

Call for Papers

The European branch of the Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI Europe) and the Transformative Social Innovation Theory (TRANSIT) project are jointly organising a one-day workshop at the Impact Hub, Vienna on 17 November 2015. The title of the workshop is:

'Beyond' Transition? Understanding and Achieving Sustainable Consumption through Social Innovation

There is continuing debate about how to theorise and how to act to address current societal challenges including growing social inequalities, aging populations, economic crises, public austerity programmes and climate change. In recent years transition studies have become one of the most pervasive approaches stemming from research on the topic (Grin et al. 2010, Markard et al. 2012). In particular the multi-level perspective (MLP) on socio-technical transitions (Geels 2002, 2011) has grown from a niche idea to a much-cited conceptualisation of technology-driven societal change processes. Along with this growth, increasingly critical and reflexive voices emerged with regard to the MLP and the broader transition studies field, related to shortcomings concerning the treatment of: power and politics; user practices; networks of innovation; sustainability discourses and institutional change (Avelino 2011, Genus & Coles 2008, Riddell & Westley 2013, Rotmans & Loorbach 2010, Smith, Voss & Grin 2010, Shove & Walker 2007). Indeed it seems necessary to transcend notions of transition to find and assess the merits of alternative ideas and approaches with which to analyse and to realise the transformation to sustainability.

Moving 'beyond transition' are attempts to study past and/or ongoing changes and to direct or influence current developments. The TRANSIT project team, for example, is considering a number of perspectives on transformative social innovation (Haxeltine et al. 2014), investigates how social innovation interacts with other forms of (transformative) change to contribute to societal transformation and examines how actors are empowered – or disempowered – by/in processes of transformative social innovation (Avelino et al. 2014). Social innovation initiatives have been found to contribute to societal change by providing alternatives to current systems, creating critical mass or supportive networks, influencing societal discourses or individual value change (Jørgensen et al. 2015). This workshop seeks to contribute to theory development on and practical insight relating to social innovation and societal transformation.

Abstracts are invited on one of the following themes which provide the foci for the workshop:

a) the similarities and differences between notions of 'transition' and 'transformation' and their relevance to the governance of sustainability, social innovation or sustainable consumption. Papers may critically address the different notions of social change, transition and transformation; their performativity in terms of what they accomplish and make possible; their use by different groups of actors for specific goals; the policy-/society-science interfaces related to these different notions; their relations to other forms of change; ways to analyse these etc.

b) case studies/examples of social innovation or sustainable consumption and their relevance to transformation. Here, papers could address the content, context and processes of social innovation and change. Specifically they may address one of the following:

- governance, social learning, resourcing and monitoring in/of social innovation initiatives
- tracing histories of social innovations
- the conduct of socially innovative research, identifying methodologies necessary/used for researching social innovation/transformational change

- the substance of successful initiatives and how success is to be understood and by whom
- what we understand and learn from failed interventions
- institutional arrangements or organisational and material factors affecting conduct and success

c) Actions, roles and interactions of diverse participants in potentially transformative social innovation or sustainable consumption initiatives (researchers, policy-makers, entrepreneurs, citizens). Papers here could focus on the analysis of cooperation and struggles of and between diverse actors. Or they may address the different capacities, discourses and access of various actual and potential participants to the governance of sustainable social innovation. Fundamentally this theme draws attention to the politics of transformation and the relevance of mundane activities to what are typically presented as grander societal challenges.

Workshop organisation and format

The Vienna workshop is the latest in a series of events organised by SCORAI Europe, aimed at presenting and discussing innovative research related to understanding and enabling sustainable or reduced consumption and production and bringing together researchers and practitioners. The workshop is a precursor to the TRANSIT project mid-term conference Social Innovation 2015: Pathways to Social Change - Research, Policies and Practices in European and Global Perspectives, which takes place in Vienna, 18-19 November. The conference is hosted by TRANSIT and SI-DRIVE, two projects funded by the EU 7th Framework Programme for the Call "Social innovation – empowering people, changing societies", and Net4Society in collaboration with two other FP7-EU-funded projects on the economic underpinnings of social innovation, CRESSI and SIMPACT.

- The emphasis is on high quality discussion of the latest relevant research
- Workshop limited to a maximum of 30 delegates (a mix of researchers and practitioners), with about a third of delegate places reserved for practitioners
- The workshop itself is free and refreshments/lunch available to participants
- Workshop delegates will pay for their own travel, food outside of the workshop and for accommodation
- Presentations will be kept to a 5 minutes maximum, allowing ample time for rapporteur summaries of groups of themed contributions and plenary discussions
- A workshop report will be prepared and made available online following the workshop
- Proceedings or a themed issue for a academic journal may be prepared
- In line with the normal practice for SCORAI events, it is expected that participants will have read the papers of other participants in advance of the workshop

Submission procedure

In the first stage potential delegates should submit abstracts of 150-250 words, including the names and affiliations of the authors and their email addresses. Please identify which author will be the corresponding and presenting author, who will attend the workshop. Abstracts should clearly state the problem/theme being addressed, the methods undertaken, and the theoretical and/or practical contribution of the paper. In a second stage an evaluation will be made of submitted abstracts to select those invited to develop and submit full workshop papers (3-5,000 words in length). Abstracts will be evaluated by the workshop steering committee: Julia Backhaus (Maastricht University); Audley Genus and Marfuga Iskandarova (both Kingston University); Sylvia Lorek (Sustainable Europe Research Institute); Edina Vadovics (GreenDependent); and Julia Wittmayer (DRIFT, Erasmus University, Rotterdam).

Please **submit abstracts** (in English only) via the following website link:

<http://www.kingston.ac.uk/events/item/1667/17-nov-2015-scorai-europe-transit-workshop-vienna/>

Key dates/activities

June 12, 2015. Submission deadline of Abstracts for review (250 words maximum)

July 10, 2015. Notification of acceptance of Abstracts

September 30, 2015. Deadline for receipt of full workshop papers (3-5,000 words)

For further information please email: a.genus@kingston.ac.uk

Information on previous SCORAI Europe workshop proceedings are available at the following website link: <http://scorai.org/scorai-europe/> Further details of the TRANSIT project may be found at the following link: www.transitsocialinnovation.eu/

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