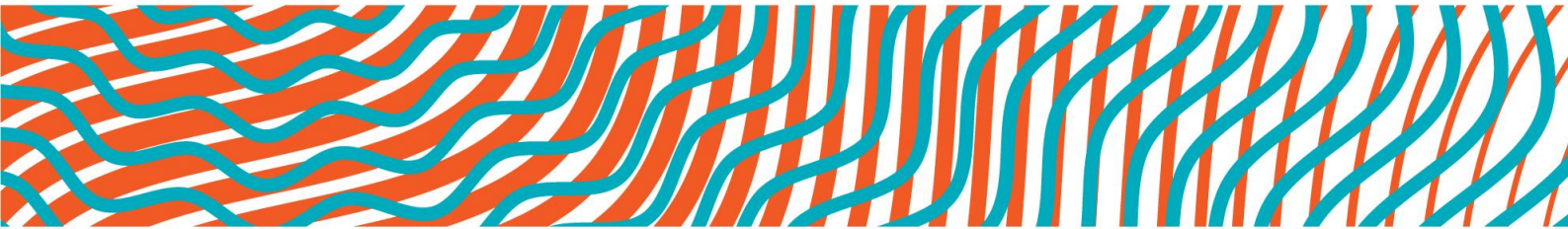


transformative social innovation theory



TRANSIT 2nd Reporting Period

Publishable summary

Theme [ssh.2013.3.2-1][Social Innovation- Empowering People, changing societies]

Project Full Title: "Transformative Social Innovation Theory project"

Grant Agreement n. 613169



This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 613169

transformative social innovation theory

1.1 Summary description of project context and objectives

The overall aim of TRANSIT (Transformative Social Innovation Theory) is to build a theory of social innovation useful not only to academics, but also to policy makers, social entrepreneurs, and stakeholders. The theory conceptualises the value of social innovation as a driver of societal development and as an element in building potentially-transformative societal innovation capacities; i.e. capacities needed for addressing major societal challenges. TRANSIT explores constituent links in the causal chain between social innovation and transformative change and thereby investigate and develop evidence to explore its central hypothesis: social innovation induces new forms of social interactions, which empower those involved and reshape society, and that empowerment of people and societal reshaping facilitate and drive transformative change. Related project objectives are as follows:

- explore the links between social innovation and societies' capacity to address pressing societal challenges;
- develop systemic understanding concerning cross-cutting issues in social innovation that policy makers and others should address in order to improve the general framing context for social innovation,
- remove impediments and enable social innovation (extension, up-scaling, acceleration, etc.);
- develop a toolbox of concepts, tools and methods to support policy makers and social innovation actors;
- and, develop lasting networks and resources for supporting social innovation processes.

The project's specific objectives are:

- i. Build, test and consolidate an empirically-informed theory of transformative social innovation (Theory development)
- ii. Review and evaluate past and current social innovation processes and outcomes across various policy areas, to both test theoretical hypotheses and develop a useful open-source data-base of social innovation cases (Empirical data-base).
- iii. Evaluate the possible contributions of transformative social innovations in dealing with grand societal challenges (Evaluation of transformative potentials).
- iv. Apply the resources of TRANSIT to support the building of a *capacity* for transformative social innovation in Europe and Latin America (Capacity development)

1.2 Description of work performed and main results

WP1 – Project management

Since the beginning of the reporting period, DRIFT continued to ensure that consortium objectives be met effectively and efficiently. In this regard, the coordinator has implemented and revised the *Project Management Plan* (D1.2) and the *Plan for Scientific Coordination and Dissemination* (D1.3). First, in terms of overall management, WP1 has ensured regular core group meetings, prepared two partner meetings, a mid-term conference and a research workshop, while also keeping close track of project finances. Second, throughout the reporting period, the Interdisciplinary Advisory Board (IAB) has also been closely engaged with the project and, in fact, has taken an active role far beyond what was initially planned for in the DOW. This involvement has included IAB members being

transformative social innovation theory

present at over six TRANSIT events and co-authoring scientific articles. Third, WP1 has continued to facilitate scientific and internal knowledge management by coordinating work across work-packages, communicating frequently with the consortium (e.g. through quarterly coordinator updates), content management, quality assurance and review, communication and engagement, a working papers series, a publication strategy, a review of conference presentations and insights, and experience sharing regarding the use of TRANSIT materials for education.

WP2 – Synthesis

During the reporting period, WP2 efforts focused largely on the social learning theme. An extensive literature review was conducted in 2015, as well as a review of the empirical research reports from the 20 networks and 40 social innovation initiatives under study in WP4. In order to better synthesize these insights for the social learning theme and discuss their potential contribution to theory development, a third synthesis workshop was organized at the University of A Coruña (Spain) in June 2016. This formed the basis for Deliverable D2.3, which integrates the main outcomes of empirical research and integration activities developed within the TRANSIT project on the cross-cutting theme of “social learning”. Other efforts were linked to the resourcing and monitoring themes, which are to be the main focus of WP2 for the remainder of the project. During the second half of 2016, the literature on resourcing was studied and a typology was developed. Work on monitoring also began during this period with preparations for the synthesis workshop and Deliverable D2.5 (due month 41). In addition to the activities described in the DoW, expert-practitioners were interviewed as part of an activity called Practitioner Engagement for Empowering Reflections (PEER), which aims to provide additional insights regarding social learning and transformative change.

WP3 – Theory

The previous theory development in WP3 successfully informed the design and implementation of the TRANSIT Batch II case studies (WP4). This then led to the second Theoretical Integration Workshop held in Copenhagen in May 2016, where the theoretical and conceptual framing was confronted with the empirics. WP3 used the device of propositions about transformative social innovation (TSI), as both a theory building method, and as a way of structuring and organising a range of theoretical insights about TSI. Thus the central thrust of WP3 progress during the reporting period was to develop a cohesive prototype of a new theory of TSI, presented in two key working papers, but also supported by an associated larger set of papers that were included in, and reported on, in Deliverable D3.3. Work is now progressing on developing a consolidated version for the TSI theory, to be presented in the final deliverable, D3.4.

WP4 – Cases and Evidence – In-depth case-studies

The overall objective of WP4 during the reporting period has been to collect and analyse in-depth empirical evidence about social innovation. WP4 work has taken place in two batches of in-depth case studies of transnational social innovation networks with their local, regional, national and international manifestations. Twelve cases were studied in Batch 1 (during Period 1), and a further eight in Batch 2 (initiated in Period 1 and finalised in Period 2). In the reporting period, these studies were summarised and compared to the overall research question of the project: the transformative impact shaped in interaction between social innovation and other forms of forms of social change. The methodological guidelines for the second batch were adjusted compared to the first batch of case studies based on the experiences from the first batch and the first prototype of the TSI theory developed in WP3. The second batch case studies thereby tested and ensured a broad and detailed

transformative social innovation theory

empirical grounding of the theory prototype about transformative social innovation from WP3. The results and experiences from WP4 have also contributed to the activities in WP5 with the development of guidelines for data collection and analysis for the meta-analyses and database development in WP5. Besides the 20 case studies it was possible to allocate funding from WP4 to develop a number of cross-network papers, where extended abstracts were written parallel to the Batch 2 case study research as part of the contribution from WP4 to the TSI theory development.

WP5 – Cases and Evidence – Meta analysis

Since the beginning of the reporting period, WP5 has put in place all necessary measures to ensure that the objectives of the consortium can be met effectively and efficiently. As laid down in *The Meta analysis Guidelines* (D5.1) and the *Configuration of the Critical Turning Points data repository* (D5.2) (see first period report for further details on both deliverables), the WP5 team has made sure to ground the set-up for meta-analysis firmly in the research philosophy as it has developed in the first phase of TRANSIT, and in the TSI proto-theory as outlined in deliverable D3.2. Over this second reporting period, this theoretical-methodological architecture has been elaborated into an operational database containing rich case study data, and into a meta-analysis procedure that ensures optimal interplay between WP5 outputs (D5.4) and the last round of WP3 theory development (D3.4). Throughout the reporting period, the WP5 leads have ensured constant communication with WP5 partners, with other work package leads, with the contracted developer of the database, and with the consortium as a whole: Especially the process of data gathering and preparation of data for meta-analysis has amounted to a vast collective effort requiring a considerable coordination effort.

WP6 – Communication & Engagement

Throughout the reporting period, WP6 has focused on further implementing communicatio tools and instruments, as well as engagement and facilitation for learning. It has deepened its contacts and relations with social innovators and entrepreneurs, policymakers, intermediaries, and researchers, not just in the European Union and Latin America, but also beyond, as an analysis of dissemination data has shown. Specific achievements in the second period include:

- a) Informing a wide variety of actors about the progress and results of TRANSIT, using a wide variety of communication-tools (e.g. social media, project website, newsletter);
- b) Actively engaging practitioners and policy-makers with TRANSIT's research, in particular at the mid-term conference (300+ participants) but also at a broad range of events (e.g. workshops, conferences, trainings);
- c) Supporting the development of knowledge and skills among these actors through the development and dissemination of training tools, the most recent of which is the social learning training tool. It enables individual learning through a multimedia approach and is currently availabel in Spanish. Earlier tools have been used in various settings, including trainings, lectures and classes.

1.3 Expected final results and potential impacts

TRANSIT aims to produce major impacts both on the research field, on policy learning and development, and on civil society. It will contribute to the reinforcement of social innovation in Europe at two levels:

transformative social innovation theory

1. At a theoretical level by deepening the understanding of how and under which conditions social innovation leads to systemic changes and the ways in which actors are (dis)empowered in such transformative social innovation (TSI) processes, and
2. At a practical level by engaging policymakers and practitioners in the development of practically relevant knowledge that is immediately applicable

TRANSIT will have **policy impacts** through an improved understanding of social innovation in relation to governance and the application of knowledge and tools developed in the project that will enable social innovation to be legitimated and empowered in the policy process and provide recommendations to policy makers in creating enabling framing conditions for social innovation. This includes help to policymakers in making most effective use of Structural Funds in the European arena and in harnessing social innovation more effectively as an instrument of international development policy making and implementation. Impacts on policy making and implementation will contribute to achieving the overarching policy goals of the Europe 2020 strategy and the Innovation Union flagship, as well as support European policy integration.

TRANSIT will have **economic and societal impacts** by contributing toward legitimization, capacity-building and networking for social innovation, increasing opportunities for social innovation and improving the prospects of securing financial support for social innovation at different phases, helping especially with prospects to increase the transformative potential of social innovations so as to empower people, drive change and help address major societal challenges. TRANSIT will support social innovation in respect to new economy developments (green, solidarity, collaborative, etc.) and sustainable development.

TRANSIT will also develop and demonstrate advances in **science and research impacts**, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in social innovation understanding, theory, tools, methods, and applications and by development of and participation within transnational platforms and networks.

TRANSIT will have direct impacts on **policymaking and implementation**. The impact of TRANSIT on social innovation can be expected to play out indirectly through recommendations to policymakers in their support of social innovation, but also through direct support to social innovators. In turn social innovation is important for its potential impacts in respect to EU-level policy goals and is a potentially potent instrument in implementing policies because of its capacities to link top-down goals with bottom-up action.