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EUROPEAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

15th European Rural Development Network Conference

Innovation and Cooperation in Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Rural Regions

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European Rural Development Network
Book of abstracts

The printing of this volume was carried out by ERDN - European Rural Development Network, www.erdn.eu.

Publishing Editor
Krzysztof Kossakowski

Managing Editor
Leszek Ślipski

Printed by the Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics – National ResearchInstitute, Warsaw, Poland.

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Vienna, October 2017

environmental NGO in Turkey serving with over 450 thousand volunteers. In this study "The Macahel Rural Development Project", conducted by TEMA is selected as a social innovation example driven by NGO's. Macahel is the name of a basin including 6 villages in Borçka Town in Artvin, situated in the north east of Turkey. The project started in 1998 in order to provide development to the region by apiculture, eco-tourism and organic agricultural production. Besides protecting the biodiversity in the region, the project had ensured the economic and social empowerment for the villagers.

As an example of social innovation in rural areas leaded by local public institutions, the case of Seferihisar (a town in İzmir province which was chosen to be the first slow city (Cittaslow) in Turkey) is examined in this study. Slow Cities (Cittaslow) is a movement founded in 1999 in Italy that has spread to 191 towns in 29 countries. The Slow City movement is a response to the fast world under the influence of globalization and it advocates local distinctiveness and desire to protect the uniqueness of localities (Mayer and Knox: 2006). Slow cities are chosen according to 59 different aspects grouped into six different topics including environmental concerns, infrastructure and technological level of the candidate city/town etc. In Seferihisar case, the social innovation process took start with the application of the Mayor of Seferihisar. Up to now, Seferihisar has implemented many innovative programs as a Slow City. Among these projects, the most important ones are focused on organic agriculture and empowering women as organic bazaars, where the local farmers and women sell their products; seed Trade Festival, a restaurant for local cuisine, gathering places for women like coffee houses, cycling lanes, tree blue ribbon beaches, support for sustainable fishing, use of solar and geothermal energy, promoting the hot water bath tourism, conservation of the historic Teos Antique City, and restoration and landscaping of the Sıgacık area (Gündüz et al.: 2016).

2.3 Experiences of Social Innovation for Blue Growth in the Dutch North Sea

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The Dutch North Sea is in transition. A series of international trends are influential to the changes occurring, including the Blue growth policy instructed by the EU, based on principles of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth at sea, in which energy, aquaculture, tourism, mining and biotechnology sectors are encouraged in the offshore marine and coastal environment. In addition, longer term challenges are impacting activities at sea, such as climate change. Consequentially, innovations are welcomed as contributions to increase employment and economic growth while taking account of the environmental qualities.

Accordingly, in the Netherlands, not only are new sectors stimulated to take part of the already occupied marine areas, but existing ones are encouraged to change. The strategy promotes technological progress and technology innovations for economic progress. Underestimating the importance of the social dimension of change, however, is likely to result in a simple technology-oriented approach. In this article we argue that confiding in

technology alone would not be enough. Social innovations would be important as well, as collaboration and other forms of mutual interchange are likely to be pivotal to progress.

Social innovation can be explained both as process and outcome, which are strongly interwoven. As process it refers to the interaction among actors through phases of problematization, expression of interest, and delineation and co-ordination. As outcome social innovation develops new institutional arrangements, dealing with the particular needs for change to realize intended societal impacts. In the article we elaborate on four dimensions of social innovations;

1) Type, referring to the kind of social innovation that is actually to be addressed.
2) Scale, referring to the directly and indirectly affected number of people,
3) Scope, referring to the level of change towards new institutional settings, and
4) Resonance, referring to the peoples imagination and believe in what is possible.

The aim here is to detect social innovation appearance and potentials in the context of the Blue growth in the Dutch North Sea. A total of three sectors are explored that represent the various new developments in the Dutch North Sea, including 1) offshore wind energy, 2) offshore mussel cultivation and 3) offshore seaweed farming. These three sectors are in different phases of change. Much attention has been devoted to technological innovations that are critical and inherent to these developments, but the same cannot be said about the associated social innovations. In this article we address the role of social innovations in the cases. We analyze the dimensions of social innovations here by using the adaptive cycle (Figure 1).

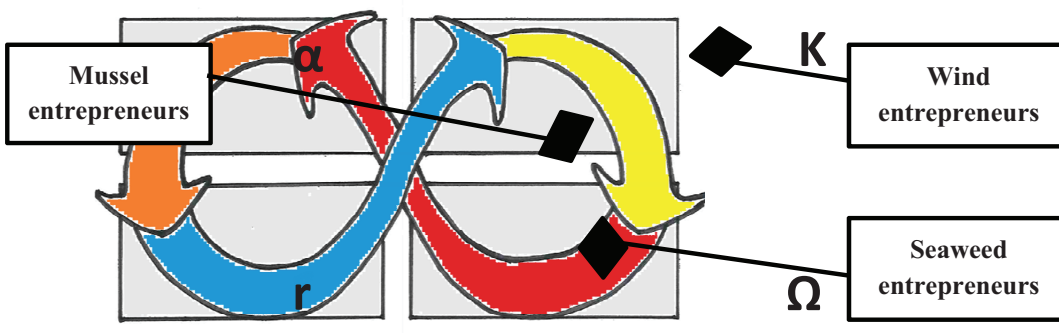

Figure 1: The mussel entrepreneurs, the wind entrepreneurs and the seaweed entrepreneurs in adaptive cycle; with four core stages including; growth (r), no change (K), release (Ω), and reorganization (α).

For the seaweed entrepreneurs, the types of social innovation can be identified as in a reorganization phase (α). They are just about to begin with both technical as well as social innovation. It appears less complicated because they do not need to release or depart from a fixed exiting system, although they have to link with it. A network is being established, and new institutional settings are being defined, based on a believe that this sector will contribute to sustainability in future in ways which not are observed until now, implying that resonance is high. This case is the most obvious one when it comes to social innovation, and belongs to

the so-called 'back loop', with a reorganization for dealing with new challenges and a new sector.

The offshore wind energy case is different because it was already a well-established sector. But due to the international and national policy ambitions, it must aim to produce larger proportions of green energy, implying a high resonance. The network scope is still one of traditional actors, such as the ministers and energy suppliers at the core, but new investors are entering the stage. The offshore wind energy entrepreneurs operates in a release stage (Ω), in which the existing network is falling apart, in preparation for a new stage of establishments of new institutional settings. As such this case is just to begin on comprehensive social innovation developments along the technological ones.

The type of social innovation is yet another one in the case of mussel entrepreneurs. They operate within existing system, arguing about the insufficiency of existing production systems and vessels to move offshore, feeling no urgency to move given attractive conditions at present (K). Still, uncertainties about the future are prevailing in coastal areas due to environmental lobbying groups, and lack of space for further explorations of activities. Still, for most mussel entrepreneurs, the resonance is low, they operate within established institutional structures and not beyond. Notably, within these structures, social innovations have been established in existing networks, in which the entrepreneurs are strongly connected. Social innovations out of this scope may be a future result of ongoing national marine planning, if outcome would put the sector under stronger pressures.

The key to enhanced future social innovation is more focus on actors and networks at various levels of cooperation, with joint efforts of stakeholders across nations, policies, sectors and institutions. This in turn depends on actors' incentives, willingness to cooperate and levels of trust, which also rely on the appearance of 'enablers' who can connect people, motivations and opportunities and by that eventually realize change. In this article we discuss conditions for such a change.

2.4 Enhanced provision of public goods through agriculture and forestry activities across the EU

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Public goods have increasingly attained attention in agricultural policy debates. In particular reforms on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) take legitimacy from linkages to provision of public goods. This relationship is most directly expressed for agri-environmental measures (OECD 2013) but effectiveness of policy is often limited so far (Westhoek et al. 2013). Moreover, there is deep concern to address all aspects of land management and achieve sufficient differentiation among management systems (Cooper et al. 2009). A European research project, called PEGASUS (Public Ecosystem Goods and Services from land management – Unlocking the Synergies), has been commissioned in the Horizon 2020