KATARSIS

Contract Nr 029044 (CIT5)

Deliverable 4 - DISSEM

WP4 Social Innovation (Integration Exercise)[*]

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Final Complete Report 15 June 2009 – DISSEM version August 15, 2009.

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[*] The complete D4 is available from the KATARSIS website http://katarsis.ncl.ac.uk/

Introduction

The purpose of WP4 is to come to grips with different scientific approaches to social innovation, past and present. How did scientists – especially in social science – come to use the concept of social innovation and related concepts? Are their approaches epistemologically underpinned? Were they interested in offering solutions to practical human problems? Can we identify a diversity of routes leading to – and from! – social innovation research? How can we situate the approaches to social innovation used by scientists in society as well as the science and practice communities in which they have worked? These epistemological questions concern the interaction between culture, ideology, science practice and social innovation research.

In order to answer these questions, we start from the wide array of socially creative strategies and social innovation processes analysed in previous and current research projects, but also from the theories and philosophies that underpinned or accompanied them. We try to discover the relations between different factors and dynamics of social innovation, with a particular focus on how dynamics of social exclusion are linked with innovative responses to exclusionary processes, and to identify a diversity of types of social innovation which could be helpful to design and analyse social innovation in the future.

The ultimate goal of WP4 is to lay out key elements for a coherent epistemological reading of social innovation processes and initiatives. To this purpose attention will be given to ontological complexity and how this is reflected in the various features of social innovation as addressed in the various theoretical approaches and experiences covered in the sequel of this report:

- An overview of the different entry points that have led to social innovation initiatives and processes.
- An examination of the possibilities and the desirability to put forward an overarching epistemological approach to social innovation inquiries and designs.
- The examination of the unity between ontology, epistemology and research methods in social innovation analysis. Is the applied epistemology part of the research practice in social innovation, or rather a *Hineininterpretiering* of research results?
- A shared language for social innovation analysis and examine. Will this language building contribute to the development of a panoptic epistemology?

1. Sociology of Knowledge: its particular relevance for social innovation analysis (F. Moulaert)

The first chapter of Deliverable 4 presents the Sociology of Knowledge (SoK) approach as a powerful tool to analyse the significance of scientists and their scientific contribution within the society they have worked, their community of knowledge (and their philosophical as well scientific premises), etc. to solve the 'problems of their time'. These problems can be both practical and scientific. The SoK approach is highly relevant for assessing the role of social innovation analysis – including theory-building – for social innovation initiatives and processes under particular societal and community conditions. It argues that SoK will only be effective if it is explicit about the view of society (ontology) that underlies the meta-theoretical framework that SoK requires.

Moulaert's objective is to develop an epistemology not as a doctrine of scientific knowledge creation in which the scientist is the main actor, but as an activity of inquiry leading to a negotiated consensus on the way to develop knowledge. Under this assumption, the author reflects on the role of "truth" and "verity" in answering the core research questions from a social innovation perspective: "truth" is concerned with the relevance of the scientific answers for the satisfaction of (non revealed) needs, the transformation of social relations, the empowerment of populations and communities; therefore, according to this point of view, the criteria for verity are necessarily relationally conceived. At the same time, within this epistemological logic, the construction of concepts and theories of social innovation must be assessed taking into account the societal framework in which they have been developed.

Looking at *ontology,* Moulaert stresses the need to integrate the tension between two main logics in the study of social transformation: the logic of being and the logic of becoming. Moulaert highlights four approaches to the 'construction of ontologies', which are relevant both to social theory and to situate the role of the scientist in social innovation analysis and practices:

- an ontology (of the *existent* or *desired*) underpinning a theory or meta-theoretical framework;

- an ontogenesis or genesis of the vision of the existent or the desired (images of the future);

- a "flat ontology", either an ontology of a homogenous society, or an 'open' ontology which opens itself to a gradual complexification, as we can see for instance in a Deleuzean approach;

- a structural-realist view of social reality: this is a view of society which recognises the structure of the economy, the political world, etc. as significantly influenced by power relations.

The author stresses that these four approaches have analytical relevance, but they should be connected to each other through a *transdisciplinary approach* – involving all concerned agents and organisations – within a framework which is able to give strength to the connections between the

existent and the desired.

In the second part of the text, Moulaert reflects on some core elements of the Sociology of Knowledge. He agrees with the definition of J. Schumpeter of knowledge as the object of diverse forms of knowledge formation and social practices, and he stresses that there is no unique SoK since the terms of a sociology of knowledge are largely determined by the theory of the society to which it refers.

He then looks at Bloor's distinction between "weak programme" and "strong programme" in the sociology of knowledge. He defines the first one as an approach where the context of intellectual activity is recognised, the potential ideological bias allowed for, but no room is given to the analysis of the activity of reason; he sees the second as an approach that could be called of 'complete embeddedness': the social, political and economic context that nourished the environment in which knowledge was developed, the socio-cultural frame of the scientists, their belonging to scientific and philosophical communities, the links between scientific practice and collective action, etc are taken into consideration. He privileges the strong to the weak programme.

The last part of the text presents four replies to the common critic posed by positivism-oriented scientists, i.e., the "strong programme" involves everything.

First, the 'strong programme' cannot be applied without a clear epistemological positioning about how to address the role of knowledge production within society. The position of the author is a structural realist perspective.

Second, the focus is not on 'everything' but on the practices, institutions and socialisation dynamics of scientific knowledge production, as embedded within societal dynamics.

Third, within the structural realist perspective and the 'view of the world' it conveys, interrogations, concepts and theories that address scientific practices producing knowledge about social innovation will be privileged.

Fourth, these practices will be examined within their macro and micro social relations, with a particular focus on the communities, social and cultural environments, political arenas and fields of social integration and exclusion in which the knowledge institutions and scientists are involved.

2. Notes for a Deleuzean-based theory of social innovation: towards a sociology of designing desirable futures? (Jean Hillier)

In this text Jean Hiller outlines a Deleuzean-based approach to social innovation. The first part of the text reflects on the relationships between knowledge and social innovation from the point of view of Deleuze's logic of pragmatic creativity. The second part of the text reflects on the advantages of a Deleuzean-inspired theory as a foundation for designing desired futures. The third part revolves around a core question: how might we recognise or stimulate windows of opportunity for socially creative strategies?

The author affirms that there is a need both to move from regarding social innovation as mainly driven by social structures as well as to reject essentialist realism, in order to look at innovation as something constructed through a dynamic and relational interplay between different elements. The Deleuzean view of social innovation is related to conflicts which are seen as challenges to institutional legitimacy and which are able to create new forms of rationality. Jean Hillier identifies some elements of Deleuze's approach that are useful for researching social innovation: emergence, considered as a result of the interaction between components of complex systems; multiscale/multiplanar micropolitics and macropolitics; a 'flat' world rather than a multi-hierarchical one; rhizome, conceived as a network of decentred set of linkages between multiple branching 'roots' and 'shoots'; democratic inclusion, seen as a democratic space beyond governamentality.

In a second step, Hillier lists what she perceives as the main advantages of the use of Deleuzean thought for a foundation of a theory of social innovation. In her view, milieux are regarded as having creative potential and are able to develop deep, co-operative strategies. Looking at innovation as a continuous creative process, problems are not defined by solutions and are not solved once and for all but provisionally reformulated. Moreover, this Deleuzean-inspired theory broadens beyond the field of economics and conceives knowledge as dynamic and driven by social construction. According to this point of view, knowledge is also regarded as the capacity to direct the self towards a different future. Finally, it is important to underline that such theory can be seen as post-humanist, because it takes into consideration non-human actors.

In the last part of the text, Hillier offers a brief methodology for the recognition of "lines of flight" for socially innovative strategies. Its first point is an effort to trace the entities and forces with particular regard to the relations between them, highlighting diagonals and transversals. This offers

opportunities to describe and to analyse the diversity of relations, the modalities of co-ordination, the discourses, emotions, affects etc, and how they were mobilised to shape actants' frames, representations and behaviours. Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatism is agonistic, referring to the role of relational difference and conflict in creative transformation. In order to develop this methodology, we need to take into account another important question raised by Hillier: what might forces of social innovation look like? Forces would actually include discourses, materialities, power, subjectivations, codings/territorialisations, i.e., a robust theoretical combination of Deleuzean 'axes' and Foucauldian *dispositif*. Deleuze and Guattari complement the *dispositif* by defining the concepts of assemblage/*agencement* along two axes. One axis defines the roles which components may play, being either purely material or purely expressive. The second axis concerns the reterritorialisation/deterritorialisation, coding/decoding and stabilisation/destabilisation of assemblages/agencements.

Another important methodological point is the identification, or mapping, of a range of diagrams of possibilities: Deleuzean maps are concerned with creative potential. Researchers intervene to assist/facilitate actualisation of selected diagram/s. Mapping, as above, generates 'a set of various intersecting lines' or *diagram*.

The author then briefly indicates two methods for research on social innovation in a Deleuzean theoretical frame. The first one is *appreciative enquiry*, a process developed in Canada that provides positive change by focussing on positive experiences, memories and successes of a community. The second one is the *Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)*. This is an assets or strengths based approach to community practice which identifies the resources, expertise, skills, capacities within communities rather than focusing on problems or deficiencies.

In her conclusions, Hillier suggests that a Deleuzean-inspired ontology offers 'a more *complete* model' which folds together both human and non-human; a model which can be social, psychological, natural-material, economic and political all at once. It does not restrict social innovation to a limited number of possibilities, nor does it restrict potential 'successful interventions' to already-prescribed outcomes or solutions. It offers a more flexible approach and a more fluid and dynamic vision of the time-spaces of territorial and social innovation. A Deleuzean-inspired approach emphasises innovation, experiment, 'the spark of the new': the capacity to generate innovation through 'an unprecedented leap, the capacity of the actual to be more than itself, to become other than the way it has always functioned'

3 Socially Creative Thinking: or how experimental thinking creates 'other worlds' (J.K. Gibson-Graham)

In this chapter, Gibson-Graham proposes to examine in a reflexive way possible responses to the following questions: are the KATARSIS researchers creating the grounds for social innovation with socially creative thinking? What are socially creative thinking practices and how can the KATARSIS network strengthen its capacity to engage with them?

In order to discuss these questions, the authors highlight the relationships between social innovation practices and creativity, focusing on three main points, and interrogating the KATARSIS project for evidence of socially creative thinking: first, there is the need to attend to the affect of researcher's analysis; second, there is a claim to generate alternative discourses with performative effects; third, it is fundamental to adopt an experimental orientation to increase the viability of social and economic experiments.

Looking at the reflexive role of creativity in the social innovation research, Gibson-Graham examines two quite similar appraisal techniques that have very different affects and effects. The first one is the *SWOT technique*, an established tool of contemporary social and community analysis. This method is based on the analysis of attributes classified as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The *SWOT technique* can be applied to KATARSIS experiences to analyse and evaluate many of the social innovation practices that have been surveyed. Its main benefits are comprehensiveness, apparent thoroughness, simplicity and realism. The authors place emphasis on the point that the claimed realism of a Weakness and Threats approach often drives the researchers to a too simplistic overview of the situation, where the conversation dwells on the challenges, and problems and negativity tend to prevail.

The second tool considered by the authors is a very different one called 'needs and assets mapping,' that is an innovative method of *Assets Based Community Development (ABCD)*. This instrument for action research provides a wider frame of the needs of people and practices, local associations and institutions. The results of the collective brainstorming about this mapping is much more oriented through positivity, pride and appreciation.

In the second part of their text, Gibson-Graham reflect on the debate about "social economy" and its connections with the tensions between the existing present and possible futures. From this point of view, they stress that "capitalocentrism" of economic discourses subsumes all economically diverse activities as ultimately the same as, the opposite of, a complement to or contained within capitalism. If considered in this perspective, social economy's innovation potential could be only

underestimated and devaluated.

This is the reason why the authors tend to consider "real" economy activities (wage labour, market transactions and capitalist enterprise) only as the tip of an iceberg composed by multitudes of very diverse economic activities. Each one of the actors involved in these activities has the power to generate narrations and representations; to let them emerge is a way to think less in terms of cooptation (by the state or by capitalism) and more in terms of support between diverse non-capitalist activities. This could mean less power given to representations of capital's structural dynamics that drive change and limit alternatives, and more inventive energy available to theorise the ethical choices and their unpredictable path-dependent trajectories.

In the third part of the text the authors examine the relationships between critical thinking and experimentation in the social innovation research, stressing that the critical approach is fundamental but it has to be integrated with a wider conception of social and economic dynamics. Starting from this point, Gibson-Graham highlight that there is a strong need to develop researchers' capabilities in order to open up to the questions they ask, looking more at those questions which are able to support and foster social enterprise development.

What they suggest is a pedagogy of research able to produce strategic questioning. For example: what might it take for these experiments to be viable, sustainable and successful in people-centered terms? Or: how can we contribute to the success of these experiments? This non-aggressive approach would be useful for cultivating an ethos and practice of experimentation rather than premature critique.

In their conclusions, the authors examine the reflexive power of academic discourse, and pose a central dilemma: academics involved in social innovation research can choose to foster and strengthen (and thus perform) an innovative social economy through their academic work, or they can undermine it by ignoring or downplaying its successes and potentials (thereby performing its marginality). This process of validation and amplification, they say, is fostered not through advocacy, or not through that alone, but through the epistemological support of creative thinking.

4. Arts, creativity and social innovation (Isabel André/ Juan-Luis Klein)

In their text Isabel André and Juan-Luis Klein reflect on the relationships between arts, creativity and innovation. In the first part, the authors focus on the analytical interpretation of *art and creativity as part of a social innovation process* that opens new possibilities for human expression and communication. In the second part, André and Klein reflect on several theoretical aspects of *arts as an instrument of social change* through critical thinking. Finally, they focus on empirical examples of links between artistic expressions and social innovation.

First, they consider the arts' potential to transform and deconstruct pre-ordered images of the world. Looking at this topic, they highlight that one of the most significant contributions of arts to social innovation is related to the use of metaphors, conceived as explanatory structures capable of moving experiences through different domains of significance. At the same time, arts also have the ability to shape new possible futures and to inspire social change. From this point of view, they connect the growing relevance of "aesthetisation" in daily life to the emergence of new transcendences, seen as challenges to the traditional spiritual values.

Frequently arts defies the established rules and deconstruct stereotypes showing their incoherencies, their inappropriateness in the face of new contexts, or their ethical gaps. In this way arts play a crucial role in social innovation strategies. But arts can also be a very efficient vehicle of propaganda to support conservative political regimes. In both situations artistic expressions emerge as decisive instruments because of their communication power.

Arts can also become a source of inspiration for *new social relations*, emphasising performance as opposed to conformance, and asking constantly for a pro-active attitude. According to this point of view, one of the main social roles of arts is to let undervalued feelings, beliefs or visions of the world emerge.

An important question raised by André and Klein is: what is a social milieu? Their answer is that socially creative milieux can emerge in social contexts characterised by four essential features:

1) social and cultural diversity – the potential contact and interaction with new objects, new ideas, new values;

2) tolerance – the capacity to allow for error and to consent to risk;

3) civic participation – the possibility and the capacity to dialogue and to decide;

4) the collective memory that prevents the potential fragmentation related to change, acting as a

cohesive platform.

This theoretical approach leads the authors to a critique of the "creative city" discourse: they highlight how the deterministic image of creative cities as "treasure maps to investment" often covers up socially destructive gentrification processes and wider inequalities. At the same time, they observe that some authors (e.g. Gertler) are trying to conciliate Florida's and Landry's concepts of the creative cities with the goal to reinforce social and territorial inclusion and cohesion, proposing a more sustainable way toward a creativity-led urban planning.

Looking closer at some examples of social innovations related to arts and creativity, the authors examine three types.

The first type highlighted by André and Klein is street art, seen as a tool of symbolic resistance against military dictatorships in South-America during '70s and '80s.

The second type concerns more institutionalised artistic companies that assume a social commitment. Emblematic cases here are le Cirque du Soleil and the Birmingham Opera Company.

The third example revolves around public art and art in public, in particular in the rehabilitation of urban public space; André and Klein stress the role of art in promoting community pride, fostering social encounter and avoiding social and cultural fragmentation.

5. Theories of social innovation from past to present (Frank Moulaert)

The text situates past and present definitions and uses of social innovation in theory and practice within social science debates. In the first part of the article, the author outlines the history of the concept in political science, sociology and economics. In the second, he discusses four different approaches to social innovation in contemporary social sciences. The third part deals with the relationships occurring between social innovation and territorial development. Finally, Moulaert focuses on the social relations of territorial community development.

The starting point for Moulaert is that the concept of social innovation is not a new one. In the eighteenth century Benjamin Franklin stressed the importance of social innovation for some specific changes in particular contexts. Later on, Weber and Durkheim emphasised changes in social relations or in social organisation within political and economic communities. In the 1930's, Schumpeter developed an extensive yet implicit theory of innovation, focusing on the relationship between development and innovation, the significance of sociology to understand different dimensions of development and the role of the entrepreneur in this change. Finally, in the 1970s, the French intellectuals of the *'Temps des Cerises'* and the journal *"Autrement"* organised a debate around the wider social and political significance of the transformation of society, summarised in the book *Que sais-je?* by Chambon, David and Devevey. This work reflects on the relationships between social/individuation needs, societal change, and the role of the state, offering a fuller picture of social innovation which provides a platform for global discussion on this theme. Moulaert affirms that social innovation can be rediscovered today in the creative rethinking of a society operated by the artistic world, and in the use of the concept as an alternative to the logic of the market in scientific literature and political practice.

The author continues by presenting four contemporary approaches, or spheres, that use social innovation as a core element. The first one is that of management science and of its interdisciplinary interrelations, i.e. within social sciences, where there is an emerging reinterpretation of social capital thus offering opportunities for an improved reading of the social dynamics in a diversity of themes. The second approach arises from the fields of arts and creativity, and is focused on the role of social innovation in social and intellectual creation. The third sphere concerns social innovation in territorial development, especially through the *Integrated Area Development* approach, which brings together the various dimensions of social development and the roles of the principal actors by structuring them around the principle of social innovation, linking satisfaction of human needs to innovation in the social relationships of governance. The fourth sphere in which social innovation is

the order of the day is that of *political science and public administration.*

The third part of the text focuses on social innovation and territorial development, reflecting on the reasons why urban neighbourhoods have been the privileged spatial foci of territorial development based on social innovation. The author identifies two main reasons: the first one is the fast and dramatic transformation of urban neighbourhoods that leads to the decline of community life; the second reason is that spatial density simultaneously works as a catalyst for showing alternatives. Moulaert's thesis is that needs satisfaction and assets for development approaches cannot be separated, but they have to be integrated through a combination of several processes: the revealing of needs and of potentials to meet them especially considering the role of social movements and institutional dynamics; the education and professional training leading to integration into the labour market, but also to more active participation in consultation and decision making on the future of the territory; the integration of groups of deprived citizens into the labour market and the local social economy production systems. The Integrated Area Development approach is socially innovative both from sociologic and economic points of view and works exactly in this direction: from one side it involves innovation in the relations between individuals and within and among groups; from another side, it links the fundamental needs of groups of citizens deprived of a minimum income, access to quality education, and other benefits deriving from an economy from which their community has been excluded. The combination of these two readings of social innovation stresses the importance of creating 'bottom-up' institutions for participation and decision-making, as well as for production and allocation of goods and services and for the promotion of experiences of alternative territorial development, inspired and/or steered by socially innovative agencies and processes. Socially innovative governance in IAD has as an objective the democratisation of local development, through activating local politics and policy-making, simplifying the functioning of institutions and attributing a more significant role to local populations and social movements.

The fourth part of the text centers on the social relations of territorial community development. Moulaert's point of view is that the analysis of path dependency as embedded in territorial development helps to avoid a deterministic reading of both the past and the structural–institutional context in which territorial and community development should take place. Looking at the nexus of social relations and territorial development, the author observes that the social relations of territorial development are not legible in general terms; in fact their reading requires an explication of the nature of development, the type of socio-political development, the nature of the strategic actors and the relationships with the territory – in all its social, political, economic etc. dimensions. At the

same time, he stresses that social innovation means not only the (re)production of social capital(s) in view of the implementation of development agendas, but also their protection from fragmentation/segmentation, and the valorisation of their territorial and community specificity through the organisation and mobilisation of excluded or disfavoured groups and territories.

6. From socially innovative experiences to a typology of social innovation (Serena Vicari Haddock and Chiara Tornaghi)

Vicari and Tornaghi organise the great variety of socially innovative and creative initiatives analysed by Katarsis' researchers according to forms of social innovation. They do so first with respect to four existential fields (Labour Market and Social Economy, Education and Training, Housing and Neighbourhood, Health and Environment). In a second step, on the basis of a transversal reading of these various forms of innovation across existential fields, they proceed to integrate them into two tentative models of social innovation.

For the cited existential fields, the authors identify different forms of social innovation primarily by looking at the actors involved and their strategies. Which kind of actors are the movers in contrasting processes of social exclusion? What is their vision of the causes of social exclusion and of problems they are confronted with? Which strategies do they pursue to find solutions to these problems? These questions guide their analysis of the socially innovative initiatives collected and reviewed in the course of the Katarsis project.

Their reading of the forms across existential fields underlines the emergence of two main dimensions as constitutive of social innovation. The first is the value orientation that motivates people to pursue progressive social change; the second is the process of institutionalisation, in which innovation settles into relatively stable and sustainable arrangements. These two dimensions serve as the fuel and the engine of social innovation; taking them together as orthogonal axes they can be used to define a space in which to locate the instances of social innovation analysed by KATARSIS.

The authors tentatively order these instances of social innovation along these two dimensions and observe their distribution. The first axis, representing the 'fuel' of social innovation, refers to the strength of value orientation toward social justice, environmental concerns, democracy and empowerment, in brief toward progressive social change that directly motivates the actors involved and legitimises their action. The second axis, representing the 'engine', measures the extent to which these practices have penetrated the public sphere. The analysed initiatives do so in two strictly intertwined ways, by entering into governance relationships with public governmental bodies at various scales and by influencing the public discourse in the direction of more inclusive and effective citizenship rights. Depending on the context, an impact on the public sphere can be achieved in different ways: civil society organisations can perform as innovative service provision agents, which identify and respond to new needs and demands, thus giving legitimacy to new

claims in the public discourse; civil society organisations can also transform the institutional governance framework, changing values and norms to generate new policies and practices. In both ways it is the link between civil society organisations and different public and private actors at different scales which has proven to be the crucial element for the success of those "*bottom-linked"*strategies.

In the space charted by these two axes Vicari and Tornaghi find that the innovative initiatives analysed in the Katarsis project are concentrated on the upper left and lower right areas of the chart. The upper left concentration hosts initiatives in which citizens, in differently organised forms, play a leading role and engage in activities with a strong value content that motivates them and strongly informs their practices. These initiatives have multiple links with social movements and often find in "the movement of movements" their main cultural reference; they are able to take part in alternative "associative networks" which they form and operate on their own terms, with or without outside support, on the basis of a shared orientation of self-organization and direct action and involvement. Hence their critical stance, with a varying degree of radicalism, vis à vis representative democracy, which is perceived as ineffective in addressing new forms of social exclusion. Alternatives to the existing social order are then articulated in a plurality of visions in which value orientation toward social justice, environmental concerns, democracy and empowerment are called upon in different combination. As a consequence of this radical/alternative cultural orientation, initiatives in this first model have an unstable relationship with public actors and difficulties in engaging with governance institutional structures; this relationship varies from an oppositional and confrontational stance to forms of reciprocal recognition and cooperation, although often based on precarious and temporary arrangements and subject to ongoing negotiations.

An opposite model is identifiable in the lower-right concentration. These initiatives are characterised by strong and formal links among institutional actors in the public, private and non-profit sectors, and the primacy of governmental actors at different scales in governance structures. Civil society organisations and associations as well as Third sector foundations, agencies and enterprises are involved as co-producers of public policy, contributing to the success of the initiatives by their direct and situated knowledge and their capacity to partake in complex networks of different actors. Among these initiatives the commitment to progressive values may not be as strong and paramount nor may it contribute so strongly to the group and individual identity of the participants; the focus is on service provision or even effective production of goods, and more radically inclusive strategies must be sacrificed to this objective.