
#SustainableJustCities

From a translocal & transformative power perspective

Flor Avelino

DRIFT, Erasmus University Rotterdam

avelino@drift.eur.nl

@FlorAvelino

date / location

19th of November 2020

EUR webinar

Online & translocal



Image from Pixabay



Photo by Chris Gallagher on Unsplash



Image by rostichep from Pixabay

**To tackle societal challenges,
innovation is necessary, but not sufficient.**

**We need systemic, transformative change,
i.e. transitions towards more just & sustainable societies.**



Image by Skeeze from Pixabay

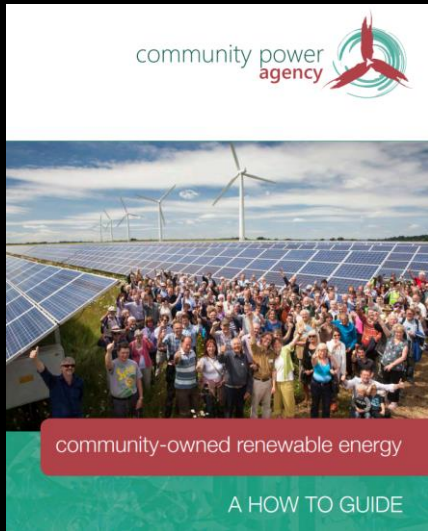


Photo by Ehud Neuhaus on Unsplash



Photo by CHRISTOPHER FURLONG / GETTY IMAGES

transformative innovation

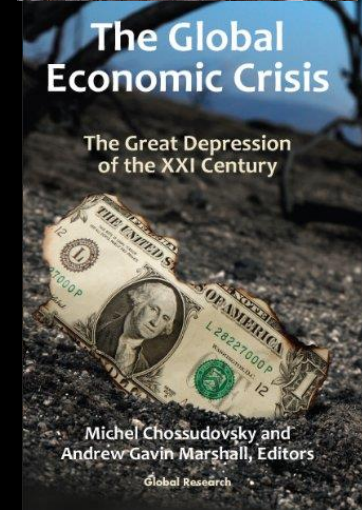


Pel et al. 2020
Avelino et al. 2019
Wittmayer et al. 2019
Haxel et al. 2017

innovations are transformative to the extent that they

- **challenge**
- **alter**
- **replace**

dominant structures & institutions



drift

for transition

Erasmus

STRN Sustainability Transitions Research Network



transformative
social innovation
theory



Prosumers
for energy
transitions

PROSEU



**Vital Cities
and Citizens**



**SOCIAL
INNOVATION
COMMUNITY**



**Social
INNOVation
in Energy
Transitions**



urbanA

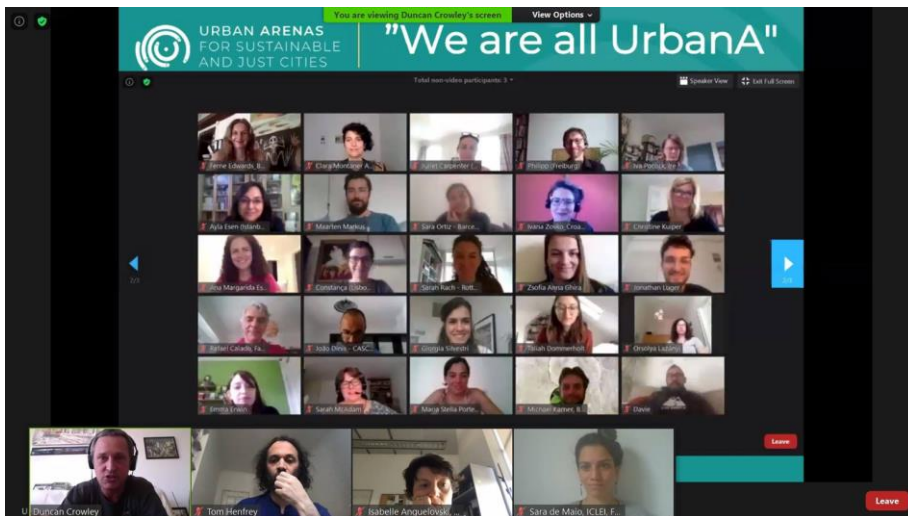
URBAN ARENAS
FOR SUSTAINABLE AND JUST CITIES



WIKI ON SUSTAINABLE JUST CITIES



The Wiki on Sustainable Just Cities is one of the main resources being produced by UrbanA. It is an ongoing, open-ended online collaborative database and knowledge source. It captures the learning process of the UrbanA Community of Practice and is an important part of UrbanA's knowledge commons. It includes a database of approaches to just and sustainable cities.



UrbanA Community Conversations

HOW TO ADDRESS JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY TOGETHER IN URBAN GOVERNANCE?

TUESDAY 23RD JUNE 2020 | 15:00-16:30 CEST

WWW.URBAN-ARENA.EU

ROTTERDAM	BARCELONA	BERLIN	BRUSSELS
28-29 November 2019	May/ June 2020	Feb/ March 2021	October 2021

MAPPING APPROACHES TO URBAN SUSTAINABILITY AND JUSTICE

UNDERSTANDING HOW MAKING CITIES SUSTAINABLE CAN CREATE (IN)JUSTICE

IDENTIFYING DECISION-MAKING APPROACHES FOR SUSTAINABLE AND JUST CITIES

DISTILLING POLICY SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE AND JUST CITIES



PODCASTS

SUBSCRIBE TO THE **URBANA PODCAST SERIES**



VIDEOS





(un)sustainable & (un)just cities?



What are sustainable & just cities?



... cities that (strive to) meet the following four conditions:

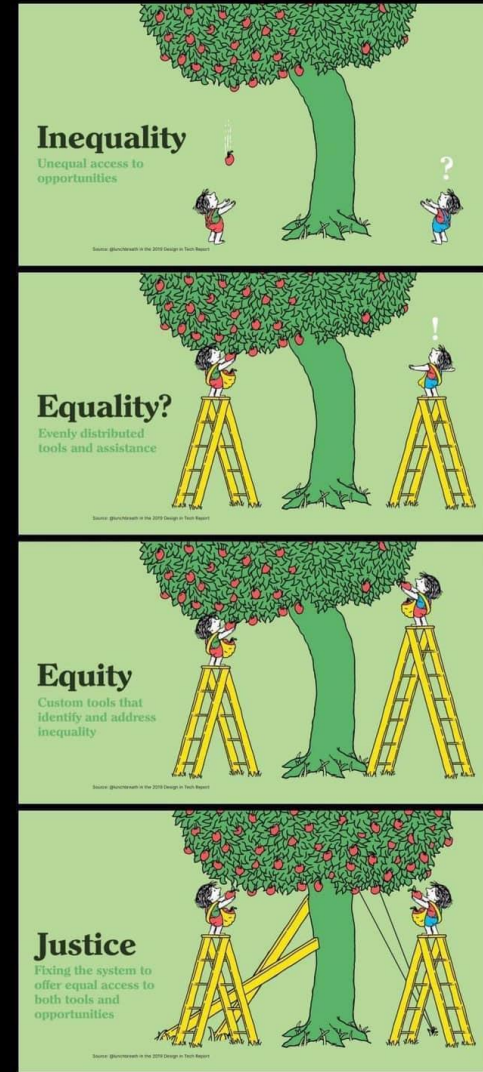
- Improving quality of life & well-being
- Meeting needs of both present & future generations
- Enabling justice & equity
- Living within ecosystem limits.

*Sources: Castán Broto & Westman (2016)
Agyeman et al (2013, 2002)*

What is environmental justice?

- Beyond inclusivity, equality & equity
- **Distributive** justice
(e.g. equitable distribution of material resources & services)
- **Procedural** justice
(e.g. participatory & democratic decision-making)
- **Recognition** justice
(e.g. recognizing historical context & culturally inclusive practices)
- (many other dimensions)

Sources: Schlosberg 2013, Kotsila et al. 2020



Types of justice

Explanation

Distributive justice

The classic liberal foundational concept of justice, which highlights inequities in the distribution of (material) goods.

Procedural justice

A well-established aspect of the social justice concept, which focuses on who is involved, and how, in decision-making processes

Recognition justice

A more recent, but well-established, notion of justice that focuses on the notion that there are many ways that certain individuals or groups can be included or marginalized due to factors such as ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality). Being able to overcome systemic exclusion, generates recognition justice

Hermeneutical justice

When vulnerable residents are engaged in the creation of safe/healthy/welcoming spaces, allowing their experiences to be expressed and accounted for (even if it means moving away from traditional scientific, political, or social language)

Epistemic justice

When local knowledge and perceptions are valued and taken into account (i.e. of space, local ecology, social factors that affect health -otherwise known as environmental epidemiology).

Testimonial justice

When past, historical experiences (of violence, oppression) in a specific neighbourhood or place are taken into account

Responsibility justice

Recognizes and addresses the restrictions of "responsibility" projects, due to their potential impacts on local realities (economic, cultural, racial, gender) realities.

Imaginary and historical (in)justice

When new urban imaginaries are erasing or overlooking spaces cared for by long-term residents, or when invisible past injustices while causing new exclusions

Intersectional justice

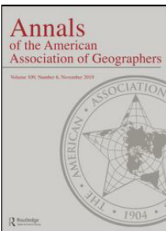
Recognize the multiple (gender, class, ethnicity, etc.) dimensions of challenges lived and interpreted in space, through time, and while making sense of place (processes).

Relationality-inspired justice

Spaces of care and connection, with attention to gender-specific social needs, but also different types of connections and care for nature.



Barcelona
Laboratory for Urban
Environmental Justice
and Sustainability



Annals of the American Association of Geographers

ISSN: 2469-4452 (Print) 2469-4460 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/raag21>

Expanding the Boundaries of Justice in Urban Greening Scholarship: Toward an Emancipatory, Antisubordination, Intersectional, and Relational Approach

Isabelle Anguelovski, Anna Livia Brand, James J. T. Connolly, Esteve Corbera, Panagiota Kotsila, Justin Steil, Melissa Garcia-Lamarca, Margarita Triguero-Mas, Helen Cole, Francesc Baró, Johannes Langemeyer, Carmen Pérez del Pulgar, Galia Shokry, Filka Sekulova & Lucia Argüelles Ramos

DRIVERS OF INJUSTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

1 EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO BENEFITS OF URBAN SUSTAINABILITY INFRASTRUCTURE



2 MATERIAL & LIVELIHOOD INEQUALITIES



3 RACIALIZED OR ETHNICALLY EXCLUSIONARY URBANIZATION



4 UNEVEN & EXCLUDING URBAN INTENSIFICATION & REGENERATION



5 UNEVEN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & POLLUTION PATTERNS



6 UNFIT INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES



7 LIMITED CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN URBAN PLANNING



8 LACK OF EFFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE BROKERAGE AND STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



9 UNQUESTIONED NED LIBERAL GROWTH AND AUSTERITY URBANISM



10 WEAK(ENED) CIVIL SOCIETY



How do we study #SustainableJustCities?

- **Transformative** perspective:
transitions & social innovation
- **Power relations** (exclusion, inequality, oppression, extraction, exploitation etc.)
how these are reproduced/ transformed &
how we can **empower** each other to
contribute to change.





Image from Pixabay



Photo by Chris Gallagher on Unsplash



Photo



Image by rostichep from Pixabay

Problematic power relations:
 inequality, oppression, exclusion, exploitation, extraction, injustice

How & to what extent are urban innovations/transitions challenging and/or reproducing power relations?

What are (un)intended power implications of urban innovation/transition processes?



Image by Skeeze from Pixabay

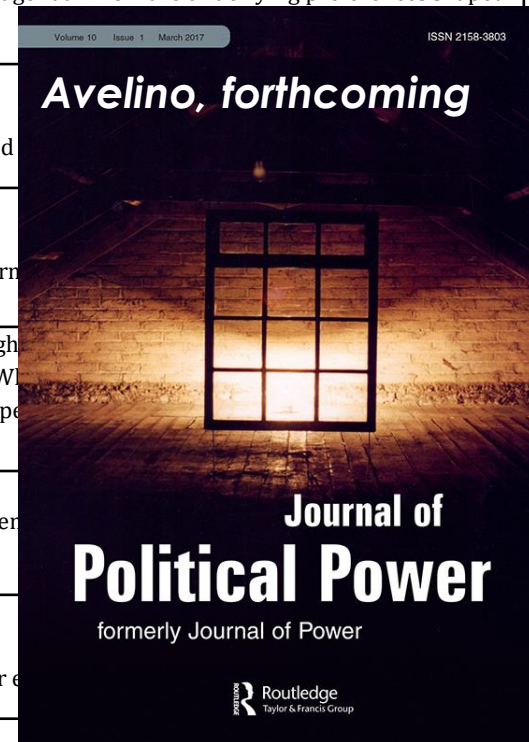


Photo by Ehud Neuhaus on Unsplash



Photo by CHRISTOPHER FURLONG / GETTY IMAGES

Power Contestations	Questions about social change & innovation
Power 'over' <> power 'to' (e.g. Dahl, Parsons, Foucault, Morris, Davis, Giddens, Arendt, Gordon, Stewart)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Power over</i>: Who is exercising power over whom? How are which structures of domination/ oppression/ dependence changed or (re)produced? • <i>Power to</i>: How is power exercised for/through/against change? • <i>Power with</i>: How do actors collaborate in the exercise of power for/against change?
Centred <> diffused (e.g. Dahl, Bachrach & Baratz, Lukes, Mann, Foucault, Gramsci)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the three/four faces of power manifested in processes of change? • How is power diffused, (de)centralised and/or recentralised in/by/for change? Who is included and excluded? • How & by whom is the agenda of change decided? Which issues are kept of the agenda? How are underlying preferences shaped?
Consensual <> conflictual (e.g. Parsons, Arendt, Mann, Haugaard)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are both consensus and conflict manifested in change? • Which conflicts are 'hidden' under seemingly consensual processes? • How and to what extent is consensus oppressive and conflict emancipatory (and
Constraining <> enabling (e.g. Foucault, Giddens, Clegg, Davis, Arendt, Hayward & Lukes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are both structure & agency manifested in change? • Who/what is enabled and/or constrained by change and how? • How/to what extent are which structures (a) an object of change (to be transformed for change?
Quantity <> quality (Mann, Sewell, Arendt, Avelino)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and to what extent are what different kinds of power exercised for/through • Which actor are exercising more/less power in/of/through change, and how? Why? • How do power relations/dynamics manifest in change (e.g. cooperation, (in)dependence, antagonism)?
Empowerment <> disempowerment (e.g. Boje & Rosile, Hardy & Leiba-O'Sullivan, Follet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is (dis)empowered in/by change, by whom or by what? • (How) is (dis)empowerment manifested in change as (a) intentional outcome (empowerment as end factor (empowerment as means), or (c) object/type of change in itself?
Knowledge as <> prior to power (e.g. Bourdieu, Flyvbjerg, Lukes, Foucault, Barnes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which knowledges, discourses, ideologies underly the process of change? • How is knowledge on change co-evolving with which power dynamics? • How is knowledge mobilised as (a) an object of change, or (b) an instrument for change?



How do we study #SustainableJustCities?

- **Transformative** perspective:
transitions & social innovation
- **Power perspective** (exclusion, inequality, oppression, extraction, exploitation etc.)
how these power relations are reproduced/
transformed & how we can **empower** each
other to contribute to change.
- **Translocal** perspective:
locally embedded & globally connected





Translocal Empowerment

locally embedded & globally connected
each region, city & initiative is unique but also linked & allied



FEARLESS CITIES
A Guide to the Global Municipal Movement
Barcelona Da Dornil with Carolina Rosendo and Alba Galan

Slow Food worldwide

FAB LAB

ASHOKA
THE POWER OF THE NETWORK

42 COUNTRIES with STAFF AND 2,967 FELLOWS IN 84 COUNTRIES 5 CONTINENTS

EUROPEAN ACTION COALITION FOR THE RIGHT TO HOUSING AND TO THE CITY

IMPACT HUB

Transition Network.org

Find local activity on the map

Enter location / postcode

Update

Key

- Red Diamond: National Hubs
- Orange Diamond: Initiatives

MAPPING PARTICIPATORY INNOVATIONS
Share the story of the participatory innovations in your city.

ATLAS OF UTOPIAS
2019 TRANSFORMATIVE CITIES FEATURED INITIATIVES

Translocal empowerment in transformative social innovation networks

Flor Avelino^a, Adina Dumitru^b, Carla Cipolla^c, Iris Kunze^d and Julia Wittmayer^a

^aDRIFT/Transition Academy, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, Rotterdam, The Netherlands; ^bUniversity A Coruña, A Coruña, Spain; ^cUniversidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; ^dUniversity of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) Vienna, Austria

ABSTRACT

This paper contributes to public and academic discussions on empowerment and social innovation by conceptualizing the mechanisms of empowerment from a *social psychology* perspective, and empirically exploring how people are empowered through both local and transnational linkages, i.e. *translocal networks*. Section 2 conceptualizes empowerment as the *process through which actors gain the capacity to mobilize resources to achieve a goal*, building on different power theories in relation to social change, combined with self-determination theory and intrinsic motivation research. Based on that conceptualization, empirical questions are formulated to be asked about cases under study. Section 3 then provides an empirical analysis of translocal networks that work with social innovation both at the global and local level. A total of five networks are analyzed: *FEBEA*, *DESIS*, the *Global Ecovillage Network*, *Impact Hub* and *Slow Food*. The embedded cases-study approach allows an exploration of how people are empowered through the transnational networking

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 24 March 2018
Revised 29 September 2018
Accepted 17 December 2018

KEYWORDS

Empowerment; translocal networks; social innovation; self-determination

Table 2. Embedded case-studies of 5 translocal networks.

Name	Translocal network	Local initiative under study
FEBEA	Different types of members-owned credit cooperatives	Fiare –Spain
DESIS	Network for design for social innovation and sustainability	POLIMI DESIS Lab Italy –Italy
Global Ecovillage Network	Connects intentional communities and other eco-communities	Ecovillage Tamera –Portugal
Impact Hub	Global network of urban co-creation spaces for social entrepreneurs	Impact Hub Amsterdam –Netherlands
Slow Food	Network linking food to a commitment to sustainable development	Convivium Slow Food Freiburg – Germany

Table 3. Dimensions of empowerment in relation to local and translocal mechanisms.

Dimension of empowerment	Individual & collective sense of empowerment	Local mechanisms for deepening	Translocal mechanisms of expanding
Relatedness	<i>We are related to each other</i>	Creating conditions to renew relations in ways that support wellbeing (e.g. face to face contact, spontaneous interactions).	Meeting and relating to others in other places.
Autonomy	<i>We can determine what we do</i>	Creating local contexts that facilitate doing things differently in line with one's values.	Creating larger supportive contexts for autonomous action – e.g. by pooling resources and creating alternative markets.
Competence	<i>We are good at what we do</i>	Developing & sharing local skills & expertize through hands-on experimentation and learning	Developing and sharing translocal skills and expertize, through becoming part of a larger movement and developing strategies for wider transformation
Impact	<i>We can make a difference</i>	Changing local circumstances and expanding ideas to local communities.	Increasing access to resources and legitimacy, based on evidence that there is local and global impact.
Meaning	<i>We believe in what we do</i>	Local sense-making and collective identity.	Confirming the broader existence of certain shared values (e.g. shared narratives).
Resilience	<i>We can adapt & recover</i>	Drawing on local networks created to survive crises/ pressures.	Sharing & learning from each other's failures & challenges; drawing on the resources of a larger movement.

Ongoing research question



Image by The Bicycle is Art

What is the **countervailing power** of translocal innovation initiatives & networks + how can it be increased?



Social Innovation in Energy Transitions

sonnet-energy.eu

[@SONNET_energy](https://twitter.com/SONNET_energy)



Social INNovation in Energy Transitions



SONNET brings diverse groups together to make sense of how social innovation can bring about more sustainable energy systems in Europe.

How has social innovation contributed to making our energy sources, use, and production cleaner? How can social change help reduce our carbon footprint in the future? Six cities and six research institutions in Europe are using techniques – like ‘City Labs’, case studies, citizen surveys and more – to co-create knowledge and answer these very questions.

SONNET City Labs

**Bristol | Warsaw | Grenoble
Antwerp | Mannheim | Basel**

Partners



The project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 837498.

Power Lab on Power Dynamics in Transformative Social Innovation



Social
Innovation
in Energy
Transitions



community-owned renewable energy

A HOW TO GUIDE



Photo by Chris LeBoutillier from Pexels



(re)politicize



Image by lucia on Unsplash



Thank you!

Dr. Flor Avelino

DRIFT, Erasmus University Rotterdam
avelino@drift.eur.nl



@FlorAvelino



@Alterotopia



@flor.avelino.5

The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function. One should, for example, be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise.

(F. Scott Fitzgerald)

GeniusQuotes.net

Erasmus
University
Rotterdam



drift
for transition



transformative
social innovation
theory

