

Exploring the added value of quasi-ethnographic case studies on the emergence and upscaling of grassroots innovations: some lessons to be



Data of Your Paper



Topic

- Resilience
- Lifestyle
- Building
- Resources
- Tourism
- Energy

Title of the Paper

Exploring the added value of quasi-ethnographic case studies on the emergence and upscaling of grassroots innovations: some lessons to be learned from the InContext research project.

Form of Presentation

- Poster
- Presentation

Short Description (maximum 2500 characters)

Societal, action research-based, transition experiments are given a core role in the InContext research project (<http://incontext-fp7.eu>). They are completed by a set of quasi-ethnographic case studies that address both outer context factors (e.g. societal norms) and institutionalization issues (e.g. relationships with public authorities) related to innovative, sustainable practices which emerge at the level of grassroots, citizen-engaging initiatives. The four case studies being part of the InContext project have actually been framed as niches of alternative and more sustainable practices in which people are engaged both individually and collectively. The case studies proved very fruitful material to further our understanding of the emergence and development of societal transitions and innovations, notably because they appear to underline the necessity for public authorities to take part in sustainable alternatives. This interaction between societal practices and public authorities is not only happening through public policies, but also through an effective commitment in collaboration/coordination between public actors and non-profit organizations or citizens organization. While the very conclusions to be drawn from the individual case studies remain under construction for now, their heterogeneity and "localness" (4 case studies in 3 European countries on 2 different consumption patterns; energy and food production/consumption) poses a series of challenges to the research design. Apart from synthesizing our individual case study specific research outcomes and conclusions, our paper proposes to problematize these challenges of comparability and generalization of lessons taken from individually developed independent grassroots innovations. While these challenges might appear on the first level as being of pure methodological interest, we pose that the issue is of wider interest to the implementation of wide-scaling consumption transitions: what can be learned from "reality"? Additional questions we pursue in the paper revolve around: what can we learn from these heterogeneous cases in terms of policy mixes and new public-private-citizens forms of coordination? What are the lessons to be learned from

the various conceptions of sustainability involved in the studied alternative practices

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