lowndes & Roberts 2013) insights, we note that in many cases there may often not be one ‘dominant’ institution guiding a particular aspect of social life in a particular context, other possibilities include overlapping and intersecting institutions.

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8.3.2 Methodological implications

These theoretical-methodological choices in turn led to a research design that involved the development of a middle-range theory of TSI through an iterative exchange with empirical case studies and surveys of SI initiatives and networks. The methodology used to develop the theory is described in more detail elsewhere (see Haxeltine et al. 2017, Pel et al 2017, included in Annex 1 and 2; and Haxeltine et al 2016), as is the accompanying empirical research design (see references to specific parts below). In brief then, the actual implementation of the middle-range theory approach was done in the following iterative manner:

- A first set of sensitizing concepts and central hypotheses about SI agency and dynamics (Haxeltine 2014) informed a first stage of empirical work consisting of in-depth case studies of 12 transnational SI networks and 24 of their local manifestations (Jørgensen et al., 2014; 2015). This empirical data, next to additional literature reviews, was used to further develop these sensitizing concepts and initial hypotheses into a first version of a ‘TSI framework’ including a first set of propositions about the dynamics and agency of TSI (Haxeltine, 2015).
- This draft informed a second stage of empirical work consisting of in-depth case studies of 8 additional transnational SI networks and 16 of their local manifestations (Wittmayer et al., 2015; Jørgensen et al. 2016). This empirical work was used to further inform the development of a second iteration of the TSI framework and resulted into the formulation of 12 synthesising propositions on the agency and dynamics of TSI (Haxeltine, 2016c).
- This second draft TSI framework and its propositions informed a third stage of empirical work, namely the analysis of a database of the ‘critical turning points’ observed in the unfolding of some 80 SI initiatives over time (Pel et al., 2017b). This last confrontation with empirical work was used to finalize the TSI framework and develop a consolidated set of propositions on the agency and dynamics of TSI (Haxeltine, 2017c).

In summary: we combined different types of data collection to inform different aspects of the theory development in different iterations. We also chose to *present* and articulate the theory in the form of propositions about the agency and dynamics of TSI—using propositions as both a device for structuring knowledge about TSI as well as a *generative* method (Haxeltine, 2016b).

8.4 The central elements of the middle-range TSI theory

A key feature of our approach is to view SI specifically in terms of how it leads to the creation of new *socio-material relations*, both between the members of an initiative and between members and any aspect of society with which they interact. With this emphasis on *socio-material relations* we place the relational firmly at the centre of how we conceptualise SI. For instance, when citizens in a *Transition initiative* organise themselves into a cooperative who jointly own a wind turbine, they create new social relations between citizens, energy users and producers, as well as new relations between people, technological artefacts such as wind mills and the natural phenomena of wind. An initiative in which there are new social relations for doing things differently, can be considered ‘socially innovative’.

A particular initiative is made up of, and operates through, the web of social and material relations that it is part of. SI both acts on the surrounding context and is produced by it. The agency (capability to be the producer of change) of SI must be understood in terms of the relations that it is embedded in. Agency is in a sense *distributed* and an emergent property of the web of relations that it is a part of. This *relational*

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framing of SI emphasises the embedded and context specific nature of SI, and leads to an interest in how and why an innovation may take a certain form at a certain time and place in history.

We approach **social innovation** (SI) as a process and as a qualitative property of ideas, objects, activities, and different groupings of people. We define a **social innovation initiative** (SI initiative) as a collective of people working on ideas, objects or activities that are socially innovative, a **social innovation network** (SI network) as a network of such initiatives, and a **social innovations actor** (SI actor) as any collection of individuals, initiatives, or networks that engage in social innovation.

In order to explain how SI initiatives are ultimately able to challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions, we first present how we conceptualise SI, we then need to explain how and why they emerge and are able to secure the resources and support necessary to sustain them (addressed in section 8.4.1). We also need to explain how they forge new relations and networks with other SI initiatives (addressed in section 8.4.2), and how they understand and respond to problems and opportunities that they identify in the wider context (addressed in section 8.4.3); all of this then provides a basis for explaining how they engage with processes of institutional change in the socio-material context (addressed in section 8.4.4). In this way each of the following sub-sections present insights around a different *relational dimension* of the socio-material relations involved in the agency and dynamics of how SI interacts with transformative change.

8.4.1 How people engage with SI initiatives

Our next step in this synthesis presentation of the TSI theory, is to look at the social relations *within* SI initiatives. Here we were interested in: what drives people to join SI initiatives, and how is motivation supported over time? How do SI initiatives experiment with interpersonal relations, as part of the process of creation of new socio-material relations and how are they constituted as both socially-innovative and as means by which social innovations are realized? How is empowerment generated within SI initiatives and what are its psychological characteristics and enablers? What role does reflexivity play in the shaping of SI initiatives and in enabling agency for transformative change?

The theory-building research steps for this relational dimension of TSI (as presented in chapter 4) led to the following key insights about the agency and dynamics of TSI:

Key insight 1: SI initiatives provide spaces in which new values can be promoted and aligned with new ways of doing, organizing, framing and knowing—in a process of experimentation that supports both members’ motivations and moves towards collective ‘success’ and impact.

Members start out with enthusiasm for the novelty the SI initiative proposes in terms of different values, relations and practices, and keeping these original intentions alive and, to a certain extent pure, is important both for motivations and for the initiative’s transformative potential. Informed by social psychology perspectives on psychological needs and self-determination, we find members’ motivations are influenced by the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness and competence. *Autonomy* refers to the ability to choose one’s own acts and to act in line with personal values and identity, and members are attracted to SI initiatives by the possibility to better align their values with new practices and behaviours. *Relatedness* is about feeling connected and part of a social group, as well as receiving support and recognition from it, and *competence* is related to developing mastery and the perception of effectiveness in carrying out actions to achieve one’s goals, and entails stimulation and developing the abilities to overcome obstacles (Bidee et al., 2013; Ryan and Deci 2002).

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Initiatives actively shape their rules and practices in ways that support need satisfaction, which in turn contributes to maintaining motivations for involvement. They consciously work on developing SI initiatives that facilitate autonomy, relatedness and competence, in line with different values from the ones that govern institutionalized social relations and practices. However, pursuing their transformative goals entails facing and dealing with external pressures and making compromises. Initiatives experiment with rules of engagement and decision-making structures that achieve a balance between keeping these motivations alive while having success in achieving collective goals, in terms of becoming an actor that has the ability to challenge, alter, replace or produce alternatives to institutionalized social relations and practices. This balance is fluid and often a source of internal tensions and disagreements. Finding ways to also deal with these is an integral part of this process.

Key insight 2: Re-inventing, experimenting with, and consolidating interpersonal relations is one pivotal way in which SI actors are able to challenge, alter and replace established institutions.

As mentioned earlier, creating new socio-material relations is at the core of social innovation processes. An importance source of motivation for SI actors to challenge, alter and replace dominant institutions arises out of dissatisfaction with, among others, the quality of social relations as institutionalised in the social context. SI actors are motivated by a search for contexts that support need satisfaction, and strive to create different social relations in their SI initiatives and SI networks, that can support such need satisfaction. New interpersonal relations that are based on values of trust, intimacy, connection, satisfy relational and belonging needs, while also supporting autonomy. Initiatives have explicit awareness about the importance of interpersonal relations, also as a basis for contributing to societal change. Such awareness manifests in explicit strategies to work on interpersonal relations and relational values, making initiatives a microcosmos of experimentation with relational change. Internalized interpersonal relations are challenged through awareness, reflection and alternatives that are practiced. These include choosing specific legal forms and decision-making methods, as well as the (re)framing of relational values (e.g. 'paid volunteerism' in response to traditional values of reciprocity in the case of Timebanking). Many initiatives struggle with the dynamics and challenges of interpersonal relations, and this is one of the main source of conflicts and tensions. It is also important to note that there is a whole range of institutionalised social relations from the social context that are reproduced and remain unchallenged by many of the SI initiatives under study (whether willingly or unwillingly). Relations between men and women, or other issues related to gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, are one example of relations that seem to be relatively unchallenged and unproblematised across many initiatives. While they actively attempt to modify a set of institutionalized social relations, including interpersonal ones, a whole range of them are confirmed or reproduced.

Key insight 3: SI actors are empowered to persist and to challenge, alter or replace dominant institutions through an increased sense of relatedness, autonomy, competence, impact, meaning and resilience, which they primarily acquire through multi-layered community building in both local SI initiatives and translocal SI networks.

(Dis)empowerment refers to process through which SI actors (both individually and collectively) gain (or lose) the ability to act on goals that matter to them and develop effective strategies to do so. Empowerment has a psychological dimension, as the ability to act on goals that matter requires a belief in the capacity to do so (a sense of mastery or self-efficacy). We argue that both at individual and collective level, empowerment relies on the optimal satisfaction of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness and on the development of autonomous motivation that is sustained over time. This leads to pro-active and shared strategies for change that are considered

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important and/or become an integral part of the self, also contributing to meaning-making. Empowered human actors can challenge, alter or replace elements of the social-material context that thwart the satisfaction of these basic psychological needs, and, as a consequence, lead to passivity and alienation, as well as to social relations and institutions that do not support the natural human potential for growth, integration and pro-active, engaged and committed behaviours. Their absence leads to disempowerment and the lack of energy or willingness to engage in efforts towards transformative change.

Beyond satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence, the belief in the ability to achieve goals, and especially transformative goals, require the actual experience of overcoming challenges and achieving some degree of impact, which is incorporated into an individual or collective identity (i.e.: a definition of the self or of a collective) that supports it. *Impact* refers to the effect of actions in achieving goals and bringing about the change sought. As initiatives experiment with different strategies to achieve legitimacy and transformative change goals, experiencing and perceiving actual impact contributes to empowerment. *Meaning* refers to cognitive processes enabled through e.g. narratives, theories, and assessments, and is an important dimension of wellbeing. Last but not least, *resilience* refers to the experienced capacity to learn, adapt and recover, even after set-backs. As they encounter failure of strategies to achieve certain goals, initiatives develop psychological and behavioural strategies that allow them to maintain the motivation to pursue transformative change. Empowerment cannot be conceived in the absence of resilience.

Empowerment relies on enabling and constraining conditions. All these dimensions of empowerment are fulfilled through a process of multi-layered community-building in both local SI initiative and translocal SI networks. SI initiatives and SI networks under study demonstrate a clear and conscious focus on community-building – both at the local and translocal level – as a pivotal condition for being able to persist in the face of dominant institutions. Such translocal community building is not confined to formalised network organisations, but can also refer to loose networks or broader social movements.

8.4.2 How SI actors engage in processes of network formation

The insights presented in this section address the processes of network formation that SI initiatives tend to be involved in. It builds on the previous section, moving towards a broader perspective: it is crucial for TSI that motivated individuals manage to organize collective agency and sustain situated SI initiatives, but these initiatives tend to become key actors in TSI processes only by virtue of their embedding in and empowerment through various kinds of *networks*

The two main concepts that organize the TSI insights in this chapter are networking and (reciprocal) empowerment. The great importance that we accord to these concepts reflects the relational, co-productionist ontological assumptions through which TSI has been theorized. It is crucial to use relational vocabularies to describe the dynamics of TSI processes, and the agency of collective actors therein. The basic issue is that it is easy to agree that it is desirable to support and develop somehow empowering knowledge for certain SI actors, yet beyond this practical commitment it is not obvious which (constellations of) actors to consider as ‘SI actors’. *Who to empower?*

TSI revolves around changing social relations and changes in dominant institutions, and is therefore a *collective* process. SI initiatives tend to be weakly institutionalized, lack resources because of this, and will generally need allies as they can’t afford to pursue go-alone strategies. Furthermore, we have seen a great variety of ways in which TSI was contributed to, and even if the SI initiatives that we identified as

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focal actors were often key trailblazers of innovation – they seldom acted alone. For these reasons it is important to use network formation as the overall guiding metaphor that expresses distributed agency. In this regard we follow McFarlane (2009) and Scott-Cato & Hillier (2011) amongst others, recognizing the need for a vocabulary and conceptualization of SI agency in terms of SI networks.

Overall we find that network formation is key to explaining TSI. For TSI to succeed, it is crucial that motivated individuals manage to organize collective agency and sustain situated SI initiatives, BUT these initiatives tend to become key TSI actors only by virtue of their embedding in and empowerment through various kinds of networks. TSI revolves around changing social relations and changes in dominant institutions, and is therefore a collective process. SI initiatives tend to be weakly institutionalized, lack resources because of this, and will generally need allies as they can't afford to pursue go-alone strategies. The theory-building research steps for this relational dimension of TSI (as presented in chapter 5) led to the following key insights about the agency and dynamics of TSI:

Key insight 4: Transnational networks are crucially enhancing local SI initiatives.

Situated, local SI initiatives tend to empower themselves and gain access to resources by joining or initiating translocal and transnational networks of like-minded initiatives. These networks form through different development patterns into differently structured network constellations. The different kinds of SI networks also reflect different emphases on the main rationales for the network formation, which are A) funding, B) legitimacy, C) Knowledge sharing, learning, and peer support and D) Visibility and identity.

Key insight 5: Discourse formation and its mediation through communication infrastructures crucially enhances the reach of SI network formation.

One crucial way in which SI actors change social relations and dominant ways of knowing and framing, is by developing and adopting narratives, ideas, metaphors and discourses. This is pivotal for the creation of collective identities within the aforementioned SI networks, but is also extending beyond them – the social-material mediation of rapidly evolving communication infrastructures crucially shapes and accelerates this network formation through discourses. SIs are enhanced by various forms of 'spaces' that enable SI actors to come together, interact and create new emergent patterns framing, doing, and knowing (including but limited to new narratives/discourses, practices etc.). The spaces are co-produced over time in interaction with existing institutions and contribute to empowerment through creation of shadow provision systems, enhanced knowledge resources, and civil society participation in new governance structures.

Key insight 6: The transformative impacts of SI initiatives depend greatly on the changing tensions within and stability of the action field(s) that they operate in.

The previous three key insights into SI network formation show how networks form in the narrow sense of allies in the promotion of particular new social relations, and in the broader sense of co-creation processes and discourse formation that also involves the many other actors encountered and interacted with in the action field in which SI initiatives operate. The action fields, as 'constellations of organizations that together form a recognized area of institutional life', tend to involve tensions (as they include both incumbents and challengers, and more generally a diversity of actors with different interests and ideas), and they tend to be unstable.

The tensions and instabilities of 'action fields' (and the network formation processes that shape them) form an important background to the paradoxes of TSI and institutional change that are addressed in section 8.4.4.

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8.4.3 How SI actors perceive the wider socio-material context

In explaining how SI interacts with transformative change, we are interested in how the perceptions that SI actors have of the stability or instability of established institutions, is actually a key aspect of explaining whether or not there is emergent agency for change. What is of interest here then is to provide an adequate theoretical and conceptual framing of the broader socio-material context but to also explain how SI actors perceive and make sense of wider change processes in the socio-material context, and how they perceptions and analysis then inform their strategic actions (as addressed in the next section).

Here a focus is to explain SI is a multi-level phenomenon (van der Have and Rubalcaba 2016, p1933). SI activities take place in an immediate context and a wider context. The context is not stable but undergoing change of a transformative nature through e.g. marketization processes, reforms of the welfare state, or the rise of partnership models. Given this interest in how SI interacts with change in the wider context, we adopted a 'concentric view' of context in developing the TSI theory, and strived to develop a theory that explains not only what goes on in different 'levels' or 'layers' but that also addresses the links and feedbacks between individuals, social activities and the wider context in which social innovation takes place. For understanding this micro-macro link, we also had to study values, the motivations and identities of people in SI, and the links to ongoing transformations in macro-social organization.

The theory-building research steps for this relational dimension of TSI (as presented in chapter 7) led to the following key insights about the agency and dynamics of TSI:

Key insight 7: SI actors make a diagnosis of developments in the socio-material context – these become visible in their narratives of change, which express why the world has to change, who has the power to do so and how this change takes place.

In the context of TSI, a key aspect of the social construction of the broader socio-material context is the diagnosis of that context by SI actors. These diagnoses are expressed in narratives about what is problematic about the world, who has the power to change this and how this can be done. We refer to these as narratives of change (Wittmayer et al. 2015) and they can be understood as system framings (Leach et al. 2010). Evoking a sense of time, narratives of change point to how TSI agency is shaped by "*memories of the past, anticipations of the future and attention in the present*" (Garud and Gehmann 2012: 985, building on Ricoeur 1984). Such narratives are a way through which SI actors interact with their socio-material context, and ultimately they inform their choice of strategic actions as addressed in the next section of this chapter. They are contingent on broader discourse activity (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008a, cf. Proposition B3, D6) with which they co-evolve. They "*recount the theories of change which are practiced and acted upon by the very SI initiatives which propagate them*" (Wittmayer et al. 2015: 15-16; cf. Leach et al. 2010). Rather than stable and accepted, narratives of change and the ideas they bring together should be considered as fluid and contested.

Analysis of the narratives of change in case study initiatives brought to the fore the diversity of different problem framings and different framings of desired futures that are taken as entry point for framing a specific theory of change on the basis of which SI initiatives engage into action. It also showed that SI initiatives are holding diverging theories of change, that these are not unanimously shared and changing through time. Therefore explaining TSI, requires acknowledgement of on the one hand the diversity of perceptions and theories of change held by different SI initiatives, while at the same time acknowledging (as addressed in the previous section) the importance of achieving and sustaining collective agency in TSI.

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An important observation from the SAFs literature (Fligstein & McAdam 2011: 10) is that during periods of contention there may be a shared sense of uncertainty regarding the rules (cf. institutions) that a SI initiative must operate within / abide by. This is really important: 'rules' (as one form in which institutions to manifest) are not simply 'dominant' and then transformed, rather they are (in some respects at least) socially constructed and the fracturing of perceptions concerning the solidity of rules, and the arising of commonly held uncertainties about the validity or stability of rules can (we hypothesise) be an important part of the transformation dynamic for TSI processes. This suggests that the choice of strategic action is conditioned not only by vision, institutions and access to resources, but also by the perceptions SI actors have of the 'stability' of specific rules and, therefore, the openings or opportunities for change.

Key insight 8: The rise of SI initiatives and discourses, and the particular transformative ambitions conveyed by them are strongly shaped by the historical development of their socio-material context.

The SI initiatives and discourses must also be explained as part of historical processes of socio-material change. There are broad social and technological trends that form the background to the specific forms that T/SI takes today in different regional contexts. Important developments include emancipation, the growing demand for autonomy, network society and negative consequences of marketization, meritocracy and bureaucracy. It is vital that a TSI theory is able to give a balanced account of how the impetus for TSI processes can be explained partly in terms of the collective agency of contemporary SI actors, but also in part as emerging from historical developments and tensions in the wider socio-material context. An important further implication of the historical shaping of TSI, is that SI initiatives (and the new social relations that they promote) can be explained as historical, transient appearances of broader changes in the socio-material context. The actual activities of innovating and invention present but one historical appearance of TSI, next to various other activities such as re-invention, advocacy, and contextual adoption.

Key insight 9: Directional diversity is an integral feature of transformative social innovation, not least because it is shaped by the people involved, who strive for diverse institutional forms and strategies that fit with their (differing) values, future visions and present circumstances.

TSI involves not a single transformation but diverse transformations based on different social relations, values and ideas of progress. Diversity of directionalities, institutional forms, ways of funding and collaboration are an integral and inherent element of the social transformations that are enacted and aspired to as part of TSI. This diversity of transformation processes, not only forms a backdrop to how TSI manifests in real-world change processes, it also has important implications for the dynamics of transformation processes. Over time SI actors come into contact with other actors (where the interaction may be desired, actively or passively sought or imposed), who are engaged in sometimes the same, and sometimes contrasting transformation processes. The following interaction patterns (as process relations) are conceptualised as distinct patterns of interaction: co-existence, co-evolution and dialectical change with an important role for hybrid forms combining different logics (in incumbent-dominated systems and the TSI initiatives with a grassroots basis). Empirically, in the TSI cases studied, the dominant pattern of development seems to be that of co-existence of networks with a "constant manoeuvring" over time. Further analysis is needed on the usefulness of those concepts, whether we can consider the interaction pattern with dominant institutions as co-evolution or co-shaping, the degree to which the convergence of TSI leads to a shadow economy, involves patterns of mainstreaming and de-mainstreaming, and is subject to imposed change and dialectics.

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8.4.4 How SI actors interact with institutional change

SI initiatives have complex relationships with established institutions: they can be constrained or enabled by them, they can be reproducing some established institutions, while at the same time challenging, altering or replacing others. Social innovators seek to develop new practices that address an identified need or vision. In doing so they make use of available resources and are also conditioned by sets of institutionalised traditions or rules (that both enable and constrain their actions). Institutions have a shaping role in human action but at the same time are constituted through human action. This interplay between actors and institutions, referred to as the *process of structuration*, accounts for the stability and continuity of social life—but actions that change or modify existing structures are also possible. Actors may find ways to use existing institutions and resources in novel ways, leading eventually to transformative change in the form of new institutional structures. Actors may also find ways to create new resources or new ‘proto-institutions’. In these ways, social innovators have the potential to create novelty and change in existing structures.

The concept of *institutionalisation* describes the process by which changes in institutional structures emerge and become more widely embedded. It refers to the process of embedding some aspect of social life (which can be e.g. norms, rules, conventions and values, or a mode of behaviour) within an organisation, a wider field of social relations, or within the context as a whole. As a SI develops over time and space, it challenges, alters, or replaces established institutions, while at the same time it also inevitably reproduces established institutions. A SI process is made up of the actions of a variety of different SI actors, who interact through a SI field in which their actions collectively lead to changes in the structuration of local practices. In other words, *transformative* SIs interact with and influence the processes of *institutionalisation* by which new institutions emerge and become more widely embedded.

We take the position that the strategic actions of SI actors need to be explained in the context of the unfolding dynamics of a wider action field (Fligstein and McAdam 2011), and that the focal ‘level’ of analysis for explaining the institutionalisation of TSI must therefore be the ‘meso-level’ of the SI action field: understood as the web of constantly changing actors and social-material relations through which a SI takes place. The concept of a SI action field provides one way to resolve the context as stratified but also intersecting—happenings in one action field may influence happenings in another. The socio-material context contains many SI actions fields; the boundaries of the field are fluid, and are analytically defined in terms of the relevant change agents in a SI process. ‘Transformative change’ may involve: transformation of the SI action field; the emergence of new fields (and the ‘breakdown’ of old ones); or, transformation of the relations between fields (in the socio-material context). Furthermore the concept of institutional logics (Fuenfschilling and Truffer 2014) can be used in explaining how institutions are related/configured in the broader socio-material context, and analytically employed to explore implications for how SI interacts with institutional change.

The theory-building research steps for this relational dimension of TSI (as presented in chapter 6) led to the following key insights about the agency and dynamics of TSI:

Key insight 10: SI initiatives emerge in contexts of institutional abundance.

A basic characteristic of the relations of T/SI initiatives to institutional change processes, and of TSI in general, namely that these initiatives tend to emerge in *institutionally abundant* contexts. This is an important basic insight about TSI dynamics, as it articulates first of all that it generally does not take place in pristine or empty environments for the filling of which new things (social relations, and institutions as formalizations of those) need to be created – similar to the ways in which new technologies can be seen

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to introduce something entirely new to the market that was lacking. The insight of institutional abundance also articulates how contemporary T/SI develops in institutionally quite mature contexts. Perceiving institutional deficits and contradictions and aiming for corresponding social transformations, T/SI actors therefore need to consider not only which institutions to challenge, but also how to actively draw upon and recombine them. This insight therefore provides a foundation and basis for how the TSI theory explains the context for the institutionalisation of T/SI.

Key insight 11: SI initiatives need to construct an institutional existence, in order to secure stable access to resources for themselves and the SIs that they promote. This entails ongoing acts of ‘bricolage’ -- involving the assembling of institutional elements into viable institutional hybrids, and a continuous balancing between the need for an institutional existence and desires for ‘institutional homelessness’.

A key aspect of TSI agency is that SI initiatives, and the social innovations that they promote, have a fragile existence in society. They tend to exist as, not yet (fully) institutionalized collectives, and not yet (fully) normalized social relations, they lack what institutions by definition do have – a stable existence in society, and the empowering resources that go with this such as societal recognition and legitimacy, trust relations with other actors, financial income through market share or eligibility for funding schemes, and capacity for learning and knowledge consolidation. This insight articulates how SI initiatives need to actively construct this institutional existence, as an intermediate stage between non-institutional and institutionalized existence. This construction of an institutional existence is far from straightforward, however. It is challenging as it takes time and the availability of not yet fully secured resources. Moreover, it is challenging due to the dynamics of the action fields in which SI initiatives operate and due to the dilemmas of satisfying contradictory strivings for stability and freedom. The construction of an institutional existence involves: i) the need to balance the typical desires for institutional homelessness with the needs for institutional existence; ii) the need for creativity and conscious assemblage/bricolage of elements of dominant institutions rather than mere reproduction; iii) the need for continuous adaptation to changing circumstances.

This insight on the need for an institutional existence can thus be seen to confirm the accounts of institutional ‘bricolage’ (Lowndes & Roberts 2013; Olsson et al. forthcoming) that have earlier been posited against models of institutional design and replacement. It also attempts to further specify the nature of this ‘bricolage’ however, articulating in particular how paradoxical it is in the context of TSI. It builds on the emphasis in the overall relational-theoretical understanding of institutions (cf. Emirbayer 1997) on the ever-presence of contradictions, conflict, multiplicity and room for interpretation in institutions (Cf. Mahoney & Thelen 2010: 9-11 and Seo & Creed 2002). In line with institutional entrepreneurship literature (Battilana et al. 2009), the proposition underlines that rules of the game need to be actively reproduced by actors for them to keep operating as rules – which creates scope for ‘bricolage’ that does not remain innocuous and confined in the realm of institutional isomorphism. Beyond mere ‘home improvement’ and survival strategy, institutional bricolage can serve to make a transformative difference.

Key insight 12: To enable and increase the potential for achieving change in established institutions, SI actors need to employ both a range of different strategic actions, and to proactively adapt and update these actions in response to changing circumstances, while navigating contestations with established institutions, and holding on to their original core values and transformative vision.

Of course not all strategic action relates in an obvious and direct way to institutional change, many strategic actions are related to building the resource base for the SI initiative and creating a ‘platform’ for change. The main types of strategic action observed in our case studies included:

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- *the provision of local alternatives* that supplement existing institutional arrangements;
- *advocacy, lobbying, and protesting* to raise awareness and promote reform or replacement;
- *embedding a social innovation into existing institutional arrangements*;
- *growing the initiative, and building a 'platform' and 'movement' for institutional change*;
- *engaging with processes of "deep" cultural change ('scaling deep')*.

In their attempts to challenge, alter or replace established institutions, TSI initiatives need to engage with one or more of these generic strategies. This theoretical framing emphasises how strategic action for TSI involves making use of diverse existing institutions, finding ways to combine them differently, or enact them differently, it provides a theoretical underpinning for explaining strategic actions in TSI as acts of 'bricolage' that make use of existing resources and existing institutions in novel ways. As addressed in insight 11, SI actors often do have access to an *institutional abundance* in engaging in such acts of improvisation and creative assemblage. The term 'bricolage' here describes how strategies typically involve the recombination of pre-existing and new ideas, concepts or technologies to form something novel (Murray et al. 2010, quoted in Olsson et al 2017; see also Westley et al 2013), with the creation of a single new 'invention' being the exception rather than rule. TSI actors are capable of strategic action within a transforming field, they are not simply the product of the field, BUT their actions are constrained by history (path dependence) and by present circumstances (access to resources, power relations).

Unfolding institutional change processes involve contestation and struggle, and are not normally fully harmonious and cooperatively shaped journeys. SI initiatives must engage in an *inherently political* relationships with (the supporters of) established and dominant institutions. And these relationships furthermore take place within a wider field of relations with other actors, that may have quite different intentions and interests.

The relations within the SI action field involve co-shaping processes, involving challengers and incumbents vying for position and influence: both are constantly engaged in moves that they hope will preserve or improve their position in the existing (and evolving) field of social relations (Fligstein and McAdam 2011). These constant adjustments can be thought of as a form of "*organisational learning*" (ibid, p15) and imply a set of tactics that actors will employ. Incumbents will adjust to the tactics of others, both challengers in the form of SI actors, and other incumbents.

Accounting for path-dependence in the choice of strategic action by SI actors is an important element of the theory. Olsson et al. (2017) note that the concept of path-dependence in systems thinking, in its most basic form, refers to the fact that "history matters" and that there are a limited subset of possible next steps that can be taken based on the history of the system (Arthur 2009). They argue that through the use of bricolage "*the path-dependence of the system can be altered and wholly new systemic opportunities opened up.*" (Olsson et al. 2017). In terms of the TSI theory, the metaphor of 'bricolage', used in this sense, suggests that, in order to achieve a specific vision, SI actors may not only need to attempt to change a dominant institution directly, they may also need to work at the level of the path dependence in the field as a whole, and that furthermore requires some degree of analysis or 'diagnosis' of the path dependence in the wider socio-material context. Used in this sense then the metaphor of bricolage refers also to the SI actor as an 'institutional entrepreneur' or even 'systems entrepreneur' – in the sense of an actor who is aiming to 'play the field' in order to actually influence the emergence of an action field that is more conducive to her vision for change.

Furthermore, the strategy of 'bricolage' may be both more likely to produce desirable results, when the field is in the right 'state' or 'phase' (cf. Westley et al. 2013). During periods of *reorganisation*, for example, new organisational forms and new linkages between things emerge, creating opportunities for

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SI actors to engage in bricolage: “connecting ideas and resources strategically through brokered partnerships.” (ibid, p27). During such periods of wider change “Institutional entrepreneurs will work to encourage the continued emergence of innovative ideas, but also to parlay partnerships into viable alternative configurations. Some ideas will [...] be orphaned, but with successful brokering, resources may be consolidated around a coherent and innovative alternative.” (ibid p27).

Key insight 13: SIs emerge in the context of diverse institutional logics. One way in which SI actors challenge, alter and/or replace dominant institutions, is through reconsidering the broader institutional logics in which those institutions are embedded, by travelling across diverse institutional logics and by reinventing, recombining and transposing specific institutional elements.

SIs emerge in the context of diverse institutional logics. Institutional logics are messy configurations of various specific and contextual phenomena that influence how things are (de/re-)institutionalised over time in a given socio-material context. SI actors ‘travel’ across different institutional logics, and they work with all sorts of hybrid institutional forms.....and with the reinventing, recombining and transposing of institutional elements. SI initiatives are often born out of a partnerships or some sort of cooperation between different sectors/ institutional logics, and/or as a hybrid institutional entity in itself. By embedding themselves in translocal networks, and by visiting and learning from initiatives in other geographic contexts, (individuals in) initiatives are taking a distance from (some of) the institutional logics in their own local, regional or national context, which enables them to become aware of and question the institutional context in which they are geographically located, and transposing institutional elements from one context to another.

This insight emphasises that ‘dominant institutions’ are NOT the same as ‘government institutions’, and that the opposition between SI and dominant institutions is NOT the same as an opposition between civil society and government. ‘Government’ represents only one type of institutional logic, social innovation can emerge in the context of any institutional logics, and SI actors operate across diverse institutional logics.

Key insight 14: As transformative changes in established institutions are realised (or not) there are cross-level and cross-scale feedbacks involving both SI initiatives and networks, and the individuals that support them. SI actors perceptions of the direction and momentum of change in dominant institutions informs their ongoing diagnosis of problems and opportunities in the socio-material context, which in turn influences their motivations and choices about to where engage their efforts.

The realisation of ambitions for transformative change (understood as institutional change) through the collective action of SI actors, then has a direct feedback on the narratives of change that SI actors develop (insight 8) and on their motivation for staying engaged with a particular SI initiative, that is promoting particular SI/s. Explaining how TSI processes, understood as transformation journeys or pathways, develop over extended periods of time then requires that these cross-level linkages and feedbacks to are taken into account. Such cross-level feedbacks result in emergent patterns of change that may lead eventually to the ‘next big thing’, OR may end up in very little change at all, depending on many circumstantial factors. Such a dynamic may be bound up with the emergence of new widely held values, new social movements for change (or stability), and ultimately new worldviews and new conceptions of what is the good life. These cross-level feedbacks can of course also affect the engagement of new members in an initiative, influencing whether it gets new members and is able to operate at new scales, and influencing whether the ethics/values of the initiative change over time as it acts in particular differing contexts, with differing results in terms of transformative impacts realised.

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8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a number of needs/opportunities for SI theory, as identified in recent review and agenda-setting articles on SI and transformative change. It has then presented a brief synthesis of TRANSIT's middle-range theory of TSI. The resulting 'consolidated' middle-range theory of TSI addresses several of the identified theoretical needs and opportunities, specifically it:

- Demonstrates that a relational ontology can be used as a meta-theoretical platform, providing a theoretical basis from which to integrate and/or organize a paradigmatic interplay between evolutionary, relational and durational meta-theoretical perspectives. Starting from this basis, it is then possible to develop a framework for TSI that is able to explain the patterned realities and path dependence and the multi-level nature of the T/SI phenomena, by bringing to bear theoretical resources from different disciplines and traditions, ranging from 'relational varieties' of social psychology theories to 'relational varieties' of institutional theories (Haxeltine 2016c).
- Brings theoretical resources from institutional scholarship to bear on the current theoretical construct of SI, to develop a middle-range theory of TSI that frames transformative change in terms of processes of institutional change playing out through SI actions fields, with two-way interactions with dominant institutions and institutional logics. In this way, the resulting TSI framework provides a basis for addressing *"How social innovators adapt their strategies to cope with the constraints of the institutional environment"* (van der Have and Rubalcaba 2016, p1933), and for developing explanations of how SI initiatives and networks interact with transformative change. The TSI framework can also serve as the basis for *"more research ... to understand what causal role social innovation plays in shaping, accelerating or decelerating trajectories"* (ibid, p1933). The TSI framework also foregrounds that diversity is an integral feature of TSI, not least because it is shaped by the people involved, who strive for diverse institutional forms and strategies that fit with their (differing) values, future visions and present circumstances.
- Develops a balanced account of TSI agency that is grounded in a relational ontology, and that explains TSI agency as distributed across networks of SI actors. Such a balanced account of the agency of TSI, allows for explanations of TSI as an emergent property of long-term social trends and transformation processes, as well as an outcome of the strategic actions of SI actors. Such a balanced account of TSI agency is able to account for both leadership and for the constraining and enabling influence of context: but without a misplaced emphasis on one or the other.
- Adapts theoretical resources from social psychology to account for the motivations of individuals and groups in TSI processes. Acknowledges that the fluid and somewhat diffuse nature of SI initiatives implies that they can be best understood in terms of the social relations by which they are constituted. And that the 'innovation' of a social innovation can be best explained by focusing first and foremost on the new social relations that it puts forward. And that the use of a relational ontology provides a basis for explaining SI processes in terms of unfolding process-relations.
- Develops a framework that is sensitive to misplaced normative assumptions about the purposes and outcomes of SI, by using a middle-range theory approach to frame an iterative focus on abstracting from empirical observations, combined with critical reflection about normative assumptions and commitments, in a *reflexive* theory-building methodology (Haxeltine et al 2017).

In putting forward this framework for a middle-range theory of TSI, we have made a contribution to advancing the SI field, aiming to address the current state of *"conceptual ambiguity and a diversity of definitions and research settings"* (van der Have and Rubalcaba 2016: 1923). We contend that the TSI framework outlined in this chapter, provides a basis for consolidating the SI field with a set of definitions and concepts that are both theoretically well-grounded and suitable to the 'societal needs' of a SI theory.

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8.6 References (for chapter 8)

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9 Overall conclusion

This deliverable of the TRANSIT project has presented a consolidated version of TRANSIT's middle-range theory of TSI, including: a brief summary of the methodology employed (chapter 2) and the theoretical and conceptual framework for TSI developed (chapter 3), a presentation of the main elements of the theory, in the form of a set of propositions on the agency and dynamics of TSI, and, finally, a synthesis of TRANSIT's middle-range theory of TSI, organised around asset of key elements or insights. Summative conclusions and identification of challenges for future research can be found in the overview sections of each of the four 'cluster' chapters (chapters 4-7), while chapter 8 provided a synthesis of the central elements of the resulting TSI framework.

The synthesis in chapter 8 is presented in the form of a draft version of a journal article, that is to be further developed and submitted before the end of the project. Apart from the two further publications included in the annexes, and the set of publications reported on in the previous WP3 deliverable D3.3, there are a significant number of further journal articles that are planned for the coming months, based on the very extensive research findings presented in this deliverable. These will be further reported on as part of the TRANSIT project's final reporting.

It is worthwhile here to briefly return to the overall ambition set out at the beginning on the project:

*"The new theory developed in TRANSIT is a so called **"middle range theory"** of transformative social innovation. TRANSIT starts with the empirical phenomena of social innovation ... and then combines with the use of existing theories to produce a new understanding of these phenomena and an empirically-grounded theory of transformative social innovation."* (TRANSIT research proposal)

This originally stated ambition has come to fruition then in the consolidated version of the new theory presented in this deliverable. We successfully adapted and implemented a "middle range" approach to building a theory of *transformative SI*, and combined it with our other theoretical-methodological choices (cf. chapter 8.2.1) to produce a bespoke theory-building methodology, that is reported on in Haxeltine et al 2017, and that itself represents an original contribution of this research. The stated ambition (in the original research proposal) was further to make use of resources from the field of **transition research** in developing the new theory. The version of the TSI theory presented here, provides a solid theoretical and conceptual basis for going beyond the current *"rudimentary linkages"* between SI and the literature on socio-technical and sustainability transitions (van der Have and Rubalcaba, 2016, p1933). Specifically we made the choice to not achieve this by 'appending' a concept of *SI* onto the Multi-level Perspective which was originally developed to describe *technological regime shifts*. Instead we developed a bespoke, relationally-grounded, theoretical and conceptual framework which is now ready to serve as the basis for *"more research ... to understand what causal role social innovation plays in shaping, accelerating or decelerating trajectories"* (ibid, p1933).

TRANSIT's main research question also encompassed **the role of actors** at various levels and the extent to which these actors are **empowered** in terms of governance, social learning, funding and monitoring. In order to include those dimensions into the TSI theory, the ambition was that TRANSIT should integrate resources from transition research and the SI field with a range of literatures and theories from various social scientific disciplines: theories on power and empowerment; social movement theory; studies on institutional entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship; social psychology approaches; and, social capital theory, incl. social valuation approaches. This ambition was largely met in the research process, as demonstrated by the range of theoretical resources used in the TSI propositions presented in this deliverable. Furthermore we found that a relational ontology can be used as a meta-theoretical platform,

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providing a theoretical basis from which to integrate and/or organize paradigmatic interplay between evolutionary, relational and durational theoretical perspectives. And that it then becomes possible to develop a framework for TSI that addresses the multi-level nature of the SI phenomenon, by bringing together theoretical resources from a range of disciplines, using the relational ontology to adapt, check and ensure compatibility. As the theory-development work progressed, the need for inclusion of a number of further theoretical resources was identified, most notably resources from various strands of institutional theories (see chapter 6). At the time, some of the theories mentioned in the original list above, have not yet been fully integrated into the TSI theory presented here, notably the social movement theories: here we did do considerable review work and explored the potentials, but integrations and adaptations remain to be tackled in future research.

A number of promising avenues for future research have been identified in the TSI proposition texts, and especially in each of the four 'cluster overview' texts in chapters 3-7 of this deliverable. In terms of the 'bigger picture' promising avenues for future research may be very briefly summarised as:

- 1) **Further development of the theoretical and conceptual framework for TSI.** Especially, making our 'institutional framework' for TSI more readily analytically tractable, with the aim to both facilitate the further development of middle-range theory, but also to craft a conceptual language around institutional change which is recognisable and useful in policy and practice; also there is an opportunity to further explore the utility of different theoretical starting points, especially Social Practice Theories and Social Movement Theories, which were reviewed in the project, but not yet fully applied to the SI/transformative change nexus.
- 2) **Moving from 'theoretical insights' to heuristics that are of use to practice and policy:** there is a need now to further develop and creatively translate the theoretical insights presented in this deliverable into heuristics or 'framing devices' that can be of use to practice and policy. This would also include participatory methods for testing these devices, building on insights from transdisciplinary science (Lang et al. 2012) and action research (Wittmayer and Schöpke 2014).
- 3) **Further empirical research in combination with middle-range theory-building** to iterate towards more solid explanations of the mechanisms and processes of TSI. Key here is research designs which allow empirical work to fully address the systemic relations between SI and other actors involved in transformative change processes, including a systematic unpacking and comparison of the historical and socio-material contexts of different SI initiatives and networks.
- 4) **Better embedding the research on transformative social innovation into critical discourses about transformative societal change at this time in history:** this might be achieved through the engagement work of individual researchers; or through a future project that created a more radical discursive exchange between the diagnosis of societal challenges and articulation of theories of change by practitioners (active in SI initiatives) and the TSI theory; finally, there is also a need for a dialogue project that uses the TSI theory as a starting point for a multi-stakeholder dialogue aimed at a radical critique of current efforts towards societal transformation.

The resulting 'consolidated' framework for TSI is still very much in its formative stages, it still needs to be further developed both theoretically and through evaluation against further empirical data. It remains to be seen whether it emerges eventually as a recognised new 'theory' versus whether it achieves a lasting impact in a more multifaceted way, through sets of concepts and ideas about T/SI that take root in the field. Nevertheless we argue that the TSI framework as currently developed is adequate for addressing many of the currently needs or deficits in the SI field (as reviewed in Haxeltine et al 2016b and summarised in chapter 8). In putting forward this theoretical and conceptual foundation for a middle-range theory of TSI we aim to advance the SI field and contribute to addressing the current "*conceptual ambiguity and a diversity of definitions and research settings*" (van der Have and Rubalcaba 2016: 1923).

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Annexes

Annex 1: Methodology for the middle-range TSI theory development

This annex consists of a submitted journal article that's current status is 'under review' as of June 2017; the submitted version of the manuscript is included as a separate PDF file and is also available here:

<https://app.box.com/s/h2iyw0ftdw95wtsu1rkh6zd7pm47wvyo>

Annex 2: Detecting Social Innovation agents

This annex consists of a submitted journal article (the full title of which is "*Detecting Social Innovation agents: methodological reflections on units of analysis in dispersed transformation processes*") that's current status is 'under review' as of June 2017; the submitted version of the manuscript is included as a separate PDF file and is also available here:

<https://app.box.com/s/k4pfv4nso3aftjdzeil06vtvko89fljn>

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