Chapter 10
Resilience Perspective of Social Innovation

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this chapter are to identify the growth trajectories and key thematic areas of resilience in the social innovation literature and to identify the distinguishing characteristics of social innovation in socio-ecological resilience systems. An exponential growth of resilience literature can be found after 2013 with a slow uptake in 2008. The bibliographic coupling network uncovered the presence of five main knowledge clusters: the first being collective resilience and institutional transformation, the second being sustainable urban transformation, the third referring to transformative capacities of agency and social structure, the fourth being local development policy planning and urban resilience, and the fifth cluster addressing developmental evaluation and citizen involvement in urban management. Social innovation in socio-ecological resilience distinguishes it from other contextual innovation based on its transformative capacity to create systemic changes in the social structure of communities.

INTRODUCTION

Social innovation is a "significant, creative and sustainable shift" in the way a given society deals with a "profound and previously intractable problem" such as poverty, disease, violence or environmental degradation (Nilsson 2003, p. 3). This emphasis has further been popularized by the involvements of international bodies such as European Union (EU). For instance, Social Innovation in Marginalized Rural Areas (SIMRA) is an example for the EU's Horizon 2020 project funded research initiative aimed at better understanding social innovation and advancing innovative governance in agriculture, rural development and forestry (SIMRA 2020). Such initiatives to support "social innovators and local actors at the early stage of social innovation processes is key for efficiently addressing and tackling challenges" (Marini Govigli et al. 2020, p. 1) of wicked social issues and opportunities. Therefore, EU recognizes social innovation as a mechanism of addressing socio-economic challenges and rebuilding resilience (Secco et al. 2019).

As a result of this increased recognition, socio-ecological resilience research shows a growing trend in examining the role of social innovation in resilience building in various contexts such as cities (e.g. Frantzeskaki 2019) and rural areas (e.g. Secco et al. 2019) and the approaches to facilitate social innovation initiatives (e.g. McCarthy, Whitelaw, Westley, Crandall, and Burnett 2014; Moore, Olsson, Nilsson, Rose, and Westley 2018; Moore, Westley, Tjornbo, and Holroyd 2012; Moore and Westley 2011). The same initiative defines social innovation as "the reconfiguring of social practices, in response to societal challenges, which seeks to enhance outcomes on societal well-being and necessarily includes the engagement of civil society actors" (Polman et al. 2017, p. 3). Such initiatives, products, processes or programs are transformative in nature and help realizing sustainable socio-ecological systems (Moore et al. 2018). Current socio-ecological resilience research mainly focuses on resilience in urban systems, the role of local institutions to enhance adaptive capacities and participatory governance approaches to facilitate social innovation (Baker and Mehmood 2015; Cole et al. 2018; Frantzeskaki 2019; Radywyl and Bigg 2013; Rodima-Taylor 2012).

However, social processes leading to social innovation are influenced by the factors specific to the place where such initiatives found their roots (Baker and Mehmood 2015). This indicates that the place plays an agentic role on one hand and the potential effect of socio-ecological context of social life on the other (Gieryn 2000). The social innovation concept is

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