Transformative Social Innovation
Insights from the TRANSIT-project

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DRIFT (Dutch Research Institute for Transitions)

Social Innovation 2015: Pathways to Social Change

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TRANSIT Partners

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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
• ...

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TRANSIT definition of social innovation

New Knowing
knowledge competence learning

New Framing
meanings visions images

New Doing
technologies practices materiality

New Organising
modes of organisation governance

Change in social relations

Haxeltine et al. 2015
Example Community Energy

Knowing
decentral
ingergy
learning

Doing
local
energy
production

New relations
neighbours, consumers - producers

“prosumer”
Framing

cooperatives
Organising
‘Reinventing’ cooperatives
Complementary currencies

City's Local Currency Is Accepted for Paying Taxes

From being voted the UK's greenest city to an awesome wood recycling project, my old hometown of Bristol, England, has a lot going for it. Its latest innovation is particularly worthy of note. The BBC reports that Bristol is
time/bank

THE TRANSITION HANDBOOK
From oil dependency to local resilience

SECURE

2012 International Year of Co-operatives

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/westlothianlets/
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”.

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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?

Haxeltine et al. 2015
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’.
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
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
Phase 1:
12 in-depth case-study reports + synthesis report

Impact cannot happen in isolation. It requires collective action.

Impact Hub Amsterdam

Vibrant Community
Inspiring Space
Meaningful Content

http://amsterdam.impacthub.net
An Impact Ecosystem

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

"WHAT'S THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR REALISING INNOVATIVE IDEAS?"
"If nothing ever changed, there would be no butterflies"

http://gen.ecovillage.org/en
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
“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.”

Meta-Narratives of Change <> Theories of Change

incubating social entrepreneurship

living in local, resilient communities

political reform towards solidarity
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
Re-negotiating TAXES

Economic System

Re-negotiating service exchange through formal money transactions

Challenges alters replaces

New Social Relations

New knowing new doing new organising new framing

Reciprocal service-exchange

Time Bank

60 Minutes

Give 1 Hour

Have 1 Hour

Agency (dis)empowerment
...challenges
...alters
...replaces

(legal) recognition for social enterprises
Planning permissions & construction regulations
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 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/blog
Transdisciplinary commitment

4 Themes
• Governance
• Social learning
• Resourcing
• Monitoring

Workshops

Knowledge group

Kemp et al. 2015

Doing Things Differently
Exploring Transformative Social Innovation and its Practical Challenges.

Pel et al. 2015

Governance
Co-production challenges in Transformative Social Innovation.

www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/resource-hub/transit-brief-1
Game Changers and Transformative Social Innovation. The Case of the Economic Crisis and the New Economy.

TRANSIT Working Paper #1, September 2012
By Flor Avelino, Julia Wittmayer, Alex Haxeltine, René Kemp, Tim Paul Weaver, Derk Loorbach and Jan Rotmans

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 Hidscher, Paul Weaver, Carla Cipolla, Rita Afonso, Iris Kunze, Jens Dorland, Morten Elle, Bonno Pel, Tim Strasser, René Kemp and Alex Haxeltine

The Institutionalization of Social Innovation Between Transformation and Capture

TRANSIT Working Paper #4, October 2015

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

http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/working-papers
TRANSIT WP3 deliverable
D3.2 – “A first prototype of TSI theory”

Version 1.1 of 30th April 2015

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http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/deliverables
Thank you.

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Maajid Nawaz:

A global culture to fight extremism

TEDGlobal 2011 • 17:53 • Filmed Jul 2011

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

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und großartiger mitmenschen.

Michael Niyarand

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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
TRANSIT embedded case-study of the Impact Hub

Transnational Network

Global Impact Hub Network

60+ Local Impact Hubs
20+ Impact Hubs ‘in the making’

In-depth case-studies

Local Manifestations

Netherlands

Impact Hub Amsterdam

Impact Hub Rotterdam

Impact Hub Sao Paolo

Impact Hub Vienna

Impact Hub London

Impact Hub Belo Horizonte

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