

transformative
social innovation
theory



Social innovation for societal
transformation: insights from the
TRANSIT project (and some conjectures)

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Central topics of my talk

- ✓ Social innovation as a modernistic metonym for an older phenomenon
- ✓ The diversity of social innovation
- ✓ Positive psychology insights for social innovation
- ✓ Social innovation as a socio-economic transformation phenomenon
- ✓ The sociotechnical transition perspective
- ✓ What the transition and transformation perspective can learn from each other
- ✓ The research agenda

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transformative social innovation theory



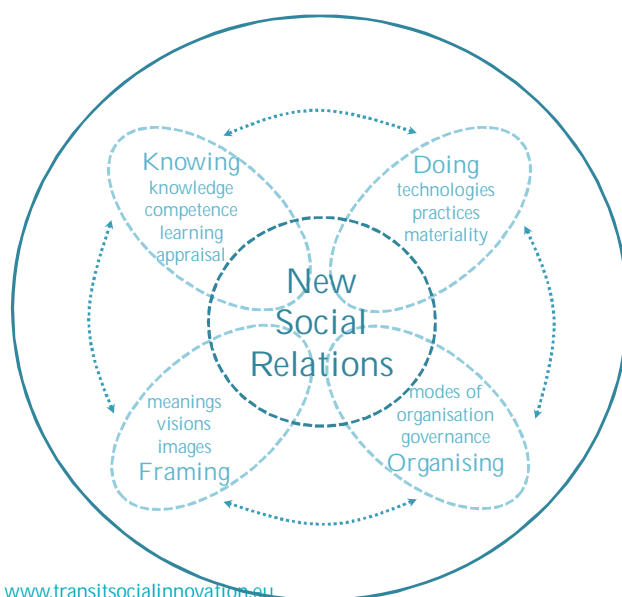
- 2014-2017
- 12 partners, 30 researchers
- EU & Latin-America
- 20 social innovation networks

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theory

the HUB, Ashoka,
Time Banks, Credit
Unions, RIPESS,
FABLABS,
Hackerspace,
Living Knowledge
Network, DESIS-
network, Global
Ecovillage Network,
Transition Towns,
INFORSE

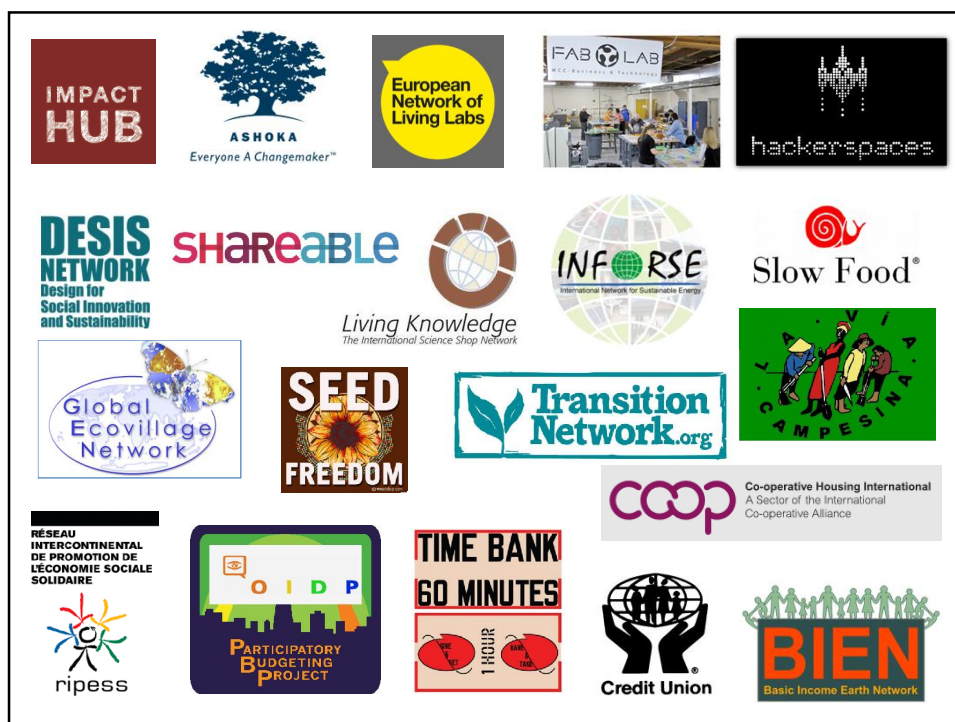
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Social Innovation



Social innovation
as changes in
social relations,
involving *new*
ways of doing,
knowing,
organizing, and
framing
(Haxeltine et al. 2016)

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Type of theory and approach to theory development

- Middle range theory
- Process theory
- Developed through deduction, induction and abduction – use of case studies and 'propositions'
- Draws on relational ontology with evolutionary and durational perspectives
- Draws on institutional theories and concepts to explain structuration while allowing for institutional change

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Key publications and papers

- Haxeltine, A., Pel, B., Dumitru, A., Avelino, F., Kemp, R., F., Bauler, T., Kunze, I., Dorland, J., Wittmayer, J., and Jørgensen, M. S. (2017) Towards a TSI theory : a relational framework and 12 propositions, (TRANSIT working paper ; 16, December 2017)
- Haxeltine, A., Pel, B., Wittmayer, J., Dumitru, A., Kemp, R. & Avelino, A. (2017), Building a middle-range theory of Transformative Social Innovation; theoretical pitfalls and methodological responses, *European Public and Social Innovation Review*, 2(1), 59-77
- Avelino, F., Wittmayer, J.M., Pel, B., Weaver, P.W., Dumitru, A., Haxeltine, A., Kemp, R., Jørgensen, M.S., Bauler, B., Ruijsink, S., Riordan, T. (2017), Transformative Social Innovation and (Dis)Empowerment: Towards a Heuristic, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.05.002>
- Avelino, F., Wittmayer, J. M. , Kemp, R., Haxeltine, A.. (2017). Game-changers and transformative social innovation. *Ecology and Society* 22 (4):41. <https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol22/iss4/art41/>
- Kemp, R., Strasser, T., Davidson, D., Avelino, F., Pel, B., Dumitru, A., Kunze, I., Backhaus, J., O'Riordan, T., Haxeltine, A., and Weaver, P.W. (2016). The humanization of the economy through social innovation, paper for SPRU 50th anniversary conference and IST2016 conference.
- Pel, B., Haxeltine, A., Kemp, R., Dumitru, A., Avelino, F., (2018) Transformative Social Innovation: Implications for Transitions Research, paper for IST conference, Manchester, June 12-14, 2018.
- Pel, B., and Kemp, R. (2018) *Between Innovation and Restoration; a Critical Comparison of Relative Novelty in 20 Social Innovation Initiatives*, paper for 10th International Social Innovation Research Conference in Heidelberg

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The historicity and diversity of social innovation

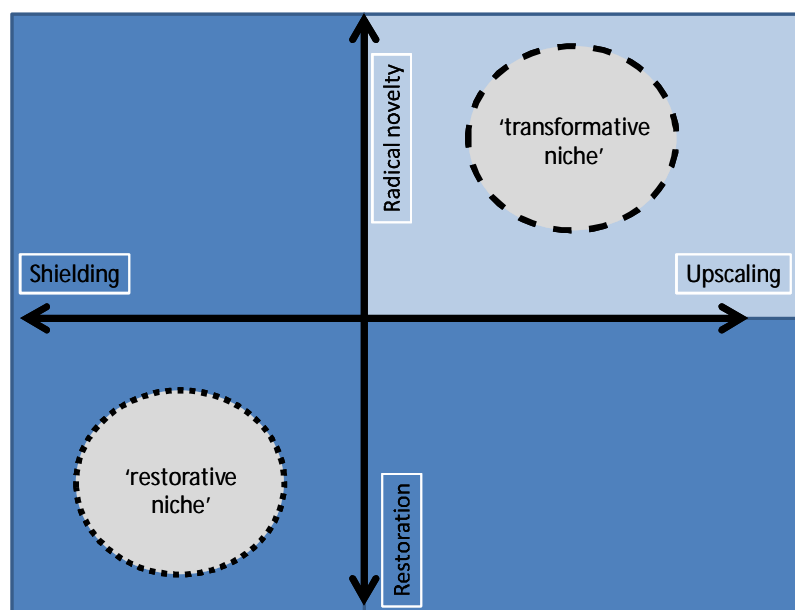
- q Many initiatives based on alternative social relations do not refer to themselves as social innovations / innovators (Examples: RIPESS, Timebanks, energy cooperatives, ...)
- q Unusualness in the world of today is a better label
- q To different degrees and in various ways they involve co-production, empowerment/co-determination, experimental learning, community activism, open source, alternative currencies, purposes other than earning money

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The relative newness

Social innovation network	Element of re-invention
Global Eco-village Network	Compared to the traditional forms of community life, they are modern in the sense of valuing individual freedom and equality and by being globally connected through virtual and personal networks.
Transition Towns	Traditional forms of local, small-scale production and community-based exchanges, including local complementary currencies, complemented with modern communication technologies and individual freedom
Time Banks	A modern version of barter systems through the use of software and absence of barter (the time of doing a service is the basis for exchange) Services are exchanged via a service pool.
Shareable-Sharing cities	Sharing is an old phenomenon, with modern ICT infrastructure it can take different forms and go beyond family and friends, connecting various communities.
Slow Food movement	Protecting local landscapes, products and traditional production methods, while re-building community relations based on conviviality and humanization of relations in the food system. Local food traditions are actively maintained.

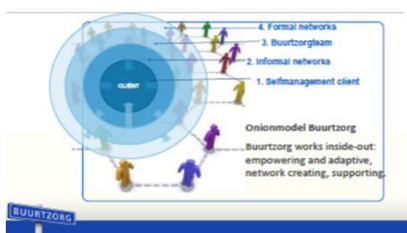
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Pel and Kemp, under development

Buurtzorg

Jos de Blok

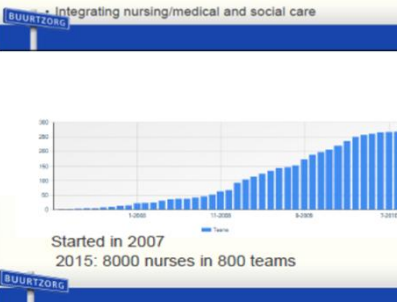


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Start Buurtzorg 2007

Starting an organization and care delivery model for community care with:

- independent teams of max 12 nurses
- Working in a neighborhood of 5000-10.000 p.
- who organize and are responsible for the complete process:
 - clients, nurses, planning, education and finance;
 - and all kind off coordination activities!!!!
 - Integrating nursing/medical and social care



Three discoveries in TRANSIT

- 1) Social innovation initiatives fit with **self-determination theory** which says that people have innate needs for autonomy, relatedness and feelings of competence (*as basic psychological needs*), where
 - q Autonomy refers to the idea that one's actions are self-determined or self-motivated and that there is a sense of choice
 - q Relatedness refers to the feeling of security, having a secure relational base and being able to relate to others in one's environment (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sheldon et al., 2003)
- 2) Transformative social innovation involves **not a single transformation** but diverse transformations based on different social relations, values and ideas of progress. Diversity of directions, institutional forms, ways of funding and collaboration are an integral and inherent element of the social transformations that are enacted and aspired to as part of TSI.

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3. Social innovation is often considered as a beyond-the-state activity, or as a manifestation of new social movements that operate in the shadow of or against the state. **But governments have a crucial role to play** in creating a favourable environment for non-state social innovation initiatives. The Universal Basic Income exemplifies how some proposals for new social relations are not a matter of 'supporting grassroots initiatives' – government will ultimately have to do it

TRANSIT brief #6 TSI- What we have learned in 4 years of research?

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TSI is part of broader historical processes

- ✓ TSI as a reaction to a changing context
- ✓ TSI as an assertive historical process of emancipation, needs for self-direction, democracy, doing purposeful things based on people's assets and relation values (humanization of the economy)

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The sustainability transition perspective

Basic assumptions (viewpoint) of transition scholars (Geels, Grin)

- The problem with achieving SD is that we are locked-in to sociotechnical systems which are not sustainable
- Sustainable development requires system innovation in the form of sustainability transitions

System innovation

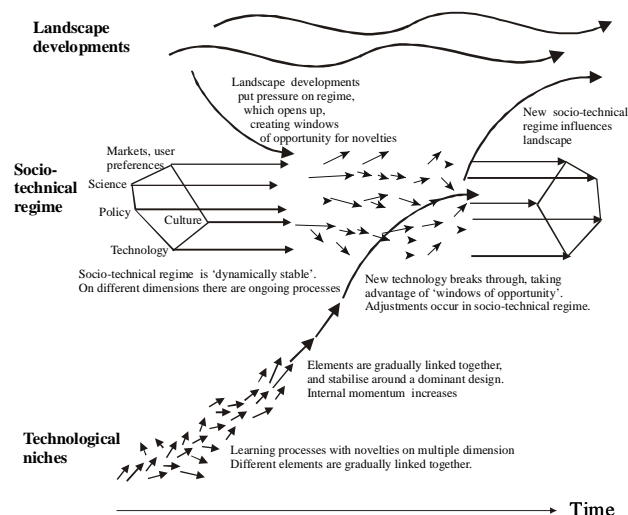
- Is broad in scope and radical in character
- It is about the implementation of a system-wide novelty
- It involves a wide diversity of actors and often takes decades to move from margins to mainstream
- It is dynamic and non-standardised
- It is disruptive from the viewpoint of incumbent actors (including users) (Fred Steward)

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The multilevel perspective

- Comes from the sociology of technology and evolutionary economics
- It is based on 3 elements: niches, regimes and landscape
- The “levels” refer to degree of structuration and aggregation – and not to hierarchical levels

Multi-level interactions creating a transition



Geels, 2002 in
Research Policy

Regimes

Regimes as socio-technical systems

- "a mutually aligned, established set of technological artifacts, use patterns, institutional contexts, regulations, infrastructures etc. that prevail for delivering a specific service, e.g. personal mobility" (Truffer et al., 2008, p. 1361)

A practice-centered view of regimes

- "the whole of implicit and explicit rules and associated ways of thinking that guide practical behaviour of professional people and which is being reconfirmed by everyday practice" (Loeber)

What is behind the idea of regimes?

- The idea that practices and structures “reproduce” each other (duality of structure)
- New practices require well-developed systems for their use, but such systems require users, companies, professionals for their development (“chicken and egg” problem → Lock-in)
- Regime actors favour regime-preserving change (it is in the interest of many people to stay with the present regime)

Examples of regimes

- Supply-oriented education
- Supply-oriented system of health care
- Car-based mobility
- Regime of centralised electricity production

The landscape consists of the wider context consisting of

- Roads, towns, cities, ..
- Values, beliefs, norms, ..
- Aspirations and concerns of people
- Political associations,
- Prices, taxes, ..
- Life styles
- International relations in the global economy

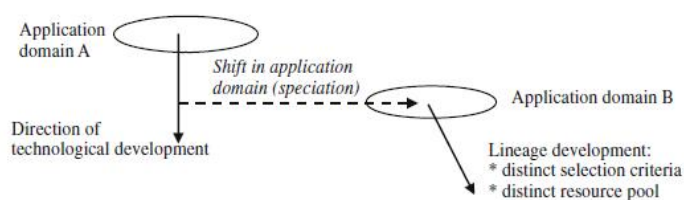


What are niches?

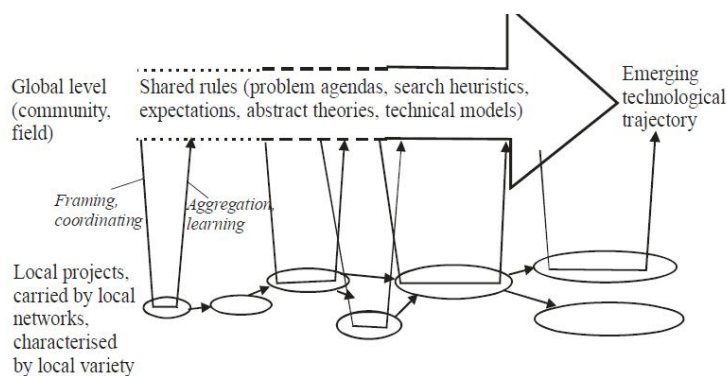
Places in which novel configurations develop and grow

Niches are application domains with distinct selection criteria and resource pools

In which there may be an element of deliberate protection



Speciation in technological development (Levinthal 1998: 223)



Source: Geels and Raven (2006)

Distinct transition patterns that stem from niche-regime-landscape interactions

- Gradual regime transformation: adaptation of socio-technical regimes to legitimacy pressures (fit-and-conform and fit-and-stretch)
- Substitution of well-established technology and by a new one (through expansion of niche markets)
- Reconfiguration: New alliances (niche-regime) and innovation cascades that change systems architectures
- De-alignment and re-alignment: decline of old technologies and competition between innovations leading to new socio-technical configurations through processes of variation-selection-retention

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TRANSITIONS PATTERNS (source: Schot and Geels (2008) in *Research Policy*)

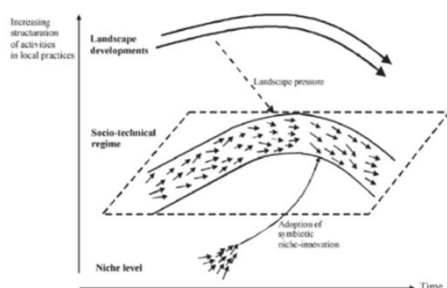


Fig. 5. Transformation pathway.

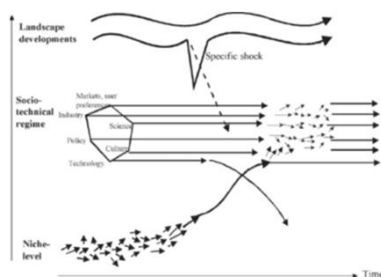
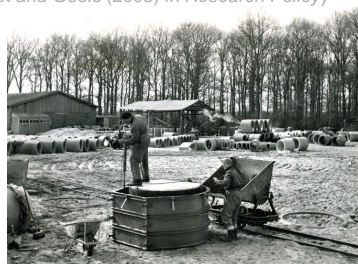


Fig. 8. Technological substitution pathway.

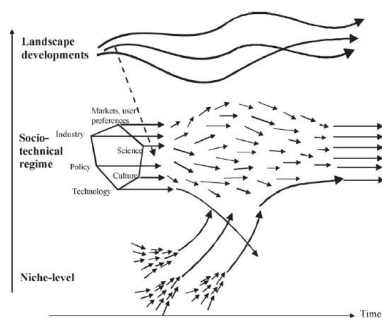
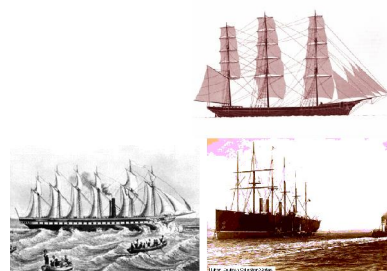


Fig. 6. De-alignment and re-alignment pathway.

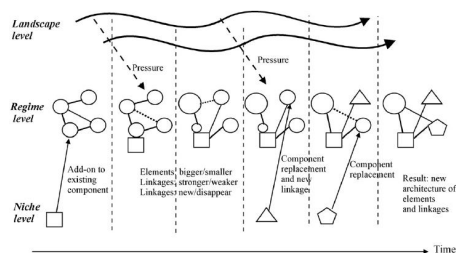
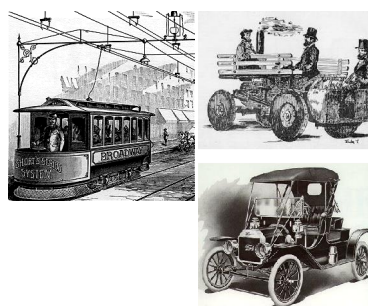
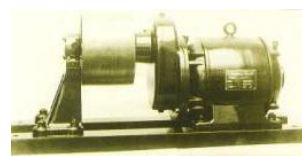


Fig. 10. Reconfiguration pathway.



We live in a time of upheaval the outcomes of which are uncertain

- The economic growth process based on marketization and debt is not sustainable socially because of inequality, uprooting, environmental degradation and conflict with basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence
- The volatile voting behaviour and election of populists, distrust of experts, identity politics and opposition to exploitive forms of capitalism is testimony of the turbulence of the present age

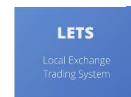


'System faults' and 'solutions'

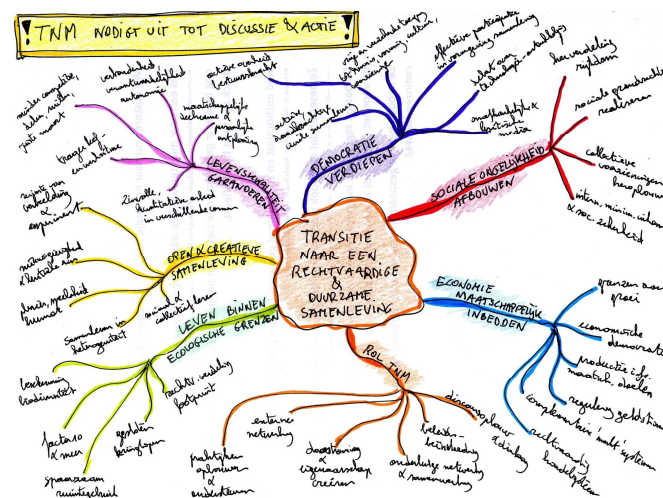
System	System faults	Social-material 'solutions'
Education and science	Disciplinary knowledge, publication-centered, one-way learning, service to society low	Transdisciplinary research, transformative science and problem-based education. Greater role for arts and humanities.
Energy	We must shift to renewable energy sources to prevent climate disruption and for additional reasons of depletion of fossil fuel stocks and reducing geopolitical (resource) dependencies	Use of renewable energy technologies (owned by sustainable energy utilities and energy cooperatives), zero energy renovation houses
Mobility	Too many cars and too much car use. The physical infrastructure for cars cannot keep up with the rising levels. Cars and air travel are also responsible for noise and pollution	Cycling, electric cars, car sharing organisations, car-free zones, less long distance holidays.
Health care and social work	Overspecialised and money-driven with constant efficiency pressures. Insufficiently patient-centered. Excessive reporting requirements and protocols. People with multiple problems cannot be helped well.	Neighbourhood care, use of experience experts (ex-drug addicts, prisoners), family conferences, caring as a normal activity for everyone (not just for paid professionals).
Work in the market economy	Job insecurity and anxiety. Profits are unequally shared. Workers are subjected to performance pressures. Competition amongst workers degrades relational values.	Work that is meaningful, fulfilling and fitting with values and competences, better work-life balance. Worker cooperatives



System	System faults	Social-material 'solutions'
State welfare system	Unemployment claimants are coerced to apply for jobs they have little interest in and very low chances at getting; failure to comply with rule and requests lead to punishment in the form of financial sanctions.	Basic income and availability of options to assume life in such a way that it is expressive of people's integrity.
Land ownership and use	Private and individual ownership leads to private appropriation of rents and profits and negative costs for society	Land as a common property, land rents are used for the common good.
Production and consumption of goods	The production of short-lived goods consumed for status and fancy which are disposed after first time use. External costs are passed on to society.	Product-service systems, circular economy. Less materialistic lifestyles with an importance role for self-development and doing-it-yourself (cooking, growing vegetables)
Financial system	Unsustainable levels of debts. Endemic tax avoidance. Orientation towards short-term financial gains at the expense of long-term stability. Contributing to disparities in wealth.	Separating high-risk 'casino' investment banking (e.g. derivative-market speculation) from traditional banking. Use of local currencies. Cryptocurrencies?



A better world involves multiple transitions / transformations



Eric Paredis CDO, Ugent

The socio-technical transition and socio-economic transformation perspective as complementary

What the Socio-Technical Transition perspective should consider

- The importance of non-material needs
- Root causes for sustainability
- The negative aspects of marketization and competition (for ST transitions and for well-being)
- The transformative significance of institutional hybridization
- Individual empowerment in niche processes
- Translocal mobilities of social niches

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What alternative economy activists and social innovation scholars can learn from the socio-technical perspective

- Distinctive patterns
- Technology as an agent of change
- Alliances with regime actors for specific transitions
- Be involved in socio-technical transitions (food, energy, mobility, waste, ...) as citizens and prosumers
- Critical role of infrastructure decisions

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Socio-technical innovations co-shaping the future (also for social innovation)

- Blockchain and cryptocurrencies
- Local energy markets
- Artificial intelligence and big data (used for surveillance and algorithm-based control)
- Open source technologies and software
- Electric mobility
- Precision farming
-



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Pleas for an alternative economy



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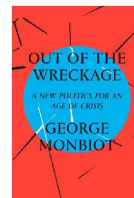
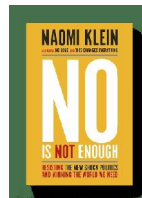
No is not enough (Naomi Klein)

Politics of belonging (George Monbiot)

Envisioning real utopia (Wright)

Humanisation of the economy

Rebalanced society for better and worse



Social innovation in a three movement model

Karl Polanyi: described a *double movement* in society:

1. The first movement is towards marketization, the spread of market thinking and market-based forms of allocation throughout society, driven by international trade and naturalistic ideas of competition and utilitarianism.
2. The second *countermovement* consists of (state-based) social protection against the negative consequences of that same marketization



In a paper with TRANSIT researchers, I suggest that the double movement model is best changed into a three movement model with

3. a *third movement* called the humanization of the economy involving a re-embedding as the opposite of dis-embedding: the loss of social ties and sense of purpose in individualistic societies, not in the sense of restoring the past but based on need for autonomy and self-development (which are largely absent in traditional communities)

		First movement (marketization)	Second movement (social protection)	Third movement (humanization)
<i>Institutional aim</i>		Establishment of a self-regulating market	Conservation of man and nature as well as productive organization	Re-embedding of values of mutuality, social purpose and respect in economic relationships, in a way that offers conditions for humane human development and ecological thriving
<i>Support of social forces</i>		Trading classes	Those most immediately affected by deleterious action of the market: primarily, but not exclusively, the working and the landed classes	Those who are disenchanted by present arrangements for work and welfare state duties and seek to enhance human well-being through autonomy-enhancing solutions
<i>Organizing principle(s)</i>		Laissez-faire and free trade	Protective legislation, accountability demands and other instruments of intervention	Self-organization and purpose-orientation, generating a fitting context for autonomy, relatedness and competence.
<i>Emerged in response to...</i>		Inefficiency, feudalism, and oppressiveness of state-based rule	Dis-embedding effects of laissez-faire economic (neo)liberalism: i.e. objectification of man & nature and economic stress cycle	Inadequacy of protection- and hierarchy-based responses to dis-embedding effects of neoliberalism

<i>Consequence for (concept of) selfhood</i>	Celebration of individualism with little consideration of alienated or egotistic self	Individual as statistical fact. Not much attention is given to the authentic self in the application of bureaucratic rule	Authentic, self-actualized self. Important role for self-fulfillment through serving a greater cause / acting for the collective good
<i>Welfare concept</i>	Economic growth & "trickle-down" justification for the super wealth of individuals	Economic growth with top-down welfare redistribution to those in need	A good life (e.g. Buen Vivir) with important role for personal growth and well-being:
<i>View on freedom</i>	Freedom of individuals from interference from others (Freedom within constraints (to avoid exploitation)	Social bonds based on trust and mutuality constitute the means of our freedom

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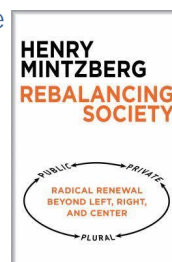
The changing context: some possibilities

- ✓ Obligations for benefit receivers to do "voluntary work"
- ✓ Local authorities orienting themselves to the local economy (local food, buy local, local currencies, ...)
- ✓ Reform of care systems (less fragmented, more community based, ...)
- ✓ Social impact bonds
- ✓ Philanthropic foundations & individuals
- ✓ Basic income
- ✓ Teal companies (based on ARC) as a new model (Laloux)
- ✓ ...

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A world of three movements

- All movements have valuable elements and the challenge of creating a better world does not lie in the elimination of particular logics but in combining them. This is a difficult task which must be taken up continuously since the three logics involve tensions
- Cf Mintzberg on the need for "a public sector of political forces rooted in respected governments; a private sector of economic forces based on responsible businesses, and a plural sector of social forces manifested in robust communities"



Embracing paradoxes is key to TSI

- Whilst striving for inclusivity they may be excluding in some way and reproduce gender relations, social class divides
- In order to make social innovation more inclusive and accessible and in order to have transformative impact, innovation must go through some sort of mainstreaming process, creating risks of co-option and capture.
- In calls for change, we may get transformations of the wrong kind, because of the power of other normativities (which celebrate efficiency, managerialism, values of meritocracy and agonistic views on government and solidarity).

à For building a more just, responsible and relational economy based on alternative institutions and practices we need to have a portfolio of different and often paradoxical strategies, including *resisting, protesting, disproving, demanding, lobbying and disobeying, but also supplementing, compromising, complementing, circumventing, improving, collaborating, seducing and surprising*. These strategies need to be flexible, continuously adapting, updating and repositioning, so as to translate values and practices to a more mainstream context, while at the same time allowing us to hold on to our original core intentions.

Source: (TRANSIT) Manifesto for Transformative Social Innovation

The research agenda on TSI

- *In what ways are social innovation initiatives responses to perceived gaps and deficiencies in established arrangements and provisions?*
- *How well do they cater to autonomy, relatedness and purpose*
- *What problems do TSI face in institutionalizing themselves and achieving transformative impact?*
- *What interventions in social welfare provision, company law and the science system can help TSI to expand and build a more social, inclusive and responsible economy* (e.g., what role for basic income, mandatory community service, social impact bonds, vouchers for research and advice, and the creation of new legal frameworks for the commons and for-benefit companies)?
- *To what extent will a hybridisation of logics undermine the value base of grassroots and/or help TSI values and practices to enter the domains of health care, science, business and social welfare provision?*
- *In what respects are the TSI initiatives today different from those of the past? Is it true that they marry individualism (in the form of self-actualization and self-determination) with values of social relatedness and demands for social purpose?*

