



(Dis)Empowerment in Transformative Social Innovation

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WELCOME

The Transition Academy partners with universities, individuals, innovation hubs and training institutes. We co-create learning environments that empower people to Think and Act for radical Change.

EDUCATION

We offer professional training, (post-) academic education and innovative learning trajectories on the theory and practise of transitions.

THINK ACT CHANGE



POWER IN TRANSITION

*Empowering Discourses on
Sustainability Transitions*

Flor Avelino

Power & empowerment modules

- 8-day Masterclass Transitiemanagement
 - since 2010 1x per year, since 2014 2x per year = 250
- 6-day Masterclass Transitie Sociaal Domein
 - since 2014 = 30
- 6-day Masterclass Sociale Innovatie
 - 2015-2016 = 36
- 4-day Transitie4Daagse
 - 2014-2016 = 30
- 1-6 day Incompany trainings
 - since 2011 = 100
- 1-day/ 1-module courses / lectures
 - since 2011 = 200
- 5-day Masterclass Societal Transitions
 - 2015-2016 = 15
- Total: 600+ policy-makers, entrepreneurs, activists

Conceptualising empowerment

- Empowerment \approx person's belief that (s)he can influence surroundings/ events towards desired ends
 \approx process in which actors come to believe that they can and want to exercise power
- Conditions for power:
 - Access to resources
 - Strategies
 - Willingness
- Organisational psychology: empowerment as “intrinsic motivation” versus “extrinsic motivation” (Thomas & Velthouse 1990)

Intrinsic v.s. Extrinsic Motivation

- Extrinsic motivation depends on supervision/ control, punishment/reward by others
- Disadvantages:
 - dependency
 - costs of supervision increase
 - punishment & reward wear off with use
- Intrinsic motivation comes forth from positive experiences that individuals themselves derive directly from their activities (“task assessments”)

Thomas & Velthouse 1990

Intrinsic motivation ≈ having a sense of:

IMPACT ≈ *“I can make a difference”*

COMPETENCE ≈ *“I am good at what I do”*

MEANING ≈ *“I believe in what I do”*

CHOICE ≈ *“I can determine what I do”*

Empowerment >

challenge for transition management

IMPACT ≈ *“WE can make a difference”*

COMPETENCE ≈ *“WE are good at what WE do”*

MEANING ≈ *“WE believe in what WE do”*

CHOICE ≈ *“WE can determine what WE do”*

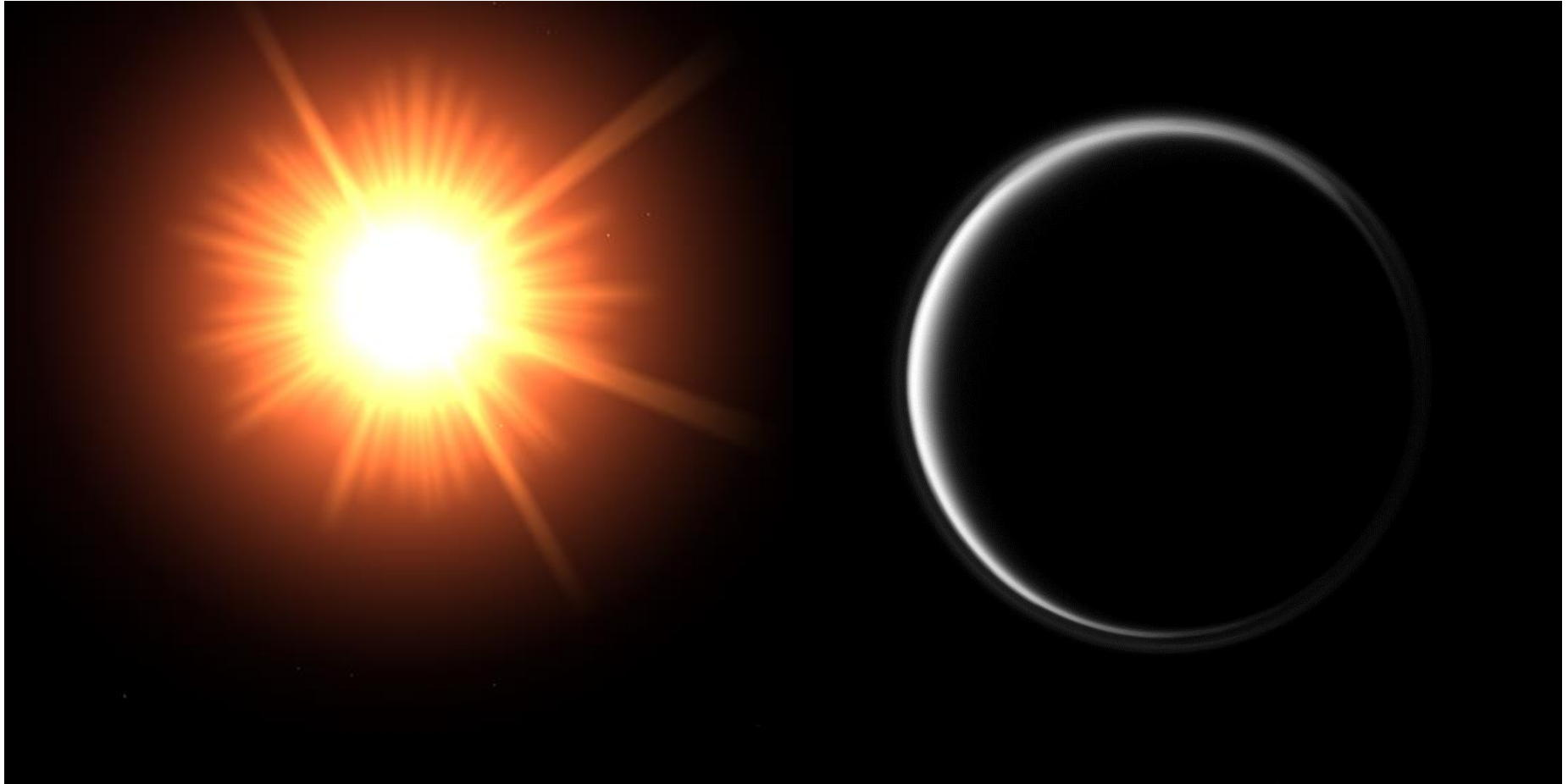
Interpretative styles

ATTRIBUTION ≈ *cause and effect*

EVALUATION ≈ *success and failure*

VISIONING ≈ *future events, potentiality*

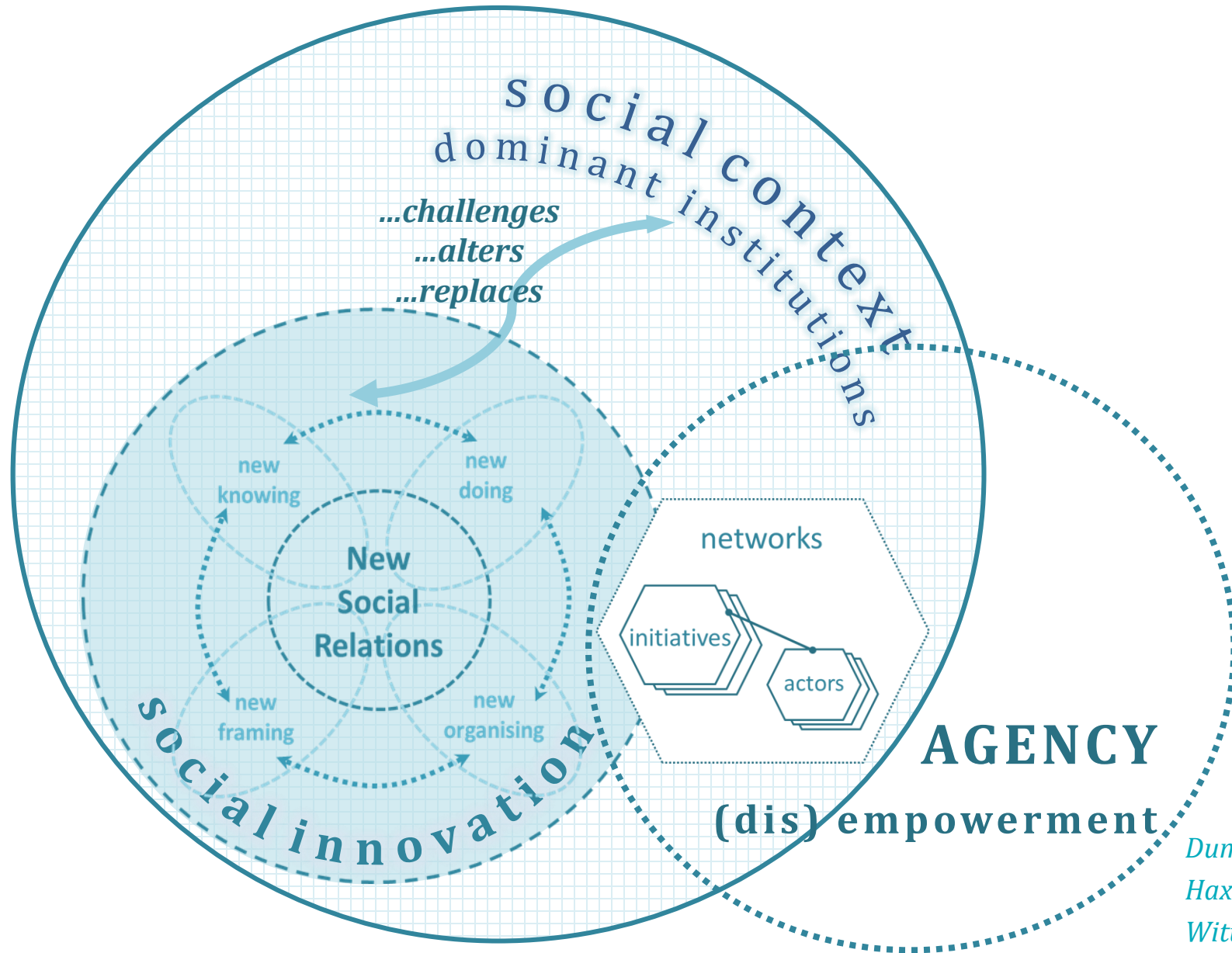
(dis)empowerment





*What are unintended,
disempowering effects
in processes of
change & innovation?*

Agency in transformative social innovation



Dumitru et al. 2016
Haxeltine et al. 2015
Wittmayer et al. 2015
Avelino et al. 2014

Unpacking motivation

social psychology & self-determination theory

Beyond dichotomy extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation

Controlled motivation:

- externally regulated* - *reward/punishment*
- introjected regulation* - *status-driven*

Autonomous motivation

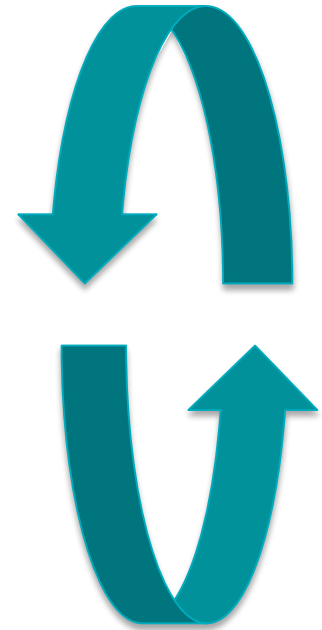
- identification* - *part of one's identity*
- integrated* - *aligned with one's values*
- intrinsic - *natural, inherent drive*

Conceptualising empowerment

social psychology & self-determination theory

Empowerment \approx process in which people...

- satisfy basic **psychological needs**:
 - autonomy
 - competence
 - relatedness
- develop **autonomous** motivation
(identified + integrated + intrinsic)
- **experience** impact and resilience



Dimensions of (dis)empowerment?

(as an intuitive heuristic...)

- Autonomy - *I can determine what I do*
- Competence - *I'm good at what I do*
- Belonging - *I am related to others*
- Impact - *I can make a difference*
- Resilience - *I can adapt and recover*
- => Meaning - *I believe in what I do*



*What are your
experiences with
(dis)empowerment
?*

Reflecting on (dis)empowerment in relation to transformative social innovation

Sharing in small working groups:

- Personal experience where you felt empowered
- Personal experience where you felt **dis**empowered
- Discuss what made it (dis)empowering
- Keep different dimensions in mind
(autonomy, competence, belonging, impact, resilience, meaning)

Plenary feedback & discussion:

- (How) did you use which dimension(s)?
- Which dimensions did you find most/least useful?
- Other dimensions/ approaches for meaningful exchange?

Thank you.

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