Transformative Social Innovation: Insights from the TRANSIT project

Dr. Flor Avelino | DRIFT, Erasmus University of Rotterdam
Assistant Professor avelino@drift.eur.nl

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@FlorAvelino @TransitSI #L4CSi

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3.5 Years of TRANSIT in 30 minutes..

- Theorising transformative social innovation (TSI)
- Case-studies & methods
- Hybrid & political nature of TSI
Social innovation

New Knowing
- knowledge
- competence
- learning

New Doing
- technologies
- practices
- materiality

New Framing
- meanings
- visions
- images

New Organising
- modes of organisation
- governance

Change in social relations

Haxeltine et al. 2016
Chilvers & Longhurst 2016
Example Community Energy

Knowing
decentral
energy
learning

Doing
local
energy
production

New relations
neighbours,
consumers -
producers

“prosumer”
Framing

cooperatives
Organising

Haxeltine et al. 2016
Chilvers & Longhurst 2016
‘Reinventing’ cooperatives
Complementary currencies

City's Local Currency Is Accepted for Paying Taxes

Bristoll Pound

World's First Local E-Currency Launches in Brixton, London

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. Its latest innovation is particularly worthy of note. The BBC reports that...
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
High Expectations of Social Innovation

Social Innovation

Social innovations are new ideas that meet social needs, create social relationships and form new collaborations. These innovations can be products, services or models addressing unmet needs more effectively. The European Commission's objective is to encourage market uptake of innovative solutions and stimulate employment.

Objectives

The Commission's actions on social innovation stem from the Innovation Union initiative (2010) and of the Social Investment Package (2013). These actions facilitate the inducement, uptake and scaling-up of social innovation solutions. The main objectives are:

- promoting social innovation as a source of growth and jobs
- sharing information about social innovation in Europe
- supporting innovative entrepreneurs and mobilising investors and public organisations.

What the Commission does on social innovation
Transformative social innovation?

- Challenges
- Alters
- Replaces

New Social Relations
- New knowing
- New doing
- New framing
- New organising

Social context
- Dominant institutions

Haxeltine et al. 2016
Wittmayer et al. 2015
Avelino et al. 2014
Agency for transformative social innovation

Haxeltine et al. 2015
Wittmayer et al. 2015
Avelino et al. 2014
Integrating dimensions & theoretical perspectives

- Institutional theory
- Relational theory
- Structuration theory
- Transition research
- Science & Technology studies
- Innovation studies
- Political theory
- Political psychology

Diagram:
- Relations to institutional change processes
- Relations to the broader socio-material context
- Agency: challenges, alters, replaces
- Transforming Socio-material Context
- Dominant institutions in flux
- New Social Relations
- Social innovation
- Relations of individual initiatives
- Relations across/between initiatives
- Structuration of social innovation...
A middle-range theory of TSI
Conceptual framework & 20 theoretical propositions on TSI

On the agency and dynamics of transformative social innovation


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

http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/deliverables
Participatory democracy in Porto Alegre

The first of a new series: this Brazilian city’s municipal assembly challenges conventional systems of government – and it works.
A NETWORK OF 547 TOWNS AND CITIES IN 52 COUNTRIES

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Holland, Honduras, Italy, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Togo, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uruguay and Venezuela.

310 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
237 UNIVERSITIES, RESEARCH CENTRES AND ASSOCIATIONS

A NETWORK OF SHARED COMMITMENTS
TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT
BARCELONA
LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL OFFICE
PORTO ALEGRE
ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
12 CITY ORGANISERS

WEB
www.oidp.net

https://oidp.net/en/
Welcome to Impact Hub

#HelloImpact
Sieben Linden (Germany)

Ecodorp Bergen (Netherlands)

Tamera (Portugal)

Findhorn (UK)
Embedded case-study approach

- 20 translocal networks
- 100+ local manifestations
- 25+ countries

EU, Latin-America, other

Interviews, participant observation, document reviews, comparative meta-analysis

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

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

By Ronno Pel (ULB), Linda Zuijderwijk (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.

http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/sii
The Critical Turning Points database; concept, methodology and dataset of an international Transformative Social Innovation comparison

TRANSIT Working Paper #10, July 12th 2017


http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/sii
Comparative analysis

Experimenting with alternative economies: four emergent counter-narratives of urban economic development
Noel Longhurst1, Flor Avelino2, Julia Wittmayer3, Paul Weaver3, Adina Dumitr2, Sabine Hielscher5, Carla Cipolla6, Rita Afonso6, Iris Kunze7 and Morten Elle8

Neoliberalism is a powerful narrative that has shaped processes of urban economic development across the globe. This paper reports on four nascent “new economic” narratives which represent fundamentally different imaginaries of the urban economy. Experiments informed by these narratives challenge the dominant neoliberal logic in four key dimensions. What is the role of different interactions in new economies and how do they play out in practice? What is the role of narratives in shaping new economies? How do narratives act as a set of logics and permissions of change?

Transitions towards New Economies? A Transformative Social Innovation Perspective
TRANSIT Working Paper #3, September 2015
By Flor Avelino, Julia Wittmayer, Adina Dumitr, Noel Longhurst, Sabine Hielscher, Paul Weaver, Carla Cipolla, Rita Afonso, Iris Kunze, Jens Dockland, Morten Elle, Bonno Pel, Tim Strasser, René Kemp, and Alex Hoxhine

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

Synthesis Report: meta-analysis of Critical Turning Points in TSI

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

Synthesis across social innovation case studies
Deliverable no. D4.4

transformative social innovation theory

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Transformative Social Innovation Theory Project Full Title: “Transformative Social Innovation Theory project” Grant Agreement: 314899

transitive social innovation theory

deliverable 5.4

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http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/downloads
4 clusters of narratives on alternative economies

“incubating social entrepreneurs”
social entrepreneurship & social economy

“living in local, resilient communities”
degrowth & relocalisation

“sharing & redesigning goods”
collaborative economy

“political institutional reform”
solidarity economy
Translocal empowerment

- **Empowerment** in terms of intrinsic motivation and self-determination: human need & longing for relatedness, competence, autonomy

- **Translocal** networks: local embeddedness (deepening) as well global connectedness (expansion)

- Access to socio-material **resources**: human, mental, monetary, technological, natural
Experimenting with social relations

• Physical and mental space for learning and experimentation.

• Renewing social relations & relational values. trust, reciprocity, equality, collectiveness, cooperation, sharing, solidarity, inclusion, transparency, openness, connectedness etc.

• Community-building and transparent, cooperative and inclusive forms of decision-making.
Diverse institutional contexts
changing relations between state, market & civil society
= social innovation in itself
Challenging institutional logics

- Initiatives challenge existing *institutional logics* and *(re)-negotiate* new / adapted institutional logics

- SI-initiatives *lack an ‘institutional home’* > ‘institutional nomadism’ = both barrier & opportunity for transformative impact.

- **Hybrid organizational forms** instead of ‘stretch & conform’.
Re-negotiating TAXES

new knowing
new doing
new organising
new framing

New Social Relations

reciprocal service-exchange

TIME BANK
60 MINUTES

AGENCY
(dis) empowerment

economic system

service exchange through
formal money transactions

...challenges
...alters
...replaces
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
Findhorn (UK)

Tamera (Portugal)
• WhiteWashing
• GreenWashing
• WeWashing?
• AirBnB, Uber, etc.
A Neoliberal Takeover of Social Entrepreneurship?

A model of social entrepreneurship focused on market-based solutions and profit is threatening to crowd out more collaborative approaches.

By Jyoti Sharma | Sep. 19, 2016

I recently read an article by Mario Loyola regarding neoliberalism and the need to reframe social entrepreneurship within a participatory democracy framework.

The watering down of participatory budgeting and people power in Porto Alegre, Brazil

by DANIEL CHAVEZ

Introduction

In the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, previously famous as the birthplace of the World Social Forum and the global capital of participatory democracy, the centre-right coalition that took office after the electoral defeat of the left in 2004 has implemented a new institutional scheme in Porto Alegre. It is known as the Porto Alegre model or participatory budgeting, which allegedly has the potential to enrich and broaden civic engagement. The scheme has been praised by mainstream international organizations but - for reasons to be discussed below - also strongly criticized by local NGOs, engaged researchers, and social movements. This process is consistent with broader changes taking place at the international level through the sustained support of a global version of participatory budgeting by other non-democratic and non-participatory institutions such as the World Bank.

New Thinking for the British Economy

Universal Basic Income is a neoliberal plot to make you poorer

by Dmytri Kleiner

23rd November 2016

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What would you do if your income were taken care of?

A large poster in a square in Geneva, Switzerland, promoting the idea of a universal basic income. Photo: Reuters
Dialectics of TSI politics

- Social innovations have a dialectic relation with established institutions - they both challenge them and reproduce them.
- To be transformative, inclusive & accessible, some sort of mainstreaming is needed (marketization, formalization, bureaucratization, normalization).
- TSI = highly political > need to be prepared for mainstreaming paradoxes.

_A dialectical perspective on innovation ‘capture’_ (Bonno Pel 2016)
Paradoxical political strategies

- **Translating** (new ways of doing, knowing, framing & organizing) to mainstream context, while also maintaining one’s **radical core**

- SI-initiatives need flexible portfolio of different - often paradoxical - strategies towards institutional change *(supplementing, lobbying, protesting, compromising, complying, circumventing, avoiding, seducing, negotiating, imitating, surprising... etc.)*

*Translation & radical core* (Adrian Smith 2006, 2007)
The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function. One should, for example, be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise.

(F. Scott Fitzgerald)
Thank you.

Dr. Flor Avelino
DRIFT
Erasmus University Rotterdam
avelino@drift.eur.nl

@FlorAvelino

#L4CSI