The International Francqui Conference 2014

How can social innovations and new democratic practices contribute to the transition?

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The EU’s Fifth Project: Transitional Governance towards Sustainable Societies

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1. How can social innovations contribute to the transition towards sustainable societies?
Intrinsic motivations: convictions, values

Extrinsic motivations: penalties, rewards, injunctions
Culture and Identity-Protective Cognition: Explaining the White-Male Effect in Risk Perception

Dan M. Kahan, Donald Braman, John Gastil, Paul Slovic, and C. K. Mertz*

Why do white men fear various risks less than women and minorities? Known as the “white-male effect,” this pattern is well documented but poorly understood. This article proposes a new explanation: identity-protective cognition. Putting work on the cultural theory of risk together with work on motivated cognition in social psychology suggests that individuals selectively credit and dismiss asserted dangers in a manner supportive of their cultural identities. This dynamic, it is hypothesized, drives the white-male effect, which reflects the risk skepticism that hierarchical and individualistic white males display when activities integral to their cultural identities are challenged as harmful. The article presents the results of an 1,800-person study that confirmed that cultural worldviews interact with the impact of gender and race on risk perception in patterns that suggest cultural-identity-protective cognition. It also discusses the implications of these findings for risk regulation and communication.
The polarizing impact of science literacy and numeracy on perceived climate change risks

Dan M. Kahan¹*, Ellen Peters², Maggie Wittlin³, Paul Slovic⁴, Lisa Larrimore Ouellette³, Donald Braman⁵ and Gregory Mandel⁶

Seeming public apathy over climate change is often attributed to a deficit in comprehension. The public knows too little science, it is claimed, to understand the evidence or avoid being misled¹. Widespread limits on technical reasoning aggravate the problem by forcing citizens to use unreliable cognitive heuristics to assess risk². We conducted a study to test this account and found no support for it. Members of the public with the highest degrees of science literacy and technical reasoning capacity were not the most concerned about climate change. Rather, they were the ones among whom cultural polarization was greatest. This result suggests that public divisions over climate change stem not from the public’s incomprehension of science but from a distinctive conflict of interest: between the personal interest individuals have in forming beliefs in line with those held by others with whom they share close ties and the collective one they all share in making use of the best available science to promote common welfare.

literacy—that is, concern should increase as people become more science literate.

Second, and even more important, SCT attributes concern with climate change to limits on the ability of ordinary members of the public to engage in technical reasoning. Research in psychology posits two discrete forms of information processing: system 1, which involves rapid visceral judgments that manifest themselves in various decision-making heuristics, and system 2, which requires conscious reflection and calculation. Most members of the public, according to this research, employ system 1 reasoning without resorting to more effortful system 2 processing. Although system 1 works well for most daily contingencies, ordinary citizens’ predominant reliance on heuristic rather than analytic modes of reasoning is viewed as leading them to underestimate climate change risks, which are remote and abstract compared with a host of more emotionally charged examples, terrorism). If this position is correct, one would also expect concern
2. Participatory governance
Initial observation
Innovative role of participation of non-state collective actors in transition pathways
General framework: participatory governance at various levels and stages of the transition pathways

Source: Plummer and FitzGibbon, 2004, *JEO* 70: 68
Defining feature: direct involvement of users/citizens in collective decision making

User Citizens

Access
Use
Management
Exclusion
Selling
Core benefits

Participation of non-state collective actors in social innovations for transition

Rights based: rights of all social groups to take part in transition processes

Process based: processes of social learning; changes in values, norms and understanding

Outcome based: effective collective action

Transition to sustainable societies
Motivations in the EU (2011). Source: Eurostat
Motivations in a sample of 35 transition initiatives in 7 EU countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Climate change</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Water pollution</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Air pollution</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Man-made disasters</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Natural disasters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. The impact on our health</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Depletion of natural resources</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Growing waste</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Loss in biodiversity</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Agricultural pollution</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. The use of genetically</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Urban problems</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Impact of current</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Our consumption</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social innovation as a stepping stone towards resilience

**Landscape level**
Substitution of natural, financial and technological capital for efficiency

**Regime level**
Expert led formal institutions for implementation

**Niche level**
Social innovations

**Resilience of complex coupled social-ecological systems**

**Adaptive participatory governance tools**
3. Towards horizontal mechanisms of participation for social learning
Focus on extrinsic motivations and existing actor identities

Lack of synergies between formal and informal mechanisms

Expert led and top-down participation

Empirical pitfalls of existing policy support for participatory governance
Case 1: agro-environmental measures

Budget: 20 billion EUR (for 2007-2013)

Legal basis: integration of environmental issues in all EU policies and coherence of all policies with its environmental regulations (EC Treaty / TFEU)
Large scale mixed-method research on farmers’ transition behaviour under the scheme

Many farmers adhere WITHOUT any resulting change in environmental behaviour

However, for a same level of subsidy, behavioural change is correlated with a regular interaction with non-state collective actors: mainly non-profit environmental associations and research partnerships.
Factors of success across the case studies

Inclusive decision making

Stage of the project matters in the choice of the appropriate mechanism: bridging networks important in mature projects

Role of participation most important when non-market values play a bigger role

Case 2: motivating biodiversity leadership
4. Overcoming the conventional approach to rationality in the theory of democratic decision making
Towards collaborative modes of rationality

Monitoring of the collaborative governance process: incentives, structures, assessment and leadership that sustain cooperation

Knowledge production by the actors: including knowledge bridging organisations, community spokespersons, knowledge co-production, etc.
5. Conclusion and future outlook
Concluding comments

• Overcoming lock-ins: generating social learning through participatory governance

• Combining formal mechanisms with support for informal networks for social innovation and social learning

• Promoting knowledge co-production and process assessment as a different approach to rationality
The role of the EU in supporting social innovations that lead the transition

How to better promote transition across EU countries?

(i) aligning macro-economic policies and budgetary constraints with the need to allow and encourage investments that support the transition;

(ii) fostering exchanges of good practices and encouraging sociodiversity;

(iii) capacity building of social actors;

(iv) by encouraging a territory-based approach to social innovations.