Chapter 6
Transition Management Perspective of Social Innovation

ABSTRACT

The objective of this chapter is to identify and discuss patterns in transition management research within the social innovation literature. This research has gained prominence, particularly after 2015 with clearly identifiable two main research strands. These are comprised of socio-technical innovation in markets and civil society-led innovation in social institutions and arrangements. Sustainability transitions in the form of grassroots innovations are an important type of social innovation and have been a key focus. In this perspective, societal transformation is achieved through a multi-level approach, moving from niches and regimes to landscapes. The research primarily focuses on niche level innovations and their management. Community movements such as transition towns embrace key sites for developing place-based niche innovations leading to sustainable transitions. The co-evolutionary perspective of transformative social innovation comprises four elements of social innovation and are gaining currency within this research sphere.

INTRODUCTION

Transition management is a type of governance experimentation in the empowerment of individuals and communities (Hölscher, Wittmayer, Avelino, and Giezen 2019). It aims for accelerated change directed towards sustainability ambitions (Kemp, Loorbach, and Rotmans 2007; Loorbach and Rotmans 2006). The inability of governments to address ecological, economic or social crises and the replacement of welfare economies by market logics require innovative governance approaches. In addition, the challenges of sustainable development demand system-wide transformations in socio-technical systems (see key terms and definitions) (Seyfang and Haxeltine 2012) which consists of technology, regulations, cultural practices, markets, resource usage practices, network of relationships and infrastructure of a society (Geels 2006). For example, complex social problems such as climate change call for major revisions, in the form of innovative governance approaches, to the organization of economic structures and social and behavioral practices (Scott-Cato and Hillier 2010). Such approaches change the centralized organization of service provision processes in socio-technical systems (Loorbach and Rotmans 2010). This has led to the rapid emergence and development of transition management research (Hartman, Parra, and de Roo 2019). Furthermore, local communities have begun to encourage social innovation to help marshaling appropriate resources to meet local public needs and thereby to create economic value (Di Iacovo, Moruzzo, Rossignoli, and Scarpellini 2014). These applications and integrated sustainability problems are key aspects of transition management research (Loorbach and Rotmans 2010), largely.

Transition management research is evolving in to a broader scientific and interdisciplinary field of study where innovation studies, history, ecology and modelling combine with sociology, politics, psychology and governance (Loorbach and Rotmans 2010). Transition management is a design intervention to encourage and enhance novel social relations, clarify the roles and motives of key players and encourage sustainability transitions (Hölscher et al. 2019). Sustainable transitions, grassroots innovation and niche innovation have received substantial attention in this literature. Grassroots innovations are niche innovative approaches which support broader, system-level changes in sustainability transitions. Radical system-level changes may be enabled by cities, which may be key drivers for creating sustainable futures (Hodson, Geels, and McMeekin 2017; Wolfram and Frantzeskaki 2016). Seyfang and

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