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SOCIAL INNOVATION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF WELFARE STATES

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Social Innovation to Foster Social Development?

This issue of the Austrian Journal of Development Studies focuses on social innovation and its contribution towards social inclusion and poverty reduction[1]. It presents parts of the outcomes of the research project ImPRovE, financed by the European Commission, which has been launched with the intention of generating academic support for European social policy makers.

1. Social innovation and its recent policy repercussions

The concept of social innovation has gained prominence in the international policy making community throughout the last ten years, particularly in the European Union. It is highly ambiguous, with blurred boundaries. The authors of the *Open Handbook of Social Innovation* (Murray et al. 2010: 3) recognise that "the field we cover is broad. Social innovation doesn't have fixed boundaries: it happens in all sectors, public, non-profit and private. Indeed, much of the most creative action is happening at the boundaries between sectors, in fields as diverse as fair trade, distance learning, hospices, urban farming, waste reduction and restorative justice".

As the above-mentioned project was commissioned by the Bureau of European Policy Advisors and the European Commission, it quickly became an important point of reference – especially for the definition of social innovation. The European Commission has defined social innovation

> "as the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. It represents new responses to pressing social demands, which affect the

process of social interactions. It is aimed at improving human well-being. Social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance individuals' capacity to act." (EC 2013: 6)

Many European policy makers highlight social innovation as a possible alternative to state controlled social policies. In times of austerity politics, this also indicates further pushes towards a more reduced welfare state; as the Bureau of European Policy Advisors stated in 2014: "In the current economic climate, it is essential to do more with less and to do it better" (BEPA 2014: 93).

In the social field, "to do more with less and to do it better" (ibid.) promises better social services, despite serious spending cuts. Thereby, it somewhat echoes the promotion of 'civil society' and the 'third sector' during the 1990s: the state was recognised as a rather bureaucratic and inefficient service provider, while civil society was seen as being able to promote new solutions better and more cheaply (Novy 1996; Appel et al. 2003; Leubolt 2007). This concept has been criticised from different perspectives, especially concerning the replacement of paid by unpaid labour and the resulting repercussion on predominantly female care work. Recent findings criticise social innovation on very similar grounds, as it is seen to promote neoliberal solutions to social policies (Meichenitsch et al. 2016). Nevertheless, the critics also recognise the potential for promising social innovations. Especially in the case of 'loopholes' in the welfare state (e.g. due to legal obstacles for foreigners), social innovations have the potential to complement or even fortify welfare states. Collective engagement by civil society actors often leads to processes of empowerment, albeit often with the 'Janus face' (Swyngedouw 2005) of accompanying neoliberal transformations.

2. Academic approaches to social innovation

Social innovation is not only politically ambiguous, but is also used in diverse ways by different academic communities. In their recent overview on social innovation, Choi and Majumdar (2015) distinguish seven

different perspectives: (1) the sociological perspective emphasises changing social practices and structures leading to social change. Introduced in the field of development studies during the early 1990s, this approach focussed on the promotion of social development by new creative strategies; (2) the creativity research perspective has a more goal-oriented focus than the sociological perspective and is interested in the tactics and strategies applied to create innovations; (3) the entrepreneurship perspective deals with social entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility and mentions social innovations somewhat "indirectly as something that social entrepreneurs do" (Choi/Majumdar 2015: 13); (4) the welfare economics perspective focusses on the "potential to improve either the quality or the quantity of life" (Pol and Ville, quoted in: Choi/Majumdar 2015: 14); (5) the practice-led perspective, such as advocated by the Young Foundation (cf. Murray et al. 2010), is to be found in reports and other non-peer-reviewed contributions and has a quite strong policy orientation; (6) the community psychology perspective emphasises experimental social innovation as a tool to drive positive change for marginalised communities; finally (7) the territorial development perspective (Moulaert et al. 2013) focusses on local development and the inclusion of excluded groups in different spheres of society.

The prevalent approach in both the ImPRovE project and the articles of this volume of the Austrian Journal of Development Studies is the territorial development perspective on social innovation (Moulaert et al. 2005; Moulaert et al. 2007; MacCallum et al. 2009; Moulaert et al. 2010; Moulaert et al. 2013). This approach puts special emphasis on insights of historical institutionalism (cf. Pierson 2004), as it recognises path dependencies and their implications for political, economic and societal institutions: social innovation "inevitably is a local and institutionally embedded process […]. Practices that are innovative and successful in one particular locality are not necessarily innovative and successful in another" (Oosterlynck et al. 2013a: 3). Therefore, the articles in this volume share the concern with understanding the locally relevant institutions of the welfare state and other concerned political, economic and cultural institutions.

Although mostly focussing on the local scale, a strong perspective on multi-level governance expands this focus towards institutions onto the regional, national and international scales. There is a markedly strong

focus on processes of collective empowerment, which is also reflected methodologically, as social innovation is conceptualised as a three-dimensional process, involving (1) a content dimension, (2) a process dimension, and (3) an empowerment dimension, which links the content and process dimensions (ibid). The content dimension refers to the satisfaction of human needs that are not currently satisfied, the process dimension highlights changes in social relations, especially with regard to governance and the increasing participation of marginalised groups. The empowerment dimension highlights increases in the collective socio-political capability of the hitherto marginalised groups.

3. Social innovation in Europe and Latin America

The articles in this volume thus deal with social innovation in a territorial development perspective. They call into question the potential and limits of social innovations in fostering social development, with special focus on the potential contribution of such innovations to improve social policies. With the help of calls for proposals for good practices of social innovation, 29 European and two Brazilian cases have been selected for further analysis within the ImPRovE research project. The articles presented in this volume build on the research published in the Case Study Working Papers of the project. The criteria for case selection were 1) distribution among different European welfare state regimes (conservative/corporatist; liberal; social-democrat; familial/Southern; cf. Esping-Andersen 1990; 1999; Oosterlynck et al. 2013b), and 2) relevance to at least one of the policy fields of housing, labour market, and education. These fields were recognised as having a strong impact on territorial and social development, with a high potential to implement socially innovative initiatives. Before the case study work in the project commenced, eight governance challenges were identified: (1) mainstreaming social innovation, i.e. the possibilities of reproducing similar innovations in different geographical and political contexts; (2) avoiding fragmentation in governing the welfare mix; (3) developing a participatory style of welfare governance; (4) finding the balance between safeguarding diversity while promoting equality; (5) the possibility of uneven access if innovations are not designed universally; (6)

avoiding responsibility by the traditionally engaged state actors, i.e. the transfer of former state responsibilities to civil society without adequate financial and institutional resources to do so; (7) managing intra-organisational tensions; and (8) developing an enabling legal framework. These challenges were derived from a literature review and have been used as a guiding framework for the 31 case studies. While the contributions in this volume of the Austrian Journal of Development Studies make differentiated use of these challenges, they give insights into all three policy fields.

The labour market is the prime focus of two of the four contributions in this volume: Pieter Cools writes about the case of 're-use' non-profit organisations in the UK. Bernhard Leubolt and Wagner de Melo Romão deal with the Brazilian national movement of collectors of recyclable material and their strategic efforts in recent years to be included in policy making. Thus, both contributions feature socio-ecological innovations, since the handling of waste has turned into a major ecological challenge in cities worldwide and thereby adds an additional dimension to the potential social inclusion described in both cases.

Cools' case study highlights the trajectory of the re-use non-profit organisations in the UK in the macro-context of neoliberal social policy reforms. He develops a single case study, but interprets the results comparatively with findings from case studies in European countries and Brazil. Cools mainly tackles two of the above-mentioned governance challenges: mainstreaming and the question of the responsibility of traditional state actors in the fields of employment and environmental policies. Cools highlights the innovative practice of linking poverty reduction with employment and environmental policies, which developed as a reaction against rising unemployment and public austerity throughout the 1980s. Despite this phenomenon, recent neoliberal reforms have led to much more pressure on the non-profit organisations in the re-use sector. Austerity politics have led to increased competition, both within the sector (from second-hand websites and other for-profit players) and from public authorities who are now increasingly competing for waste contracts. There is a tendency of state actors to increasingly avoid responsibility, as the re-use initiatives currently tend to take over former responsibilities of the government without an adequate transfer of public resources. This tendency contradicts the idea that the British liberal welfare regime is very conducive to social

innovation and highlights important problems for the political implementation of such innovation.

Leubolt's and Romão's article deals with the Brazilian movement of collectors of recyclable material. This particularly marginalised group of people consists of many homeless and formerly unemployed people. They began to organise in cooperatives at the end of the 1980s and had managed to build a nation-wide social movement by the beginning of the 2000s. While the 1990s were marked by rising unemployment and the local spread of collectors' cooperatives, the 2000s were economically stronger and marked by the territorial up-scaling of policies geared towards the inclusion of the collectors. Guided by Fraser's '3-R-approach' to promoting social justice, social inclusion is understood as a multi-dimensional process, involving redistribution, recognition, and representation. These dimensions have been addressed by policy making, which promoted an approach that is described as 'bottom-linked', that is, operating between a state-driven 'top-down' and a civil society-driven 'bottom-up' approach. This 'bottom-linked' approach is evaluated as being promising, despite contradictions.

Carla Weinzierl examines the contribution to social cohesion of a socially innovative initiative in the field of intercultural education. She frames cohesion as the balance between diversity and equality, between the right to be different and the right to belong. The Vielfalter, an initiative that funds projects in Austrian kindergartens, schools and non-profit associations, aims at valuing diversity by fostering participation and empowerment. Weinzierl scrutinizes the understanding of participation in the Vielfalter-funded initiatives with a view to sharpening this fuzzy concept that oscillates between dichotomic understandings of participation as 'tyranny' vs. participation as 'liberation'. She argues for overcoming the prevalent, reductionist 'either-or' solutions in Austria, whereby policies and strategies are either culturalised or are narrowly conceived in terms of labour market activation. If social cohesion, a multi-layered phenomenon with not only socio-economic and cultural, but also political aspects, is to be achieved, the concept of citizenship needs to be rethought in immigration societies such as Austria.

Finally, Fabio Colombo and Tatiana Saruis' contribution deals in a comparative way with the policy field of housing: the article looks at the evolution of 'Housing First' in Bologna (Italy) and Stockholm (Sweden),

from the perspective of the different welfare configurations and their role in shaping social innovation. 'Housing First' responds to the various challenges of the traditional system of homelessness services; its innovation lies in considering housing as a basic human right to be provided without prior compliance to the different requirements of the traditional, so-called staircase model. By zooming in on the implementation of these two initiatives, the article asks how social innovation arises differently in different contexts, that is how it is embedded in the local welfare regime, governance model and territorial organisation of social policies. Thus, Saruis and Colombo highlight path dependencies in welfare regimes by disentangling the relationships between actors, practices and contexts. They elaborate how both the fragmentation and weak coordination of the familistic welfare system in Italy, as well as the more strongly coordinated approach in Sweden, pose different challenges to the mainstreaming of 'Housing First'.

The four presented case studies shed light on the contradictions within recent efforts to promote social innovation. On the one hand, there are new possibilities for emancipatory civil society efforts. This is especially evident in the case of the Brazilian collectors of recyclable material. On the other hand, the contributions also point at the potential fortification strengthening of neoliberal policies, as especially highlighted by the re-use non-profits in the UK. In a nutshell, the contributions reveal an ambiguous picture concerning the potentials and limits of social innovation for the sake of restructuring welfare states.

1 Research for this issue has been carried out under the project ImPRovE – Poverty, Social Policy and Innovation, funded by the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission. One of the core themes of ImPRovE is the relationship between social innovation and welfare systems, asking how social innovation can complement, reinforce and modify macro-level policies and vice versa. For further information about the project please consult the website: http://improve-research.eu.

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Pieter Cools

Looking for a Mutually Supporting Relationship between Local Social Innovation and Welfare Reform: The Case of Re-use Non-profits in the UK

Abstract *Concerned with how social innovation and macro-level social policies can complement and mutually reinforce one another to promote social inclusion and equality, this article develops a case study of the Furniture Re-Use Network (FRN), a large network of re-use non-profits in the United Kingdom. The article explores the development, policy embedding and future challenges of the FRN in relation to public policies and welfare reform. Our study shows how this development is particular to the UK welfare regime legacy and how current austerity politics and a lack of recognition by the government for potential cross-departmental value creation by re-use non-profits hampers the sector's development.*

Keywords *social innovation, work integration social enterprise, sustainability, welfare reform, re-use*

1. Introduction

Over the past decades, the seemingly unrelated issues of environmental sustainability and the structural unemployment of vulnerable target groups remained high on the policy agendas of European countries. Since the 1980's, various local civil society actors set-up re-use organisations involving people with low opportunities in the labour market, in the margins of macro-level policies. These organisations collect, repair and sell used household materials at low prices in their stores. This practice spread at different speeds and guises across Europe, but these organisa-

tions' "experience in balancing economic, social and environmental goals has largely remained unnoticed" (Anastasiadis 2013: 1). The fact that this is now gradually changing is partly due to the growing popular interest in 'second hand sale' and 'environmental responsibility' and the recent EU policy concern with "circular economy" (EC 2011) and "social enterprise" (EC 2014). Recently, researchers with an interest in studying social enterprises as drivers of sustainable change labelled these re-use non-profits "ecologically oriented work-integration social enterprise" or "re-use ECO-WISE" (Anastasiadis 2013; Gelbmann/Hammerl 2015). They characterise them as organisations that combine different societal goals, logics and resources (incomes from sale, subsidies, contracts, donations) and possess an innovative potential to contribute to regional development through the creation of social and environmental value that benefits local communities.

These social enterprises can be regarded as drivers of social innovation in the sense that they introduce new and alternative business models and partnerships to address societal needs through a transformation of social relations (for instance between people and the labour market or between different users of household goods etc.) while claiming to strengthen the capabilities of deprived citizens (cf. Moulaert et al. 2013; Jenson 2015). The present article explores the relationships between re-use ECO-WISE as a socially innovative practice and public policies, and more specifically the ways in which public policies enable or hamper the development of this initiative. The analysis focusses on the case of the Furniture Re-use Network (FRN) in the United Kingdom, a large network of independent re-use ECO-WISE that has been involved in the provision of employment, poverty relief and waste management policies for about 30 years. Drawing on the literature on social enterprises and the ImPRovE framework on the relation between welfare regimes and local social innovation, we show how the institutional context of the English welfare regime has shaped the development of the sector. In brief, this article seeks to answer the following three research questions: (1) How is the development of the innovative practice of re-use non-profits shaped by the particular institutional context of the English welfare regime? (2) To what extent can the relationship between the network of ECO-WISE and public policies be understood as enabling or hampering, from the perspective of 'mainstreaming social innovation' and 'sharing responsibility' between state and

civil society? (3) Lastly, we draw on the answers from the previous questions to reflect upon the central question of this special issue: How can social innovation complement, reinforce and modify macro-level social policies and vice versa to promote social inclusion and equality?

The following analysis first revisits the ImPRovE framework on social innovation and welfare regimes and its governance challenges in relation to national welfare regimes, and then briefly considers the relation between social innovation, social enterprise and public policy. Next, the case study selection and research methods are discussed, before analysing the emergence, policy embedding and main future challenges of the FRN network in relation to the UK welfare regime. The concluding chapter overviews the case study findings and discusses their implications for the central question of this special issue as well as implications for future research.

2. Social innovation and welfare regimes as institutional context

Social innovations can be defined, in general, as "new social practices created from collective, intentional and goal-oriented actions aimed at prompting social change through the reconfiguration of how social goals are accomplished" (Cajaiba-Santana 2014: 44). Focussing on the relation between social innovation (SI) against social exclusion at the local level and macro-level welfare reform, the ImPRovE project defined SI as "locally embedded practices, actions and policies that enable socially excluded and impoverished individuals and social groups to satisfy basic needs for which they find no adequate solution in the private market or institutionalized macro-level welfare policies" (Oosterlynck et al. 2015: 4). These authors stress that SI entails the development and institutionalisation of new or alternative[1] practices through a transformation of social relationships (cf. Moulaert et al. 2013).

Importantly, by focussing on social change, collective action and social relations, both definitions recognise (implicitly) that SI has to be studied in relation to its institutional contexts to grasp its concrete meaning and dynamics (cf. Chambon et al. 1982). Institutions can be defined generally as "stable, valued, recurring patterns of behaviour" (Huntington 1965: 394). From an institutional perspective, SI thus refers to collective actions that

aim to change these patterns of behaviour and the related societal perceptions and value structures (cf. Cajaiba-Santana 2014). In this paper we will often use 'institutions' or 'institutional context' in a more specific sense when we refer to formal entities created by (local, national or European) governments as key actors in the development of SI initiatives in a particular country.

Since the European Commission started promoting SI as a paradigm for social reform with and beyond the state in 2008 (Sabato et al. 2015), there has been a growing interest in 'welfare regimes' (Esping-Andersen 1990, Hemerijck 2013) as institutional contexts that shape SI dynamics (Evers/Ewert 2015, Oosterlynck et al. 2015). The literature shows that the relation between socially innovative service initiatives and macro-level policies "is highly dependent on country-specific legacies and institutional configurations" (Ferrera/Maino 2014: 7). Different policy legacies and their regulatory principles thus shape institutional relations and opportunity structures that both enable and constrain civil society actors, authorities and for-profit organisations in their development of SI initiatives. This strand of research on SI development joins a rich research tradition of using welfare regime typologies as independent variables to explain policy outcomes and third sector dynamics (see Evers/Laville 2004; Emmeneger et al. 2015). Indeed, welfare regime 'ideal types' provide

> a fundamental heuristic tool for welfare state scholars, even for those who claim that in-depth analysis of a single case is more suited to capture the complexity of different social policy arrangements. Welfare typologies have the function to provide a comparative lens and place even the single case into a comparative perspective (Ferragina/Seeleib-Kaiser 2011: 598).

Integrating insights from this literature, Kazepov and colleagues (2013: 34-36) developed hypotheses on how different welfare regimes produce particular governance arrangements and thus create contextual conditions that shape SI dynamics. For the purposes of this article we focus on the 'liberal' regime –as instanced in the UK, our central case – and the 'corporatist-conservative' regime – countries such as Belgium and Austria, which offer contrasting cases (see table 1). Based on this literature we expect that liberal regimes rely strongly on the market for social innovation and

attribute a comparatively weaker or residual role to the state. The latter is mainly focussed on enabling pluralist competition. This context would create an active space for new innovative ideas and projects, but at a high 'failure rate'. Not many initiatives will be structurally supported through state investment, and survival will strongly depend on financial sustainability through either commercial success (sales, service contracts) or gathering alternative (non-state) funding. In this context, SI initiatives risk becoming 'gap fillers' rather than partners of the state.

In contrast, the state tends be more involved with collective action beyond the state in corporatist-conservative countries. Civil society groups that defend categorical interests (such as unions and social economy networks) historically have comparatively stronger, more formally institutionalised relationships with public agencies in these countries. These relations can both enable and hinder SI. In any case, 'corporate' arrangements have a tendency to systematise SI and make it prone to compromise. This can slow down SI dynamics, but it also has a high potential to spread initiatives across the territory in a democratic way. Differing from the 'passive subsidiarity' in 'familistic' regimes like Italy, relations between the national (or regional) and local levels tend to be characterised by 'active-subsidiarity', meaning that the devolution of public responsibilities is met with an adequate transfer of public resources (cf. Kazepov 2008). Table 1 compares ImPRovE project hypotheses on the expected governance arrangements and social innovation dynamics in the liberal and corporatist welfare regimes.

Welfare regimes	Governance arrangements		ImPRovE hypotheses on the relation between welfare regimes and local social innovation dynamics		
	Governance	**Relationship between state/third sector**	**Potential of developing social innovation**	**Capacity to upscale social innovation**	**Types of social innovation**
Liberal	Market ruled (pluralist) and corporative mixed	Market model and residual role of the state	High capacity but frail innovation (subject to market logic)	Potentially high but tendency to replace the state (gap-filling)	Self-sustained innovation
Corporatist	(neo) Corporatist	Active subsidiarity	High but challenge to overcome institutionalized interests and slow decision making processes	Slow but highup-scaling capacity	Negotiated innovation

Table 1: Welfare, governance models and hypothetical capacity and types of social innovation
Source: Adapted from Kazepov et al. 2013: 34

In order to better understand how SI and welfare regimes could complement each other in order to promote social inclusion and equality, we propose to focus on two governance challenges[2] of concrete SI initiatives: mainstreaming and the sharing of responsibility between state and civil society.

Mainstreaming concerns the process of evolving from small context-specific initiatives to larger or widely spread initiatives. The idea of mainstreaming is thus closely related to questions of whether SI initiatives succeed to turn novel practices into established, institutionalised ways of doing things. This poses a governance challenge for the initiative, since new strategies and forms of coordination are required in order to operate at a larger scale. Given our focus on SI in relation to welfare regime change,

we are also interested in how the SI initiative is 'linked' to larger policy and funding structures, as well as the role of public agencies in supporting or not SI to enable (or not) equal rights and opportunities to its citizens and thus to avoid new types of territorial inequality (cf. Andreotti/Mingione/Polizzi 2012).

Secondly, SI in social service provision tends to rearrange the distribution of roles and responsibilities between public authorities and civil society. Jenson (2015) speaks of "reconfiguring the welfare diamond" to suggest that the institutionalisation of SI rearranges the relationships between state, market, family and community (understood here not as sectors, but rather as social spheres with a distinctive logic). These processes come with questions and challenges on how to distribute responsibilities among the different actors involved.

A related concern in the SI literature is whether public discourses about SI and civil society involvement are used by the government to justify avoiding public commitment (Sinclair/Baglioni 2014). The 'Big Society' discourse in the UK is often mentioned as a case in point. This challenge thus also includes the question of whether the devolution of public responsibilities is met with an adequate transfer of resources, and whether SI initiatives are embedded in a broader public commitment towards social inclusion and equality, or whether they are forced into a 'gap-filling' role.

3. Social enterprises as drivers of SI

The historical-institutionalist approach (Kerlin 2012) and welfare regime types (see e.g. Nyssens 2014) also have a rich tradition in the literature on social enterprise. Social enterprise is "a term that is increasingly used across the globe to describe new business solutions to a myriad of social and environmental problems" (Kerlin 2012: 66; see also Defourny/Nyssens 2013 for a more elaborate definition). Social enterprises are generally recognised as one of the main organisational vehicles for SI (EC 2014; Sabato et al. 2015). The present article considers the relation between social enterprises and SI as such. Consequently, the relations between social enterprises (SE) and policy can be regarded as an important channel for diffusing SI. Defourny and Nyssens found that

> In the European context, the process of institutionalization of social enterprise has often been closely linked to the evolution of public policies. In fact, social enterprises significantly influence their institutional environment and they contribute to shaping institutions including public policies. If this dynamics can be seen as a channel for the diffusion of social innovation, the key role of public bodies in some fields of social enterprises may also reduce them to instruments to achieve specific goals, which are given priority on the political agenda, with a risk of bridling the dynamics of social innovation. (Defourny/Nyssens 2013: 50)

In the following section we use this perspective and the ImPRovE hypotheses to look at the case of the Furniture Re-use Network in the UK. Assessing its development and current governance challenges in relation to public policy and its broader policy regime context, we seek to learn more about their potentially mutually enforcing relationship for local development that realises social inclusion and equality.

4. Re-use ecological work integration social enterprises: case selection and methodology

Work integration social enterprises that organise re-us' (re-use ECO-WISE) provide a particularly interesting case to study the development and institutionalisation of SI in relation to (social) policy reform, because these organisations simultaneously drive innovative practice in employment, poverty relief and environmental policies simultaneously. They provide "labour intensive services to address regulation driven needs of corporates (e.g. waste/resource recovery) and public sector (e.g. work integration services)" (Vickers 2013: 33-44). Their performance is thus "strongly linked to developments in national and global policies across policy areas" (Anastasiadis 2013: 90). The relatively limited international literature on re-use ECO-WISE is gradually growing and perhaps most developed in Austria (see Anastasiadis 2013; Gelbmann/Hammerl 2015).

According to Nyssens (2014: 211), "the field of work integration is emblematic of the dynamics of social enterprises and constitutes a major sphere of their activity in Europe". As such, insights from our case study hold relevance for a much broader group of innovative social enterprises

aiming to "help disadvantaged unemployed people, who are at risk of permanent exclusion from the labour market" (ibid.).

The present article develops a single case study (Flyvbjerg 2006) to scrutinise the hypotheses developed above. In order to interpret the findings of our case study in a broader, comparative perspective (cf. Robinson, 2011), we will occasionally draw on the ImPRovE case study of a Flemish network of re-use ECO-WISE called 'De Kringwinkel' (Cools/Oosterlynck 2015; Cools/Vandermoere 2016) as a contrasting case of a similar SI initiative in a corporatist welfare regime.

The Furniture Re-use Network is a UK network of independent social enterprises, which often take the juridical statute of a registered charity and/or a company limited by guarantee or by related charity and social enterprise statutes. Many of these re-use ECO-WISEs[3] have been active for over three decades, which makes the network suited to assessing its relations to the policy context over time and also to grasping the "processual evolution" of SI (Cajaiba-Santana 2014: 48). Table 2 provides some recent data about the size and output of the FRN network, data produced by the umbrella organisation FRN.

	Furniture Re-use Network
Number of centres and stores	152 centres 271 stores
Tons of collected goods	271 stores
Environmental Gain in tons of CO_2	110,000
Number of reusable items	3,4 million items of furniture and electrical equipment
Paid staff	4,700 employees
Trainees and work placements	around 35,300 There is a rapid circulation of trainees through relatively short training trajectories (high turnover of trainees)
Volunteers	around 13,500 persons

Table 2: The FRN in numbers (2015)
Sources: Furniture Re-use Network, Sector and impact reports[4]

Importantly, these aggregate data hide a huge variation in the size and activities of FRN members (see further).[5] Also, there is a higher concentration and much higher number of FRN members in England compared to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland[6], and some national policies are slightly different. For the sake of clarity the analysis below focusses on England.

Data collection focussed both on the umbrella organisation FRN and one relatively large member with the pseudonym 'SE-ENG', located in one of the 10 largest cities in England. This double focus combines a region-wide strategic perspective with an 'on the ground' perspective. The first round of data collection took about three months in late 2014 and early 2015. It involved the study of over 100 documents (about 450 pages), including strategic documents on FRN (members') operations, mission statements, annual reports, opinion pieces and website posts by sector representatives, news articles, as well as scientific research reporting on the sector or relevant policies. Seven experts, including directors, board and staff members, were also interviewed for about 50 to 100 minutes using a semi-structured questionnaire with open questions. We refer to these respondents in the analysis below as (I: professional position). After transcribing the interviews, the documents and transcripts were coded and analysed using content-thematic categories on referring to the relation with public policies and governance challenges (Silverman 2013). More specifically, two main types of codes were used, namely, 'policy domain' (welfare services, employment, environmental) and 'governance challenges from the practitioners' perspective' (including overarching codes like mainstreaming, balancing responsibility and an extra category of future challenges and 'sub codes' such as organisational sustainability, avoiding mission drift, image management etc.). After this first round of ordering the data, both were put together to identify which governance challenges were policy domain specific and which ones could be related to overarching regime characteristics as described in our hypothesis above, or explained by other factors. The time dimension was relevant throughout these analyses in order to grasp ongoing developments.

The second round of data gathering is best understood as a feedback loop. All respondents were invited to comment on the draft version of the ImPRovE research report (Cools/Oosterlynck 2016). These responses

informed small revisions, the study of additional documents, and two follow up interviews. It needs to be acknowledged that our data collection focussed mainly on the perspective of practitioners that are involved in the FRN network. While one may argue that this leads to a one-sided account of things, it is not the author's ambition to present readers the absolute truth about the development of re-use ECO-WISE and the FRN in the UK, but rather to present the story of those in the UK who pursue a more inclusive and sustainable society and who use the re-use ECO-WISE as a means to transform established practices, perceptions and social relations.

5. Research findings

The remainder of this article first describes the emergence of the re-use non-profits and the FRN. After this, we zoom in on how these organisations tried to institutionalise their innovative practice in public policies. Thereafter, we discuss the main future challenges of the network, with particular attention to the governance challenges of mainstreaming and sharing responsibility.

5.1 The early development of the Furniture Re-use Network

Often called 're-use charities', the first UK re-use, ECO-WISE, emerged around the early 1980s as small, informal initiatives. The SE-ENG for instance, "started as a one man band that went on to mobilize volunteers to move around used items" (I: Director SE-ENG). Today, it has grown to a social enterprise with over £1,000,000 of annual income. From the start, the motivations and backgrounds of local initiators differed, but their basic model was similar and most of them were involved in charitable networks. They shared the conviction that "No one should be without a bed to sleep on, a cooker to cook on or a sofa to sit on, wherever they live in the UK." (FRN mission statement)

The early 1980s were a period of high unemployment and public austerity. The emergence of re-use charities can be understood as a reaction against this situation in which a growing number of people experienced difficulties furnishing their houses, while many others threw away usable goods. From early on, these organisations operated stores and local

waste, job training and social welfare contracts to generate income and expand their activities. After a few years, four chief executives of furniture projects met and realised that they were doing similar things. They eventually arranged a meeting in Derby in 1989, where the network, originally named Furniture Recycle Network, was formalised.

Confirming the literature that describes English civil society as being actively involved in charitable poverty reduction alongside a rather 'residual' public welfare system (Evers/Laville 2004), our analysis shows that most FRN members regard alleviating material hardship in their communities as the number one priority. This mission is strongly intertwined with the goals of waste reduction and providing training opportunities (I: FRN director). The explicit focus on alleviating material hardship is different from a similar network of re-use ECO-WISE in Flanders, a region with a strong social economy tradition, where the "emancipation of vulnerable groups through paid labour" is more central (Cools/Oosterlynck 2015). In the UK, the re-use ECO-WISE sector was and is still driven by community actors responding innovatively to unmet needs and attempting to fill gaps left by the state and market. During the interview, the FRN director argued that "It is not that we have a solution for poverty, but we reduce the poverty impact. We are here despite the government. Because they won't do it, so we have to do it and that's where our sector started in the 1980s and now we are still doing it."

5.2 Policy and the institutionalisation of the non-profit re-use sector in England

FRN members are active at the local intersection of different policy domains: alleviating material deprivation, labour market activation, and waste reduction. Concerning waste reduction, the activities of FRN members are weakly embedded into public policies, through local service contracts that are unevenly spread across the territory in comparison to Flanders, where the initiatives are structurally embedded in the regional environmental policy that provides incentives for local authorities to collaborate with re-use ECO-WISE (Cools/Oosterlynck 2015). The FRN deplores the persisting lack of active partnership or enabling regulations from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Despite occasional good contacts and promising policy documents (cf.

Alexander/Smaje 2008), recognition of re-use charities as valuable partners of English waste policies never materialised in policies or structural support. Reacting to the 2013 DEFRA strategic report,

> FRN asserts that more meaningful intervention and leadership by DEFRA with local government and business would make it easier for the social economy re-use sector to get access to more reusable bulky household waste, in order to alleviate poverty and minimise waste [...] For example, DEFRA could set re-use targets, by which local authorities would be forced to consider and work with the local social economy re-use. Currently, this is a very patchy, ad-hoc approach employed by the more innovative local authorities in England. Cross-departmental benefits would be obtained by waste, welfare, housing and community-focused departments (FRN 2013).

The SE-ENG director (interview) perceives a similar failure or lack of interest of public departments to think and act beyond their specific domain and responsibilities at the local level. Sector representatives observe that the continuity of waste collection and other contracts have become increasingly uncertain in recent years (I: FRN market development manager). From the perspective of mainstreaming the SI initiative across the English territory, the huge differences in local contracts and partnerships explain a much more uneven territorial spread of the sector and huge differences between FRN members in size and services, as compared to the Flemish sector, where the public waste department did provide a framework and incentives for cooperation between local authorities and re-use non-profits (Cools/Oosterlynck 2015).

Expecting little public support, FRN management and larger members turned towards private for-profit organisations for cooperation. For instance, FRN members now organise furniture take-back services for large retailers like IKEA, which make this cooperation part of their corporate responsibility agenda. These contracts allowed the umbrella (brokering contracts) and members to expand their activities and increase the number of incoming, re-usable goods (see FRN 2015 for more detail and the estimated social impact). Such market-oriented partnerships appear typical for the more market-regulated English welfare regime, since they are less developed in corporatist regions like Flanders. Adapting to the

'liberal welfare regime' context in which the state does take on a rather residual role, English re-use ECO-WISE more actively turn towards partnerships with for-profit organisations and philanthropic foundations.

For many years, the FRN has also been oriented towards the European policy level, lobbying for waste and circular economy policies that recognise their added value and provide enabling regulations. They co-founded the European umbrella Reuse[7], which was actively involved in the development of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) directive and the Waste Framework Directive (WFD). These two pieces of European legislation (early 2000s) introduce the European Waste Hierarchy, which recognises re-use as one of the preferred strategies. This EU legislation obliged member states to develop an environmental policy along these lines, which provided new opportunities for the re-use social economy such as organising take-back services for electronic appliances. Particularly in England, this compensated for a lack of public initiative and engagement. Or as the FRN director expressed it during the interview: "Thank God for EU legislation. Otherwise we would have no environmental policy."

Now let us consider the institutional embedding of re-use ECO-WISE practice in active labour market policies (ALMPs). Consistent with the UK policy legacy, the available training policies are best described as "transit employment" (Nyssens 2014). They are supposed to enhance a participant's 'employability' through relatively short trajectories (between four weeks and six months), in which they provide employment experience and work on labour attitudes and concrete professional skills. Participants get a small surplus added to their benefits, but not everybody participates voluntarily, depending on the specific policies and referrals. There is a lot of geographic variation in the availability and use of job training policies. Some FRN members regard it as a means (i.e. of cheap labour). Others regard it as a key objective (Curran/Williams 2010: 702). Local organisations decide autonomously about their employment services, and sector wide data are not gathered systematically. While the availability of these policies does enable the organisations to pursue one of their goals and expand their activities, they are not considered very lucrative. Fees for supporting trainees and providing the necessary materials are generally below the estimated cost of adequate support and materials (I: Director SE-UK, FRN Operations mangers). Furthermore, the return on investment in trainees is low because

of the high turnover. Interview respondents indicate that ALMP reform such as the 2010 Work Programme, which introduced less generous and output-oriented policies, hampered the expansion of the sector, which is similar to the development dynamics of the Austrian ECO-WISE sector in the 2000s (Anastasiadis 2013: 61ff.). Therefore, the enabling effect of engaging with ALMPs should not be overestimated, and appears limited in comparison to Flanders, where the policies of the past two decades realised a far bigger boost for expanding re-use ECO-WISE activities and durably improving the situation of the formerly unemployed (Cools/Vandermoere 2016).

Besides waste collection and training, many FRN members also provide material support, social loans and voucher systems to poor families, and furnishing services for social housing companies. The importance of these services, which are less developed in Flanders for instance, needs to be understood in the context of the broader UK welfare legacy, where unemployed citizens tend to receive relatively low income replacement benefits and in kind support, for instance through vouchers for basic household goods (cf. Hemerijck 2013). For several years, English re-use ECO-WISE embedded their activities, amongst others, in Social Fund policies such as Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants, which were replaced in 2013 by the Local Welfare Assistance policy framework. These contracts provide a stable income and enabling framework to pursue their charitable mission, and therefore the director of SE-UK regards them "as a big deal" (interview). Similar to the other policy fields, these services are unevenly distributed across the national territory and it appears that the uncertainty surrounding local collaboration is increasing (I: FRN operations manager, FRN market development manager; see also further below).

5.3 Future challenges

Overall, the networks' aggregate number of stores, sales and tonnes of 'waste' diverted from landfill has grown continuously over the past 20 years. These numbers disguise that fact that re-use ECO-WISE sector has grown and spread unevenly across the country, with big differences between large, professional social enterprises and small, voluntary charities (I: FRN liaison officer). These processes of mainstreaming involve processes of professionalisation and standardisation in order to take on new

contracts, for instance with for-profit retailers or local authorities. This (uneven) evolution has created tension within the network. Several directors and board members of FRN members have expressed concerns that their sector is 'becoming too business like' and risks losing sight of the core mission, while others argue that professionalisation and commercialisation are necessary to ensure organisational sustainability and to pursue their mission in the future (I: FRN market development manager).

The social enterprise literature (Skelcher/Smith 2015) and the Flemish case (Cools/Oosterlynck 2015) show that these developments and tensions are not particular to the English context. Also, as in Flanders (Cools/Vandermoere 2016) and Austria (Gelbmann/Hammerl 2015), the FRN faces an increase of competition from second-hand websites and for-profit players who show interest in expanding re-use as a commercial activity. Drawing on resources from philanthropic foundations for instance, the sector invests in its communication about is goals, operations and output to "be more loud and proud" (I: Director FRN) about their societal value and to do away with their image of 'being shops for the poor' (see also Dururu et al. 2015).

Other key challenges for the FRN stem from, or are worsened by, the government's austerity politics and cuts to local budgets since 2010. This historical cost-saving operation (Hemerijck 2013) puts additional pressure on precarious collaborative relationships with local authorities. This shows, for instance, in increased competition with local authorities over waste contracts, or local authorities terminating the welfare assistance services (the budget of which was halved in 2015) to use the 'non ring-fenced' subsidies for other purposes in times of shrinking budgets. Sector representatives observe and fear that this budgetary pressure has the effect that public officials are even less inclined to look across departments or to re-use non-profits for durable partnerships. They are critical about this policy evolution, which was flanked by the 'Big Society' rhetoric about engagement of community actors, and argue that without adequate resources the ongoing policy reforms actually undermine the civic engagement that this discourse celebrates. More than ever they need to look for commercial income or donations to sustain their activities and charitable mission. They speak of their members as 'furniture banks' – alluding to the growth of food banks in the UK – to underline the fact that they are once again forced into

this gap-filling role which hampers the networks' capacity to pursue their multiple goals and contribute to social inclusion and equality in a structural manner (I: FRN market development manager). FRN representatives argue that a more supportive role of the government would enable them to expand their social innovative initiative and public value.

> "If the sector can survive it must be recognized that we are not dealing with normal commercial markets and this market cannot look after itself; but with the right market intervention from the Government we can increase the social, environmental and economic value over and above what we are doing today." (FRN 2011)

6. Conclusion

This article analysed the development of the Furniture Re-use Network and how FRN representatives experience the current challenges of their network in relation to public policy and to the broader context of the English policy regime that is often described as a 'liberal welfare regime' in the literature. Our analysis shows that the institutional context of this regime, which is known for the residual role of the state, the charitable civil society tradition, and the predominance of market regulation, shaped this network of 're-use charities' in particular ways. The charitable identity and orientation towards market players and foundations in a context of limited public support speak for themselves. The 'residual role' of the government is also prevalent in the lack of a countrywide framework for waste management, decreasing local budgets (including cuts to local assistance services that are organised locally), and a proliferation of 'not very lucrative' training services for target groups. These policies have decisively shaped an uneven spread of the SI initiative and show a tendency of 'passive subsidiarity' and 'avoiding responsibility'. These evolutions seem to put re-use ECO-WISE in a position of 'filling gaps' left by a public policies that are being downscaled. However, because these tendencies cut through various policy domains, including some that are not characteristically attributed to the 'welfare state', such as environmental policies, it is perhaps more accurate to speak of policy regimes rather than welfare regimes in the context

of SI analysis. Looking at FRN development and challenges, this case does seem to support our hypothesis that liberal policy regimes shape a 'self-sustained SI' that is vulnerable to market developments and manifest a tendency to replace the state (Kazepov 2013: 34).

Our analysis shows a rather ambiguous relationship between the network of re-use ECO-WISE and government policies, because while the former was able to use the latter to institutionalise their practice, the limited resources, lack of regulations and broader developments of welfare reform (workfare oriented ALMPs and austerity politics) hampered a process of mainstreaming and led to uneven territorial spread. In comparison to De Kringwinkel in Flanders (Cools/Oosterlynck 2015; Cools/Vandermoere 2016), it appears even more clearly that UK policymakers have missed opportunities in supporting this innovation and that recent welfare reforms risk to hamper rather than enable re-use ECO-WISE to pursue its multiple goal mission, to contribute to inclusive local development, sustainability and poverty reduction. Formulated even stronger, the ongoing austerity politics risk reducing these organisations' potential for contributing to inclusive local development, sustainability and poverty reduction to simply 'filling the gaps' left by a retrenching government.

From the network's perspective, a more mutually supportive relationship between their initiatives and macro-level policies is currently hampered by a lack of public engagement in environmental and poor relief policies, as well as 'silo thinking' at the local and national levels, where public agencies fail to look beyond department-specific interests. The sector is convinced it could create substantial value in the various aforementioned policy areas, but this would require public recognition and the conscious choice to work with community non-profits (cf. Alexander/Smaje 2008). Today, they have little hope for such public support and therefore they turn to private partners who seem to understand what they are doing. However, this raises new challenges, since private actors are increasingly interested in the re-use niche (I: FRN director). Overall, this case study confirms Antadze and Westely's (2013: 133) general observation that for local SI to durably address the "complex social and environmental problems where conventional problem solving frameworks have been ineffective [...] the support of policymakers and investors for such innovation is needed."

The tentative conclusion of this exploratory research could be developed further by additional research that complements this interview and document study data with wider spread surveys on local centres and local authorities, which could contribute to an updated overview of the UK re-use ECO-WISE sector, its relation to public policies, and the possibilities to drive local development in partnership with local authorities and other partners (cf. Curran/Williams 2010). Also, focussing on the case of the FRN, we limited the comparative perspective in this article to occasionally putting forward contrasting examples. More elaborate comparative analyses are an important path forward to the study of social enterprises as sustainable actors (Anastasiadis 2013) and drivers of SI. The 'welfare regime' or rather 'policy regime' approach to assessing the relations between innovative practices and the broader institutional context could provide a valuable perspective in this regard.

1 While innovation implies novelty, SI initiatives or models do not have to be 'new' in the sense of never having been invented or used before. In fact, many contemporary SIs, for instance those related to collective ownership of public goods, draw on experiences from the past (Moulaert et al. 2013). In the case of 'social' innovation, 'innovative' is best understood as practices and social relations that are new or alternative to established practices in a particular social context (cf. Chambon et al. 1982).

2 The full range of ImPRovE governance challenges can be retrieved online: http://improve-research.eu/?page_id=406 under papers created by Pieter Cools: "List of governance challenges for successful local forms of social innovation (ImPRovE Milestone 42)" (last accessed 23-11-2016).

3 To be sure, these networks do not comprise all re-use activities in their regions. Many charities and (third world) NGOs also gather and sell reusable goods. This does not, however, make these organisations re-use ECO-WISE (cf. Anastasiadis 2013). The selected networks consist of independent organisations pursuing work integration of target groups for which re-use is the main activity and not merely a branch to sustain a social mission.

4 Online: http://www.frn.org.uk/ (last accessed 22/08/2016). Personal communication with sector representatives.

5 The FRN cannot be mistaken for the entire UK re-use ECO-WISE sector as not all these organisations are FRN members. The FRN estimates a total of about 250 re-use non-profits.

6 Online: http://www.frn.org.uk/donate.html (last accessed 23/09/2016)

7 Online: http://www.rreuse.org/ (last accessed 23/09/2016)

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Abstract *Der Beitrag geht von einer Perspektive aus, die nach Komplementaritäten und gegenseitigen Stärkungen von sozialer Innovation und Sozialpolitik auf der Makroebene sucht, um soziale Inklusion und Gleichheit zu fördern. Er beschäftigt sich mit dem Fallbeispiel des Furniture Re-Use Network (FRN), einem großen Netzwerk von Recycling-NGOs in Großbritannien. Der Artikel zeichnet Entwicklung, politische Einbettung und zukünftige Herausforderungen des FRN im Hinblick auf wohlfahrtsstaatliche Reformen nach. Die Ausarbeitung zeigt auf, wie typisch diese Entwicklung für das britische wohlfahrtsstaatliche System ist und wie aktuelle Sparpolitik und ein Mangel an Anerkennung seitens der Regierung für die potenzielle, übergeordnete Wertbildung durch die Recycling-NGOs die Entwicklung des Sektors behindern.*

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Socio-Ecological Innovation in Brazil: The Collective Survival Strategy of the Collectors of Recyclable Material

Abstract *This article deals with the social inclusion of hitherto marginalised people by means of social innovation. Theoretically guided by Fraser's '3-R-approach' to promoting social justice, social inclusion is understood as a multi-dimensional process, involving redistribution, recognition, and representation. Empirically, the focus is on the Brazilian social movement of collectors of recyclable material. This historically marginalised group of people was able to constitute a nation-wide social movement. Based on this achievement, further social and political inclusion has been promoted since 2003. The article describes the process as 'bottom-linked', in the sense that a middle way between 'top-down' solutions by the state and 'bottom-up' processes by civil society has been found.*

Keywords *Social innovation, social justice, social inclusion, collectors of recyclable material, Brazil*

1. Introduction

This contribution will deal with the Brazilian movement of collectors of recyclable material and its inclusion into the multi-level governance framework throughout the 2000s. The process will be analysed within a framework of social innovation, understood as a process of civil society actors participating in providing institutional solutions to promote social justice.

The promotion of social justice will be analysed, guided by Nancy Fraser's '3 R' approach. Her holistic framework of social justice can help

to further elaborate the multidimensionality of poverty and specify how local forms of social innovation can help to overcome poverty and social exclusion. Fraser distinguishes three dimensions of social justice: (1) redistribution concerns the economic dimensions of inequality and exclusion; (2) recognition concerns social justice's cultural dimensions; and (3) representation concerns its political dimension. The latter dimensions have also been emphasised by Spivak (1988), who stressed the inability of the subaltern (or marginalised) to 'speak' – i.e. their inability to participate politically due to a lack of cultural recognition and political representation.

This article is based on research for the projects ImPRovE and SUSY[1], involving an analysis of recent Brazilian literature on the movement of collectors of recyclable material, document analysis of the Brazilian legislation on solid waste, and interviews with members of the political community in the sectors of waste recycling and the social and solidarity economy. In addition, field visits to cooperatives and training centres in the sector of waste recycling were carried out.

Based on this framework, the emergence and proliferation of the Brazilian movement of collectors of recyclable material will be analysed, initiated by a short introduction to the Brazilian context. The emergence of the social and solidarity economy (SSE) will be highlighted as an important feature regarding the development of the collectors' movement. The latter will be explored regarding its contribution to social justice and its growing embeddedness into governance settings which can be described as 'bottom-linked'. The final sections will deal with challenges and contradictions, while concluding that the case of the collectors of recyclable material is promising.

2. Context

Brazil is the 5th largest country worldwide, both in terms of inhabitants – the last census in 2010 reported 190.7 million inhabitants (IBGE 2013; data for 2009) – and in surface area – its 8.5 million square kilometres amount to nearly double the size of the EU 28 member states' 4.4 million square kilometres. It has ranked among the most unequal countries worldwide for many years, but recently reported a considerable decline in its

Gini coefficient, from 0.596 in 2001 to 0.53 in 2012, while the poverty rate dropped from 35.09 per cent to 15.03 per cent during the same period (cf. Leubolt 2015).

The Brazilian welfare regime has been characterised – along with other Latin American examples – as a historically 'conservative-informal' regime (Barrientos 2004; cf. also: Soares 2001). The institutions of the welfare state were comparable to corporatist or conservative European welfare regimes, but the institutional consequences were different, due to important differences in the labour market (Behring/Boschetti 2008). The latter regime is characterised by a large informal sector, comprising of workers without formal contracts. Therefore, the employment-centered social security model produces more social exclusion than in the European cases of corporatist/conservative welfare regimes. The Brazilian welfare regime has been transformed since the 1980s in various and partly contradictory directions: the 1980s were marked by democratisation after a long lasting military dictatorship (from 1964 to 1985). The social movements emerging during the period of democratisation strongly pressed for social and democratic reforms, acting as an important trigger for both institutional social policy reforms and socially innovative practices, which were further incentivised during the 1990s (Dagnino 1994). The latter decade has been characterised as ambiguous, as neoliberal reforms led to a deterioration of the labour market, negatively affecting standards of living, while socially innovative initiatives promoted participatory reforms and poverty reduction (Dagnino 2002a). The 2000s can be seen as a period of consolidation of socially innovative initiatives and the search for solutions to the problems created during the neoliberal period in the 1990s (Leubolt 2013; Abers et al. 2014; Romão 2014).

3. The Social and Solidarity Economy in Brazil

Based on prior research (e.g. JEP 2009), the emergence and proliferation of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) can be seen as one of Brazil's most important socially innovative initiatives regarding labour market policies. It has been promoted since the end of the 1980s to organise informal workers. Reacting to the crisis of unemployment and employ-

ment conditions, workers began to organise themselves in cooperatives. A broad variety of initiatives from different ideological backgrounds, ranging from philanthropic and religious to socialist or anarchist inspired initiatives, began to create socially innovative labour market experiments.

The guiding principle of the Brazilian solidarity-based economy has been the collective self-organisation of workers with the explicit requirement of democratic decision making. All involved workers have an equal vote in the decision-making process and it was envisaged that salaries would be less stratified than in conventional capitalist enterprises. The main difference of solidarity-based enterprises, compared to their conventional counterparts, is that they are owned by their workers. Therefore, the differentiation between workers and owners ceases to exist, as the workers collectively own their company (Singer 2002).

Despite the mixed success[2] of these experiments with regard to the improvement of working conditions (Leite 2009), they have been largely seen as innovative solutions to deal with the problem of unemployment (Singer/Souza 2000). Rising rates of unemployment and informality in the 1990s were an important trigger for efforts to tackle the respective problems. During the 1990s, the most important expression of the SSE in Brazil was the occurrence of factories being taken over by the workers (*empresas recuperadas*), reflecting the centrality of the fight against unemployment. During the 2000s, these factories began to disappear (Interviews with Sanchez 2015; Singer 2015).[3] Despite the importance of these experiences in the fight against unemployment, many of the factories were not practically organised according to the principles of SSE. Recent empirical findings (Leite et al. 2015) suggest that in many cases, workers' rights were not applied, while, at the same time, democratic decision making and egalitarian wage structures were lacking. Consequently, these practices contributed to the precarisation and deterioration of labour conditions.

During the 2000s, the factories taken over by the workers therefore gave way to a broader spectrum of different expressions of SSE. While during the 1990s the centre of attention was production, this changed during the 2000s: The SSE moved closer to environmental movements and the concepts of *Buen Vivir* and *Vivir Bien*, promoted by the indigenous movements and the governments of Bolivia and Ecuador (interview with Sanchez 2015). From 2004 onwards, the Brazilian government

started to collect data. The mapping carried out by the sub-ministry for SSE (cf. Gaiger et al. 2014) reported a total of 33,518 SSE enterprises in Brazil between the years 2004 and 2013 (SENAES 2013). This number is believed to be considerably lower than the exact number of enterprises, as some of the small enterprises might not have been registered (ibid.). There are different forms of organisation of these enterprises: 8.8 per cent are organised as cooperatives, 30.5 per cent as informal groups, and 60 per cent as associations (ibid.). The majority of SSE enterprises (40.8 per cent) is situated in Brazil's poorest region, the northeast. In Brazil, 54.8 per cent of SSE enterprises are situated in rural regions, 34.8 per cent in cities, and 10.4 per cent in mixed regions (ibid.). The majority of Brazilian SSE enterprises (47 per cent) are operating in the sector of familial agriculture, 14 per cent are beneficiaries of agrarian reform, 12 per cent are working in the handicraft sector, six per cent consist of other autonomous workers, five per cent are collectors of recyclable material, three per cent are cooperatives of people with advanced educational backgrounds, and three per cent are fishermen (SENAES 2014). In a nutshell, the most important field for SSE was familial agriculture in the countryside, where the majority of SSE initiatives are situated. As Sanchez stated in the interview, the collectors of recyclable material became the most important expression of SSE in the Brazilian cities during the 2000s.

The SSE mainly concerns people considered as poor. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that the mapping process revealed lack of income as the central problem of the Brazilian SSE sector (as stated by 74 per cent of the respondents of the government's questionnaire, cf. SENAES 2013). Despite this fact, it has also been recognised (Santos 2002) that collective organisation in SSE initiatives contributed to better possibilities to generate income. Nevertheless, the lack of capital (in a thorough sense, including social, cultural and financial capital; cf. Bourdieu 1984) is an important obstacle for many SSE initiatives. Therefore, many initiatives have been developed in close cooperation with NGOs and (from the 1990s onwards) the public sector. In Brazil, this movement has been described as the proliferation and institutionalisation of 'citizenship' (Dagnino 2002b), understood in a broad sense as the promotion of social justice with the participation of the hitherto excluded. Many efforts were started during the 1990s, despite a 'perverse confluence' (Dagnino 2002a: 288) with

neoliberal reforms, which limited the improvement in material circumstances of the poor. The most important political party to implement such efforts has been the Workers' Party (PT). During the 1990s, this mainly concerned local governments (Bittar 1992; Magalhães et al. 2002). Considering the SSE sectors, local policies included the provision of adequate space for work, or subsidies. An important landmark regarding government support was the election of Lula as national president in 2002. As early as 2003, the first year of his government, a new sub-ministry of solidarity-based economy (Secretaria Nacional de Economia Soliária – SENAES) was created. Headed by the renowned intellectual Paul Singer, SENAES always worked with a rather small budget. Therefore its efforts were mostly in the area of coordinating government action, related to legal obstacles, such as the availability of credit. An important exception was made for the collectors of recyclable material, who began to be more and more actively involved in policy making and who became one of the most important target groups for the efforts of poverty reduction.

4. Collectors of recyclable material and the Social and Solidarity Economy

The collectors of recyclable material can historically be seen as a particularly disadvantaged and excluded group of workers: since the 1950s, there have been reports of men, women and children surviving in and through waste. The group of people involved in waste collecting grew particularly during the 'lost decade' of economic growth in the 1980s and the neoliberal decade of the 1990s. Formal jobs were lost and people had to find work in the informal sector. While the composition of waste changed to include a rising percentage of recyclable material, recycling was also facilitated by the growing numbers of temporarily unemployed people desperately looking for employment opportunities (Bosi 2008; Wirth 2013), who were willing to accept to work with trash under precarious and unpleasant conditions (Medeiros/Macêdo 2006; Couto 2010). From the 1990s onwards, awareness of the need to recycle waste has grown, especially after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. In the aftermath of the conference, public opinion in Brazil

also recognised the need to promote social and environmental sustainability. As a result, groups such as the collectors have begun to be viewed more positively.

The number of people employed in the sector of collecting recyclable materials consistently grew to reach 387,910 workers in 2010 (IPEA 2013: 8). In 2010, 31.1 per cent of the collectors were female and 66.1 per cent belonged to the socially disadvantaged group of 'black people' (port.: *pretos e pardos*). 20.5 per cent of the Brazilian collectors were illiterate (ibid.), which is clearly above the National average (1.51 per cent in 2011). The collectors are therefore clearly an educationally disadvantaged group, which is also reflected in income terms. The average income of the collectors was 571.56 Brazilian real (approx. 250 Euro), slightly higher than the minimum wage (510 Brazilian real in 2010) and less than half of Brazil's average wage. Besides the comparably low income, working conditions are also considered to be dangerous, as dealing with waste can also be hazardous to the collectors themselves (Castilhos Jr. et al 2013), especially if they are not equipped with sufficient security clothing. Therefore, efforts to improve material wellbeing have to consider wage levels, work equipment and labour conditions.

The extreme form of social exclusion in Brazil has negative impacts on issues related to dignity and 'recognition' (Fraser 1995). In the case of the collectors, the problem is further aggravated by the working conditions, as dealing with waste is regarded as a particularly unsavoury and dirty activity (Couto 2010). Social justice issues of 'recognition' therefore have to tackle a two-fold process of improving societal views of the collectors while also further promoting self-respect among the workers to promote social inclusion and the improvement of dignity. 'Representation' (Fraser 1995) of the collectors was also rather limited until the end of the 1990s, thereby creating a pattern of political exclusion. Thus, the promotion of social justice for this particularly vulnerable and excluded group had to tackle many obstacles. The formation and proliferation of a social movement proved to be vital in this regard.

The movement of collectors of recyclable material began to be formed at the end of the 1980s. Philanthropic entities linked to the Catholic Church were campaigning for social programmes for people living on the streets who were suffering most from hardships induced by the economic crises

of the 1980s and 1990s. The philanthropic organisations soon began to incentivise the poor to begin to organise themselves to struggle for a more decent standard of living and to obtain social rights. The first cooperative of collectors of recyclable material – COOPAMARE – was founded in 1989 in São Paulo. Soon, other comparable initiatives were founded, such as the first association of collectors of paper and cardboards (ASMARE) in 1990 in Belo Horizonte. The growth of the movement further profited from UN efforts to promote international environmental conferences, such as the Rio conference in 1992, which emphasised the social dimension of sustainability (Gonçalves 2006). In 1998, UNICEF incentivised the first national encounter of the collectors as part of a campaign against child labour associated with garbage. These efforts gave birth to the 'National Forum of Waste and Citizenship' (Fórum Nacional de Lixo e Cidadania), which can be seen as a vital institutional step towards the collective organisation of the collectors (Grimberg 2007: 15).

One year later, in 1999, the 'First National Encounter of Paper Collectors' (I Encontro Nacional dos Catadores de Papel) took place in Belo Horizonte. There, the participants decided to realise the 'First National Congress of Collectors of Recyclable Material' (I Congresso Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Reciclável) in 2001 in Brazil's capital city, Brasília. At this congress, the participants decided to found the 'National Movement of Collectors of Recyclable Material' (Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Máterial Reciclável – MNCR; cf. MNCR 2009: 10). Thus, the foundation of the movement occurred at a moment when many participatory institutions had already been established in Brazil (Wirth 2013). The constitution of the national movement can be seen as strongly interlinked with the rise of popular social movements in Brazil during democratisation, and their consolidation and inclusion into policy making during the 1990s. Compared to other social movements, the formation of a movement of collectors of recyclable material occurred considerably later, and it has developed in close linkage to supportive governments. The first cooperative, Coopamare, was founded in São Paulo, when the city was governed by a mayor of the Workers' Party (PT), who was supportive of the collectors – particularly by providing a space to work in a middle class district (which generated a considerably large volume of waste and thus, also, of recyclable material). As it has always been more difficult for marginalised

people to organise, the efforts of local governments and NGOs have been seen as vital by the interviewed experts and involved agents. Besides the provision of space, other efforts involved financial aid to buy machinery (e.g. waste press, garbage collection trucks), as well as financial grants for collectors who join registered cooperatives.

The MNCR acts as an organisation of diffuse representation of the workers of waste recycling, working on the 'lower end' of the value chain, i.e. people and organisations working in sectors of (a) collecting recyclable materials and (b) organizing materials to be able to sell them in bulk. The latter activity is important, as it secures better payment for the collectors who otherwise have much less bargaining power. Additionally, it is easier to search for alternative purchasers, if price pressure is exercised on the collectors. Important in the activities of the MNCR is its self-recognition as representing a particular group of workers (MNCR 2009, 2013), instead of being simply a representative body of the poor.

The MNCR is not formally entitled to represent all the associations and cooperatives. Nevertheless, due to the links with the grassroot organisations, the MNCR legitimately claims the representation of the organised sectors of collectors, which adhere to basic principles of the solidarity-based economy of (a) self management and direct democracy; (b) direct popular action by the collectors themselves; (c) 'class independence' from political parties, "dominant classes, governments and the rich" (MNCR 2015); while (d) practising 'mutual support' both among collectors and a broader variety of social movements and trade unions in Brazil and internationally which share the objectives of the MNCR – namely to struggle for decent conditions of "work, education, health, nutrition, transport and leisure" (MNCR 2015). The principles of the MNCR require all members to be organised collectively and to adhere to workplace democracy. Another important issue is education, which the MNCR organises by itself, guided by the educational principles of Paulo Freire (1968). Therefore, professional and political education are necessarily linked. This "integral instruction" (MNCR 2013: 113) is reflected in the efforts of the MNCR in promoting on-the-job education for the collectors ('from collector to collector'), emphasiing the material benefits of collective organisation and decision making being intertwined with individual and collective empowerment (MNCR 2009, 2013).

5. The MNCR and its contribution to social justice

The creation of the MNCR has been directly associated with the promotion of SSE for the collectors of recyclable material. By adhering to the principles of SSE, the collectors were able to promote social justice in a thorough sense, involving 'redistribution', 'recognition' and 'representation' (Fraser 1995).

'Redistribution' has been promoted by egalitarian income structures within the member cooperatives of MNCR. Furthermore, selling recyclable material in bulk secures higher revenues. Thereby, collective organisation contributes to improving income levels for a particularly vulnerable group. This is further aided by better options for using machinery, such as waging machines, garbage presses or trucks (for further details, please consult Leubolt/Romão 2016). Additionally, the very process of engagement in paid work for hitherto excluded people promotes 'recognition'. As Elizabeth Grimberg reported in the interview[4], recognition has been further expanded by formalising labour. The very use of uniforms and professional working spaces in cooperatives helps to get rid of the image of delinquency, often associated with informally working collectors of recyclable material. As confirmed in the literature (Mayer 2005; Pereira 2011), the emergence and proliferation of cooperatives has positively contributed to the recognition of the collectors as workers and citizens.

Furthermore, the collectors of recyclable materials are engaged in a vital activity to improve socio-ecological wellbeing among the population, as the question of how to deal with garbage is not only connected with sustainability but also with sanitary and health issues. Therefore, the reduction of waste through recycling benefits society. Throughout the 2000s, Brazilian public opinion gradually shifted towards recognising this special benefit, as promoted by the collectors of recyclable material (interview Grimberg). Important for this process was the political inclusion of the collectors – leading to 'representation' in Fraser's terms. The latter process will be highlighted in the following section.

6. The governance of Brazilian waste collection and social innovation as a 'bottom-linked' process

Given the very marginal position of collectors of recyclable material in Brazilian society, their capacities for political action were severely limited. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that the first efforts towards their social inclusion were made by NGOs and faith-based philanthropic organisations, and from the 1990s onwards deepened by progressive local governments and university centres. In the field of social assistance they have been engaged in the training and mobilisation of the poor to enable them to work in the sector and to organise collectively. They assisted the collectors' organisations both commercially and in their dealings with legal matters.

People who participate in cooperatives and associations need a basic level of training and adaptation to regular work to be able to collaborate in collectively self-managed entities. Significant sections of the most excluded sectors of society are – at least initially – not able to meet the requirements. Apart from knowledge of professional procedures and of prices for different recyclable materials, this also concerns problems related to drug addiction, which is an important factor behind people having to live on the streets. These people need social assistance, as they would otherwise not be able to survive in the market. In order to start the process of social inclusion, there are centres – co-financed by the local state and charitable entities – to prepare the most vulnerable to be able to take part in cooperatives and associations.[5]

The intermediary actors were also important in the initial steps of the political organisation and articulation of the collectors' movements. This was conducive to the MNCR in constituting itself as a social movement as a first step to campaigning for its inclusion in public policy making.

While the first steps were taken on the municipal level, recent steps have significantly involved the national level. The up-scaling of political decision-making processes has resulted in positive results for the MNCR in municipal and regional institutions. The 'upscaling of demands' by the MNCR was facilitated by the national government under president Lula (from 2003 onwards), who gave a lot of attention to the social inclusion of the collectors. As early as 2003, they were included in the national programme to eradicate hunger (Programa Fome Zero). In the same year,

the national government also created an inter-ministerial committee for the social inclusion of collectors (CIISC). This committee was coordinated by the General Secretariat of the Presidency and included representatives of the Ministries of Social Development, of Work and Employment, of the Environment, and of Cities, as well as the most important state-owned companies (the National Economic and Social Development Bank (BNDES), the public banks Caixa Econômica Federal and Banco do Brasil, and the semi-public oil company Petrobrás). Besides the government actors, the MNCR was also represented in the committee (CIISC 2013).

These efforts reached a peak at the end of the 2000s, when the national government decided to promote nation-wide participation on the question of waste management. The MNCR was the most important participant in all three levels of governance (municipal, regional and national), being highly active in constructing a new National Policy of Solid Waste (Política Nacional de Resíduos Sólidos – PNRS), as the national coordinator of the Fourth National Conference for the Environment, Ana Carla de Almeida, stated in an interview[6]. The law arising out of the participatory process in 2010 did not only include the collectors in its drafting, but also considered the collectors in the execution of policies. The PNRS was incentivised by a national law (no. 12,305, Aug. 2nd 2010) and deals with the principles, objectives, instruments and directives of integrated waste management, including the responsibilities of waste creators and public entities. It is a national law affecting private and public entities on national, regional and municipal levels. In relation to the collectors, the PNRS follows the objective of the "integration of collectors of reusable and recyclable materials in the actions involving shared responsibility for the life-cycle of products" (article 7, item XII) and explicitly includes the "incentive for creation and development of cooperatives or other forms of association of collectors of reusable and recyclable materials" (article 8, item IV) among the political instruments. Shortly afterwards, the CIISC also set up a new programme to better benefit the collectors. In 2010, the programme Pró-Catador was put in place to further promote the interests of the collectors. As with the drafting of the PNRS, the people represented by the MNCR were not only beneficiaries of the programme, but the MNCR also actively participated in its drafting (CIISC 2013).

The national law was the starting point of a participatory political process to put the abstract law into a concrete action framework with aims and targets for the involved private and public actors on federal, regional and municipal levels. This process has been gradually realised, leading to the Fourth National Conference on the Environment in 2013. The conference was organised as a multi-level participatory process with municipal and regional conferences preparing for the national conference. To secure the participation of relevant actors in the process, quotas for participation were set up: 50 per cent of participants came from civil society, 20 per cent were representatives of business, and 30 per cent came from the public sector. The MNCR was the most important collective actor, mobilising vast numbers of collectors to participate in the process of policy making. This did not concern only national policies, but also the other levels of governance, such as the municipalities, where Integrated Plans of Solid Waste Management (Planos de Gestão Integrada de Resíduos Sólidos – PGIRS) were drafted.

Analytically, the processes described above can be understood as an important part of a transformation of state – civil society relations in Brazil. Instead of the dichotomy between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' solutions, a new approach was developed. Within the confines of the research project ImPRovE, we described this as a 'bottom-linked' approach (Oosterlynck et al. 2013): Instead of bottom-up processes, led and primarily executed by civil society, bottom-linked processes stress the necessity of public institutions and intermediaries for fostering innovation. Given the special difficulties of marginalised people, there is a need for external guidance. Nevertheless, guidance does not necessarily imply full control by the state or intermediaries, as top-down solutions would suggest.

7. Social innovation, contradictions and challenges

The MNCR represents an interesting example of multi-scalar social innovation. Collective organisation has systematically linked political mobilisation to the improvement of the living conditions of a particularly vulnerable and excluded section of the population. Thus, Westley and Antadze's (2010) finding that social innovations should go beyond mere

market-based solutions has been confirmed. As indicated by Mumford (2002), a chain of interdependent social innovations led to the results described in the previous sections.

Despite many factors being linked to the specific Brazilian institutional framework and political landscape, important lessons for mainstreaming social innovation can be drawn. The first step of social innovation occurred locally, when the collectors began to organise collectively and founded the first cooperative in São Paulo in 1989. During the 1990s they were able to consolidate and expand their actions, which was important for forming a national movement at the beginning of the 2000s. From 2003 onwards, political commitment was sustained and an interministerial committee was formed on the national level. Despite implementation difficulties, the most outstanding result of the political inclusion of the collectors was the final approval of the National Policy of Solid Waste (PNRS), in large part due to the intensive participation of members of the MNCR

Despite the material improvements, the focus of the MNCR has always gone beyond monetary issues. Issues of the collectors' recognition as a group of workers, engaged in the socio-ecological wellbeing of society were always strong, as the long-standing leading personality of the MNCR, Eduardo de Paula[7], reported in the interview. This focus has also been institutionalised – in the form of organising the cooperatives and associations, as well as the regional and national organisations of the collectors, and in the internal organisation of education processes, which are mainly organised within the cooperatives, and include consciousness-building to promote self respect and solidarity within and beyond the collectors of recyclable material (MNCR 2013). Thereby, individual and collective forms of empowerment are intertwined.

Additionally, the actions of the MNCR have been carried out in a rights-oriented perspective, claiming the right to the city and beyond. This was fostered by the constant lobbying (via fora including other civil society actors and/or via demonstrations) to take part in the political decision-making process. The presence of activists of the MNCR was vital in political settings involving the media, as the long-standing scientist and activist Elisabeth Grimberg reported in the interview. Consequently, the collectors were better able to convince the public that they deserved public support – much more effectively than professional advocacy groups would have been

able to. By exercising publicly visible pressure for social, cultural and political inclusion, the MNCR succeeded in being included in this comprehensive sense. Thus, lobbying in the wider public sphere is important in order to improve the process and empowerment dimensions of social innovation. Policy actors can thereby be pressed to find ways to actively include beneficiaries in policy making. Public recognition and learning processes in participatory settings can then foster empowerment.

Another important issue has been education: as self-organized entities need basic preparation and training for the labour market, the most excluded sectors of society cannot instantly join self-managed organisations such as cooperatives and associations. To deal with this problem, special institutions of social assistance were created to prepare the most excluded to participate in the labour market. In the city of São Paulo, financial contributions of the city government were vital, paying a diverse range of social workers and providing for locations for on-the-job-training. In the countryside, such efforts were linked to the national government programme 'Brazil without misery' (Brasil sem miséria) and the National S ecretariat for Solidarity-Based Economy, which coordinated efforts and channeled resources of social assistance. Given these initial efforts by public and private entities, the internal training has been largely organised by the MNCR itself, reflecting its autonomous strength and ambitions.

Problems involve the managing of intra-organisational tensions. Within the cooperatives and associations, a code of conduct regulates a set of norms and rules, with the intention to minimise possible intra-organisational tensions and conflicts. As the collectors come from the excluded parts of the population, problems related to alcohol and drug abuse exist. Despite controversial discussion, the use of such substances is strictly prohibited within the confines of the organisations. Another rule which has been reported as controversially discussed is the use of security clothing, which is mandatory for the associated collectors. While these rules help to mediate internal tensions, they can also lead to exclusion. Despite constantly growing numbers of collectors being organised guided by MNCR's principles, the majority is still working independently and informally. Statistics for the year 2008 suggest that only 43 per cent of Brazilian collectors worked in a collectively organised way (author's own calculation, based on statistical data by IPEA, cited in Pinhel 2013: 18). This

relatively high percentage of non-collectively organised collectors is a good indicator of the importance of this contradiction between the advantages of organisation and the resulting restrictions on the individual freedom of workers.

8. Conclusions

This contribution described the emergence and proliferation of the Brazilian social movement of collectors of recyclable material, and its gradually deepened inclusion, as an interesting example of social innovation. This process included the promotion of social justice regarding 'redistribution', 'recognition', and 'representation', as laid out by Fraser (1995).

After overcoming special difficulties due to marginalisation, the collectors were able to form an institutionalised national movement from the early 2000s onwards. The comparably late consolidation of the MNCR can be explained by the rather marginalised role of the collectors of recyclable material. Therefore, their connection to governments and the support by the latter has always been vital for the MNCR. The initial steps towards empowerment have been strongly supported by NGOs and local government actors. In the course of the events, the collectors were empowered up to a point when they were able to form a social movement on the national scale in the early 2000s. Given the marginalisation and exclusion of the collectors, together with the enormous size of Brazil, the difficulty as well as the importance of this step cannot be underestimated. From 2003 onwards, specific national policies have been set up for the collectors of recyclable material, also involving them actively in policy making through participation. Joint efforts of the Ministries of Employment and Income (especially by the National Secretariat for Solidarity-Based Economy, a branch of the Ministry of Employment and Income), environment, and social affairs, and of state-owned enterprises (banks and the petrol company), all coordinated by the presidency, pushed the political importance of the collectors to unprecedented levels.

Political inclusion was vital to secure better working conditions: legal recognition and public subsidies directly geared towards the collectors (instead of intermediaries in the value chain of recycling) were vital in

promoting processes of redistribution. From the perspective of civil society, the collective organisation of the collectors according to the principles of SSE was decisive. Recognition went beyond the actions of the state, as public opinion also improved considerably. Assisted by the inclusion of collectors into efforts for environmental education, they began to be seen as fulfilling an important role, rather than as simply poor or delinquent people. "What changed between 2000 and 2015 is that we no longer discuss whether there should be collectors or not. We discuss what work conditions are decent for them to provide a service that is necessary for the cities", as Grimberg explained in our interview.

This case thus shows the complex interplay of different forms of promoting social justice in a governance setting of 'bottom-linked' solutions. Together with the collective nature of empowerment, this sort of political approach is very promising for fostering social innovation, despite the involved problems and contradictions.

1 Information about the projects can be obtained at the following websites: http://at.solidarityeconomy.eu/; http://improve-research.eu/. Both projects have been financed by the European Commission.

2 Research on working conditions in the SSE sector pointed out that a considerable number of enterprises abuse the legal loopholes created by the emergence of SSE: many companies are formally cooperatives, but are actually run as conventional firms. Thereby, workers' legal protection is bypassed. In such companies, the main problems are the non-existence of internal democracy and unequal payment (Leite et al. 2015).

3 Fábio Sanchez works at the Universidade Federal de São Carlos, specialising in the sociology of work and social and solidarity economy. He coordinated the incubator for SSE at the Universidade de São Paulo at the end of the 1990s and worked in different positions at the National Sub-Ministry of SSE (Secretaria Nacional de Economia Solidária) in the national government during the 2000s.
Paul Singer is an economist and Professor Emeritus at the Universidade de São Paulo. He is among the most important intellectuals in the Workers' Party (PT) and was one of the first promoters of SSE in Brazil. Since its creation in 2003 and the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 he was the head (Secretário) of the Secretário Nacional de Economia Solidária.

4 Elizabeth Grimberg is a sociologist and Co-Director of Instituto Pólis in São Paulo, an important NGO engaged with social movements and the right to the city. She was one of the founders of the 'Fórum Lixo e Cidadania' and active in the formulation of the national policy framework for solid waste (Política Nacional de Resíduos Sólidos).

5 In our field research, we visited 'Recifran', one of four centres responsible for the city of São Paulo at the time. The participants in this training centre were sent by the local authorities, to be trained to work in one of the cooperatives later on. In addition to the field visit, we also conducted an interview with the coordinator of the centre, the social worker Talita Tecedor.
6 Ana Carla de Almeida is an environmental analyst, working at the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment (Ministério do Meio Ambiente).
7 Eduardo de Paula is one of the founders of the first collectors' cooperative 'Coopamare', and a political leader of the MNCR.

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Talita Tecedor, social worker and coordinator of the social assistance centre 'Serviço Franciscano de Apoio a Reciclagem' for the capacity-building of collectors; São Paulo, January 16, 2015.

Abstract *Der Beitrag fokussiert soziale Inklusion von marginalisierten Personen mittels sozialer Innovation. Theoretisch auf Frasers „3-R-Zugang" basierend, wird soziale Inklusion als mehrdimensionaler Prozess verstanden, der Umverteilung, Anerkennung und Repräsentation mit einschließt. Empirisch wird die brasilianische soziale Bewegung der SammlerInnen verwertbaren Materials untersucht. Diese historisch besonders marginalisierte Gruppe schaffte es, ein landesübergreifendes Netzwerk als soziale Bewegung zu institutionalisieren. Auf diesem Erfolg aufbauend gelang es ab 2003, die soziale und politische Inklusion zu vertiefen. Der Beitrag beschreibt diesen Prozess als „bottom-linked", als einen Mittelweg zwischen „top-down"-Politik des Staates und „bottom-up"-Prozessen seitens der Zivilgesellschaft.*

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Intercultural Education as a Means to Foster Equality in Diversity – Understanding 'Participation' in the Austrian *Vielfalter* Initiative

Abstract *Social cohesion is clearly at stake in Europe. A key to achieving it is striking the balance between equality and diversity by understanding it as a complex, multi-layered problématique, that needs to be tackled in terms of being able to 'live together differently'. This paper asks about the contributions of a socially innovative initiative in the field of intercultural education in Austria, the Vielfalter, to social cohesion. In particular, the article scrutinises the Vielfalter's approach to 'participation' and 'empowerment', quasi-concepts that have become buzzwords in social innovation.*

Keywords *diversity, empowerment, equality, participation, social cohesion*

1. Introduction

Striking the balance between equality and diversity is a key to social cohesion, a major challenge of our time: over the last decades, diversity as well as inequality have increased, apparently hand in hand, and the concern for inequality has become a key issue in social policy (OECD 2011). The adoption in 2000 of the EU's motto 'United in Diversity' reflects the increasing diversity of European societies. Yet diversity has not just increased in terms of ethnic background due to increasing mobility and migration, but also in terms of people's position in the labour market, as well as regarding gender roles and family models.

While historically, struggles for cohesion were intended to repair the damage done by capitalist modernisation, in recent decades, especially

with the Lisbon Agenda, the term has been de-politicised and framed as being functional to competitiveness (Maloutas et al. 2008: 260). Clearly, social cohesion has to be understood as a contradictory and contested quasi-concept with different definitions in different policy fields (Jenson 1998), for instance dealing with the exclusionary dynamics of social inequality and poverty from a socioeconomic perspective, or with participation, representation, mobilisation and questions of citizenship from a political perspective, or with the co-existing rights to difference on the one hand, and recognition, dignity and belonging on the other, from a cultural perspective. This article proposes to conceptualise social cohesion as a *problématique*, i.e. a complex, multilayered problem that can only be tackled in a transdisciplinary, multi-scalar and multi-dimensional way. It is about "living together differently" (Novy et al. 2012: 1874), that is, enabling people to live together, and yet have the opportunity to be different, in a context-sensitive way. This is of special relevance due to the current policy discourse on poverty in the EU that mainly focusses on the lack of income of people at the margins of society.

This integrated and multi-dimensional approach to social cohesion is increasingly picked up by socially innovative initiatives.[1] This article focusses on one of these – the *Vielfalter*[2], an initiative fostering intercultural education in Austria – and its contribution to social cohesion in the context of an education system that faces various challenges regarding social cohesion, for example in terms of reproducing socio-economic inequalities.

European welfare state models were developed during the Fordist era and based on the male breadwinner model and a national community of shared values and ethnic-cultural background. For a long time, the key objective of national welfare institutions has been to offer social rights for all citizens to equally participate in socio-economic life. While material equality was neither the objective nor the outcome, there has been a uniformisation in the access to social services and infrastructure which was often not very attentive to diversity. On the contrary, sociocultural and ethnic discrimination can be perceived as weaknesses of European welfare models, with assimilationist tendencies especially strong in the conservative-corporatist welfare models, as is the case in Austria (Weinzierl et al. forthcoming).

This issue aims to contribute to research on the "spatial and institutional conditions under which localized forms of social innovation can complement and strengthen existing institutionalized welfare programs" (Oosterlynck et al. 2013: 3). In this framing, this paper focusses on one of several governance challenges to social innovation[3], namely participation, and the challenge "to design a framework for localized forms of welfare provision that includes decentralized participatory (deliberative) institutions in a way that they can react to experienced social needs, benefit the practices in other localities [and] enrich the knowledge and responsiveness of centralized institutions" (Improve Social Innovation Team 2013: 4).

Socially innovative initiatives need to resolve the tension between claims for the recognition of various forms of diversity on the one hand and more traditional socio-economic claims for civic and social rights and universal social protection on the other. In this context, this article asks how *Vielfalter* as a socially innovative initiative is a laboratory that takes on the challenge of social cohesion by tackling the negotiation between the right to belong and the right to be different at the same time. More specifically, this paper asks about the *Vielfalter*'s approach to participation and empowerment and its contribution to tackling the challenge of social cohesion, here understood as equality in diversity. Even though participation has become a 'buzzword' (Leal 2007; Cornwall/Brock 2005), the term remains elusive. It is often used uncritically, and frequently co-occurs with the term empowerment, yet these concepts and their relation are quite fuzzy (Cooke/Kothari 2001). As it is *Vielfalter*'s explicit aim to contribute to the participation and empowerment of marginalised members of Austrian society, it serves as a good case study for the purpose of sharpening the participation term by asking: 'How is participation thought and practised in *Vielfalter* funded initiatives?', looking both at the discourse and practice of participation in this field of intercultural education.

In what follows, the *Vielfalter* is placed in the context of the Austrian education system, which continues to reproduce inequalities. This is followed by a brief introduction to different, partly contradictory, elements of participatory theory. Section 4 consists of a presentation of empirics, where one of 15 interviews with project leaders is scrutinised in closer detail, followed by a synthesis of all interviews and the results of a questionnaire.

Concluding, reflections on the *Vielfalter*'s contributions to participation and empowerment sum up the iniatiative's relevance as a laboratory for the creation of cohesive societies.

2. *Vielfalter* in the context of the Austrian education system

Vielfalter funds initiatives in the field of intercultural education in kindergartens, schools (at all levels), and for associations working with children and adults with migratory background.[4] The aim of the *Vielfalter* initiative is to contribute to the empowerment and participation of people with migratory background and to promote a change in the Austrian value system towards the appreciation of diversity in Austria in order to harness the potentials of a multicultural and multilingual society. The target group consists of children and youth with a migratory background as well as of mainstream society, their parents, and pedagogues. The funded projects aim at helping children and their parents from diverse cultural and social backgrounds to discover their talents and to strengthen their self-esteem; they should feel 'proud to belong' and be empowered to actively participate in kindergartens or schools and – as a larger aim – in society in general. At the same time, *Vielfalter* attempts to establish inclusive structures at kindergarten and school level and to contribute to a gradual change of perspective in the Austrian education system by understanding diversity and multilingualism as valuable resources.

The initiative was set up in 2009, in cooperation between the Vienna hub of Western Union, an international US-based company specialising in money transfer, the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (nowadays the Federal Ministry of Education) and Interkulturelles Zentrum (IZ), an independent non-profit organisation based in Vienna that was founded in 1987. Owing to this collaboration of representatives of the public sector, the private sector and of civil society, *Vielfalter* benefits from diverse approaches and experiences. IZ brings in experience and expertise in the fields of education and cultural/linguistic diversity, as well as access to contacts and networks. The ministry contributes to the selection process of projects as part of the jury and presents the initiative to the public. The Western Union Foundation provides the project funding and

Western Union gives stimulus regarding the initiative's focus and content, drawing on the company's experience with diversity among customers as well as staff.

In its self-image the project is a butterfly[5] that brings diversity to the education system, which focusses on German skills as a prerequisite to integration and a strong orientation towards performance, while the individual's other potentials are not sufficiently recognised.

Austria was a country of immigrants long before the heated debates on the refugee movements of recent years started: in 2014, the time when the field work underlying this article was conducted, one out of seven people living in Austria was foreign born, i.e. was a first generation immigrant (Statistic Austria 2014a). Yet this fact is rarely accepted as such, and people with a migratory background, including second and third generation immigrants, continue to be regarded as foreigners in mainstream Austrian society as well as in political discourse (Luciak 2008: 46). Aside from the six officially recognised national autochthonous minorities tracing back to the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, Austria's immigrant population is predominantly from the former Yugoslavia or Turkey, due to labour migration in the second half of the 20th century, as well as to refugee flows after the Yugoslav wars (Statistik Austria 2014b). In recent years the profile of the country's minority groups has become more diverse and even before the much discussed refugee movements of the past few years, students from more than 160 countries attended Austrian schools. More than a third of the population of foreign citizens lives in Vienna, where cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity in classrooms has become a reality in many schools (Luciak 2008: 45-49; BMBF 2014: 5f.).

However, regarding Austrian educational policy, this diversity has historically largely been met with measures aimed at students with immigrant background, and assimilatory approaches or 'pedagogy for foreigners', based on conceptualisations of 'deficit' and later of 'difference', have dominated (Wältli 2010: 130; Luciak 2008: 52). A discourse on intercultural education – aimed at all students and reflected in a discursive focus on 'diversity' (Rieber 2010)– only began to form during the 1980s, and it was introduced as an educational principle in the early 1990s in Austria (BMUKK 2013a,b). Nevertheless, to this day systematic implementation is lacking.

Furthermore, the focus in language education in Austria is first and foremost on German language skills, as continuously identified as the top priority by policy makers, with English as the first foreign language and a secondary focus on Romance languages (Dalton-Puffer et al. 2009). In other words, available resources are not being used, since the foreign languages primarily taught in Austria are neither the languages of immigrants nor of the autochthonous minorities. This lack of intercultural understanding is also reflected in today's schoolbooks (Mayrhofer 2010).

These issues need to be seen in the overall context of a problematic education system, which reproduces socio-economic status not only because of the different valuations of languages, but especially via the dual school system and the early segregation at the age of 10 and 14/15. Additionally, the rigidity of Austria's education system stems from a fragmentation of competencies, with higher education being a federal responsibility but compulsory education (the first nine grades) falling within the competence of the nine regions (Bundesländer). This division, in combination with a strong teachers' union as a third major political actor in this field, hinders progressive change and flexibility. This again highlights the importance of *Vielfalter* as a promoter of innovative ideas and alternatives in education.

3. Participation – liberation or tyranny?

In order to be able to account for the complex and potentially contradictory effects of participatory practices in terms of empowerment and social change, a dialectical approach is necessary (Jäger/Springler 2012: 86ff.), one that allows the capturing of participation in its totality and "true nature" (Schaerer 2008). In order to capture this true nature as lived and practised in *Vielfalter,* a grounded theory approach was chosen. Therefore, the focus of this article is mainly on the narrative of the interviews; however, a quick, admittedly overly simplistic introduction to participatory theory is necessary. In what follows, potentially contradictory aspects of participation and empowerment are highlighted: an optimistic conceptualisation of participation regarding its potential for empowerment and social change is complemented by an understanding of participation, which exposes it as an oppressive, rather than progressive, concept.

Social pedagogy calls for intercultural education in order to build an inclusive society, that is, one where people of different ethnicities and cultures not only live together but interact with each other, and constantly exchange ideals, rules, values and meanings (Portera 2011: 17). The concept of interculture moves beyond mere multiculture, the latter meaning the peaceful coexistence of cultures, which are conceptualised as equally good, but static. This concept constrains immigrants to their 'native' culture and ascribes patterns of behaviour to them that might actually be outdated in their country of origin (ibid: 19f.). Interculture on the other hand, approaches culture and identity dynamically, where 'otherness' is not regarded as a potential threat but as an opportunity for personal and common enrichment (ibid: 20). Additionally, interculture is thought to be crucial in a context of globalisation and increasing migration flows (Grant/Brueck 2011: 10). Subject-orientation and multi-perspectivity are thus crucial characteristics in intercultural pedagogy (Rieber 2010: 99), which furthermore requires a different understanding of teaching: interculture cannot be taught in specific lessons but needs to be included in *all* disciplines and activities at schools (Portera 2011: 21). In order to foster a society based on a dialogue of cultures and co-existence free from discrimination and racism, intercultural education also needs to be seen as moral education, based on universal values such as freedom, justice and solidarity (Puig Rovira 2000: 97). The understanding that an open, democratic society crucially depends on the education that *all* children receive, lets social pedagogues call for educational practices that enable individuals to "participate and transform the social system for the benefit of everyone" (Singh 2000: 85). This is possible when education is not seen as merely quantifiable and functionalist, but in a neo-humanist manner as a goal in itself, allowing human subjectivity, autonomy and responsibility to unfold (Scherr 2010: 353). This indicates that in social pedagogy, intercultural education and the positive identities, values and skills it promotes are seen as a basis for the successful participation of autonomous individuals in society.

Aside from the intercultural education literature, social pedagogy promotes participatory methods in pedagogy in general, largely with the goal of *empowering* students to develop the skills and understandings needed to *participate* in a democratic society (McQuillan 2005: 640; Knauer 2005).

In this sense, participation of students in educational facilities empowers students in several ways: personally, academically, politically and socially (Sturzenhecker et al. 2010: 110ff.; Knauer 2005; McQuillan 2005: 642ff.). In this understanding, the relationship between empowerment and participation is not clearly defined, or at least lacks a common definition, but overall the understanding appears to be that the two concepts are interdependent: empowerment is seen as the basis for participation, but at the same time it is participatory methods that lead to empowerment (Scheipl et al. 2009; Herriger 2010). McQuillan (2005) even appears to use the terms synonymously (e.g. page 641). Overall, this strand of social pedagogy literature deals with preparing individuals for a fulfilling life in a democratic society. However, this literature appears to be focussed on culturally homogenous contexts or at least to be lacking a focus on interculture. What participation might mean for people denied access to the formal mechanisms by which individuals shape democratic societies, especially the right to vote as it continues to be based on an understanding of citizenship not based on residence but rather origin, thus remains unclear in this line of literature. Yet, marginalized groups in particular face multiple barriers to participating in a democratic way: even aside from the status of their voting rights, the poorest and most excluded groups structurally also have very limited access to civil society organisations (Castela/Novy 1996; Novy 1996), thus depriving them of their capabilities (Sen 1999) to lead the kind of free lives they wish for themselves and to actively shape their society by participating in the collective action of civil society organisations. A "culture of silence" (Freire 1974) or the inability of "the subaltern to speak" (Spivak 2009) indicates the poor are misrepresented and thus have very little political voice (Hirschman 1970). According to Fraser (1999, 2007), social justice has three dimensions: redistribution, (the socio-economic dimension), recognition (the cultural dimension), and representation (the political dimension). Cucca et al. (forthcoming) argue that empowerment exists only if all three interrelated dimensions are addressed, due to dynamics of circular cumulative causation processes (Myrdal 1957) of relational and multidimensional deprivation, as elaborated in Bourdieu's theory of capital (Bourdieu 1986, 1989). Deprivation in one of the three dimensions is frequently accompanied by deprivation in other dimensions.

An additional look into critical development theory (Munck/O'Hearn 1999) offers tools to shed more light on the relationship between participation and empowerment in an intercultural context. It is informed by theories of power, including Foucauldian power/knowledge (Foucault 1978, 1980, 2000), Gramscian conceptualisations of hegemony and civil society (Gramsci 1992), and Bourdieusian concepts of symbolic capital and symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1977, 1986, 1989). Freire understands empowerment as the "ability to act against the oppressive influences of real life" (Freire 1974). In line with Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, empowerment can be defined as processes through which social groups improve their ability to create, manage and control material, social, cultural and symbolic resources (Andersen/Siim 2004). The empowerment approach as a critical paradigm places collective action and changes to unjust opportunity structures in the centre and opposes neo-liberalism and market fundamentalism (Craig/Mayo 1995). Similarly, originally conceived as a critique of the Eurocentric, top-down development efforts in the 'Global South' and therefore as part of a counter-hegemonic approach, participatory methods in development practice represented a challenge to the status quo (Leal 2007: 539f.). However, as neoliberalism is immensely resilient to critique, due to its hegemonic status and the ability to incorporate threatening concepts by perverting them without challenging fundamental structures, participation gained legitimacy during the 1980s and 90s in mainstream development discourse. Critical development researchers therefore argue today that participation has been co-opted (Cooke 2004: 45; Cooke/Kothari 2001; Cornwall/Brock 2005) and that the conversion of "a radical proposal into something that could serve the neo-liberal world order led to participation's political decapitation" (Leal 2007: 539). The promoted participatory methods, while understood as leading to the empowerment of the marginalised by mainstream development practice (Narayanan 2003: 2484), are identified in this line of thought as "clouded by the state and market model of governance where people are either objects or clients of development and not the agency of development" (ibid: 2486). Critics argue that while participation and empowerment are uncritically assumed to co-occur, the participatory methods promoted by the mainstream are depoliticised and individualised, ensuring an inability to produce structural change. In other words, a lack of institutionalisation prevents trans-

formation above the local level and masks power asymmetries, thus reproducing and at the same time lending legitimacy to the status quo (Cooke/Kothari 2001; Christens/Speer 2006; Mohan/Stokke 2000).

4. *Vielfalter's* approach to participation and empowerment

In its self-understanding, the *Vielfalter* initiative works towards a change in the Austrian value system towards the appreciation of diversity in Austria the country so that the potentials of a multicultural and multilingual society can be fully harnessed. It aims to do so by contributing to empowerment and participation.

Specifically, the *Vielfalter* funds projects in four key areas in the field of diversity: the promotion of multilingualism, empowerment and building self-confidence, intercultural education, and integrative parent participation. The target group consists of children and youth, both native and with migratory background, their parents and pedagogues. Further criteria to be met for the submission of project ideas include the innovation and creativity of the approach; a participatory concept, i.e. the involvement of the target group, pursuant to the corporate values of Western Union, namely integrity, team work, partnership, commitment and the creation of opportunities; and project sustainability, understood as long-term benefits for society as a whole.

The range of projects the *Vielfalter* has funded over the years is thus quite wide; it is a colourful mosaic of implementing institutions, the people involved, and approaches to inclusion. While this chapter and especially section 3.2. are informed by the analysis of interviews held with 15 project leaders and a questionnaire answered anonymously by 50 project leaders, the following section, 3.1. zooms into one of the projects funded in order to elaborate some aspects of participation and empowerment in more detail.[6]

4.1 Claiming public space for marginalised social groups by bottom-up approaches in a youth and family centre

The project presented in more detail in this section was implemented by a youth and family centre, and built on previous low threshold German as foreign language courses for educationally disadvantaged Turkish women

(of whom at least a third were analphabets), who has largely been in Austria for years but isolated from mainstream society. The project added a German as foreign language expert to a multiplier (a German teacher with Turkish background) for those with slightly advanced German skills. The course content focussed on hearing comprehension and conversational skills for beginners, the acquisition of basic skills in writing and math, and understanding and reproducing biographical data, for instance that needed in communication with public institutions and local authorities. The course was designed to motivate and overcome previous negative learning experiences in two ways: firstly, an art project with an art therapist, and secondly, an intercultural cooking project with a nutrition expert were designed to draw public attention to the presence of immigrant women in the city where the project was based on the one hand, and on the other to transcend the women's traditional role in a mutual learning process aimed at experiencing their cooking skills as a resource. This project was later expanded by various field trips to familiarise the women with public space. These trips and accompanying workshops were centered around four themes: literacy, creativity, health, and mobility.

The idea for the project also grew from the bottom up in the sense that the projects not only respond to a demand perceived by the association, but also because the association had already established contacts with the target group via the German course that preceded the project. In this context, the role of the multiplier with Turkish background was crucial, according to the interviewee. She acted as a key person, without whom the ties to the target community could not have been established as successfully.

The interviewee illuminated the complexities of a participatory approach when dealing with marginalised groups: while the projects do respond to the needs and wishes of the target group, these wishes are not always expressly communicated by the affected people. Instead, project ideas arise out of a complex learning process that also relies on experts being able to 'read in between the lines'. Seeing as most of the targeted women not only speak no or only very little German, but are multiply disadvantaged (in a process termed *intersectionality*), their capacities to voice their wishes are severely constrained. However, this barrier was not met with a top-down approach to project design and implementation; besides the perceptions of the experts and the team of the association

behind the project, that were based on their already established contacts with the target group, the interviewee mentioned the important role of the targeted women's children, who were generally more comfortable not only speaking German, but also voicing their concerns and ideas. Overall, the project responds to a demand not only perceived by experts, but indicates the important role of people who can serve as a mouthpiece for those most disadvantaged and marginalised, in this case the course leader who shared a migratory background with the target group, as well as their children, whose interactions in turn shaped the ideas of the social workers and experts in the association. Additionally, however, some of the targeted women also contributed actively to conceptualising the projects from the beginning on. These were women that had already been reached via the previous language classes and who had built a trusting relationship with the Turkish course leader. This sheds further light on the relationship between empowerment and participation: according to the interviewee, when the association officially and via a number of information channels called for members of the target group to come to a meeting with a view to network or to tighten relations within the target group and between the association and the targeted women, it was largely women who had already gathered experience with the association who came. This indicates the high barriers to participation for members of marginalised groups also identified in the literature. These barriers decrease with every project experience, as the projects aim at increasing individual capacities to become active and to participate in society in general.

On the whole, the interviewee stressed that participation is a highly held principle of the association, but, depending on the capacities the target group members already have, in other words, depending on the 'empoweredness' of the targeted women, this principle can be put into practice more or less effectively. The idea is to include the women from the beginning on, not only to let them contribute, but also to open spaces for them to develop their own, new ideas; however, this is a delicate process that takes time, as individual barriers to participation are high and go well beyond language barriers.

To sum up, participation in this association means to include the target group members' ideas and resources from the project conceptualisation stage onwards, to address their wishes, needs and worries via the project,

and also to let the women plan the project themselves, depending on their individual capacities to contribute, given the context. At the same time, the projects aim at empowerment, in the sense of increasing these capacities by strengthening their resources and raising their independence and self-worth with a view to increasing the participation in further projects and in societal, public life in general.

Nevertheless, empowerment is not merely understood as a process related to the individual. Instead, the interviewee spoke of a learning process that also affected the association: the project shifted the focus from improving German skills towards a more inclusionary approach. The project has the effect of increasing the public presence of the targeted women as a group, for instance through the art they created and presented in public, but also through their increasing participation in the public transport system and so on. These project aspects address a lack of public awareness of the situation of the targeted women, or even of their presence in the respective city, or more generally in Austria. Furthermore, while the effects of one single project might not transcend the impact on the individual, any such project is to be seen in the context of the entire course programme of the association: the effects are thought to accumulate. In this sense, each project, and the public relations work done within it, contributes to raising awareness and potentially also to changing structures within the Austrian mainstream society, as the interviewee understands it.

4.2 *Vielfalter's* innovative dimension: contributing to cohesion via the promotion of participation in intercultural settings

The *Vielfalter*-funded projects indicate, on the whole, that participation and empowerment remain contested concepts characterised by the tension of change and persistence and that the individualisation and privatization (Arendt 1997; Sennett 2004) of inclusion strategies have to some extent led to a hollowing-out regarding their transformative and radical character. Nonentheless, they continue to have potential.

The analysis of the interviews produces four categories, whereby participation is both a means (process dimension) and an end (discourse dimension), and empowerment has an individual dimension (best translated as Befähigung) and a collective dimension (understood as *Ermächtigung*, which is based on the German word for power: *Macht*).

So the reality is not 'either-or' as the strands of participatory theory presented in section 3 would suggest. Clearly, theoretical "celebrations of 'individual liberation' and critiques of 'subjection to the system' both oversimplify participation's power effects" (Williams 2004: 557). Participation and empowerment in *Vielfalter* are certainly pursued first and foremost in a social-pedagogic sense. They are not primarily thought in collective terms of socio-political mobilisation and movement-building capable of triggering lasting societal transformations, or finding a common voice for marginalised groups with a view to self-representation. Yet, at the same time it would be wrong to condemn *Vielfalter*'s efforts as promoting participation at the local level in order to keep resistance fragmented and maintain the status quo at macro levels. While empowerment is mainly present as individual capacity building, the objective, and as far as measurable also the outcome, is not to capacitate people to better arrange their lives within a given system, but to become active members of society that collectively shape the structures they are embedded in.

Participation in the projects leads to empowerment, which in turn is assumed to lead to participation on a wider, societal level in the future. The empirical data show that participation is both a method and an outcome and it operates in a circular fashion with empowerment. The projects targeting children have a long-term claim to societal change: via the empowerment the children experience in the projects, their identities are strengthened, allowing them to grow up to be open-minded, responsible, and respectful adults, who take on active roles in society. Eventually, this should lead to a socially inclusive society based on openness and diversity.

The experience in the above presented project for instance, shows the children growing together; instead of opposing groupings, the projects create cohesion, according to the interviewee. The children think and act as a group and leave thought structures of 'us' and 'them' behind. The expectation is that children who grow up this way will also become adults who approach others with openness and without, or with fewer, preconceptions. In this sense, *Vielfalter* projects transcend the aspect of individual identity strengthening, as they allow individuals to interact socially and step into contact with each other more easily: the fostering of plurilingual competencies opens people's hearts, as one interviewee put it.

Another interviewee stressed her conviction that the fact that this cohesion and openness towards one another can rarely be witnessed today in youth with migratory background, is to be explained by the lack of intercultural content in educational methods 15 years ago. The earlier these contents reach the children, the less rivalry will occur and the better they are prepared for life in a diverse society.

In addition to the envisioned abandonment of ethnocentric views and the ideological welcoming of a multicultural, multilingual society, long-term effects include democratization according to the self-assessment of the project leaders. The democratic and participatory processes associated with several of the 15 projects analysed, for instance, are designed to show the students they have a voice and to bring out the desire in them to use it democratically. Yet, to one interviewee it is unclear how this will play out, as with the expansion of the EU, European immigrants have less incentive to be naturalised than they did prior to the 2000s; formal democracy, however, remains based on citizenship. Another expectation of project leaders, besides a peaceful society based on cultural and linguistic openness and democratic participation, is the increased access children will have to the labour market, adding to equality of opportunity and a diverse labour force.[7]

Overall, these processes will increase the quality of Austrian society, as formerly excluded individuals are empowered to demand change and in turn react upon mainstream society, ideally creating an environment where all are free to choose their paths, including the culture and language they feel comfortable with. It has to be kept in mind, however, that even the best projects at the kindergarten age will not lead to such long-term results if the children face completely different situations once they enter school. Another project not mentioned in detail also clearly created unity among kindergarten children, but the conservative at best, racist at worst, structures in the community can entail children being classified according to their countries of origin once they begin school, especially where teachers leave room for such attitudes. Overall then, the effects of the kindergarten projects largely depend on the schools that are available afterwards. The importance of creating standards and in turn of implementing them in the entire education system cannot be stressed enough.

The projects targeting adults have more immediate effects regarding social inclusion and cohesion. While the contribution to social inclusion of several projects' effects on the children are long-term and dependent on several changeable factors, the effect on the involved parents is more immediate: the project builds up the parents' pride in their background and language and empowers them to transcend fears and previous negative experiences, and in turn the isolation from mainstream society. The work with parents in one kindergarten project, for instance, provides settings where parents diverse in family language, cultural background, educational and professional attainment and world views come together and exchange ideas. For a lot of the first generation immigrants, such a meeting space is the first step towards inclusion. Similarly, the open atmosphere in another kindergarten project has the effect that women with headscarves proudly enter and feel accepted, which they didn't before given the context of the village, according to the interviewee. In this sense, the projects move beyond the obsolete concept of integration and contribute important aspects to the social inclusion of immigrants and to cohesion in Austria. This is starting to be felt in the village of the respective kindergartens as well, although change is slow paced. Some of the projects even lay explicit claims to societal change: for example, a sub-project of a self-organised black women's association was to create a children's book, as the group found there was a clear lack of children's books and educational materials that transcend prevailing ethnocentric views. Such a collaborative project aims at overcoming the individual level through the joint creation of a product as a group. Additionally, the public presentation of the project and final product were intended to have direct repercussions on mainstream society and discourse. Such effects were for instance, felt in the neighbourhood of a higher secondary school for economic professions (HLW), that offered training courses in intercultural mediation to its students and teachers to become so-called 'integration-guides': the student body comprised diverse groups represented in the school's district; as the gulf between them was gradually closed in the school setting, a relaxation of the situation in the district is witnessed as well. Other projects, such as the one presented in section 3.1. successfully increased Turkish women's access to and presence in public spaces; in turn, this is also expected to have repercussions on mainstream society. One kindergarten's multilingual

library had the effect that the women get familiarised with the concept of a lending library, which can be regarded as a first step towards the utilisation of public libraries. Another project that introduced the same target group to the 'Kulturpass' (essentially subsidised access to cultural activities such as festivals, theatres, museums, or libraries), as well as the idea of familiarising marginalised women with the public transport system, followed the same idea.

In conclusion, all projects are designed to contribute to social inclusion in the long run; nonetheless, the interviewees generally shared the opinion that while the projects are important steps and certainly lead to deep, positive ramifications for the directly involved target group, the projects remain a mere drop in the ocean and that they cannot satisfyingly compensate for the slow change in the education system. In other words, the issues and challenges the projects respond to will continue to hinder social inclusion in terms of equality of opportunity, of equality of outcome, and social cohesion in terms of being able to be different together, unless structural change is induced and the contents are enshrined in the education system.

5. Conclusion

Striking the balance between equality and diversity is difficult and often leads to one-sided either-or solutions. Diversity is increasingly understood in terms of diversity management, a neoliberal strategy of competitiveness that doesn't necessarily have anti-racism at its core (MAIZ 2014: 231f.). But diversity must not be instrumentalised to legitimate inequalities, it has rather to be re-attached to struggles for equality and justice in order to be a useful concept (Ahmed 2007). In Europe, policies either favour so-called universal services to which all ethnic and social groups have access, which often results in biased welfare services, as there is an inclination to misunderstand equality as homogenisation and assimilation. Or policies have a culturalisation bias, often connected to an essentialist understanding of culture (MAIZ 2014: 237f.), for example by focussing on the problems of marginalized groups as if they were only cultural, meeting them with purely cultural measures. Cohesion is culturalised as a problem of immigration by non-EU citizens in the dominant discourse, but declining social

cohesion is actually an outcome of neoliberal policy (Boucher 2013). The perspectives of the lower and middle classes are increasingly threatened, which in part explains the rise of radicalisation and ethnocentrism (Eribon 2016). These value polarisations further threaten cohesion (Aschauer 2016). Yet social cohesion needs to be regarded as a *problématique*, a complex phenomenon; often, solutions consist in overcoming either-or dualisms by identifying as-well-as strategies. From this perspective, cultural aspects of social exclusion need to be seen in the context of the power of symbolic (or cultural) and social capital, by which powerful groups monopolise resources and opportunities in the form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1977, 1986, 1989). Nevertheless, social cohesion additionally requires a focus on socio-economic factors, including aspects of ecological justice, and most of all, of political representation. This indicates that social cohesion will neither be achieved without the collective action of marginalised groups nor without a redefinition of citizenship based on residence rather than nationality. From this perspective, a broadening of problem awareness needs to replace the tendency to culturalise issues in some of the *Vielfalter* projects, even though, on the whole, *Vielfalter* succeeds well in approaching cohesion as a multi-layered *problématique*. The broadening of perspectives, that the array of *Vielfalter*-funded projects also promote, should lead to a critical assessment of the underlying structures, which could open up truly emancipatory room for manoeuver.

Given the current debate on refugee movements, pending Brexit, and the continued increase in various forms of inequalities across Europe, the relevance of finding ways of „living together differently" (Novy et al. 2012: 1874), as the key challenge to social and territorial cohesion, is still increasing. Unfortunately, the management of the refugee movements does not seem promising: it tends to be used as a pretext for deepening cuts in social policies as well as conserving the existing, assimilation-oriented welfare institutions, even if they are clearly deficient. Intercultural conviviality remains an unresolved challenge in fostering social cohesion, which is currently increasingly solved in a reductionist way: by defending identities at the expense of appreciating diversity. In this context, laboratories like *Vielfalter* contain lessons for social cohesion by bridging communities and building trust. Multi-dimensional and long-term support of intercultural initiatives could be the key investment towards realising the EU's motto

and building a Europe 'united in diversity'. This is invaluable, but will not come for free. Brussel's austerity politics has undermined solidarity in Europe for long, to the extent of becoming a real threat to European integration. In the context of welfare state retrenchment, the complementary potential of social innovations like *Vielfalter* and especially their innovative aspects in terms of multidimensionality cannot be fully realised. As long as there is increasing pressure on socially innovative initiatives to compensate in a short-term logic for weaknesses of welfare regimes, there are limited resources available to focus on exploring their full potential for social cohesion. Unfortunately, it seems as if the current crisis reinforces path dependencies, thereby deepening secular deficiencies and reinforcing essentialist concepts of identity, ethnic homogeneity and enforced assimilation. While in the 1970s and 80s social innovation was led by social movements and other collective actors that followed targets of collective emancipation (empowerment as *Ermächtigung*), today it is often private actors that promote (generally less radical) change. The role of philantropy and (social) entrepreneurship, not least through Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, needs to be seen in this light and critically reflected upon. Also, the increasing importance of volunteers indicates an understanding of social innovation that is less oriented towards social rights or a broad understanding of solidarity, but one that arises rather out of (Christian) traditions of charity. Neoliberal interests were in this sense able to coopt social innovation, which is thus „Janus-faced" (Swyngedouw 2005). Social innovation today might still be aimed at improving individual life-worlds, but hardly targets systemic change and the transformation of those structures that create exclusion and poverty in the first place (Weinzierl/Novy 2016). At EU level, the Commission, under Manuel Barroso (2004-2014), played a key role in establishing this new understanding of social innovation, according to which, creativity and the engagement of society are to be used to counter budgetary constraints (Bureau of European Policy Advisors 2010: 27). Social innovation is thus increasingly incorporated into a neoliberal logic: activities get funded as long as they are functional for the marketisation logic and competitiveness (Jessop 2002; Moulaert/Nussbaumer 2005). Certainly, there are still projects in the field of education or the labour market that are historically rooted in the the older holistic understanding (Novy/Hammer/Leubolt 2009), but social inno-

vation today is dominated by a functionalist understanding of empowering individuals in terms of increasing their capabilities to participate in set structures, notably the labour market. Conflict and the transformation of structures, of modes of life and of production are no longer integral parts of social innovation. The old generation of social innovation saw participation at the project level as a first step towards a democratisation of society on a larger level. This is lacking today, and certainly more difficult to envision within the neoliberal project logic. Projects dependent on EU resources tend to be system-reproducing and conservative rather than system-altering, radical innovations (Edminston 2015). Participation and empowerment as *Ermächtigung*, as a collective process, would require a broader conceptualisation of social innovation oriented towards macro-processes, not merely the local level. At its core, this would require an understanding of social innovation as multi-dimensional and inherently political, whereby participation and representation are furthermore not reduced to formal citizenship and initiatives not reduced to approaches based on culturalisation.

Initatives such as *Vielfalter* need to strategically focus on creating knowledge alliances (Novy 2012) in order to promote structural change towards an emancipatory education system: this would be a long-term learning and research partnership that implies a transdisciplinary research process, i.e. the collective research activity of multiple, diverse actors from marginalised groups to policy makers. It would be characterised by bringing various forms of knowledge together in a partnership, with Paulo Freire's approach to education, which aimed at mobilising the resources of the oppressed by starting learning processes directly in the context of their lifeworlds and basing it on their participation in social activism in order to collectively overcome oppression (Novy 2012). A forum more conducive to long-term partnerships of multiple actors should be established in order for the so-far locally and politically scattered initiatives to collectively exert political pressure. Such a forum would have to be multilingual, in order to accommodate potential project leaders, who still face the challenge of a German-only application process.

A knowledge alliance has different objectives due to the different interests of the participants. In the case of Vielfater, its overall target should be the finding of answers to the *problématique* of „living together differ-

ently“ (Novy et al. 2012: 1874). Cohesion is not the sum of assimilated individuals, but a characteristic of a community, where unity in diversity is possible. This includes the right to equal participation on a societal level as well as the right to being different. The question is how equality can be promoted without fostering homogenisation and assimilation: how we can be equal, yet different. The existence of diversity has to become the standard of equality: a socially cohesive society is neither based on abstract universalism nor on identity-based communitarianism, but rather on a dynamic construction and recognition of particularity (Rosanvallon 2013).

1 This is showcased by the ImPRovE case studies, a large share of which deal with questions of interculture and inclusion across the three fields of education, housing and labour market.
2 The *Vielfalter* is one of the 31 case studies of the ImPRovE research project (2012-2016), which explores social innovation in the field of poverty and social exclusion in the EU (www.improve-research.eu). The findings of this article are therefore based on the collaborative research of Florian Wukovitsch, Andreas Novy and the author, within the ImPRovE framework: the representatives of the actors behind the Vielfalter (the IZ, WU and the ministry) were interviewed and a focus group with experts in the field and Vielfalter affiliates was held with a view to synthesising the findings of the interviews. In addition to the ImPRovE case study, the author conducted a further 15 semi-standardised interviews with 15 project leaders as well as an online questionnaire that was sent to all former and current project leaders.
3 See the introduction of this issue for an overview of definitions and approaches. The evolution of the concept of social innovation is furthermore discussed critically in the conclusion of this contribution.
4 In Austria understood as immigrants of the 1st and 2nd generation
5 The term Vielfalter, is a play on words: Vielfalt means diversity in German, Falter means butterfly.
6 Given the heterogeneity of Vielfalter funded projects, the chosen project cannot be seen as representative. But it serves to allow for a more detailed look into the workings of participation and empowerment. A sysnthesis of projects not presented in detail due to space constraints follows in section 3.2.
7 Western Union’s engagement in the Vielfalter is to be critically reflected in this light.

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Williams, Glyn (2004): Evaluating Participatory Development: Tyranny, Power and (Re)politicization. In: Third World Quarterly 25(3), 557-578. https://doi.org/10.1080/0143659042000191438

Abstract *Kohäsion ist in der EU eindeutig gefährdet. Um sie zu erreichen, ist es nötig, eine Balance zwischen Gleichheit und Verschiedenheit herzustellen. Dies ist nur möglich, indem sozialer Zusammenhalt als vielschichtiges Problem verstanden wird, das im Sinne eines ‚Zusammenlebens in Verschiedenartigkeit' gelöst werden muss. Dieser Artikel beschäftigt sich mit dem Beitrag zu sozialer Kohäsion einer sozial innovativen Initiative im Bereich der interkulturellen Bildung in Österreich, dem Vielfalter. Genauer noch geht er der Frage nach, wie im Vielfalter ‚Partizipation' und ‚Empowerment' – nur schwammig definierte, aber viel verwendete Begriffe – verstanden werden.*

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Social Innovation and Local Welfare: A Comparative Case Study on Housing First in Italy and Sweden

Abstract *Social innovation rises and grows within specific social and institutional conditions and relations, being at once an outcome and a driver of change of the contexts in which it is embedded. This paper sheds light on these processes, by studying the relationship between social innovation and local welfare configurations in the development of the same innovative practice, the Housing First model to contrast homelessness, in two different European cities: Bologna (Italy) and Stockholm (Sweden). The comparison allows us to highlight how the two local innovative practices, inspired by the same global model, have developed differently in these contexts and how they have adapted to the conditions posed by local welfare and housing configurations.*

Keywords *Social innovation, welfare systems, Housing First, homelessness, case-study research*

1. Introduction

The paper analyses the role of welfare configurations in shaping social innovation (and vice versa) by means of a critical contextualisation of two Housing First initiatives. Housing First is a service model aimed to combat homelessness. It was conceived in New York City in the early 1990s and then extensively spread in many North American and, more recently, European cities. It is widely recognised as a social innovation, since it radically challenges the way services to homeless people are conceived, designed, organised and delivered, as described in chapter two. The opportunity to study the implementation of the same innovative service model in two different

local contexts (Bologna, Italy and Stockholm, Sweden) was of special interest for the purposes of this research. The research strategy is based on case studies, which enable "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 2003: 13). The aim to grasp phenomena in their contexts makes the case-study strategy particularly suitable for this study. The case studies of Bologna and Stockholm were selected because they belong to different welfare and housing regimes. In the traditional classification of welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990; Ferrera 1993; Kazepov 2010), they respectively belong to the Southern so-called "familistic" model – with a low level of decommodification, residual role of the State and passive subsidiarity – and the Nordic model, based on universalism – which is characterised by generous decommodification and inclusive universal benefits mainly provided by the State. In the typology of housing regimes (Kemeny 1995, 2001), they are classified as a dual housing system (in the case of Italy) – characterised by a policy oriented towards home ownership, an unregulated and unsubsidised private rental market, and a residual social sector – and a unitary housing system (that of Sweden) – with a tenure-neutral housing policy, and a regulated and subsidised private sector that competes on equal terms with public housing. These configurations, and other local conditions, contribute to shaping the way Housing First is implemented in the two cities.

The relationship between the development of social innovation and local welfare systems is therefore the object of this paper, which develops as follows. In the first part, we briefly introduce the perspective of social innovation in a framework of changing welfare configurations. We then provide a description of the Housing First model and its spread from the United States to Europe and explain to what extent it can be considered as an innovative approach in the design and provision of services for homeless people. In the second part, we focus on the two case studies of Bologna and Stockholm. We provide a framework for the field research, presenting the main characteristics of the initiatives and of the local welfare and housing policies. We then describe how the two initiatives interact with the original model and the local welfare policies. The final part sums up the main results of the field research and proposes some general reflections on social innovation in a comparative perspective.

2. Social innovation and the configuration of welfare policies

A shared definition of social innovation is still to be agreed, despite the growing interest shown by policymakers, researchers, and socioeconomic operators around the world (cf. this issue's introduction). The definition of social innovation adopted in this paper refers to locally embedded practices, actions, and policies that help individuals and social groups to satisfy basic social needs for which they find no adequate solution in the consolidated welfare policies or the private market and that aim at promoting the structural transformation of social relations (Oosterlynck et al. 2013a). This perspective focusses on territorial development and historical institutionalism (Pierson 2004). It emphasises path dependency and path discontinuity characteristics in social innovative initiatives, as well as their implications for political, economic and societal institutions. Social needs and, consequently, possible solutions, differ on the basis of local socioeconomic and institutional conditions. Social relations, too, are structured at the micro level, and their transformation should be defined starting from specific local configurations. The local embeddedness of social innovation (Fontan/Klein 2004; Moulaert 2009) does not mean it ignores overall processes and transformations. On the contrary, the local is intended as the level where the effects of all other levels are conflated: global, supranational, national, and regional levels all influence local welfare configurations. Social innovation is both an outcome and a driver of change within the ongoing process of rescaling of social policies (Kazepov 2010). On the one hand, socially innovative practices can profit from the decreased strength of the central state, a stricter link with local public institutions, and an enlarged space given to new nonstate actors. On the other hand, they can suffer from a lack of support and coordination, traditionally provided by the central state.

The contexts in which social innovation takes form are diversified across Europe, due to different societal, cultural, economic, and historical frameworks. Innovative initiatives are also influenced by different configurations of welfare regimes, governance models and territorial organisations of social policies, as social innovation is essentially a practice-led field and a locally embedded practice (Young Foundation 2012; Oosterlynck et al. 2013b).

In our understanding, social innovation is not an attribute of a single social actor or sector, but it rather grows in the intersections and collaboration between different actors (public administrations, private for-profit actors, third sector and civil society organisations, social movements, informal groups) to cope with complex and multiple social needs and problems, and often changes their relationships, modifying their roles, tasks and forms of cooperation (Oosterlynck et al. 2013a).

This paper aims to disentangle these relationships between actors, practices and contexts, and to highlight the path dependency and path discontinuity relations between social innovation and different welfare contexts, with reference to a specific socially innovative practice (Housing First) and two local contexts (the cities of Bologna and Stockholm).

3. Housing First as a 'glocal' social innovation

Housing First (henceforth 'HF') is a model of intervention for addressing homelessness among people with mental health and addiction problems that was developed in New York City in 1992 by the nonprofit organisation Pathways to Housing. It radically challenges the traditional 'staircase' model, which considers housing as a final goal to be achieved only after individuals have successfully participated in psychiatric and addiction treatment programs (Johnsen/Teixeira 2010; Pleace 2011; Tsemberis 2010). These requirements prevent many people from accessing housing and push them into chronic homelessness (Pleace 2011; Tsemberis 2010). The HF model considers housing a basic human right to be provided without any requirement for compliance with psychiatric treatment or sobriety. Other basic principles of HF are a commitment to working with users as long as they need, the separation of housing from mental health and drug and alcohol services, consumer choice and self-determination, recovery orientation, and a harm reduction approach (Tsemberis 2010). In the original New York-based initiative, users have access to furnished apartments rented in the private market. If possible, they sign contracts directly with landlords in order to enjoy full tenancy rights. If landlords are unwilling to commit directly with HF's users, Pathways to Housing signs their contracts. The only two conditions are weekly visits from a social worker

and the payment of 30 per cent of the user's monthly income, if available, towards rent (Tsemberis 2010). The social support is provided separately from housing and it follows the methodology of assertive community treatment, a method of intervention for mental illness that aims to reduce risks of relapse and re-hospitalisation. Both the staff and treatment practices are transferred out of institutions, into local communities (Tsemberis 2010). Social support is delivered by an interdisciplinary team, which includes a psychiatrist, a health worker, a family specialist, a housing specialist, a substance abuse specialist, and an employment specialist (Tsemberis 2010). This support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and the services are delivered as much as possible in the user's environment: the dwelling, the neighbourhood and, sometimes, the workplace. The support addresses housing maintenance, health care, job search assistance, spare time activities, family relations, personal hygiene, and life styles (Tsemberis 2010). The model adopts a recovery orientation and a harm reduction approach. In any case, the cornerstone is the free choice of the users, who can decide which services to use and to what extent to use them.

The HF model has been widely spread in the United States, being both horizontally transferred among cities and vertically upscaled from the local to the national level (Stanhope/Dunn 2011; USICH 2015). In recent years, the new approach has also been used as a model for change in Europe, mainly for two reasons. First, the model has shown much better outcomes than the traditional staircase model, at least in terms of housing retention (Atherton/McNaughton 2008; Johnsen/Teixeira 2010; Pearson/Montgomery/Locke 2009; Pleace 2008). Second, a number of studies have demonstrated that HF is associated with decreased costs compared to traditional staircase-based services, considering that users of HF services significantly reduce their use of other services, such as shelters, hospitals and prisons (Gulcur et al. 2003; Tsemberis 2010).[1]

The local practices inspired by the original model present common features and differences depending on the local needs and institutional conditions (Atherton/McNaughton 2008; Busch-Geertsema 2013; Pleace 2011; Pleace/Bretherton 2013). Some of the HF services implemented in European cities show a high degree of fidelity to the original model (Pleace/Bretherton 2013); others are addressed to different homeless groups. In effect, the definition of homelessness elaborated by FEANTSA (2011)[2],

referred to as "Ethos", proposes a wide conception of homelessness, which also includes situations of housing vulnerability which are not included in the scope of the original HF model.[3] Access to affordable housing for vulnerable groups is a major concern throughout Europe, and this influences the way HF services are conceived and implemented, to the extent that a new concept, that of "housing-led services", has been introduced to describe services that present only some features of the original model, for example, providing low-intensity social support or addressing different target groups (ECCH 2011).

HF is widely recognised as a social innovation (Busch-Geertsema 2013) that has radically challenged the traditional way services to homeless people are conceived, designed, organised and delivered. However, if we refer to the definition of social innovation provided in section one, we should turn our attention to the local level, and recognise that the extent to which HF can be considered a socially innovative practice is highly context sensitive. Indeed, many basic features of Housing First directly derive from the experience of the supported housing service model, which emerged during the 1990s (Tabol et al. 2010). When HF was transferred to Europe, some countries, like Germany and the United Kingdom, had already implemented a well-established system of supported housing, providing homeless people with long-term housing solutions. In those countries, HF is not considered as a radical social innovation, as it is in other contexts. For these very reasons, each HF project should be analysed in relationship to the local policies and social relations.

4. Contexts and practices of Housing First in Bologna and Stockholm

Two case studies have been selected to analyse the dynamic relationship between social innovation and local welfare systems. They pertain to two different welfare and housing regimes and are embedded in the social and institutional relations of the two contexts where they have developed: the cities of Bologna, Italy, and Stockholm, Sweden. They draw on reflections, information and data collected within the European research project ImPRovE: Poverty, Social Policy and Innovation, which includes a study

on social innovation in the field of poverty, based on the analysis of 31 case studies of socially innovative practices, six of which concerned Housing First. The field research in Bologna and Stockholm was conducted between February and June 2014. Data collection corresponded to the protocols established within the ImPRove project (Kazepov et al. 2013), and used the following methods: a) Document analysis, including a detailed study of documents concerning the innovative experience (web sites, publications, formal agreements, evaluation reports, leaflets, brochures, internal reports, agreements, evaluations); b) analysis of institutional programmes, laws, strategies, statistics and research describing local policies on homeless and housing; c) three to five qualitative semi-structured interviews per case study conducted with people related to the organisations involved in the initiatives and other people having privileged insights on them and on the context (the aim of the interviews was to describe in depth the project, its genesis and potential, its organisation and network, the characteristics of the local context, and the policies on housing and homelessness); d) one focus group per case study with people involved in the innovative initiatives, aimed at discussing in depth the project and its innovative characteristics in relation to the context.[4]

5. Contexts: Housing and welfare policies in Bologna and Stockholm

The contexts where the two initiatives are developed are described in order to provide a background for the case studies. The main aspects influencing them are highlighted, especially in relation to local welfare and housing policies.

5.1 Bologna

50,724 homeless people have been reported in Italy by a study published by the National Institute for Statistics (Istat 2014). The vast majority of them are men (85.7 per cent), with a prevalence of foreign homeless people (58.2 per cent). 21.4 per cent of them have been in a state of homelessness for more than four years, 41.1 per cent for more than two years, and 17.4 per cent for less than three months. 23.7 per cent of the

Italian homeless population live in Milan, and 15.2 per cent in Rome. Two per cent of the Italian homeless population, that is 1,032 people, live in Bologna, a medium-sized city of 387,000 inhabitants. 51.6 per cent of them are foreign citizens.

Social welfare policies in Italy are regulated at the regional level, co-financed by the central state, regions and municipalities, and implemented by the latter. The municipality of Bologna has organised its welfare system through a central unit of coordination and six territorial social desks placed in the city districts. A public local agency coordinates the providers, which are mainly third sector organisations. Public shelters for adults (Italian and regular immigrants, aged 18–65 years old) are classified in four typologies on the basis of requirements for access and time of permanence, and bound to a gradual accomplishment of social and activation pathways, as in the staircase model. They can accommodate about 300 guests (550 during winter), are completely financed by public funds, and managed by third sector organisations. The city offers many other services to poor households and homeless people, such as canteens, toilets, and the distribution of essential goods.

Italian housing policy is residual and mainly oriented towards home ownership. Only six per cent of households reside in social rented dwellings, an exceptionally small number compared to the European standards (Istat 2013). In 2010, social rented houses in the province of Bologna numbered 16,542 (Province of Bologna 2012), but in the period 2007–2010, only 949 applications could be satisfied. The public supply is insufficient and the province estimates the deficit of houses in its territory at between 20,500 and 27,000 units (Istat 2013). The Municipal Housing Policy Sector provides measures to limit rent costs in the private market and manages the assignment of public social rented houses. In 2010, there were 13,098 demands for such housing, regarding 24,493 people. In 2012, the list for public houses contained 8,485 valid requests. Inclusion in the lists to access these provisions is based on economic and social criteria. Applicants must be in the local register of residents and accomplish a complicated procedure; both of these conditions disadvantage homeless people. Besides, these measures are not considered as part of the policies to combat homelessness, although at the end of a successful inclusion pathway, social workers can present a social evaluation to facilitate access.

5.2 Stockholm

The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare reports about 30,800 homeless in the country, including people in different precarious accommodations ranging from acute homelessness to inadequate or unsafe long-term conditions. Those living on the streets and experiencing acute homelessness number 4,500 people (NBHW 2011). Stockholm has about 900,000 inhabitants and 2,866 homeless people (Stockholms Stad 2014). Almost half of them (49 per cent) are 46–64 years old and the women are on average younger than the men. Fifty eight percent are reported to have substance abuse problems (38 per cent are mainly alcohol related, 39 per cent are mainly drug related, and 19 per cent involve both). In recent years, people experiencing housing difficulties are increasingly young adults and families with children, especially immigrant newcomers (Källmen et al. 2013).

In Sweden, social welfare policies are regulated at the national level and implemented at the municipal level. The traditional model of intervention on homelessness is based on the staircase logic. The municipalities are in charge of the provision of public housing. Each municipality owns a housing company, except for the city of Stockholm, which owns four companies. Since the 1990s, the municipal housing companies have been gradually transformed into market actors, after a long history of acting outside the market with the aim of promoting housing as a universal social right (Elsinga/Lind 2012). As a consequence, between 2000 and 2010, 120,920 dwellings were sold by public housing companies in Sweden, of which 41,990 were in Stockholm (Andersson/Magnusson Turner 2014). Access to the regular rent market is a tricky issue, especially due to the housing shortage, the high rental market prices, and the long waiting lists to access public housing. These conditions are particularly severe in Stockholm, where 551,756 people are registered on the municipal waiting list.[5] 64,618 people were added to the waiting list in 2015, the biggest number ever recorded in one single year: the number was 18,706 ten years before, in 2005.[6] As a result, the average waiting period is increasing year by year: it was 8.2 years in 2015, while the vast majority of registered candidates received a house within six years in 2007.[7] The average waiting period can be up to 16 years in the inner city.[8] As a consequence, the so-called secondary housing market is expanding, including not only

apartments subleased by social services to poor households, but also a growing black market that attracts young people in particular, as well as vulnerable households that do not meet the requirements to access the public stock reserved for social services (about 400 apartments).

6. Practices: The Housing First projects in Bologna and Stockholm

6.1 Bologna

The project Tutti a Casa is managed by the non-profit organisation Piazza Grande. It was the first experiment with the HF model in Italy. It started at the end of 2012 as a pilot project financed by the Bank Foundation Del Monte of Bologna and Ravenna, and its development has been very rapid: in August 2013, the association was managing about 40 private and four public apartments, hosting 160 formerly homeless tenants. Unlike the original model, the project does not include active users of drugs or alcohol. It addresses two target groups: adult homeless individuals coming from the streets or shelters with long-term difficult pathways and multiple needs (not necessarily with mental illness, but different combinations of economic poverty, unemployment or weak work positions, health, psychological, relational problems and so on), and households with minor children who are homeless or coming from inadequate, unsafe, or precarious accommodation.

Candidates are selected by a working group including professionals from Piazza Grande, the municipal social services, public health services, and some local social cooperatives for work inclusion. The assessment is mainly based on people's motivation and capacities, means and needs, and their willingness and potential to reach housing stability through the support of this integrated public-private network. In fact, it collaborates to provide the tenants with (a) an internship aimed at a more stable occupation to enable them to pay their rent, if they have no right to an elderly or disability pension; (b) support in the organisation and management of the apartment; and (c) health care at home and psychological and social care. These measures are decided case by case, depending on households' needs and resources.

The municipality of Bologna is actually the main partner of the project: the social services oversee the users in coordination with the public-private network and also provide limited and temporary economic subsidies in the most difficult cases. Thanks to an innovative agreement with the health services, the tenants who need ongoing aid (e.g., people in psychiatric care) receive assistance directly at home. Furthermore, a team of professionals from Piazza Grande, composed of a project manager, a psychiatrist, four social workers, and four psychologists, provide relational and organisational support to all the tenants. Individual weekly meetings are organised with the association's professionals and fortnightly group meetings among cohabitants in each apartment.

The apartments are mainly rented by Piazza Grande from private owners and are not free of charge. The main responsibility with respect to the contract and the payment of the rent falls on the association, which also provides the economic and formal guarantees, takes charge of the bureaucratic practices, and supervises the apartments' management. These are free services for the landlords, to encourage them to offer their houses for the project. The association has launched a social campaign to find houses to rent. Special agreements can be made, if Piazza Grande also takes over the renewal of the apartments.

The rent for households is about 150-200 euro per month, depending on their socioeconomic conditions, which is significantly below the market price (568 euro)[9], and includes the cost of utilities.

6.2 Stockholm

Bostad Först i Stockholms Stad is a pilot project of the municipality of Stockholm, started in 2010 to test the potential of the HF model. It is managed by the Social Affairs Division of the municipality, which leads a network comprising four city district administrations, the municipal housing company Svenska Bostäder, which provides the apartments, and the NGO Stadsmission, which offers social support to the tenants. The University of Lund works on the assessment of the project.

Homeless people are offered a trial period (from nine to 24 months) during which they sublet an apartment from the social services without any condition apart from paying their rent (when possible) and respecting the national Tenancy Act.[10] They are not expected to stop using drugs

and alcohol, and social measures, health therapy, or both, are provided if requested and due, but they are not conditions for keeping the accommodation.

The target group is homeless people, both with substance addiction and mental illness , with long-time homelessness pathways. A major difference between the original model and the Swedish experiment is that the former addresses people not engaged in structured pathways in the welfare system, while the latter involves people with a long history in the social services and poor results from traditional intervention.

The social workers of the district social services manage the access to the project. They select candidates with the required characteristics and conduct interviews to assess their motivation. When a new apartment is available, a meeting between all the partners involved in the project and the candidate is organised to explain the conditions for accessing the accommodation. During the trial period, the rental contract is signed between the housing company and the district service following the case. If there are no complaints during this period, the contract is transferred directly to the tenant, who gets access to the regular housing market.

The apartments for the project are provided by the public housing company Svenska Bostäder, using the stock reserved for the social services. The NGO Stadsmission provides social support to each tenant, coordinated by the case manager of the social services. Its social workers visit the apartments once a week. Their task is to monitor and support the tenants' strategies to keep housing stability and respect the Tenancy Act. The staff is available on call seven days a week and 24 hours a day for any emergency. The project is financed using the ordinary budget of the municipal social services dedicated to homelessness.

	Bologna – Italy	**Stockholm – Sweden**
Title	Tutti a casa (All at home)	Bostad Först i Stockholms Stad (Housing First in Stockholm)
Year of launch	2012	2010
Main organiser	Association Piazza Grande	Social Affairs Division of the Municipality of Stockholm
Type of organisation	Third sector	Public sector
Other organisations involved	Municipality of Bologna, Local Health Agency, Provincial centre for unemployed in Bologna, Social Cooperatives employing disadvantaged people, private houses' owners	Municipal public housing company Svenska Bostäder, Stockholm's Stadsmission NGO for social support, University of Lund, municipal Unit for homelessness and social services of four city districts
Type of network	Public-Third sector mixed	Mainly Public
Territorial dimension	Bologna and some Municipalities in the surroundings	Stockholm
Funds	Mainly private	Public
Financers and budget	Multiple sources: Bank Foundation Del Monte, private donors, Municipalities (mainly ordinary social services measures), rent paid by the beneficiaries	The Social Affairs Division of the Municipality of Stockholm funds the project (including rents) through the ordinary budget of social services for homeless people. Only a small additional budget is assigned to the project for publishing the results.
Aim	Housing-led intervention, social and health support, activation, gradual autonomy but without a temporal limit	Experimental intervention providing housing stability not bound to other treatment-related measures
Target	Families with minor children without a stable accommodation and homeless single adults	Acute and prolonged homeless people with substance addiction and mental illness

Beneficiaries	160 people (2012-2013)	35 people (2010-2014)
Type of accommodation	Four public and 40 private apartments rented by the association in the Municipality of Bologna and environs	24 public apartments reserved for social purposes
Houses' rent contracts	The rent contracts are between the association and public and (mainly) private owners	Trial period of nine-24 months with rental contracts established between the housing company and the social services. If successful, the contract is transferred to the tenant
Request to the tenants	The tenants have to pay their rent with the support of the association and measures activated by the network collaborating with the project	The candidate is only required to respect national Tenancy Act. A contract between the housing company and the local district is signed

Table 1: Main features of the Housing First projects in Bologna (IT) and Stockholm (SE)
Sources: Author's elaboration from field research

7. Similarities and variations: The Housing First model and local practices

7.1 Bologna

Tutti a Casa is inspired by the original HF model but also influenced by the ideas of the Italian psychiatrist Franco Basaglia (1981, 1982), which were crucial during the 1970s in promoting the national law establishing the closure of the asylums and the deinstitutionalisation of psychiatric patients. Some of the differences between Tutti a Casa and the original HF reflect this historical framework, such as the stress on relations as enabling and being part of empowering interventions.

The basic principle taken from the HF model is that access to housing should be granted to anyone. Piazza Grande provides homeless people and families with affordable apartments, mainly rented from private owners. The association shares the responsibility with the tenants for respecting the

established costs and conditions. If the tenants have incomes (pensions, social assistance benefits, or wages) they use part of these to pay the rent. Otherwise, a tailored solution is developed within the public-private network, supporting the project and negotiated with the tenant. Italy has never introduced a measure of minimum income and the municipal social services can provide only limited and temporary economic subsidies, paid internships, or both. The acceptance of activation measures, in order to be in a position to pay a rent, is a reason why active users of drug or alcohol who are not in treatment have not been included in the initiative: they are supposed to have more difficulties and to need specific support in accomplishing these goals. This is a major difference from the original HF model.

The attainment of the housing stability generated in the beneficiaries of Tutti a Casa a new demand: to be supported in their social integration in the new neighbourhood. This has become part of the support provided to tenants during the first period they are in the apartments: Piazza Grande's social workers participate in local public events with them and introduce them to strategic places for setting in the context, like parks, social centres for elder people, public libraries, shops, gyms, and so on.

The apartments are scattered throughout the city, as in the original HF model. Special attention is paid to avoiding any condition that might create a potential negative label for the tenants and thus reproduce processes of social exclusion. For example, the names on the doorbells are those of the tenants (even if the formal holder of the contract is the association) and the other people in the condominiums are not informed about the special status of the apartments.

7.2 Stockholm

Bostad Först was designed following quite exactly the original model as interpreted by the University of Lund (Knutagård/Kristiansen 2013), which promoted this approach in Sweden and has the task of monitoring the initiative's implementation. The mainstream strategy in the field of homelessness is based on the staircase model, and therefore the experiment represents a challenge for the Swedish social and housing services.

The target group is similar to the beneficiaries defined in the original model: the acute and long-time homeless, with both substance addiction

and mental illness. Following the model, the provision of housing is not conditional on participation in any social or health care programme. The only condition is to respect the Tenancy Act, as it is for all the other tenants in Sweden. For a trial period of nine to 24 months, tenancy contracts are signed by the social services of the local district. After this period, if there are not problems or complaints, the contract is transferred directly to the tenants, who have to pay 30 per cent of their income toward rent, when possible. This is meant to guarantee housing stability.

The social support was very 'light' in the first edition of the project. Social workers visited the tenants, provided information, and mediated, if necessary, with other services and institutions. A professional from the housing company acts as a mediator in conflicts with the neighbours.

Finally, as in the original model, the apartments are scattered-site independent houses. They are mainly concentrated in suburbs in North and South Stockholm, as they are less expensive and have apartments of the needed size.

Tsemberis' principles of Housing First	**Tutti a casa (All at home) in Bologna**	**Bostad Först i Stockholms Stad (Housing First in Stockholm)**
Housing as a basic human right	Limited – Access to stable accommodation as a pre-condition to social inclusion and as a collective (not only public) responsibility. Tailored measures help the tenants to pay an affordable rent.	Yes – Experimentation totally financed by public funds and with dedicated public houses housing. The houses are free of charge for tenants for nine-24 months, then they are required to pay their rent, if possible.
Respect, warmth and compassion for all clients	Yes – Continuous dialogue to understand and support personal needs, desires and capabilities.	Yes – Support by a staff available seven days / 24 hours, provision of health and social services if requested and due.

A commitment to working with clients for as long as they need	Yes – No fixed term for the accommodation and services.	Limited – The rent contract and social support can be renewed after the trial period, with the approval of the involved partners (substantial role of the housing company).
Scattered-site housing, independent apartments	Yes – Explicit avoidance of a concentration of the apartments, spread throughout the city and the suburbs.	Limited – Scattered-site independent housing, although mainly placed in some (less expensive) areas in the suburbs.
Separation of housing and services	Limited – Integration between housing provision and services to support social inclusion (economic, social, health and activation measures).	Yes – Access to housing is not conditional on participation in health or social programmes; the only condition is to respect the Tenancy Act and meet a social worker once a week.
Consumer choice and self-determination	Yes – Selection of tenants based on the assessment of conditions and motivation. Tailored intervention on multiple aspects, attention to tenants' needs, desires and capabilities.	Yes – Selection of tenants on conditions and motivation. Health and social services are provided only if requested.
A recovery orientation	Yes – Tenants are supported in managing the apartment (especially those in cohabitation), paying their rent (also through activation measures), and building relationships within the neighbourhoods.	Yes – Tenants meet a social worker once a week and are supported in their adaptation to the new house and respect of tenants' rules. The participation in any other social or health program is voluntary.
Harm reduction	No – At the moment, active drugs or alcohol-addicted people who are not in treatment are not included in the project.	Yes – Although participation in treatment programmes is not a condition for keeping the apartments, the project aims at reducing risks related to substance abuse.

Table 2: The Housing First original principles and their application in Bologna (IT) and Stockholm (SE)

Source: Tsemberis 2010: 18; Author's elaboration from field research

8. The Housing First practices and the innovation of local welfare

8.1 Bologna

Piazza Grande's experience in the field of homelessness was important in the design of the project, as it had a deep knowledge of the local social needs, resources, and networks. Its good reputation has been crucial for succeeding in fundraising strategies and finding low-cost houses to rent in the private market.

The main challenge for the association was how to help the tenants pay rent. Italy does not have a minimum income scheme, the municipality could not make available free public houses, and the economic subsidies are limited and temporary and thus inadequate to support housing stability. Excluding people who have old age or disability pensions, it is necessary to offer to the tenants paid job or internships. These opportunities are offered by a mixed network, including public services and third sector organisations. These measures are also supposed to complete the tenants' process of social inclusion, creating new relationships and reinforcing their self-confidence.

The initiative was born during a period of a crisis of local policies for homelessness, mainly due to increasing needs and decreasing public resources. The high cost of public shelters and the awareness that this solution leads to dependency on welfare provisions stimulated the research into new and more effective interventions. The combination of crisis and innovation should not be taken for granted: a deep crisis can reduce the creative potential and redirect resources to coping with emergencies while cutting investments in potentially promising experiments.

The support of the municipality of Bologna was crucial for the development of the initiative. The governance system of the local welfare is strongly horizontal and participatory, a condition that fosters the promotion and diffusion of social innovation. One year after the beginning of the project, the municipality decided to close a night shelter in order to earmark new resources to finance a public HF service to be managed in collaboration with Piazza Grande.

The number of houses and tenants involved in Tutti a Casa is growing in Bologna and the surrounding municipalities. The association was able to

present the initiative as a cost-effective new solution. Similar initiatives are being established in other Italian cities and regions and a national network of HF has been promoted by fio.PSD.[11] The network supports the establishment of new HF services providing training, networking, and evaluation (Consoli et al. 2016). Apart from this initiative, promoted entirely by the third sector, there is no public national strategy for implementing HF, mainly due to the regional and municipal aspect of the Italian welfare system and the lack of institutional mechanisms designed to identify and spread local best practices.

8.2 Stockholm

Bostad Först is completely financed by the municipality of Stockholm, and involves a mainly public network in the governance process (a third sector organisation has a limited role in the social support aspect). This initiative highlights the innovative potential of the public welfare institutions in this context. After the initial experimentation (2010–2014), the project was expanded in the second edition (2014–2016), with the number of available apartments increasing from 24 to 64, and becoming better integrated in the social welfare. The aim is to strengthen the multi-professional team, to better coordinate housing provision and care, social and economic support, substance abuse therapy, psychiatry, active labour market measures, and crime prevention. The purpose is to improve the initiative by better combining the strengths of the HF approach with those of the local welfare system. In particular, an innovative agreement between the municipal social services and the provincial mental health services was in the process of being signed at the time of the field research. It would be a relevant innovation in a context where the two services usually show a low degree of collaboration.

The structure of the national and local housing market was a major obstacle to launching the initiative, for two reasons. First, neither private landlords nor municipal housing companies (which act as market actors, as established by the law) are interested in providing apartments for these kind of initiatives, since they could rent them to more reliable and stable tenants. Out of four municipal companies operating in Stockholm, only one agreed to take part in the pilot initiative. Second, once a tenant has access to the regular housing market it is very difficult for the landlord to

terminate the tenancy. On the one hand, this fosters housing stability for the HF beneficiaries when they sign a direct contract after the training period; on the other hand, it undermines the willingness of landlords to participate since they are reluctant to accept tenants that could give them problems. Furthermore, vested interests are in action: public, private, and nonprofit organisations managing shelters and other similar forms of accommodation have strong interests in preserving the staircase model (Knutagård/Kristiansen 2013). So far, only seven out of 290 Swedish municipalities have started an HF project, despite the fact that the method has been promoted by the University of Lund as an evidence-based and cost-effective strategy.

Svenska Bostäder, the more socially-oriented public housing company in Stockholm, reserved 24 apartments for the pilot project. They are mainly concentrated in some areas in the northern and southern suburbs of Stockholm where cheaper dwellings are available. The small number of apartments does not currently create a problem of concentration of these tenants and the consequent labelling effects. However, this could become a problem in the future if the number of apartments increases: at least in terms of the promoters' goals, the model should become part of city welfare services.

9. Contexts and practices of Housing First: A synthesis

Both projects are inspired by the same model, but their implementation is shaped by different national and local welfare and housing configurations. Five main points can be highlighted.

1. The target groups are different. In the Swedish context, public investment allows the programme to address homeless persons with both addiction and mental health issues, separating housing and welfare measures, as in the original HF model. In the Italian project, houses are rented in the market and tenants have to fully pay their rent, although they are supported with welfare and activation measures. This entails the exclusion of active drug or alcohol users, who are perceived as too problematic to fulfil these aims.

2. In Stockholm, the capacity for innovation in public welfare institutions is evident, as the municipality drives the entire process of adaptation of the model to the local conditions. In Bologna, a complex mix of public-private resources was activated through the efforts of the leading association, while the public local welfare system became crucial in the institutionalisation process.
3. Starting from an urban context in the United States, the original HF model became a global model and then, in both cases, it came back to the local dimension. In Italy, it is mainly diffused through informal horizontal networks among different cities or through the national network of HF promoted by the third sector. In Sweden, there is the supervision of the University of Lund, which is also trying to build a "Swedish model" of HF (Knutagård/Kristiansen 2013). In any event, in both cases a structured vertical diffusion is lacking: supralocal institutions (such as the regions or the state) do not intervene to evaluate and mainstream the model.
4. Both projects try to overcome the staircase model, which is considered to be ineffective and inefficient in dealing with homelessness. In Bologna, the initiative takes into particular account the multidimensional aspects related to homelessness (health problems, relational difficulties, unemployment, and the like). In Stockholm, the quality of the social support and of the attention to health problems emerged as a weakness of the first version of the initiative, mainly because of the lack of coordination between municipal social services and provincial mental health services. The second version of the project aims to better integrate the two components.
5. Housing stability is considered in itself a socially inclusive and empowering instrument, which allows tenants to regain full social citizenship. However, this is hardly considered an automatic outcome, especially for the long-term homeless, who often present complex and multidimensional problems. The support provided in Bologna to tenants' social integration in the new neighbourhood addresses this concern. This specific attention stems from the bottom-up, participatory perspective historically adopted by the leading organisation. The more managerial approach adopted by the municipality of Stockholm seems less adequate to pursue the goal of social integration.

10. Final reflections from a comparative perspective

Despite their very different welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999; Ferrera 1996; Kazepov 2010), both Sweden and Italy consider homelessness a social issue whose resolution belongs to the social policy sector and not to the housing sector. This logic is consistent with the dominant paradigm based on the staircase model, where the accomplishment of the aims of the social services is a prerequisite for homeless people to access stable accommodation. However some features of the two HF practices show a certain continuity with the welfare regimes in which they are embedded.

The Scandinavian welfare model is characterised by a managerial governance style and a pervasive role for the state (Kazepov 2010; Oosterlynck et al. 2013b); both features are evident in the HF initiative in Stockholm. This guarantees strong economic and political support for socially innovative initiatives, which are integrated into broader, but mainly top-down, national and municipal political strategies. The managerial approach tends to concentrate its efforts on achieving the expected results more than on promoting new approaches, such as bottom-up participation, that could slow down the attainment of the anticipated outcomes. This context could reduce the innovative potential of HF, which is mainly considered as another possible way of managing homelessness, more than as an opportunity for promoting new social relations where homeless people can play a proactive role. This approach promotes a sort of 'conservative' social innovation which, being promoted within the system by strong public actors, tends to produce substantial effects through linear processes instead of challenging existing social structures and radically transforming social relations.

The framework of passive subsidiarity which characterises Italy leaves instead enough room for third sector organisations' initiatives, yet often without adequate financial support (Kazepov 2010). The socioeconomic crisis worsened the situation in recent years: the retrenchment of the welfare state both at national and local level and the growth of the demand for social benefits and services led many public and private actors to react in a conservative way, by trying to preserve the existing services rather than investing in innovative ones. In the case of Bologna, a private actor,

the Bank Foundation, was fundamental in sustaining the start-up phase of the project, which was then supported by the local public administration, without a preceding broader strategy. This confirms a certain degree of chance in the emergence and diffusion of social innovation in Italy and a large, albeit confused, space for less established actors, processes, and ideas.

For both projects, the main difficulty lies in the possibility of mainstreaming. In Italy, this is mainly due to the fragmentation of the welfare system and the weak national coordination, although the recently established national network of Housing First is a promising initiative for addressing the challenge of mainstreaming. In Sweden, the vested interests of public, private, and nonprofit organisations managing shelters tend to preserve the staircase model, despite the fact that the University of Lund has provided evidence-based results of the effectiveness of the HF method, both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

1 This is a contested point. See, for example, Rosenheck 2010; Stanhope/Dunn 2011.
2 Fédération Européenne des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec le Sans-Abri (European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless).
3 "Ethos" stands for the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion, available at http://goo.gl/PXhZ2p.
4 Drawing on the data collected, a report for each case study has been drafted (see: Colombo/Saruis/Kazepov 2016 and Saruis, Colombo/Kazepov 2016).
5 Stockholm Housing Agency (2016): Bostadskön i siffror. https://bostad.stockholm.se/statistik/statistiktjansten/. Last consultation 5th October 2016.
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8 Stockholm Housing Agency (2016): Bostadskön i siffror. https://bostad.stockholm.se/statistik/summering-av-aret-2015/. Last consultation 5th October 2016.
9 Istat (2015). VII Rapporto sul mercato delle locazioni in Italia. https://goo.gl/OaXn9B
10 Tenants' rights are particularly strong in Sweden, so that it is very difficult for a landlord to dismiss a tenant, except for two conditions: lack of payment for three months or exceptional disturbances caused to the neighbours. These are the rules to be respected by HF tenants.
11 Federazione Italiana Organismi per le Persone Senza Dimora (Italian Federation of Organizations for homeless people).

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Abstract *Soziale Innovation gründet auf spezifischen sozialen und institutionellen Voraussetzungen und erwächst aus Beziehungen. Sie ist zugleich Folge und Triebkraft jener sich wandelnden Verhältnisse, in die sie eingebettet ist. Der vorliegende Beitrag beleuchtet diese, indem er anhand eines innovativen Modells, dem „Housing First"-Programm gegen Obdachlosigkeit, die Beziehung zwischen sozialer Innovation und lokalen wohlfahrtsstaatlichen Strukturen analysiert. Als Fallbeispiele dienen zwei unterschiedliche europäische Städte: Bologna (Italien) und Stockholm (Schweden). Der Vergleich verdeutlicht, wie lokale innovative Praxen, die vom gleichen globalen Referenzmodell inspiriert wurden, sich unterschiedlich entwickelten und an lokale wohlfahrtsstaatliche und wohnbaupolitische Strukturen angepasst wurden.*

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