Paper to be presented at:
Pressure Cooker “Theories of change in sustainability transitions” University of A Coruna, 10-11th of September 2015

Transforming the World? How Networks with Transformative Ambitions engage with Narratives of Change

Authors:
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Narratives of Change (NoCs)

- Sets of ideas, concepts, metaphors, discourses and/or story-lines about change and innovation,

- revealing ‘theories of change’ about why the world has to change, who has the power to do so and how this can be done.

- Narrative research ≈ broad interdisciplinary field > we focus on constructivist approach.
Framework for Analysing NoCs

- Content of narratives
  - Context (why?)
  - Actors (who?)
  - Plot (how? when? where?)

- Social production of narratives

- Role of narratives in processes of change
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Batch of 12 Networks under study in TRANSIT project</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Impact Hub: &lt;br&gt;Global network of glocal hubs for social entrepreneurs</td>
<td>NL</td>
<td>BRA</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ashoka: &lt;br&gt;Network for supporting social entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Credit Unions: &lt;br&gt;Network of different types of credit cooperatives</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>RIPESS: &lt;br&gt;Network for the promotion of social solidarity economy</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>FABLABS: &lt;br&gt;Digital fabrication workshops open to local communities</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>ARG</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Hackerspace: &lt;br&gt;User driven digital fabrication workshops</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Living Knowledge Network: &lt;br&gt;Network of community-based research entities/ science shops</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Romania</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>DESIS-network: &lt;br&gt;Network for design for social innovation and sustainability</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>BRA</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Global Ecovillage Network: &lt;br&gt;Network of eco-villages and other intentional communities</td>
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<td>INFORSE: &lt;br&gt;International network of sustainable energy NGOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Content of narratives</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>How is the context constructed in the NoC under study?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>why?</strong></td>
<td>- How is the past and present context framed?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- How is the desired future described?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What are elements of the past and present context that need to be changed? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
<td>How are actors constructed in the NoC under study?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>who?</strong></td>
<td>- Who are the individual, organisational and sector-level actors?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Who is driving and/or hindering change?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plot</strong></td>
<td>How is the social change process said to unfold in the NoC under study?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>how? when? where?</strong></td>
<td>- What events, experiences or activities lead to the desired future and in what sequence?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Which activities by the initiative and other actors are driving and/or hindering change?</td>
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<tr>
<th>(2) Production of narratives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How were/are the NoC’s under study produced?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What kind of narrative practices does the initiative engage in?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- How central are narrative practices to the activities of the SI-initiative?</td>
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<th>(3) Role of narratives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is the role of narratives in general and specifically in social change processes perceived?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What role do narrative practices play in bringing about change according to the SI-initiative?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Contexts: why change?

• Centralised, formalized, rigid structures, for-profit vs. non-profit > need for social entrepreneurship, changemakers, social impact economy, ecosystems for innovation (*Impact Hub*/ *Ashoka*)

• Individualisation, disconnection, fragmentation > (living in) community, reconnecting, holism (*GEN*/ *TT*)

• Globalisation, capitalism, hegemonic neo-liberal order > need for more equality, solidarity economy (*RIPESS*)

• Peak oil, climate change, economic crisis (‘game-changers’)

www.transitsocialinnovation.eu
Actors: who enables change?

• (Social) entrepreneurs & ‘intrapreneurs’, ‘change-makers’, ‘impact-makers’ (Impact Hub, Ashoka)
A Community of Impactmakers

5,000+ local #Impactmakers in Amsterdam and 65+ Impact Hubs in cities globally

For a Radically Better World

Issue-driven entrepreneurs moving society forward
A不甘于平凡的人，总会走出与众不同的道路。
Actors: who enables change?

- (Social) entrepreneurs & ‘intrapreneurs’ (Impact Hub, Ashoka)
- Community members, communities, residents, parents, ‘planetary citizens’, spiritual beings (GEN, TT)
- Political collectives, empowered citizens (RIPESS)
RÉSEAU INTERCONTINENTAL DE PROMOTION DE L'ÉCONOMIE SOCIALE SOLIDAIRE
Plot: change how? when? where?

- Creating ‘ecosystems’ for innovation, co-working spaces for social entrepreneurs, improving social entrepreneurship skills (Impact Hub, Ashoka)
#LEGAL ADVICE FOR SOCIAL STARTUPS

#WORKBENCH

SEPTEMBER 4 | 15:00 - 17:30
Haarlemmerweg 8C | Westerpark | Amsterdam

Events

Workbench #19 Legal advice for social startups

04 SEPTEMBER 2015 | 15:00 TO 17:30

Welcome drink offered to join the network drinks afterwards at 17:30 + bring a friend / colleague!
An Impact Ecosystem

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

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

MEMBERSHIP

EVENTS
Plot: change how? when? where?

• Creating ‘ecosystems’ for innovation, co-working spaces for social entrepreneurs, improving social entrepreneurship skills (Impact Hub, Ashoka)

• ‘Be the change you want to be’, acupuncture points, living in community, education (GEN, TT)
http://gen.ecovillage.org/en
Plot: change how? when? where?

• Creating ‘ecosystems’ for innovation, co-working spaces for social entrepreneurs, improving social entrepreneurship skills (Impact Hub, Ashoka)

• ‘Be the change you want to be’, acupuncture points, living in community, communal villages (GEN, TT)

• Empowering collective political voice, public and political arena, incl. scientific/intellectual debate (RIPESS)
Feeding the Planet through Agroecology: on June 3-5, a RIPESS delegation with twelve people from Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe participated in Milan People’s Expo to assert the voices of peoples in putting forth food sovereignty.

"Agroecology is political: it requires us to challenge and transform structures of power in society"
- Nyeleni Declaration, February 2015
Production & Role of Narratives

• ‘Locally active, globally connected’

• All pay considerable attention to the production of trans-local narratives: meta-narratives + local narratives

• All seem particularly aware of the role of narratives/discourse is enabling/impeding change
COURAGE

COLLABORATION

TRUST
Welcome to Impact Hub
#HelloImpact
New Story Summit
Inspiring Pathways for our Planetary Future

Special Event
27 September - 3 October 2014

For people, generally, their story of the universe and the human role in the universe is their primary source of intelligibility and value. The deepest crises experienced by any society are those moments of change when the story becomes inadequate for meeting the survival demands of a present situation.

Thomas Berry, Dream of the Earth

As we change our story, we change our world.
We humans find our way by story. Our stories shape us, hold us and give meaning to our lives. Every so often it becomes clear that a prevailing story is no longer serving. Now is such a time.

If we do not create a positive, realistic picture of the future, we will not live into it.
Our modern world faces unprecedented challenges and
“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.”

So What?

- Both structure & agency manifest in narratives

- Awareness of the ‘structural power’ of and power dynamics between (meta-)narratives and how these are reproduced/ challenged – *social innovators, policy-makers, researchers, lecturers!*

- Increasing one’s transformative potential through ‘narrative agency’? (e.g. ‘counter-narratives’)

- Research: Beyond deconstructing of narratives towards reconstructing narratives? ‘Narrative experimentation’?
Thank you. Questions?

Flor Avelino
DRIFT
avelino@drift.eur.nl
@FlorAvelino

Social Innovation 2015: Pathways to Social Change
Research, policies and practices in European and global perspectives
Vienna, 18-19 November 2015

TRANSIT and SI-DRIVE bring together practitioners, policymakers and researchers from around the world to look at how social innovation can lead to societal transformations.

The first day focuses on the state-of-the-art in research, whereas the second centres on practice. Both feature a rich offering of interactive sessions and opportunities for networking.

Registration is open & free

www.transitsocialinnovation.nl / @TransitSI
Ecovillage Networking

GEN-NA

GEN Europe

GEN-NOA

CASA

RESNATUR

GEN Africa
F*ckUp Nights
Vol. XXVII
-LONDON-

EVENTS

F*ckUp Night: Conversations about failures and other things

13 NOVEMBER 2014 | 6:30 PM TO 8:30 PM
Deliverable

Deliverable no. 4.3 : Methodological guidelines for Batch 2

29 May 2015

As part of the TRANSIT project, an embedded case study approach is used to ground and test the emerging middle-range theory on transformative social innovation (TSI). This approach combines both qualitative, in-depth case study analysis, as well as quasi-quantitative comparative meta-analysis. In WP4, the focus is on grounding the theory through in-depth case study work. The aim of the in-depth embedded case studies is to develop knowledge about the emergence of social innovation and social innovation initiatives/networks as well as TSI-agency and TSI-dynamics.

Deliverable

Deliverable no. 5.1 : From research design to meta analysis guidelines

39 May 2015
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<td>3 <strong>Time Banks:</strong></td>
<td>Sharing economy, social economy, reciprocity service exchange</td>
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<td>Networks facilitating reciprocal service exchange</td>
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<td>4 <strong>Credit Unions:</strong></td>
<td>Anti-capitalism, critical economy paradigm</td>
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<td>Creative commons, free knowledge, open access</td>
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<td>Post-capitalism, gift economy, sharing economy, commons, post-capitalism</td>
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<td>Degrowth, post-capitalism, sharing economy, local economy</td>
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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
Renewing social relations

- Transforming societal as well as interpersonal relations
- Community building
- Relational values & principles

  trust, reciprocity, equality, collectiveness, cooperation, sharing, solidarity, inclusion, transparency, openness, connectedness etc.
“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)
Challenging institutional constellations

Are these initiatives changing dominant economy system?

Indirectly challenging the economic system:

• Cultivating (counter-)narratives
• Demonstrating alternative forms of social relations
• Challenging institutional constellations
Institutional boundaries

STATE (public agencies)

MARKET (firms, business)

COMMUNITY (households, families etc.)

NON-PROFIT (NGOs, associations, foundations)

Avelino & Wittmayer 2014, Based on Evers & Laville 2004, Pestoff 1992
Blurring, contested and shifting boundaries

STATE
(public agencies)

NON-PROFIT
(NGOs, associations, foundations)

COMMUNITY
(households, families etc.)

MARKET
(firms, business)

Avelino & Wittmayer 2014, Based on Evers & Laville 2004, Pestoff 1992
Blurring, contested and shifting boundaries

TIME BANK
60 MINUTES
1 HOUR

STATE
COMMUNITY
MARKET

formal
informal

non-profit
profit

public
private

time exchange

THIRD SECTOR

Avelino & Wittmayer 2014
Blurring, contested and shifting boundaries
Blurring, contested and shifting boundaries

science, education, knowledge, innovation, design

Avelino & Wittmayer 2014
Critical debates on shifting power relations

STATE
(public agencies)

MARKET
(firms, business)

COMMUNITY
(households, families etc.)

NON-PROFIT
(NGOs, associations foundations)

Avelino & Wittmayer 2014
“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.”

‘New Economy’

Different strands of ‘new economy’:

• Degrowth and localization
• Collaborative economy
• Solidarity economy
• Social entrepreneurship and social economy
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SCORAI & TRANSIT workshop: Transition to Sustainable Consumption through Social Innovation.

Call for Papers

The European branch of the Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI Europe) and the Transformative Social Innovation Theory (TRANSIT) project are jointly organising a one-day workshop at the Impact Hub, Vienna on 17 November 2015. The title of the workshop is:

‘Beyond’ Transition? Understanding and Achieving Sustainable Consumption through Social Innovation

There is continuing debate about how to theorise and how to act to address current societal challenges including growing social inequalities, aging populations, economic crises, public austerity programmes and climate change. In recent years transition studies have become one of the most pervasive approaches stemming from research on the topic (Grin et al. 2010, Markard et al. 2012). In particular the multi-level
### Strands of New Economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strands of New Economy</th>
<th>Social Innovation networks under study</th>
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<tr>
<td>Degrowth &amp; Localization</td>
<td>Global Ecovillage Networks, Transition Towns, INFORSE, Time Banks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solidarity Economy</td>
<td>RIPESS, Global Ecovillage Network, Time Banks</td>
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*‘post-capitalism’, ‘green economy’, or ‘gift economy’*
Impact Hub Network
Research question

Questioning the assumption/ hypothesis:
“social innovation contributes to wider societal transformation and empowers people to deal with societal challenges”

Main research question:
• how, to what extent and under which condition does social innovation contribute to transformative change?
• how are people empowered in such processes?

Transformative social innovation (TSI) ≈
• process by which social innovation contributes to transformative change
Institutional Logics & Actor Categories

1) The quadruple helix: citizens, social society and users:

Proposition:
Civil Society has a strong role to play in increasing effective innovation in cities.
The ‘Welfare Mix’
Pestoff 1992:25
zooming in on individual roles

Avelino & Wittmayer 2014
power struggles, inequalities, hierarchies

Avelino & Wittmayer 2014
Blurring, contested and shifting boundaries

Avelino & Wittmayer 2014
“It is about the quality of relationship and the way we operate with each other. (...) It is something around being part of a certain type of society, which attracts people here. Not just pure service relationship or nice products and services. That’s nice, but people come in for something bigger. The way of being together is why people come to our Hubs. We pride ourselves in building another kind of society.”
(Member global Impact Hub team)

“Trust, courage, collaboration”
High Expectations of Social Innovation

Former EU president José Manuel Barroso:

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

Hubert 2012
High Expectations of Social Innovation

“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”.

2010: p7
Social Innovation Discourse

• ‘Social’ vs. ‘technological’ innovation

• More than social dimension of technological innovation

• The social as the object of innovation in itself

• “Immaterial and intangible” (Howaldt and Schwarz 2010)

• Beyond a technology focused innovation paradigm