Transformative social innovation & new economies

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date / location
June 23rd 2017
ESEE
Budapest
• 2014-2017
• 12 partners, 25 researchers
• EU & Latin-America

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The next 20-25 minutes

→ What is transformative social innovation?

→ Case-study ecovillage movement

→ New economies

→ Changing social relations & institutional logics

→ Slides will be made available.
Social innovation

Change in social relations

New Knowing
- knowledge
- competence
- learning

New Framing
- meanings
- visions
- images

New Doing
- technologies
- practices
- materiality

New Organising
- modes of organisation
- governance

Haxeltine et al. 2016
Chilvers & Longhurst 2016
THE ROUGH GUIDE to
Community Energy

http://www.westmillsolar.coop

http://persoonlijkeruimte.nl/?portfolio=buurtenenergie-blijstroom
Social innovation
example community energy

New relations
neighbours, consumers - producers

Knowing
decentral energy learning

Doing
local energy production

“prosumer”
Framing

cooperatives
Organising

Haxeltine et al. 2016
Chilvers & Longhurst 2016
Reinvention (innovation ≠ ‘newness’)

Ecopower cvba

REScoop.eu

Cooperatives Europe

2012 - International Year of Cooperatives
Transformative social innovation?

- Transition studies
- Innovation theory/ STS
- Relational sociology
- Structuration theory
- Political theory
- Social psychology

Avelino et al. 2017
Haxeltine et al. 2016
Wittmayer et al. 2015
20 translocal networks

100+ local/regional/national initiatives

27+ countries (EU, Latin-America, other)

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

1. Tamera (PT)
2. Schloss Tempelhof (DE)
3. Bergen (NL)
4. Sieben Linden (DE)
5. Findhorn (UK)
what is an ecovillage?

- "...an intentional, traditional or urban community that is consciously designed through locally owned, participatory processes in all four dimensions of sustainability (social, culture, ecology and economy) to regenerate their social and natural environments." (GEN)

- Intentional community: a group of people who have chosen to live together with commitment and a common purpose

- Seeds of social critique & social movements: founded consciously on a critical attitude towards society
  - search and explore new ways of living with people and nature
  - strive for intervention and creation of society rather than subordination

Examples:
- Auroville (India)
- Crystal Waters (Australia)
- Sieben Linden (Germany)
- Ithaca (New York)
• 170 people
• 330 acres
• Alentejo (Portugal)
• founded in 1995
"if nothing ever changed, there would be no butterflies"

http://gen.ecovillage.org/en
New Economies

Four meta-narratives on new economies:

1. Green economy through degrowth & localization

2. Social entrepreneurship & social economy

3. Collaborative economy (incl. ‘sharing economy’)

4. Solidarity economy
Experimenting with alternative economies: four emergent counter-narratives of urban economic development
Noel Longhurst\(^1\), Flor Avelino\(^2\), Julia Wittmayer\(^2\), Paul Weaver\(^3\), Adina Dumitru\(^4\), Sabine Hielscher\(^5\), Carla Cipolla\(^6\), Rita Afonso\(^6\), Iris Kunze\(^7\) and Morten Elle\(^8\)

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 purpose of economic development? What are the preferred distributive mechanisms? Who governs the economy? What is the preferred form of economic organisation? The emergence of these experiments illustrates that cities are spaces where counter-narratives can emerge and circulate. Acknowledging the existence of these alternative visions opens up a wider set of possibilities for future urban transitions.

Introduction
In the ‘century of urbanisation’ [1,2] cities are seen as critical sites for societal change in general [3] but also specifically instead of specific sustainability transitions [4,5,6]. Attempts to steer urban sustainability transitions create a number of difficulties, not least how such transitions relate to the role of cities as sites of economic production, consumption, exchange and innovation. A narrative based on neoliberal market rationality has, in recent decades, played a significant role in shaping the governance, economies, built environment and infrastructure of cities [7]. The power of this narrative is that it creates a ‘common sense’ way in which urban economic development should be pursued, which is underpinned by a certain set of logics and enacted through a set of decisions, relations and practices. Here we highlight four important dimensions of the overall neoliberal narrative:
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 Dortland, 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

http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/working-papers
4 (ideal type) Meta-Narratives on New Economies

- **Impact Hub**
  - "not-for-profit organizations & incubating social entrepreneurs"
  - social entrepreneurship & social economy

- **Ashoka**
  - "self-provisioning, life-style change & local communities"
  - degrowth & relocalisation

- **European Network of Living Labs**
  - "sharing & redesigning goods through decentralized networks"
  - collaborative economy & sharing economy

- **BIEN**
  - "participatory democracy & political institutional change"
  - solidarity economy
Renewing social relations

What different narratives on new economy have in common:

• A new economy (and any kind of social change) 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
Grassroots land-use planning & ecological construction & community ownership
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
• WhiteWashing
• GreenWashing
• WeWashing?

• AirBnB, Uber, etc.
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’
• Transformative social innovation = 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)

• Embracing the paradoxes of institutionalisation, mainstreaming, and ‘capture’ of innovation (Pel 2015)
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)
drift for transition

Thank you

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TRANSIT presents:

Learning for Change: A Journey through the Theory & Practice of Transformative Social Innovation

14-15/09/2017
case reports & database (forthcoming)

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 Zuiderwijk (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
Transformative social innovation and (dis)empowerment

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\textbf{ARTICLE INFO}

Keywords:
Transformative social innovation
Governance
Empowerment
Societal challenges
Transformative change

\textbf{ABSTRACT}

This article responds to increasing public and academic discourses on social innovation, which often rest on the assumption that social innovation can drive societal change and empower actors to deal with societal challenges and a retreating welfare state. In order to scrutinise this assumption, this article proposes a set of concepts to study the dynamics of transformative social innovation and underlying processes of multi-actor (dis)empowerment. First, the concept of transformative social innovation is unpacked by proposing four foundational concepts to help distinguish between different pertinent ‘shades’ of change and innovation: 1) social innovation, (2) system innovation, (3) game-changers, and (4) narratives of change. These concepts, invoking insights from
“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.”

“Economy is always a reflection of our social behaviour. And so you need to look at this if you want to change the economy also. (...) If we build a new currency, we need to anchor it in a new social system, in a new social behaviour of people, in order for it to work. Because if I don’t trust people, also Gift Economy doesn’t work at some point. [...] I have my doubts [about alternative economic systems] if they are not based in community work.”

(Interview TAM6)
research

We need research to show us how and when transformative change is possible.

DRIFT is a world-leading institute for research on and for sustainability transitions. We conduct interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research to better understand and facilitate new ways of thinking, doing and organizing in contemporary transitions.

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