

**transformative
social innovation
theory**



Transformative Social Innovation

Insights from the TRANSIT-project

Flor Avelino & Julia Wittmayer

DRIFT (Dutch Research Institute for Transitions)

Social Innovation 2015: Pathways to Social Change



This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 613169.

TRANSIT Partners



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DRIFT (Coordinator)

Erasmus University of Rotterdam,
the Netherlands

3S-group

University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

ICIS

University of Maastricht, the Netherlands

IHS

Erasmus University of Rotterdam,
the Netherlands

ULB-CEDD

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

AAU

Aalborg University, Denmark

SPRU

University of Sussex, United Kingdom

IEC-UNQ

Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Argentina

COPPE

Rio de Janeiro Federal University, Brasil

People-Environment Research Group

Universidade da Coruna, Spain

BOKU

University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences
Vienna, Austria

ESSRG

research and development SME, Hungary

Contact: coordinators

Flor Avelino, Julia Wittmayer, Matthew Bach (DRIFT)



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<https://www.facebook.com/transitsocialinnovation>



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<https://www.linkedin.com/transitsocialinnovation>



transformative social innovation theory

TRANSIT (Transformative Social Innovation Theory) is an ambitious research project which will develop a theory of transformative innovation which is about empowering change in society. You can...

Take a look at our resource... get involved on www.transit...

Project partners

- Erasmus University of Rotterdam
- Leeds University, United Kingdom
- Utrecht University, the Netherlands
- Utrecht University, the Netherlands
- Université de Bruxelles, Belgium
- Aalborg University, Denmark
- University of Sussex, United Kingdom
- Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Argentina
- Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Research Centre, Universidad de Granada
- Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna
- and development SME, Hungary

This project has received funding from the European Union Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement No 101019727



TRANSIT in 30 minutes

1. Conceptualising transformative social innovation
2. Empirical analysis approach
3. Mid-term insights:
 - Renewing social relations
 - Narratives of change & game-changers
 - Institutional challenges and politics

Social Innovation?

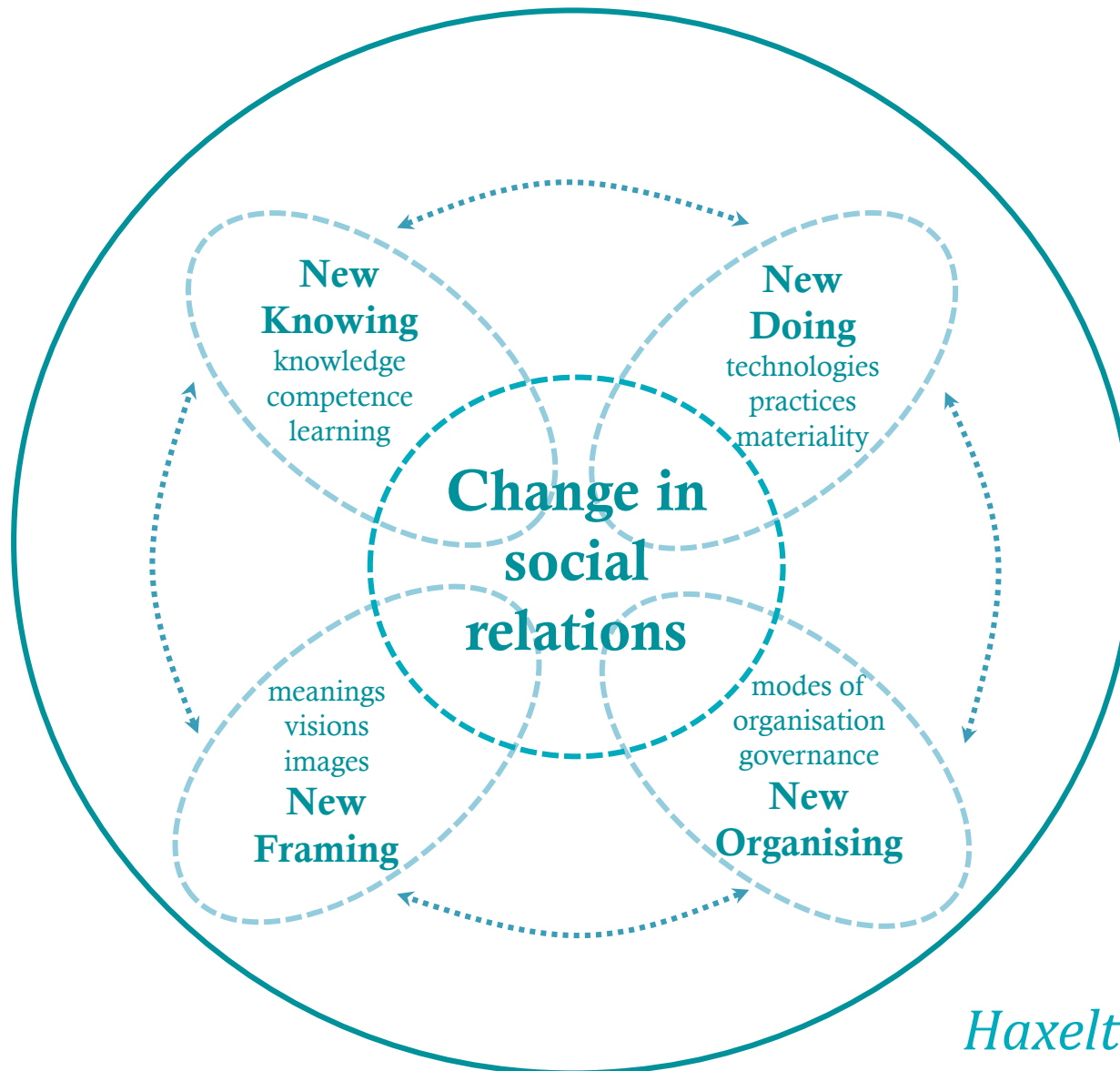
Existing research & literature:

- new (combinations of) social practices (Howaldt & Kopp 2012)
- changing social relations (Moulaert et al. 2013)
- societal, systemic change (Westley 2013)

TRANSIT definition of social innovation:

- integrates these different dimensions
- builds on relational theory
- ... >>>

TRANSIT definition of social innovation





THE ROUGH GUIDE to
Community Energy

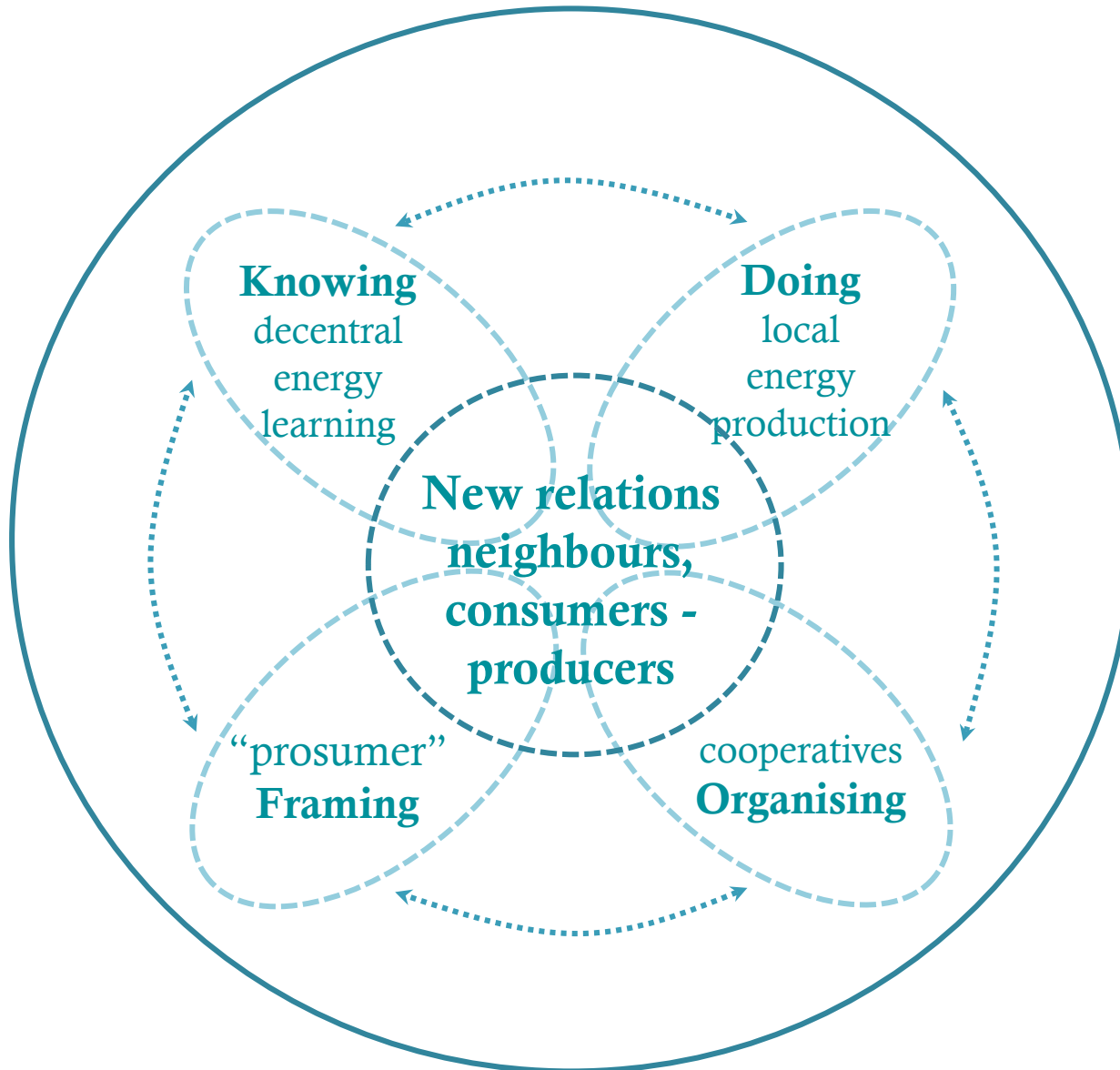


<http://www.westmillsolar.coop>



<http://persoonlijkeruimte.nl/?portfolio=buurtenergie-blijstroom>

Example Community Energy



'Reinventing' cooperatives



Complementary currencies

A screenshot of a web article from Treehugger, a Discovery Company. The article title is 'City's Local Currency Is Accepted for Paying Taxes'. The author is Sami Grover, and the date is February 16, 2012. The article includes a 'RELATED' section with a link to 'WORLD'S FIRST LOCAL E-CURRENCY LAUNCHES IN BRIXTON, LONDON' and a photo of a crowd. The main image shows a waterfront scene in Bristol, England, with a church spire and cranes. The article text mentions that Bristol is the UK's greenest city and has an awesome wood recycling project.

treehugger
A DISCOVERY COMPANY

ALL DESIGN TECHNOLOGY LIVING TRANSPORTATION ENERGY SCIENCE

City's Local Currency Is Accepted for Paying Taxes

Sami Grover
[Business / Corporate Responsibility](#)
February 16, 2012

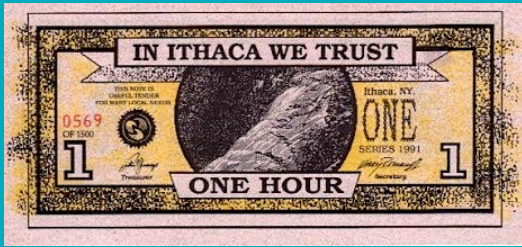
RELATED

WORLD'S FIRST LOCAL E-CURRENCY LAUNCHES IN BRIXTON, LONDON

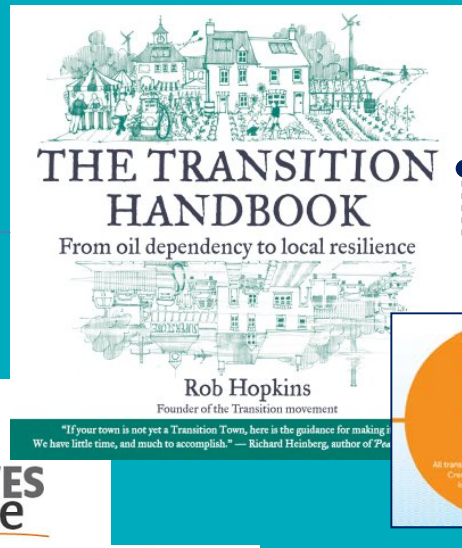
LOCAL CURRENCY CAUSES A STIR IN LONDON: THE

Kurt Thomas Hunt/CC BY 2.0

From being [voted the UK's greenest city](#) to an [awesome wood recycling project](#), my old home town of Bristol, England, has a lot going for it. It's latest innovation is particularly worthy of note. The BBC reports that [Bristol is](#)



time/bank

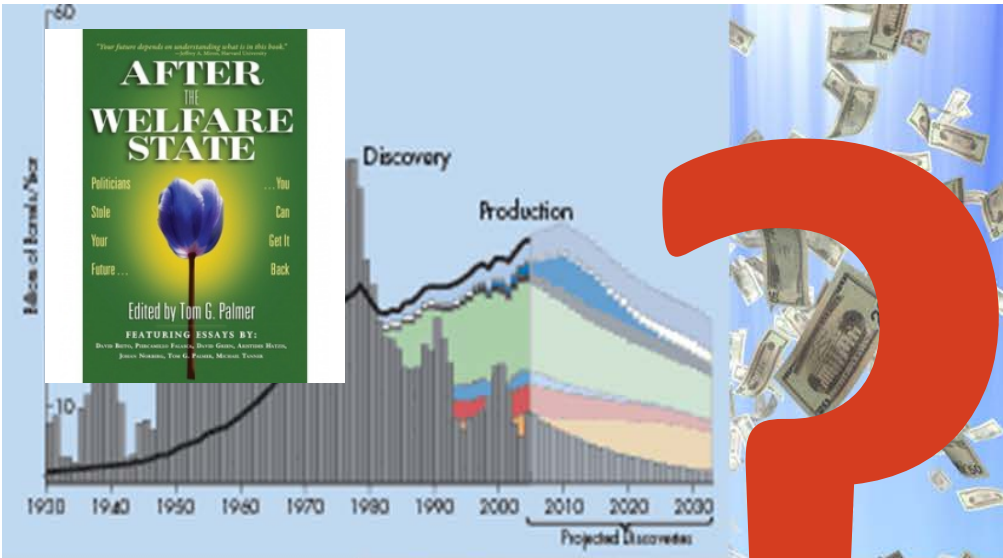


INNOVATIVES Europe



rop.be





time/bank

IN ITHACA WE TRUST ONE HOUR

IN ITHACA WE TRUST EIGHTH HOUR

COOPERATIVES Europe

2012 International Year of Cooperatives

Transition Network.org

Local Energy Tableland LETS TRADING SYSTEM

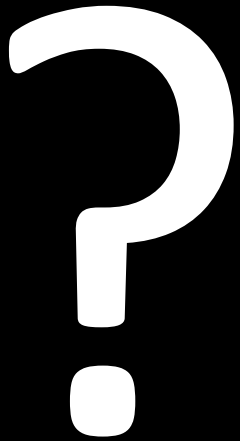
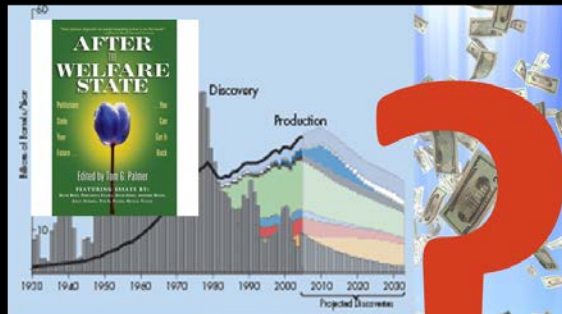
GLOBAL ECO-VILLAGE NETWORK

Ecopower cvba

COOPERATIVES Europe

2012 International Year of Cooperatives

Transition Network.org



High Expectations of Social Innovation



Former EU commission president José Manuel Barroso:

*“If encouraged and valued, social innovation can **bring immediate solutions to the pressing social issues** that citizens are confronted with.”*

BEPA:

*“At a **time of major budgetary constraints, social innovation is an effective way of responding to social challenges, by mobilising people’s creativity to develop solutions and make better use of scarce resources”.***

www.transitsocialinnovation.eu



Questioning the Assumption

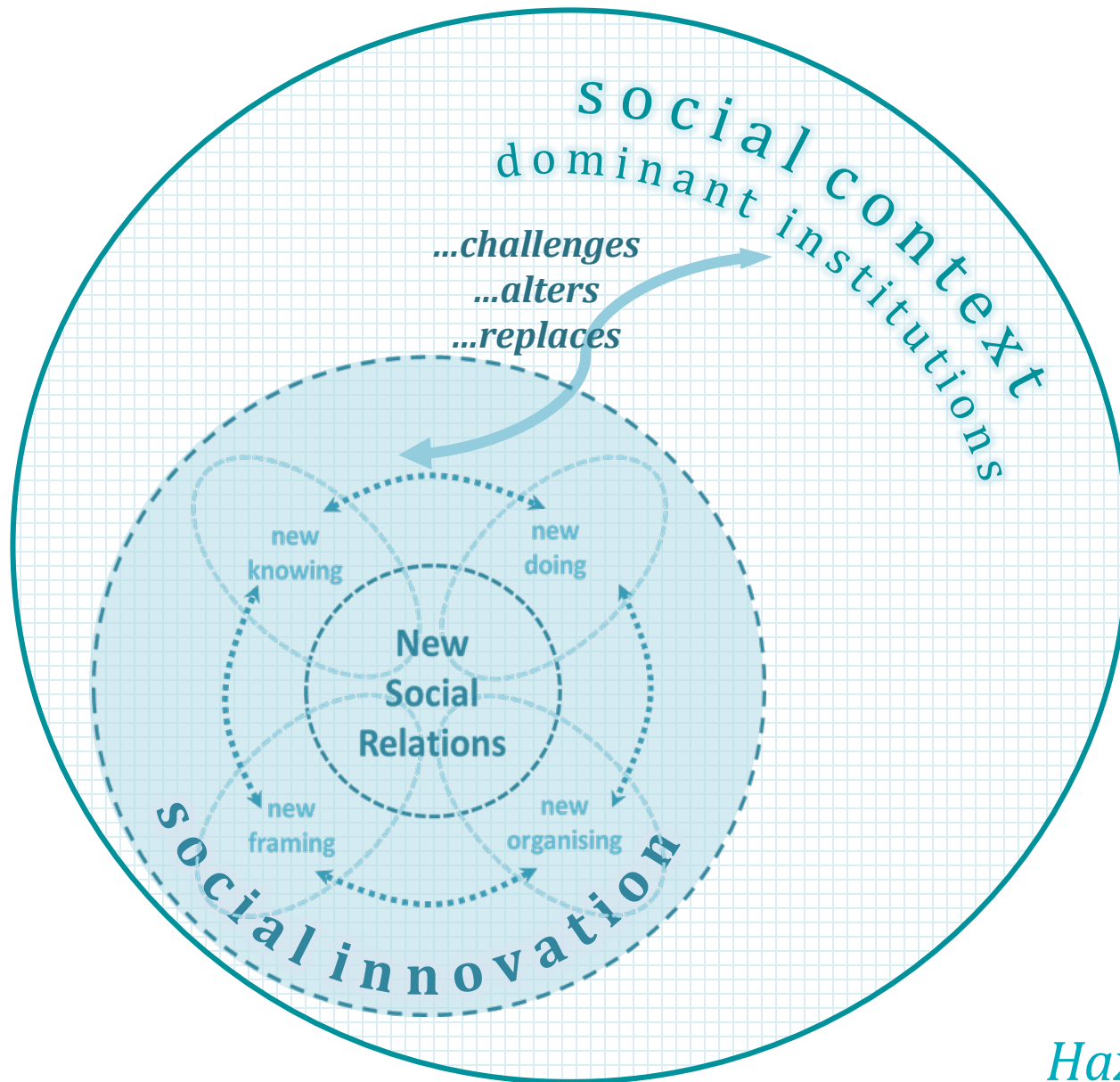
Underlying Assumption:

social innovation contributes to wider transformative change and empowers people to deal with societal challenges

Research questions TRANSIT-project:

- how, to what extent and under which conditions does social innovation contribute to transformative change?
- how are people empowered (or disempowered) to contribute to such processes?
- how do we conceptualise and study transformative social innovation?

Transformative social innovation?



Unpacking the social context

Narratives of change =

- Societal discourses on change and innovation, i.e. sets of ideas, concepts, metaphors, and/or story-lines about change and innovation

Game-changers =

- Macro-developments, events or trends that are framed as/ perceived to change the (rules, field, players in the) 'game' of societal interaction
- e.g. 'globalisation', 'climate change', 'economic crisis'

Narratives co-evolve with game-changers. Social innovation initiatives play into that 'discursive dynamic'.



Transition Network.org



THE TRANSITION HANDBOOK

From oil dependency to local resilience



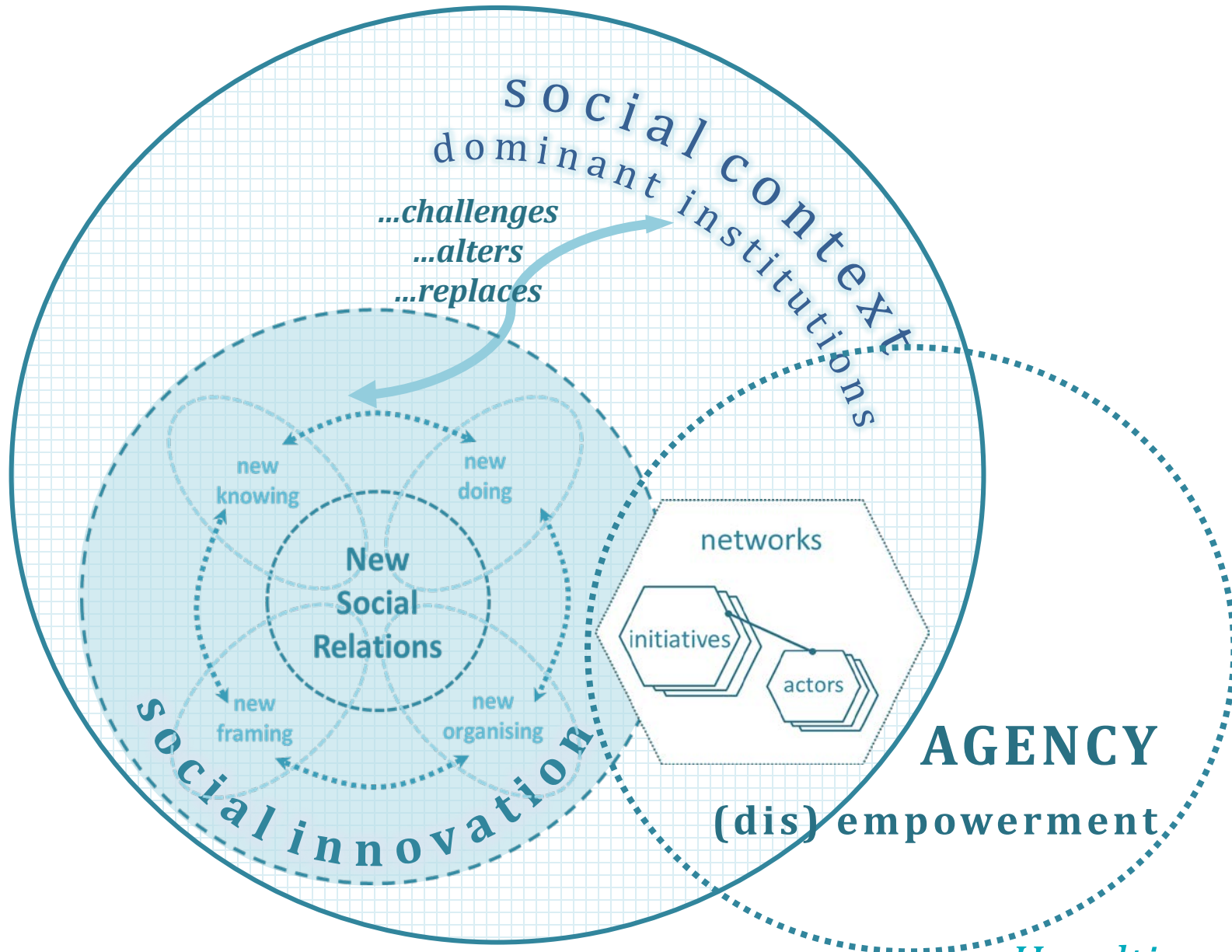
Rob Hopkins

Founder of the Transition movement

"If your town is not yet a Transition Town, here is the guidance for making it one.
We have little time, and much to accomplish." — Richard Heinberg, author of *Peak Everything*



Agency in transformative social innovation





Living Knowledge
The International Science Shop Network



RÉSEAU
INTERCONTINENTAL
DE PROMOTION DE
L'ÉCONOMIE SOCIALE
SOLIDAIRE



Embedded case-study approach

- Studying 20 transnational networks
- Globally connected, locally rooted
- In-depth case-studies on 40 local manifestations
- Cross-comparative meta-analysis 80+ local manifestations
- 13+ countries across EU & Latin-America

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WP4 | CASE
STUDY Report:
[The Transition
Movement]

transformative
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theory

WP4 | CASE
STUDY Report:
[Credit Unions]

Theme [sch.2013.3.2-1] [Social Innovation- Empowering People, changing societies]
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WP4 | CASE STUDY
Report: Impact Hu

Final Draft 01.02.2015

Theme [sch.2013.3.2-1] [Social Innovation- Empowering People, changing societies]

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theory

Transformative Social Innovation Narrative of the **Global Ecovillage Network (GEN)**



photos: Iris Kunze

By Iris Kunze and Flor Avelino – DRAFT 2015-02-17

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Phase 1: 12 in-depth case-study reports + synthesis report

<http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/discover-our-cases-2>

Impact cannot happen in isolation. It requires **collective action.**



IMPACT HUB Amsterdam

Vibrant **Community**
Inspiring **Space**
Meaningful **Content**

<http://amsterdam.impacthub.net>

IMPACT HUB





73

Open Impact Hubs



20

Impact Hubs in the Making



11,000

Members



49

Countries



An Impact Ecosystem

Where #Impactmakers connect, work, meet, collaborate, innovate, start, grow and scale.

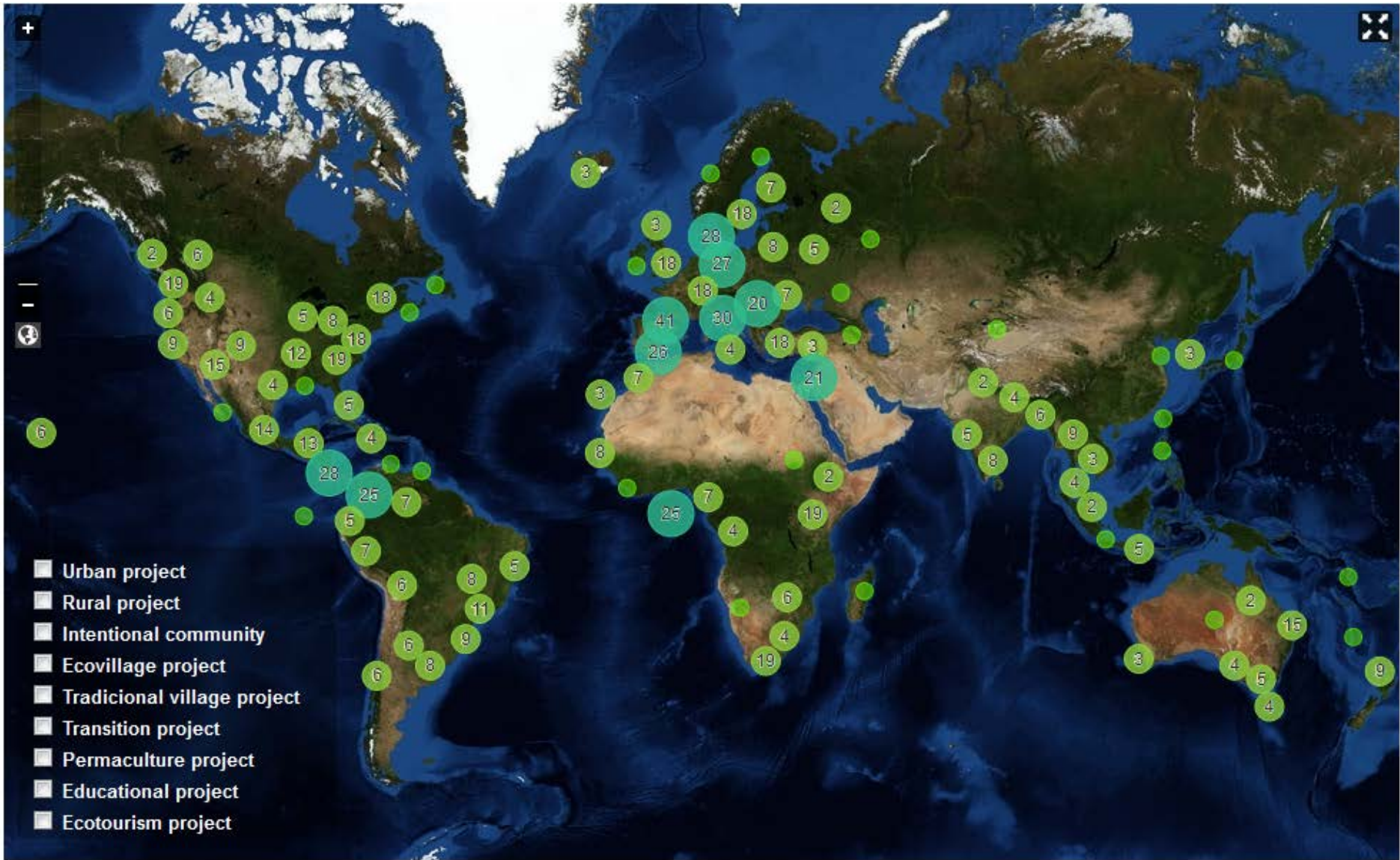


**"WHAT'S THE
INFRASTRUCTURE FOR
REALISING INNOVATIVE
IDEAS?"**

MEMBERSHIP

EVENTS







next
GEN

Global
Ecovillage
Network

Global
Ecovillage
Network - Europe

ENA

GLOBAL
ECOVILLAGE
NETWORK
Oceania & Asia

CASA

Global
Ecovillage
Network
AFRICA



"If nothing ever changed, there would be no butterflies"

HOME



ABOUT GEN

ABOUT ECOVILLAGES

GEN WORK

RESOURCES

PARTNERS

GET INVOLVED

NEWS & RELEASES



SIRClE

Social Innovation for Resilient Communities

**SOLUTION
LIBRARY**

Gaia
education

<http://gen.ecovillage.org/en>



Living Knowledge
The International Science Shop Network



RÉSEAU
INTERCONTINENTAL
DE PROMOTION DE
L'ÉCONOMIE SOCIALE
SOLIDAIRE



Co-operative Housing International
A Sector of the International
Co-operative Alliance



Narratives of change on 'New Economy'

Diversity of ways of framing the (new) economy:

1. Green economy through degrowth & localization
2. Collaborative economy (incl. 'sharing economy')
3. Social entrepreneurship & social economy
4. Solidarity economy

**RÉSEAU
INTERCONTINENTAL
DE PROMOTION DE
L'ÉCONOMIE SOCIALE
SOLIDAIRE**



*“It is very common for the **social economy to be conflated with the solidarity economy. They are not the same thing** and the implications of equating them are rather profound. The social economy is commonly understood as part of a “third sector” of the economy, complementing the “first sector” (private / profit-oriented) and the “second sector” (public / planned). (...) **The solidarity economy seeks to change the whole social / economic system and puts forth a different paradigm of development that upholds solidarity economy principles.**”*

*“RIPЕSS Global Vision”, Manila 2013
– www.ripess.org*

Meta-Narratives of Change <> Theories of Change



incubating social entrepreneurship



ASHOKA
Everyone A Changemaker™



living in local, resilient communities



BIEN
Basic Income Earth Network

political reform towards solidarity

RÉSEAU INTERCONTINENTAL DE PROMOTION DE L'ÉCONOMIE SOCIALE SOLIDAIRE



Renewing social relations

- Social change (e.g. ‘new economy’) needs to be based in the renewal of social relations
- Community building
- Relational values & principles
 - trust, reciprocity, equality, collectiveness, cooperation, sharing, solidarity, inclusion, transparency, openness, connectedness etc.*
- Transforming interpersonal relations as well as societal relations at the institutional level.

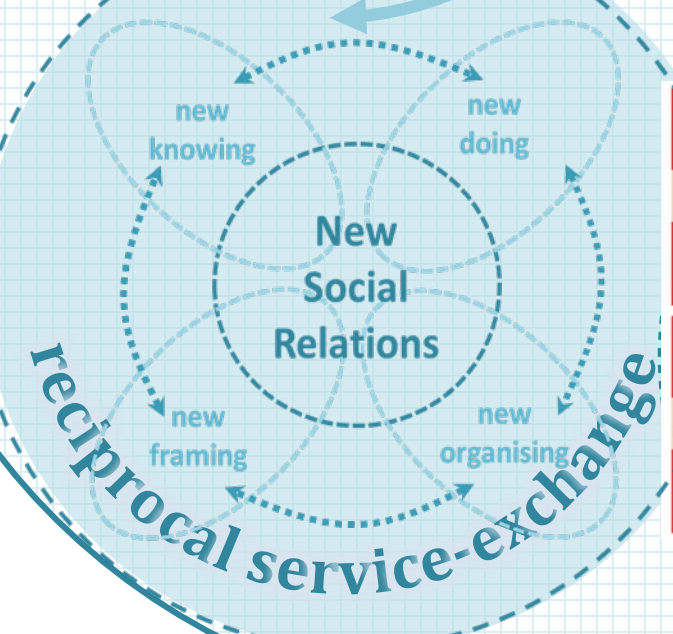
Challenging institutional logics

- Social innovation crosses the boundaries of different institutional logics: can originate in / apply to any sector (state, market, community, 3rd sector)
- **Changing relations** *between* sectors & institutions
- Initiatives **challenge** existing institutional logics and **(re)-negotiate** new / adapted institutional logics

economic system
service exchange through
formal money transactions

...challenges
...alters
...replaces

**Re-negotiating
TAXES**

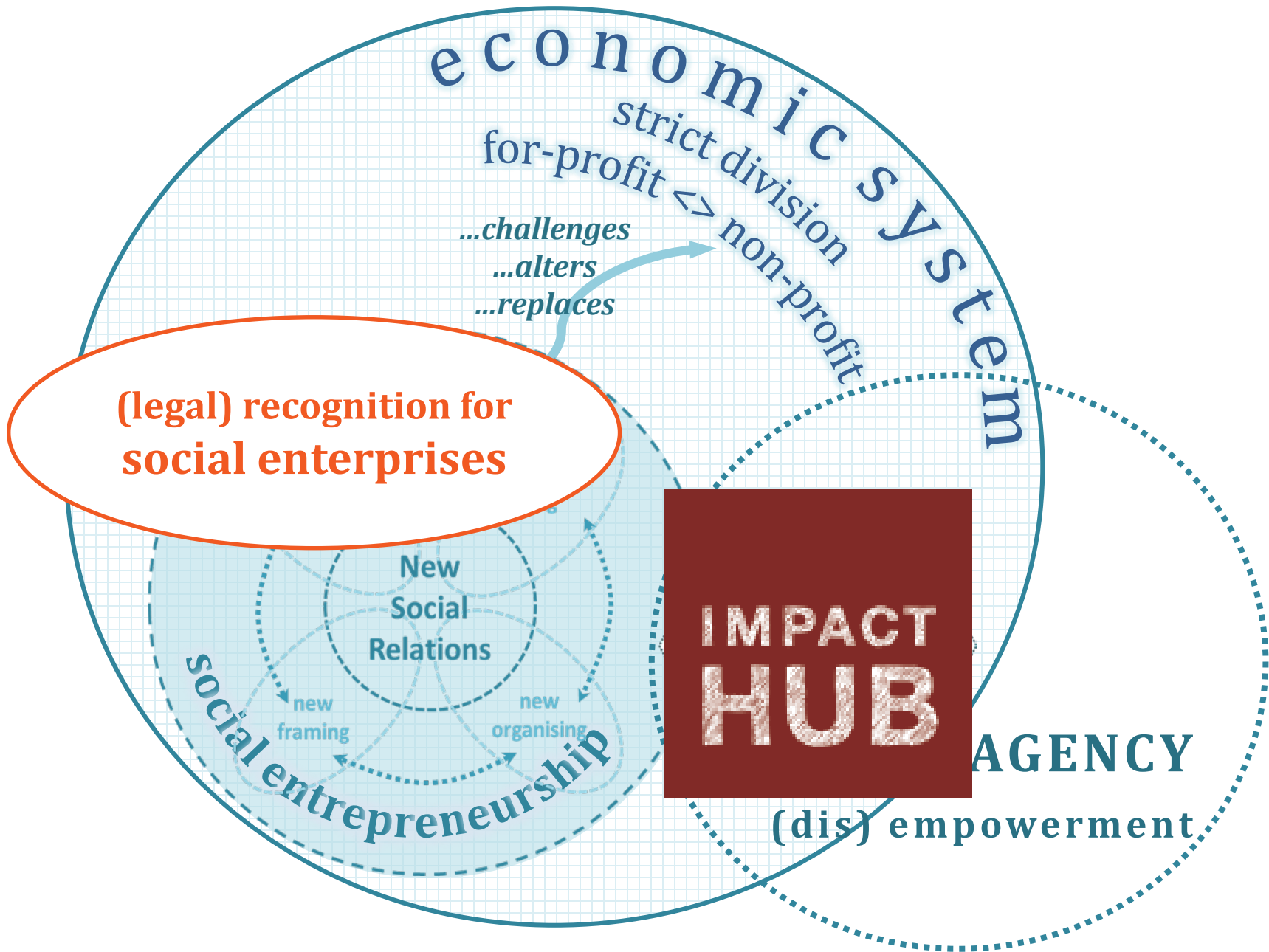


TIME BANK

60 MINUTES

~~GIVE & GET~~ 1 HOUR ~~HAVE & TAKE~~

AGENCY
(dis)empowerment



(legal) recognition for social enterprises

IMPACT HUB

AGENCY

(dis) empowerment



spatial planning

central planning &
construction

...challenges
...alters
...replaces

**Planning permissions
& construction
regulations**

cooperative eco-housing

New
Social
Relations

new
framing

new
organisism



AGENCY

(dis) empowerment

The Institutionalization of Social Innovation between Transformation and Capture

TRANSIT Working Paper 2, 14/10/14

By Bonno Pel & Tom Bauler

<http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/working-papers>



Dialectic & hybrid nature of TSI

- Social innovations have a **dialectic relation** with established institutions and structures - they both challenge them and reproduce them.
- SI-initiatives **lack an 'institutional home'** > both opportunity & barrier for transformative impact
- **Hybrid organizational forms** instead of 'stretch & conform'

Paradoxical & political strategies

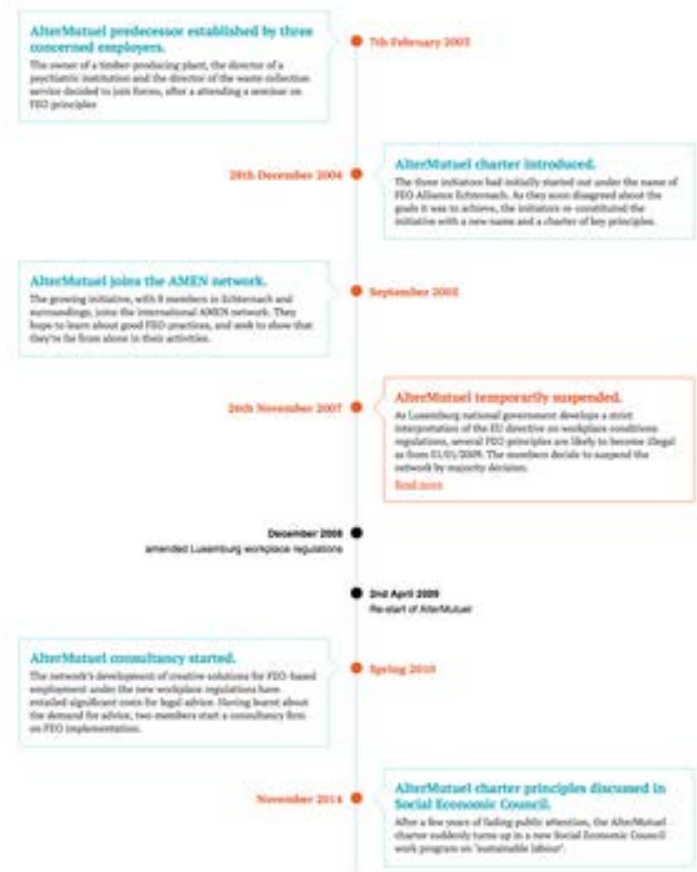
- Political struggle and negotiation
- SI-Initiatives need a **portfolio of different - often paradoxical - strategies** towards institutions (*complying, irritating, avoiding, resisting, compromising, hijacking, exploiting institutional pressures etc.*)
- Continuously **update and adapt** portfolio of strategies, and their narratives and theories of change, while holding on to **original core intentions** (*integrity, autonomy, motivation*)

A repository of Critical Turning Points: making sense of TSI timelines

On breakthroughs, setbacks and surprises in processes of Transformative Social Innovation.

By [Bonno Pel](#) (ULB), [Linda Zijderwijk](#) (IHS) and [Adina Dimitru](#) (UDC).

Through this blog we'd like to introduce you to our database project on Critical Turning Points in transformative social innovation. In the following we will explain how these Critical Turning Points help to make sense of social innovation processes, how we describe them, and how we seek to collect a diversity of those experiences from about 80 social innovation initiatives in various countries.





Transdisciplinary commitment

4 Themes

- Governance
- Social learning
- Resourcing
- Monitoring

Workshops

Knowledge group



**transformative
social innovation
theory**

TRANSIT Brief #1

Doing Things Differently

**Exploring Transformative
Social Innovation and its
Practical Challenges.**

Kemp et al. 2015

**transformative
social innovation
theory**

TRANSIT Brief #2

Governance

**Co-production challenges
in Transformative Social
Innovation.**

Pel et al. 2015

Game Changers and Transformative Social Innovation. The Case of the Economic Crisis and the New Economy.

TRANSIT Working Paper #1, September 2015

By Flor Avelino, Julia Wittmayer, Alex Haxeltine, René Kemp, Tim Strasser, Paul Weaver, Derk Loorbach and Jan Rotmans

The Institutionalization of Social Innovation Between Transformation and Capture

TRANSIT Working Paper #2, September 2015

By [Bonno Pel](#) & [Tom Bauler](#)

Transitions towards New Economies? A Transformative Social Innovation Perspective

TRANSIT Working Paper #3, September 2015

By Flor Avelino, Julia Wittmayer, Adina Dumitru, Noel Longhurst, Sabine Hielscher, Paul Weaver, Carla Cipolla, Rita Afonso, Iris Kunze, Jens Dorland, Morten Elle, Bonno Pel, Tim Strasser, René Kemp and Alex Haxeltine

Narratives of change: How Social Innovation Initiatives engage with their transformative ambitions

TRANSIT Working Paper #4, October 2015

By Julia M. Wittmayer, Julia Backhaus, Flor Avelino, Bonno Pel, Tim Strasser, Iris Kunze

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social innovation
theory**

**transformative
social innovation
theory**

**Methodolo
Guidelines
Batch 2**

**From research
design to meta
analysis guideli**

**TRANSIT WP3 deliverable
D3.2 – “A first prototype of
TSI theory”**


Deliverable 4.3

Theme [55h.2013.3.2-1][Social Innovation- Empowering People]
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Deliverable 5.1

Theme [55h.2013.3.2-1][Social Innovation- Empowering People, changing societies]
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Version 1.1 of 30th April 2015

Deliverable prepared by:

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With additional contributions from:

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<http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/deliverables>

Thank you.

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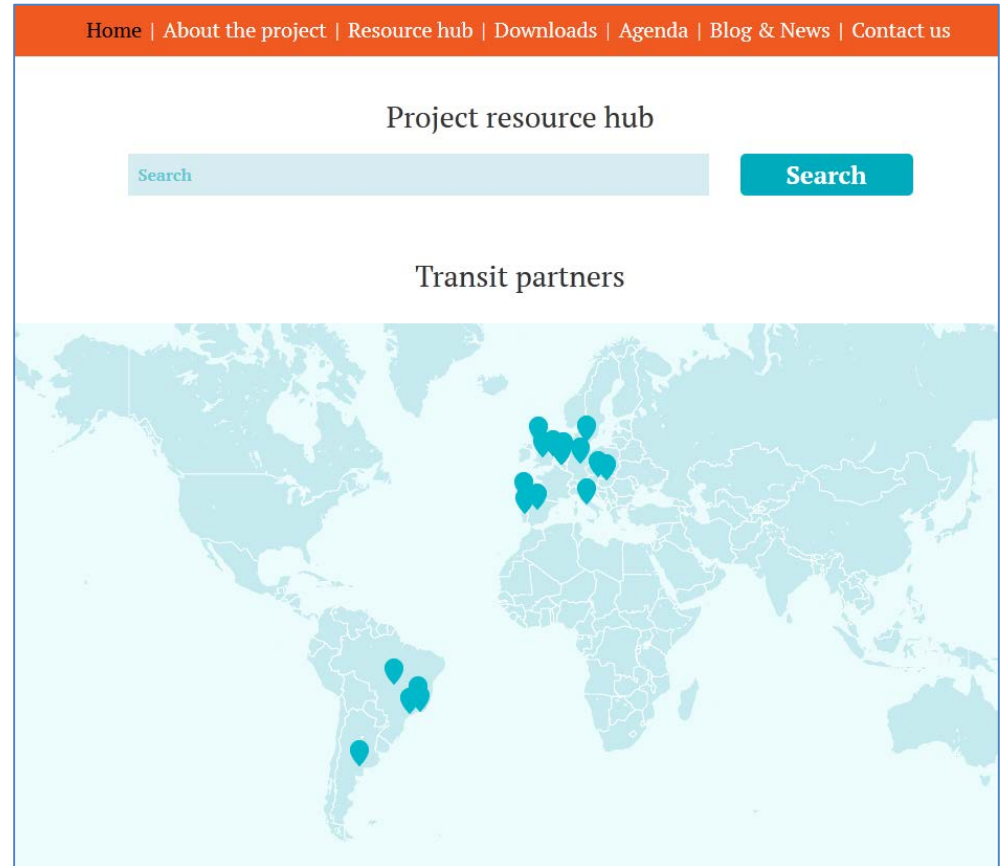
@FlorAvelino

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Maajid Nawaz:

A global culture to fight extremism

TEDGlobal 2011 · 17:53 · Filmed Jul 2011

27 subtitle languages

View interactive transcript



Share this idea



608,713 Total views

Share this talk and track your influence!

Why do transnational extremist organizations succeed where democratic movements have a harder time taking hold? Maajid Nawaz, a former Islamist extremist, asks for new grassroots stories and global social activism to spread democracy in the face of nationalism and xenophobia.



// REFUGEES ON RAILS

grenzeloos talent
REFUGEE COMPANY



Eine Herzens-Angelegenheit von Christian M. Nuhn, Gerry Flöckel, Film Factory, Vienna Point, der 28 „Herzlichen Agenturen“ und 81 Unterstützern, die diese Kampagne ermöglicht haben.





Schizophrenic nature of local governments:

“We have political parties that come here and want to film us and believe that we are the future of social innovation in the city and then on the other side votes against us to kick us out of this place because they want to build a luxury hotel.”

Impact Hub Amsterdam team member

BRITON POUND

REScoop.EU

BRISTOL POUND
OUR CITY. OUR MONEY.

COOPERATIVES Europe

2012 - International Year of COOPERATIVES

The Global Economic Crisis

The Great Depression of the XXI Century

Transition Network.org

THE TRANSITION HANDBOOK
From oil dependency to local resilience

Rob Hopkins
Founder of the Transition movement

"If you're not out on a Transition Town, here is the guidance for setting one up. We have ideas, and much to accomplish." — Richard Branson, author of *Full On Energy*

TRANSIT embedded case-study of the Impact Hub

