WP 3: Analysis of success factors

Deliverable 3.2: Summary reports on case study findings

Reference code: TESS – D3.2

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Project Title: Towards European Societal Sustainability
Contract Number: 603705
Title of report: Deliverable 3.2: Summary reports on case study findings
Reference code: TESS – D3.2

Short Description:
This deliverable is a compilation of reports on the 14 community-based initiatives (CBIs) that have been studied in depth in TESS Work Package 3. It briefly explains the way in which the 8 partners collected the interview data across 6 countries. It also describes the methodological and participatory process by which the analysis was planned and executed. A short section presents background information on each case study.

The bulk of the report consists of summaries of analytically relevant qualitative data from the case studies. The data is organised into 5 themes: Power and politics within CBIs; Governance and governing relations within CBIs; Aspirations and Rationalities within CBIs; CBIs’ trajectories; and CBIs’ relationship with money. Each thematic thread summarises and reflects the data drawn from one or more initiatives in each of the 6 countries as provided by project partners. A bullet-point list summarises the key concepts in each theme. The deliverable ends with a short conclusion.

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Made available to: Public

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Internal Reviewers: Joshua Msika (JHI)
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List of Abbreviations

CBI  Community-based Initiative
DoW  Description of Work
I. Introduction: methodological approach

WP3 focuses on assessing the trajectories of community-based initiatives over time and their distribution in terms of space, communities and members. This involves a close examination of the processes and conditions that favour the emergence of bottom-up initiatives, and an evaluation of the societal, social, attitudinal, and behavioural transformation processes which facilitate them. We also assess the limiting factors and constraints for initiatives’ institutionalisation and up-scaling, including factors at various scales. Last, we analyse how institutional arrangements and change influence socio-technical systems aiming at transition, while enhancing prosperity and wellbeing. Special interest lies in community-based initiatives cutting across more than one domain/sector, and in assessing how the initiatives enhance resilience and social innovation. In this WP, we also assess the extent to which initiatives contribute to social and environmental equity and the constraints they face to be more environmentally just. The research approach undertaken here is based on standard qualitative analysis where transcribed interviews are analysed on the basis of coding categories associated with (previously determined) research questions. The information from the coding work is then analysed and reorganized around the previously determined research questions, where analytical statements are backed by quotes. The detailed steps of this process are outlined below. The selection of initial research question and methodological approach for data collection was already presented in D.3.1, which explains why this deliverable is exclusively focused on descriptive data analysis.

Between May 2015 and December 2015 partners were involved in five main types of responsibilities, which can be summarized as Task 3.3 as per the DoW (presented in Figure 1).

Figure 1. Data Analysis Process WP3

1. Explorative analysis of transcribed interviews

2. Definition of five thematic areas

3. Preparation of manuscript outline and coding categories on each thematic area

4. Coding (NVIVO) of all interviews

5. Preparation of 10-page memos on each theme

6. Preparation of Deliverable 3.2
Firstly, as part of Task 3.3 a step-wise analysis of initiatives’ success-factors and constraints was initiated, recognizing the emergence of innovative technologies and business models. Using the transcribed semi-structured in-depth interviews (conducted as part of Task 3.2) all partners conducted an exploratory analysis of the WP3 interview data (interviews with CBI members and external stakeholders), exploring the themes and issues that arose during interviews (see Appendix 1.1). The exploratory analyses consisted of 3-page documents, including some preliminary answers and reflections based on the main research questions and themes at the centre of WP3. These documents were circulated among all partners and used as feed-ins for the TESS consortium meeting on May 26th (Edinburgh) to discuss next steps. A document summarizing all preliminary analytical points emerging out of the exploratory analysis was prepared by UAB and JHI and used as a discussion grounder for the meeting (see Appendix 1.2).

Secondly, at Edinburgh in May 2015, one full day was dedicated to discussions and feedback sessions in a large and in smaller groups, where the outstanding ideas (those which have not been dealt with the literature) and associated themes (as emerging from the transcribed interviewers) were brought up and consequently grouped in categories. The meeting was based on participatory techniques for collaborative research which enhanced creativity and innovation for the planning of more structured analysis techniques and procedures (See Appendix 1.3). As a result the following five thematic clusters emerged for further analysis, building on the original research questions selected by WP (see Appendixes 1.1 and 1.2 for a list of research questions): “CBI’s evolution, or ‘Trajectories of Community-based initiatives’”; “Power and politics”; “Governance and governing relations”; “CBI’s Aspirations and Rationalities”; and “Money and Community-based initiatives”. The five thematic areas were then expanded in relation to previously set research questions and reflected the data obtained by partners.

Third, smaller teams of researchers were established to work on each thematic area, each headed by one coordinator. Researchers from each partner organization joined one to two thematic research teams based on their interest and relevance of the particular initiative for the particular theme. See Table 1 for a distribution of the themes per partners/initiatives. In June 2015, the small teams prepared outlines (of the potential manuscripts) on each theme, deepening the research questions into more detailed categories and setting clear codes, or short phrases, around which qualitative data analysis could take place (see Appendix 1.4). The outlines followed a common structure based on: a short introduction as to the theme’s relevance in the literature, a short note on the results, key areas and points to be analysed and a discussion, presenting the possible messages that could arise from the results. Once outlines were elaborated for each theme a list of codes was jointly developed and agreed upon through a series of phone-conferences between partners. The coding framework (for each of the five themes) was finalized in July 2015 and tested on one of the English language interviews and one or two of partners’ own CBI interviews. The coded interviews were then shared and analysed for potential misreading or incongruences of the codes by theme coordinators. Eventually, the coding frameworks were fine-tuned through group phone-meetings and prepared for application to all transcribed interviews in September 2015. Attention was particularly paid to overly specific or overly broad categories, editing unclear formulations, quotations ‘length and density; use of double coding; formatting and disagreements on coded texts between researchers (see Appendixes 1.5 and 1.6).

Fourth, after receiving training in the use of qualitative softwares (in our case Nvivo), WP3 researchers coded the interviews from (at least) one CBI per country for each theme.

Fifth, once coding was finalized (early October 2015) partners used the (manuscript) outlines and associated research questions prepared earlier to write an analytical summary of the coded data under each theme, based on selected quotes to illustrate key findings. This involved a period of intensive writing (and translation) for non-English-speaking countries. These texts, referred here as ,the memos’ are about 10 page long and follow a similar structure, elaborated
by UAB and based on the outlines initially prepared, (see Appendix 1.7). Each memo has a short introduction, followed by a discussion structured around each of the in-depth research questions, and closes with a conclusion as to the main insights and their relevance for the factors of success of community initiatives. A total of 29 memos were developed, with between

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5 and 6 documents per theme. The thematic memos were completed by mid-November 2015 and further refined upon their review by each of the main five themes’ coordinator. The memos themselves can be found in the appendices of this deliverable, but their key findings are summarized in Section II of this deliverable. The memos have two versions: a shorter (10-page version) for the deliverable and a longer version (up to 22 pages) for further use for academic papers.
The final submission of this memo has been delayed by 2.5 months because of the large amount of data to be coded and analysed, as well as due to the revisions WP3 researchers needed to submit to each theme leader (upon their review by the theme leaders in November 2015), and the need to further synthesize the memos into an overall summary for deliverable 3.2. That said, the late delivery of D3.2. is not putting a burden upon WP4, nor on the production of the Deliverable 3.3. since WP3 researchers have been continuing to work on further tasks since the submission of their individual memos.

**Corresponding timeline**

1. **Explorative analysis of transcribed interviews**
   - *April - May 2015*: Exploratory analysis of the WP3 interview data, including some preliminary answers and reflections based on the main research questions and themes
   - *May 2015*: Preparation of a document summarizing all preliminary analytical points emerging out of the exploratory analysis and associated summaries

2. **Definition of five thematic areas**
   - *25th May 2015*: Team meeting to jointly discuss findings with all consortium members (in Edinburgh/UK) and development of following five thematic clusters: *Power and politics within CBIs; Governance and governing relations within CBIs; Aspirations and Rationalities within CBIs; CBIs’ trajectories; CBIs’ relationship with money.*

3. **Preparation of manuscript outline and coding categories within each thematic area**
   - *June 2015*: Preparation of potential manuscript outlines on each theme
   - *June-August 2015*: Preparation, testing and refinement of codes for interview analysis

4. **Coding (NVIVO) of all interviews of (at least one CBI) per theme**
   - *September 2015*: Nvivo Training + Coding for the five themes of the transcripts (and meeting notes) involving (at least one) CBI per country

5. **Preparation of 10-page memos on each theme**
   - *October – November 2015*: Preparation of 29 memos (between 5 and 6 memos per theme)

6. **Preparation of Deliverable 3.2**
   - *December 2015*: Preparation of Deliverable 3.2 and an outline focusing on success factors within each theme (preparation for Deliverable 3.3)
   - *January 2016*: Deliverable 3.2 submitted for internal review
   - *February 2016*: Deliverable 3.2 finalized

**Next steps**
   - *January – April 2016*: Summarizing findings on success factors along each thematic area (preparation of a Report on qualitative success factors, Deliverable 3.3 as per DOW)
II. Summary reports on case study findings

This section presents the main findings arising from the memos submitted by the TESS partners for the following themes: Trajectories of Community-based initiatives; Power and politics; Governance and governing relations; Aspirations and Rationalities; and “Money and Community-based initiatives”. We first briefly describe the CBIs studied in each country. Next we examine each theme in turn, drawing on the most relevant and salient initiatives to address the themes’ guiding research questions. The memos themselves are included in the Appendices.

1. Description of the community-based initiatives (CBIs) studied

The following list of initiatives, referred as “key initiatives” in TESS, have been studied through detailed semi-structured interviews, conducted with several of their members and external stakeholders. Information on a few CBIs, referred in TESS as “supportive initiatives”, has also been drawn and coded when longer narrative responses to the Data Assessment Sheet elaborated and conducted within WP2 have been given.

Finland

The Herttoniemi Food Co-operative (HFC) is a community-supported bio-dynamic agriculture project close to Helsinki, which is managing 0.2 hectares of land, owned by approximately 200 households. The HFC managed to raise its own capital and invest in machinery and a green house. The farm, run by two full-time employees grows around 40 different types of vegetables. Work is distributed between them, interns, work-camps, and members of the cooperative, who are organized in groups, managed by a board.

The Eno energy co-operative is a social enterprise providing inexpensive heat from local (left-over) wood for the local community, thus decreasing reliance on imported oil. Wood sellers are furthermore provided with a fixed price for their wood to retain money in the local economy and create more jobs, while reducing carbon emissions.

“Recycling Centre” (RC) is a not-for-profit recycling enterprise (shop) located in Southern Finland and running 5 stores in which donated objects are sold. The CBI, dedicated to reducing waste and increasing environmental awareness has been active for over 20 years and presently employs more than 400 people. The majority of the employees have been long-term unemployed who obtained a job at RC through governmental subsidies.

Germany

Foodsharing is a network of individuals and retail shops working to reduce food waste. It operates in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. It originally started with individuals doing “dumpster diving” who intended to legalize the act of saving food which had been thrown away by supermarkets. It is now organized through online platforms, where members can offer (edible) food that would otherwise be wasted (to each other). Unwanted food can also be brought to openly accessible shelves or refrigerators called “fairteiler”. These are openly accessible shelves or refrigerators. The online food-sharing platform is also available to retailers, such as bakeries and supermarkets that are willing to donate the (edible) food they would otherwise throw away. When there is an established cooperation, the retailer can decide

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1 Dumpster diving refers to individuals recuperating food which has been thrown away, or dumped in containers, despite the fact that it is still of sufficiently high quality.
how often a “food-saver” shall come to the store to pick up food. Currently food-sharing has more than 11,000 members and 2,000 cooperating retailers.

**Bürger Energie Berlin (BEB)** is an energy cooperative aiming to acquire the energy grid of Berlin and change the energy mix towards renewable energy only. As of 2015, it has raised €11 million from 2300 members for purchasing a grid worth €2 billion. The money is saved on a bank account and not used for campaigns, which are supported by external stakeholders and sponsors. The CBI started in 2012, inspired by the experiences of the city of Schönau, where a cooperative bought the energy grid in the 1990s. Due to procedural errors, the bidding process has been paused until the end of 2015. This time has been used by BEB to raise awareness on public participation in energy politics and the necessity of changing the electricity mix in the city.

**Italy**

**Association Ciclonauti** is a community bike repair shop working to promote sustainable mobility through the promotion of a cycling culture in an urban context. Their primary objective links closely with their political vision for a more sustainable, liveable and just city. This is particularly relevant in Rome, which suffers from a series of mobility issues: heavy traffic and congestion from high individual car and scooter use, a weak and underserved public transportation system, and a lack of cycling infrastructure such as bike lanes, paths, and traffic lights. The CBI is a spin-off of the Critical Mass movement, initiated by bicycle activists gathering once a month to reclaim “the right to be the traffic”. Over time groups realized they needed physical spaces for meetings, bicycle maintenance and creating sustainable mobility actions. Having its roots in squatted social centres for bicycle repair and activism, over time Ciclonauti obtained a rented space from the Municipality of Rome. Over the course of its 11 year history the initiative refined its activities. Its radical political positioning faded a little with the change of people, making the initiative more inclusive and consequently increasing attendance.

**Casale Podere Rosa (CPR)** is a non-for-profit association established in 1993 in a peripheral area in the north-east of Rome. It manages an old country side building, a library and some fields on behalf of the local municipality. In over 20 years of activity it developed a wide network of activities with the aim of protecting the natural environment, supporting social and workers’ rights and promoting a life-style based on better and lower consumption. Its activities include a solidarity purchasing group, an educational botanic garden, 100 urban garden plots, a farmers’ market twice a month, an organic restaurant, an “Ecological Culture Centre”, a library and energy production through solar panels. Around 500 people and more than 100 families in the neighbourhood benefit from (and contribute to) its activities and its presence has strongly contributed to shape the current identity and quality of the surrounding area.

**Romania**

**Cycling Club Napoca (CCN)** are a civic and ecologist association working on raising awareness in the field of sustainable transportation and the promotion of bicycle use in cities and for tourism. The association has been active for more than 20 years and has a long history of civic engagement and volunteer action.

**EcoBucovina (EB)** is a relatively young non-governmental organization, founded in 2014, promoting environmental preservation and protection, focusing on forestry and environmental policy-making. The initiative started with a group of young enthusiastic students, doing actions for a clean and healthy environment. Over time, its objectives evolved to targeting public policies on environmental protection. To this end, the initiative collaborates intensively with local authorities and civil society in Romania.

**Spain**
**Totacucaviu, (TCV)** is a cooperative of 23 households which organize and commit themselves to purchasing (seasonal) fruits and vegetables from a local organic producer on a weekly basis all year long. Their producer (Aurora del Camp, AdC), is a peri-urban small business producing up to 200 baskets with organic vegetables per week for food cooperatives in Barcelona. Initiated 5 years ago AdC initiated a network of organic producers in the Maresme region, located about 20 km distance from Barcelona. Kosturica is another peri-urban organic farm, who supplied fruit and vegetables for TCV before AdC.

**Som Energia (SE) (key initiative)** is an energy consumers’ cooperative with more than 20,000 members across Spain, who jointly purchase energy with a green certificate and are gradually starting to invest in generating their own (renewable) electricity. The initiative is managed by three groups with different functions: a professional technical team (about 15 people based in Girona), a board (5 people, elected every 4 years, on a voluntary basis) and more than 30 local groups distributed throughout Spain (with different levels of engagement). Local groups are generally working towards the dissemination of the initiative, communication with local actors, and small technical tasks.

The following additional initiatives (referred to as “supportive” in TESS) have been studied in the context of the “Money and CBIs”. Their inclusion has been motivated by the availability of sufficiently long narrative responses in the Data Assessment sheet on innovative forms of economic exchanges and thus - their thematic relevance for “Money and CBI”.

**Biciosxs** is a bicycle repair workshop based in an occupied space and working without monetary intermediation (in Barcelona).

**Can Masdeu (CMD)** is a 30-member residential intentional community which is cooperatively purchasing and producing fruit and vegetables, while undertaking a wide range of social and political activities;

**Calafou**, defined as “post-capitalist industrial complex” by its members, is a residential (intentional) community of 30 individuals dedicated to communal cooking, food recycling and various forms of production (from soaps to furniture, software and various household objects).

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**UK**

**Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust (Colglen)** is located in a remote rural area with a small, sparse population and a fragile economy. Its primary concern is rural regeneration, reviving the local economy through moving to a re-localised and low-carbon future. In Colglen’s case this means ownership of 600ha of forest, partly financed through selling the rights to most of the timber for the next 99 years while leaving the community areas of native deciduous woodland. This is partly about gaining the potential to generate income, through sites for renewable energy generation, creation of jobs in forestry and (hopefully) by running a currently derelict former hotel. Here renewable energy is primarily seen as a source of long-term income for achieving the wider regeneration goals of the trust. In addition, Colglen has provided advice on improving energy efficiency at home. It has two large community polytunnels, various renewable energy projects and a project for the creation and maintenance of a long-distance footpath.

**Huntly and District Development Trust (HDDT)** is situated in Huntly in NE Scotland. It has around 300 members and is managed by a board of directors. The Trust has a broad range of activities – it is developing a renewable energy project (a wind-mill) at Greenmyres farm (a piece of land they bought in early 2015) and a sustainable transport hub. In the past they have done different activities such as community consultations for the Local Authority, developing signage for the town, setting up a farmers’ market and developing a footpath to connect Huntly with other towns amongst other things.

**SHIFT** is a student-led food and energy initiative which is part of the Students Association of Aberdeen University. SHIFT is organised into three main parts: **Shared Planet** comprises a café, a veg bag scheme and small food retail ‘shop’ called The Corner. **Sustainable Futures** is
an association training students to be energy aware and then train others how to decrease energy consumption. The Environment and Ethics committee is engaged with lobbying the university to become more sustainable and change its policies where possible.

The following additional initiative (referred to as “supportive” in TESS) has been studied in the context of the “Money and CBIs”. Its inclusion has been motivated by the availability of sufficiently long narrative responses in the Data Assessment which are relevant for the “Money and CBI” theme.

Remade in Edinburgh (RE) is a social enterprise giving people the skills to repair and reuse computers, textiles and furniture and intending to roll out a network of similar ‘repair centres’. Remade in Edinburgh is also working towards restructuring the economy, putting in place the infrastructure for changing the prevailing culture so that ‘waste’ becomes a resource in a circular economy. It provides people with the skills to repair, reuse and upcycle. The initiative is currently very reliant on grant funding but seeks to generate part of its income using a social franchising model to replicate itself. Their services are made available to low income groups by cross-subsidising and through support of the local authority.

2. Summaries of memos per theme

This section presents the summary findings of the analytical memos developed around the following themes: Trajectories of Community-based Initiatives; Power and Politics; Governance and governing relations; Aspirations and Rationalities; and Money and CBIs. Findings are presented in a concise form (a list of bullet-points for all countries) followed by narrative summaries. Under each theme results have been presented in the order of data-collection, which is based upon partner countries. The bullet-points are the first step towards data integration and success factor analysis (Deliverable 3.3).

2.1 Key insights on “Trajectories of Community-based Initiatives”

**Overarching research questions:**
How were the evolutionary paths of the CBIs shaped and where did they lead to? What influences how CBIs evolve/evolved? How do they respond to difficult internal and external stimuli/events/situations? What are their greatest achievements? What future evolution is expected for the CBIs? Are there any conflictive events and processes that played a substantial role in influencing CBIs’ lives?

**Approaches to economic and financial stability**
- Income-generating projects and ones that ensure financial stability and survival are preferred to grant-based funding (UK)
- There is a limited role of CBIs’ community engagement when the level of technical planning and management of tangible outcomes is too high which might risk ignoring less tangible community needs (UK, Spain, Finland)
- The clash between the time/effort required for administrative work (fundraising) and the time available for campaigning, has been resolved by opting out of project funding (Romania)

**Legal/organizational format, collaboration with public authorities and cultural context**
- There is a dilemma between informal organizational format and a legally-established structure, with higher level of outreach and inclusivity (Italy)
- Avoiding monetary intermediation and defending on a free and solidarity-based service can be a more inclusive organizational format for economically disadvantaged individuals compared to business-based enterprises (Italy)
• Active collaboration with local authorities (provision of local services/use of local resources) is a key factor for CBI’s emergence and establishment but does not seem to be a requirement in other places. In some there is even a strong attempt of autonomy (Finland)
• Importance of institutional windows of opportunity (such as a change in the procedure for operating power grids in cities) for initiatives’ emergence (Germany)
• Legal prohibition (e.g. of “dumpster diving”) and finding ways to undertake actions considered socially and environmentally legitimate but formally “illega” can drive the emergence of CBIs (Germany)
• The horizontality versus efficiency dilemma could be key for initiatives’ existence and persistence: being inclusive and horizontal (in operational decisions) rather than efficient and professional when it comes to taking key decisions could come at the cost of closing down (Spain)
• The geographical (location) and socio-political context (“liquid society”) of the CBIs matter for their emergence and establishment (Spain, Italy, Germany)
• Social links (e.g. between producers and consumers) and participatory techniques matter for initiatives’ establishment and persistence (Spain, Italy, Germany)

Growth and replication
• Replication of a CBI organizational format elsewhere is preferred to growth in numbers/members/income/activity (Italy, Spain)
• When a growth/expansion strategy is chosen, it tends to prioritize job-creation to more intangible services provision (such as environmental education) (Finland)
• Supportive working environment, trust in the personnel’s skills, possibility to diversify tasks and plan CBI’s work depending on given interest, low level of hierarchy and high possibility to participate in the development of the CBI are some of the factors that contribute to CBI’s growth (Finland)
• There tends to be a clash between the values and commitments needed for CBIs’ initiation and persistence and those needed for its growth and expansion (Germany, Italy, UK, Spain)

Membership/ volunteer base
• Adopting a “small and beautiful” or “big and open” approach, or staying within a small group of like-minded individuals versus opening up to wider set of members is a common debate in CBIs (Spain, Italy, Germany)
• There is a tension between relying on volunteers vs. needing professional skills for fundraising and management (UK, Germany)
• Renewing CBIs’ membership base is key for their long-term survival and social contribution (UK, Germany, Romania)
• “Volunteering too little or too much – is there a balance?” Volunteering tends never to reach the fine balance between intensive work for a successful project with the risk of burnout, and superficial involvement resulting in little social impact (All countries)
• One of the biggest challenges for volunteer-based structures (e.g. food cooperatives) is how to carry on in a context of lower participation rates, where people prioritize low prices rather than commitment to a political agroecological project; and (for energy cooperatives) how to respond to the growth in members and keep momentum, without watering down transformational aspirations (Spain)

Summary of memos on trajectories by country/initiatives

| Finland |
The **Eno energy co-operative** and the **Recycling Center (RC)** are the two initiatives studied under this theme. The energy co-operative’s primary objective is increasing the production of renewable energy to replace imported energy for heating. It was initiated with the help of the local municipality, which provided the initial investment in the heat plant so that the co-operative could start supplying local residents with heat. Later on, the co-operative bought the facilities and built its own heat plants. In 2014, the co-operative had 52 members, three heat plants and about 10 km of heat distribution network. They are actively collaborating with different actors in the area and they strongly emphasize local sourcing (e.g. wood raw material, employment) in their activities. The cooperative is initiated and ran by a rather homogenous group of active members, mostly native men now in their 50s. There have been very few new entries and few younger people, which is a source of concern for the ageing core members. While the normal, (passive) members were reported not to always know or understand what is going on in the co-operative, active members were concerned with getting more people involved, also as sellers of wood. Most members are forest owners, yet only 20% of the wood used by the cooperative comes from the members, although the price which the co-operative pays for their wood is reportedly higher. This relates to reported tensions on the fairness of the price which members receive from the co-operative and the trade-off between benefiting the community (with low price of heat) or its members (offering higher price of wood).

Eno-energy is considered innovative for its setting and context, although its emergence is marked by a context of similar initiatives being founded in different parts of Finland. It collaborates closely with the local university of applied sciences on research projects and to disseminate innovative practices. The cooperative is highly attractive, receiving multiple visitors from Finland and abroad, for which paid guided tours are provided with lectures and on-site visitors. Its members furthermore argue that if it were strictly profit-oriented the cooperative would look very different. Its core values are based on benefiting the local community (forest owners, heat customers), creating employment and protecting the environment in general.

The cooperative is now at a mature stage, without much aspiration for structural change or growth. Over its development, communication, or influencing the leaders’ opinions, has been key, but also honesty, trustworthiness and commitment. Co-operation with different actors, commitment by particular individuals, willingness to learn, openness and relying on the local resources are some of the key success factors for the overall development of the co-operative. The co-operative has been open to new ideas and it has had an active approach in adopting new techniques which may have contributed to its evolutionary trajectory.

**RC**, on the other hand, was started by local activists and non-governmental organizations, which redistributed various items they received as donations. This strategy invited misuse as users sometimes sold items after having taken them for free. Eventually, the initiative started selling all donated objects, using the proceedings to employ people and organize environmental education events. The environmental school which RC runs is however funded with EU grants, as the initiative is unable to raise enough for this non-profit activity.

RC is reported to have one of the highest rates of growth for an initiative of its kind, gaining recognition and popularity in the press across the country. In the beginning, little attention has been paid to its organizational structure and its growth was perceived as “organic”. At times members reported that growth was so fast that constant adaptation became tiring. The expansion of shops and personnel required a change of the organizational structure, establishing common rules and generally professionalizing in terms of being more efficient and developing a brand name. The commercialization strategy did not take place without disagreement regarding the ethics of selling donated objects. Yet discordant voices have been small and relatively silent.

The growth strategy of RC is clearly aimed at opening even more shops and creating an online shop. While interviewees agree that the CBI should keep on growing, they do not see growth as a goal in itself. The growth has nevertheless required prioritizing the creation of meaningful and attractive jobs for local long-term unemployed while paying less attention to environmental
education activities that are not directly subsidized by the government. Activism is given less attention and is problematic for the growth of the initiative. Moreover, municipalities’ interest in employing older people who find it more difficult to find a job has excluded young people.

There are several factors that contributed to its success and growth: the supportive working environment and trust in the personnel’s skills, the multiple tasks available, the possibility to change tasks and plan work depending on one’s interest, having managers that are easy to approach, the low level of hierarchy and the possibility to participate in the development of the CBI. Other enabling factors for the successful growth of RC are their positive reputation and the strong synergies with local municipalities. The change in peoples’ attitudes towards recycling and environmental protection and the ability to offer goods at reasonable prices to people with low income have also contributed to the expansion of RC. The initiative has not reached a plateau in its growth, which is strongly contingent upon negotiations and connections with outside actors such as funders, policy and decision makers, having a secure capital base and stability with in the unemployment subsidies used for paying employees.

### Germany

**Bürger Energie Berlin (BEB) and Foodsharing** were started by a group of active citizens concerned with the amount of food wasted in commercial industrialized system (Foodsharing) and with the ways to bring the energy grid under the management of people convinced of the need for a transition to renewable sources of energy (BEB). Yet, while BEB started in response to a change in the allocation procedure in the Berlin power system which opened space for innovation, Foodsharing grew in response to the prohibition of so-called “dumpster diving”. Foodsharing had to develop a creative procedure for making the illegal act of giving away outdated or damaged food into a publically acknowledged (legal) process while BEB had to raise the funds needed for presenting themselves as a legitimate buyer.

While Foodsharing started with various web platforms and gradual contacts with supermarkets willing to cooperate with the recuperation of the food they throw away, the BEB created a cooperative calling for individual contributions for the purchase of the energy grid of Berlin. Foodsharing grew quickly, through the help of online tools and changed its organizational structure over time. An important step in its history has been the establishment of a legal arrangement for engaging different stakeholders such as supermarkets and shops in three countries (Germany, Austria and Switzerland). BEB also expanded fast in numbers and donations, in this case through synergies with the networks established by other energy cooperatives and movements in the field of energy and politics. Bürger Energie Berlin is in fact a replication of another cooperative from the town of Schönau which successfully purchased the town’s power grid. Schönau has been instrumental in the success of BEB through passing on knowledge and expertise. However, BEB’s continued expansion is conditioned by the political decisions of Berlin municipality although in a public referendum it received up to 600 000 votes in its favour.

Both initiatives would not have achieved their growth in numbers and activity without the contribution of volunteers. Foodsharing works thanks to the volunteers and their local associations, which have a shared identity and a sense of responsibility. Lawyers have been especially useful there in ensuring the reliability of the waste-food donations by supermarkets. BEB, on the other hand, has groups of volunteers and general assemblies, allowing for the participation of all members. However, it also has a board and key individuals who are driving the evolution of the organization through careful planning and more strategic actions.

The support of third parties has been central in the evolution of both initiatives. In the case of Foodsharing, cooperation with the media and various institutions and companies providing electricity for their free fridges, which can be filled-in and emptied by anyone, has been crucial. BEB cooperates with shops where info-stalls have been placed and with renewable energy cooperatives and companies that work towards their original mission.
Success for both groups is understood as growing recognition and participation rates. Both groups aspire to grow further as a way to spread their message among a wider audience. In terms of concrete metrics of success, Foodsharing would identify the amounts of food saved and BEB would refer to the funds generated for the grid purchase. For members of BEB, simply continuing the process, despite numerous hurdles and low chances of achieving the ultimate objective, is perceived as an achievement in itself. The aim expressed by members is to obtain 25% of the Berlin power grid. The presence of the website, public fridges and a legal framework for donating food waste are presented as some of the important achievements for Foodsharing. Next steps would include legal bans on food-wasting. A more long-term and radical definition of success expressed by members of Foodsharing is reaching the moment when they are not needed any longer.

A common dilemma for both initiatives in their intention to expand further concerns professionalization (in terms of management, or hiring experts). In the case of Foodsharing, professionalization is perceived as necessary as long as the organizational structure leaves space for individual decision-making and does not become too strict and formal. Keeping the democratic structure of their cooperative and maintaining its transparent and participatory character while expanding further is the concern for BEB as well.

Furthermore, in the case of Foodsharing, the clash between initial (ideal) goals and the compromises necessary for expansion can be identified. The initial strategy involved saving the food bought in private households and sharing it with those in need, supporting the values of solidarity and cooperation. Over time, through the pressure of the media, the initiative turned into a bigger movement, working with bigger companies rather than households. The Foodsharing initiative has furthermore taken over the food recuperation work, which used to be done by others (“dumpster divers”) who are now left without an access to the containers they previously used. On a different note, as the CBI’s fridges are openly accessible for everyone, no one can guarantee whether the food provided in there has not been poisoned, for example.

A potential conflict for BEB concerns the compromises the cooperative might have to undertake in order to acquire the city power grid, and how far these could eventually extend. Given the procedure is now halted until a political decision is being taken, it is unclear whether the cooperative might have to team up with a commercial company when presenting its candidacy as city grid operator.

The Ciclofficina Centrale (CO)/Ciclonauti is the initiative analysed within this theme. The CO aims to increase the number of cyclists and their visibility by providing access to bicycles and facilities for their maintenance for all. Ciclonauti emerged after the eviction of a squatted social centre with a bicycle repair workshop, which divided into two groups. One remained loyal to the radical political scene having a strong critique of public authorities and founded a bicycle workshop in a different squatted location. The other one, Ciclonauti, decided to opt for some level of dialogue with public institutions and to adopt a legal statute as an association. It rents a space from the Municipality of Roma and actively collaborates with the public body responsible for the collection of bulky objects (such as abandoned bicycles) on the streets.

Over time, the activist character of Ciclonauti transformed. Social activities which were not exclusively focused on promoting cycling were less popular and most energy went into the bicycle reparation work. This facilitated the inclusion of people from various backgrounds united by a common passion for cycling. The CBI has had greater success in terms of outreach and social inclusivity than other workshops of the same kind. Yet, the radical orientation of the project never disappeared completely. Its main scope and values, such as granting a free service, were never modified nor strongly questioned.

The relationship of Ciclonauti with the wider non-cyclist population is defined as somewhat conflictive, as most people in Roma consider urban cyclists an obstacle to the traffic, rather than a part of it. Public opinion of cycling, however, has transformed over the years, partly thanks to the work of various bicycle activist groups and social centres. The recent economic
crisis is another possible reason for the increase of the total number of users of Ciclonauti. The CBI saw the demand for its service exponentially growing between 2008 and 2011. Consequently, the numbers of volunteers also increased.

The CBI is now at a stage were growth has reached a plateau in terms of the number of people who can simultaneously attend. Further growth would necessitate structural change. The newer members of the initiative see up-scaling as a goal, while the older ones would rather foster replication and knowledge spill-overs. The conflict of visions can be understood as an ideological clash between more business-oriented and more grassroots solidarity volunteer-based. The first vision, expressed by the new entries defends the growth of Ciclonauti as a single entity which can repair more bikes, be open more frequently and for a longer time. This also involves making some room for generating money and eventually hiring people because for such an undertaking the work of volunteers is not sufficient. The other vision, expressed by the older members, supports the replication of the experience somewhere else, sharing knowledge, teaching new generations, and most importantly - reinforcing social ties. They are concerned that the expansion path may corrupt the spirit of the CBI and transform it into a commercial bicycle workshop, while their original motivation is avoiding monetary intermediation and defending the free and solidarity-based service. For the older members, rather than increasing the number of bike repairs or auctions, the goal consists in investing in social activities that can build up long term social relations and yield the beneficial repercussions needed for the birth of new centres that promote cycling culture. To this end, a bigger and newer venue is not necessarily needed, but rather a recognizable landmark with an authentic taste.

The key signs of success are described as having more people on bikes in the streets and, more ambitiously, living in a better city. For this purpose replication and knowledge spill overs are considered key. Indeed, several other places now exist that are replicating Ciclonauti’s operative framework. Some offspring were directly founded by Ciclonauti members who left and opened a sister organization in a different neighbourhood, showing that their model is effective and yielding substantial results.

**Romania**

**EcoBucovina (EB) and Cycling Club Napoca (CCN)** were started by a group of committed volunteers. The emergence of CCN was inspired by similar bicycle promotion groups outside Romania. Over the first 8 years of its 25-year history, the group had no office, nor employees. Its volunteers met regularly in various locations to organize public education activities. Eventually the association obtained grant funding to rent an office and hire a few employees, although these worked semi-voluntarily as at certain points they had to pay back their salary to cover running costs. Eventually the structure of the CCN members changed, as older members could not commit as much of their time to overseeing the activities and management of the organization. The conditions and administrative burden were perceived as too high to continue paying an office and having employees. Over the years, the association struggled to renew its membership base, meaning that its capacity for undertaking a wider range of (public) actions decreased. Project work has been perceived as too demanding and generating too much stress for employees (who were paid very little) and volunteers, who had no time to commit to writing and reporting on funding applications. Thus, the association shifted back to being volunteer-based, which did not reduce its campaigning work, with committed members working almost like employees in terms of time invested.

The organization worked on the promotion of bicycle infrastructure in a context of conflict and tension with the local municipality. Their ideas met the resistance of local authorities, which resulted in CCN’s exclusion from public consultations and rejected access to information on transport infrastructure. Over its development, its members (many of them - lawyers) supported the creation of multiple similar organizations, helping out with their legal status. Its members were specialized in different areas, providing a wide set of expertise to draw upon. Nevertheless, the major challenge faced by CCN has been associated with retaining members over time. With students moving on, emigrating or leaving the city, the association lost much of
its volunteer base, and new members are reported to be less concerned with the goals of the initiative.

**EB** started as a volunteer-based environmental association adept at working with the press to raise awareness of environmental issues. Over the years, they have expanded their activities, obtaining funding in the field of forestry and environmental awareness. Unlike CCN, EB are less conflictive, more careful about the radicalness of their image and more project-oriented. Yet, both initiatives are based on volunteers, and have been facing difficulties replenishing members with determined, dynamic and creative people with “high ideals”. One of the reasons for this reported gap is that the sought profile of young people tends to emigrate from Romania, rather than stay in town and fight with local authorities.

### Spain

The analysis below is drawn from four different initiatives, the first one (**Totacucaviu, TCV**) is a cooperative of 23 households who organize and commit themselves to purchasing (seasonal) fruits and vegetables from a local organic producer on a weekly basis all year long. The next two are their (Totacucaviu’s) local organic producers – initially **Kosturica (K)** and later **Aurora del Camp (AdC)**; the fourth one is the energy cooperative **Som Energia (SE)**.

One of the local organic farms in the sample, the four-year old **AdC** project started off as a spin-off of a food cooperative. After spending 8 years in one of the Barcelona food cooperatives, two of its founding members decided to “close the circle” and start producing for it. In this way, they could count on a customer pool of 40 family units right from the start. Over time, more cooperatives in Barcelona subscribed to receive AdC’s vegetable baskets. An important feature of the CBI’s development was the social links between producers and consumers which were constructed slowly through assemblies and communal lunches on the farm site. Gradually the project kept growing in terms of cultivated land, production, planning and technology. Starting with mostly manual work, its members constantly upgraded production techniques, moving on to the use of a bicycle-tool for removing weeds and eventually to more mechanized tools.

The geographical and socio-political context of the project has to some extent determined its character and success. The project members feel part of the local agroecological movement through which consumers are put in contact with the producers of their food, and agriculture is understood as part of both the “natural and human world”. This vision is reflected in the particular location of Aurora. The farm stands 500 meters from the beach, bordered by luxury houses built for speculation purposes during the construction boom (and cheap loans) period in Spain and a small textile factory. The plot is property of an investor whose intention to convert its status from agriculture to constructible land and build luxury housing failed due to the crisis. The farm is now a form of “green lungs” for the nearby village and a biodiversity reserve for local bird and animal species.

The other productive project in the sample, **Kosturica**, is one of the oldest in Catalunya. It started in a very different socio-political context. In the beginning, there were hardly any projects where consumers united with producers to provide local, seasonal and fresh food, produced in equitable, or socio-ecological conditions. Because of this lack, Kosturica could count upon the interest of a large number of highly motivated individuals, who perceived consumption as a political act, or a tool for social transformation and committed to working together with farmers.

In the case of the energy co-operative **SE**, one of the key internal elements for its initiation has to do with the personality and skills of its initiator. On the other hand, the energy, work and trust which the people who supported the project pulled into it, and more than anything, the SE local groups, are a key driving force for its expansion. The principle of horizontality is embedded in the functioning of SE, which centres its activity on groups of local members (called local groups). The important role of local groups within SE, that is, the use of participatory techniques to address societal needs, is one of the innovative features of the cooperative. The local groups meetings are central for resolving organizational problems,
innovating and undertaking changes. These drive the cooperative to constantly redefine itself in the search for a balance between being a commercial structure and one based on volunteers, or activists, campaigning for energy paradigm shift.

The list of exogenous factors which contributed to the evolution of both first and second generation peri-urban farms and their cooperatives can be summarized as: having a positive perception and financial support (subsidies) from public authorities, presence of supportive networks of producers, type of location and finally factors related to the relation with consumers and demand for local organic vegetables. The external stimuli, to which the initiatives in the sample have responded, tend to differ for the different groups. While for food cooperatives, the biggest challenge is how to maintain operations in a context of lower interest or less active participation, for the energy cooperative current concern is how to respond to the growth in members and keep its momentum. Nevertheless, certain features of the “liquid” (or highly mobile) society pertain to both, especially when it comes to local groups in cities. On the side of the peri-urban farms, the external challenges they are confronted with concerns competition with (or entry of) big business in the sector, as well as the shrinking of the food cooperatives and the “softening” of commitment on the side of their members.

Success is perceived in multiple ways depending on the evolutionary stage of the initiative. For established food cooperatives and their producers, the act of continued existence is a success in itself since it provides a socially and ecologically sustainable alternative to mainstream food production and distribution which is viable and easy to adopt. For the energy cooperative, success is mostly understood in terms of growth in members, investment projects, which eventually contributes to the creation of an environmentally and socially just alternative to the energy oligopoly in the state. All initiatives tend to see success in terms of constructing networks of like-minded people who collaborate towards a common socially acceptable goal. Some interviewees consider the organisation of public events that attract people outside their close circles as an achievement.

The desired future evolution of SE has two aspects, one which pertains to the cooperative as such and another which concerns its wider socio-political impact. The aspiration and potential evolution of the cooperative itself concern its growth in members, customers and installed energy-generation capacity and organizational improvement. Its wider societal impact could imply building alliances with social movements, contributing to increased energy sovereignty and energy democracy.

As in the earlier case, for the food production and distribution networks aspirations either pertain to the initiatives as such or to the society at large. In the case of producers, improved efficiency and productivity but also personal ecological and social coherence are very much needed for the evolution of the project. The food cooperatives find attracting and retaining long-term members, improving power relations within the group and having the capacity to participate in the wider social and political movements in town as some of their key aspirations. The self-perceived imperative of acting on a societal level comes out as a desired evolutionary path in some of the interviews (of Totacucaviu).

A number of implicit and explicit points for debate, representing inner or outer contradictions has marked and continues to mark the evolutionary path of all initiatives in the Spanish sample. While categories are never clear-cut, in many cases the debate is shaped between two opposing visions, (sometimes with one of them prevailing, and the other less explicit). In the case of Som Energia, these have been identified as:

- “Small and beautiful” versus “Big and open” organizational form, which implies staying within a small group of like-minded individuals versus opening up to a wider set of members and ideas with the respective advantages and disadvantages of both strategies; a subset of this debate concerns the strategy of selling energy of renewable origin from the market pool versus buying directly from a respective producer; Moreover there are different nuances of the discussion, where “big and open” could be done in a professional (market-based) way, or through embracing a bigger diversity of voices, or larger groups of volunteers.
- “Horizontality versus efficiency in governance”, or being inclusive and horizontal (including all local groups in decision-making) rather than efficient and professional (deciding within the technical office and council) when it comes to taking key decisions;
- “Volunteering too little or too much – an impossible balance?” Volunteering tends to never reach the fine balance between intensive work for a successful project versus superficial involvement and having little social impact.
- “Achieving social change through defending the structure or by spreading ideas”? This debate concerns the extent to which the cooperative can be considered a political actor which brings about a wider social change, and the diversity of strategies which social and environmental sustainability might require.

The dilemmas faced by the initiatives in the field of sustainable food production and distribution can be generally framed as a tension between the pressures for economic profitability and price affordability and overall socio-political commitment. Some of its aspects can be summarized in the following subtitles, considering that titles suggest more clear-cut categories than their content for reasons of clarity.

- For producers: strong socio-political positioning versus economic sustainability. This tension concerns farms’ organizational strategy associated with maintaining horizontality and inclusivity versus adopting a more managerial and efficient approach oriented towards lower production costs; the first may involve self-exploitation and the second increased marketing, or searching for customers;
- For cooperatives/consumers: prioritizing low prices or prioritizing commitment to a political agroecological project which members consider worth supporting; focusing on organizing food distribution or undertaking wider socio-political action; buying from shops or joining a cooperative; stimulating participation within the cooperatives in the fragile ground between new (unpoliticised) members versus old (active) ones;

### UK

**Huntly and District Development Trust (HDDT)** has inherited a specific institutional legacy from its past, meaning that its trajectory and future are shaped by what has gone before: i.e. having a very general objective, trying to make a name for themselves, trying to distance themselves from the local authority. Yet, it would not have started up without government investment, and partnership of public bodies. This first development stage gave HDDT and the community the confidence needed to continue operation when funding ran out, and demonstrated that there was a need for the services they could provide. This first stage allowed them to develop skills, expertise and contacts before the funding were withdrawn.

The legal organisation of the Trust (where the board has a personal financial liability) defines their path to the extent that (board) members tend to be risk-averse when considering potential projects. This has resulted in choosing projects that offer higher chances of profitability over ones that may fit its overall aims in a better way. Here, eventual closure is seen as an embarrassment, thus many actions in the trust, including its focus on profitable projects, stem from the desire to avoid this outcome. Many of the board members have business backgrounds which they intend to reconcile with the volunteer base of the Trust. The Trust simultaneously relies on the skills of the volunteers and can be shaped by their interests and project pursuits. However, volunteers are not bound by employment law and can leave at any time and therefore those leading them need diplomacy and facilitation skills. Thus some interviewees perceive reliance on volunteers as a limiting factor to what a CBI can do.

The Trust is in a very precarious financial position and spends a lot of time searching for financing opportunities that they can pursue. Developing bids and funding proposals can be time consuming and requires specific skills, which are difficult to demand from the volunteers. Having paid staff allows time for this while providing a continuous drive and project management skills. The Trust has turned down potentially lucrative funding because it did not fit in with the overall vision that the directors had for the organization. Funding which does not specify too strictly what the money has to be spent on is preferred.
The Trust’s continued existence has been very contingent on state funds and other long-term government investment in renewable energy. When funding ran out, the Trust had to adopt more of a business approach and focus on more tangible pieces of work. Interviewees reported on the pressure it received from the government to own and develop an income-generating asset. The feed-in-tariffs obtained from selling renewable energy generated by installations purchased and developed by the Trust are currently perceived as a major pillar for financial sustainability. The planning process by which development permission is granted and the difficulties in connecting to the national electricity grid have however proved to be a major hurdle to communities taking this route.

Among the list of achievements which members of the Trust mention is a well-engaged community. For this reasons the Trust is well respected within the community and local authority. Yet, some interviewees feel that the public that they have engaged is quite “niche”. The Trust is doing a large set of projects and is thus not known for one particular thing, for example: international exchanges with a group of people in Finland, (“transnational cooperation project”); the car club and driving training showing people how to drive in a more sustainable way; “community resilience” projects for improving employment opportunities or improving the look and feel of the place. The factors which contribute to this list of achievements are the good networks and strong ties developed with the Local Authority and community groups on a local, regional and national level, as well as the experience and professional skills on which to draw upon.

The broader perceptions of success of the members of the Trust can be summarized as the act of continued existence, survival or “keeping going”. Reliance on small pots of money can be strenuous and time consuming. Financial sustainability and independence from government funds is therefore given a priority. One success in this respect is the agreement with the developer of a nearby windfarm (Cairnborrow) to pay out a 10% community benefit which will cover their core costs and various initiatives. The key element of continued existence (and therefore of future success), however, is the development of another fully owned turbine on the premises of Trust-owned community farm.

It remains unclear whether similar initiatives today can successfully start up and develop without being asset-dependent. Focus on profitable projects, or ones generating future incomes, could be at odds with community needs and wants. For example, Trust members and volunteers might not necessarily express the interests of the wider ‘community’ and less tangible community needs can sometimes be ignored when financially sustainability is a key aspiration. It is unclear how far the Trust can make an impact (along the lines of fulfilling its original missions and aims) when struggling for financial stability; or whether shifting away from providing invisible services to developing visible projects that render tangible benefits is aligning well with community needs.

### 2.2 Key insights on “Power and Politics”

**Overarching research questions:**
To what extent do intended/unintended or invisible/visible exclusionary patterns (such as power structures, hierarchies, discourses, dilemmas and imaginaries) constrain CBIs’ ability to engage with (benefit from) a diverse range of people and be truly transformational in their societal impact?

**Imaginary of transition**

- The main contribution of many CBIs’ concerns the possibilities and imaginaries they open in terms of values and organizational models (Finland, Germany, Spain, UK)
- Some CBIs are more oriented towards social change and doing political actions (the ideas) while others towards maintaining the organization fit (the structure);
This duality can also be phrased as a model of social change through creating your own enterprise (asset acquisition) or through grassroots campaigning (Spain, UK).

- Many of the CBIs in the sample are not interested in confronting the current “capitalist” system directly, but in building and improving the alternatives existing in parallel (All countries).
- Justice and transition are perceived as something taking place on local level, for example making local people benefit from their local resources, or providing local services to the community (Finland, UK).

**Approaches to public institutions**

- For some initiatives external power structures do not necessarily encourage or facilitate community-led transition, despite policy rhetoric which often puts this discourse forward (Spain, UK).
- A common perception shared by members of the energy cooperatives from Spain and Germany in the sample is that neither public government, nor private companies are capable of undertaking the energy transition towards efficiency and renewable source of energy. The basic premise of some CBIs is that the socio-economic transition in the energy sector shall be driven by the people and direct democracy (Germany, Spain).
- Some CBIs intend to make people and communities take responsibility for their own services and quality of life, rather than expecting local authorities to take charge. Other CBIs empower local people and communities by encouraging them to think critically and participate in decision-making on key issues (Finland, Spain, UK).
- Lack of dependence from external funding makes some groups less constrained by bureaucracy and therefore more able to direct their initiative (Spain).
- An internal conflict existing within some of the CBIs concerns preference for lobbying and use of a diplomatic campaign style (changes within capitalism) versus preference for having a more confrontational approach (fighting against capitalism) (UK).

**Internal organization /volunteers**

- Initiatives relying heavily on volunteers cannot be as professional as they would like when there is a constant change of volunteers (Germany).
- Centralization and non-delegation of tasks by board-members is a recurring source of conflict in one energy cooperative (Finland).
- In food and farm cooperative projects, where (physical) work is unevenly distributed, a conflict could easily occur between the most active groups and the members perceived as ‘free-riders’. Such conflicts have been worked upon through equalizing perceptions on what the collective stands for, what it means to be a member or how to share the work load in a just manner (Finland, Spain).

**Concern with intended/unintended or invisible/visible exclusionary patterns**

- Internal power dynamics are inherent to all CBIs but are generally unrecognized or mentioned briefly (Finland, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, UK).
- Most members of CBIs tend to be white, educated, (mostly) middle class people, or ones with similar worries and priorities who organize themselves to avoid conventional markets (Finland, Germany, Spain).
- Concern with inequality is not given as much priority as environmental protection within the initiatives, and migrants and low-income beneficiaries are underrepresented (Finland, Germany, Spain).
- Inclusivity (gender or member heterogeneity) is not an issue of concern for CBIs operating through asset-management and/or selling of services through the local market (Finland). Their dependence on income generation (through the market)
could be one of the underlying explanations for certain exclusionary patterns in CBIs which could eventually restrict their transformational effect (Finland, UK)

- Initiatives can perceive themselves as gender-inclusive and simultaneously / implicitly exclude women from the imaginary of their ideal member (Finland, Romania)
- Focus on consumption (in the case of food cooperatives) and as financial stability (in the case of energy cooperatives and small farms) tends to preclude higher social considerations, such as environmental justice and the role of social and economic privileges. On the other hand, if productive initiatives pay less attention to economic sustainability and planning, while focusing more on social aspects, their very existence is put in danger. (Spain, UK)
- One CBI perceives justice as making local people (or members) benefit from their local resources (cooperative) in an equal way.

Role of the cultural context

- The dominant mentality, characterized by conservativism and apathy, as well as the level of corruption in public institutions can pose a significant barrier to (CBIs contribution to) social change (Romania)
- When the population is caught up in the swirl of surviving economically, social change and environmental awareness are not a priority (Romania)

Finland

The Herttoniemi Food Co-operative (HFC) and the Eno-energy cooperative are the Finnish CBI studied within this theme. HFC counts almost exclusively on volunteers who run the distribution of the harvest from five delivery points. For this purpose, members are required to donate a minimum of 10 hours work per farming season. From the very beginning, the cooperative has had a loyal group of active members, as well as people who hardly come to the field. Most active members are women in their thirties and forties. Overall, members tend to come from the (upper) middle class.

In general the HFC imaginary of transition is based on undertaking incremental and gradual steps within the CBI. The outside world is not of concern other than maintaining the CBI alive. Nobody favoured radical approaches or political activism, which are seen as fruitless and unhelpful for the cooperative. Rather than considering its potential wider societal impacts the initiative centres on the production of a good harvest for its members. At the same time initiative members are aware that by bringing non-members to the field, they enhance social sustainability and train people in the practice of bio-dynamic agriculture.

Equity is perceived in terms of distributing project yield among members and generally, membership is recognized as a privilege. One of the conflictive points with respect to internal power dynamics concerns centralization and non-delegation of tasks by members of the board. Another aspect is the workload contributions of active versus passive members, the number of employees and the obligation to do voluntary work. Some of the more affluent members are perceived as “free-riders” for not contributing much to the communal work, though benefiting from the membership. While heterogeneity of profiles is seen as a positive attribute of HFC, the diversity of commitment, or members who only collect the harvest without contributing to the common work, were not viewed positively by interviewees. The main challenge in this aspect concerns equalizing perceptions on what the cooperative stands for and membership and fair work-sharing imply.

The Eno-energy cooperative has undertaken a number of transitions, such as utilizing unused wood and improving forest condition, creating jobs, making money circulate locally and motivating locals to self-organize and serve some of the needs of their community. It has empowered local forest owners to participate in the management of their own forest resources, i.e. the co-operative has created a new imaginary of how forest owners can benefit from their
own resources in a sustainable way. The cooperative is focusing on (and motivated by) the transition taking place on local level. Members, mostly forest owners, participate mostly for the associated economic benefits (selling wood), although membership driven by environmental awareness is not an exception. Justice is perceived as making local people benefit from their local resources and the services provided by the cooperative.

In terms of inclusivity, participation is based on being a forest owner and having the possibility to pay the participation fee. It is composed of local men, mostly in their 50s or early 60s. The co-operative is not highly open to new members anymore, partly due to its evolved stage, possession of substantial assets and reduced amount of wood required from members. Gender does not come across as an issue of concern, nor is the co-operative worried about its members’ homogeneity. The membership structure can be partly explained by demographics in the forestry business in general in which is male-dominated.

Concerning, power structures, the co-operative is organized hierarchically with an annual general meeting where key decisions are taken, an executive committee (management) and a core group taking care of the practical daily management. Most members were content with the current structure with a few exceptions: one relatively new and young member who was concerned with the internal power relations.

Overall, the socio-environmental transition has been realized through capitalist logics, through capital accumulation, private ownership and paid labour in the market economy. Their dependence on the market has furthermore increased with the increased asset acquisition. Dependence on income generation and market dynamics could be one of the underlying reasons for the exclusionary patterns (in terms of membership) in the cooperative, which could eventually restrict their transformational effect.

### Germany

**Bürger Energie Berlin (BEB)** and **Foodsharing (FS)** are the two German initiatives studied under this theme. For **FS** the socio-environmental transition involves redistribution, poverty reduction, re-appreciation of food, reduction of food waste, and thus - consumption of locally produced goods. Bottom-up process are perceived as fundamental for this goal, where social movements rise until the point that policy makers cannot ignore them any longer. **FS** is thus more inclined to pursue local social change first, as political change is believed to take place through awareness-raising and changing consumer-behaviour with the support of the media. **Foodsharing** has already shown that millions of kilograms of food can be saved if there is a will for change and that money need not be the driving force of social change. The initiative is critical of economic growth and free from the requirement to generate funding. Contacts with politicians take place sporadically, at fairs or demonstrations.

**BEB**, on the other hand, has the clear objective of obtaining a 25% share of the energy grid in Berlin and eventually - changing its structure to promote decentralized renewable energy. This obliges the CBI to build up sufficiently large financial reserves to invest into an energy transition. For the initiative, social change can take place when you try something that has never been done before, or putting democracy at the heart of the energy transition. The objective is having a bottom-up and cooperative management of the power grid, rather one driven by private economic (or other) interests. Neither public government, nor private companies are trusted of being capable of undertaking the energy transition. The basic premise is that the energy sector can be influenced by the people. For this reason the CBI works with individuals who believe in democratic structures and are inclined to participate in social movements and recruits as many members from the citizens of Berlin as possible. The cooperative is furthermore perceived as a space for political training where people can meet and deliberate. At the same time, being highly dependent on political decisions which take long time to come along, **BEB** is well-connected to formal political parties and actors and wishes to be a positive example to inspire others to follow.

Neither of the two initiatives is interested in confronting the current “capitalist” system. Building and improving the alternatives in parallel to existing structures is the preferred
approach. The interviewees of FS believe that radical actions (such as supermarket closures) would rather act at the disadvantage of the initiative.

Concerning inclusion, inequality is not given as high priority as environmental protection in both initiatives. Immigrants in FS, for example, are primarily the ones receiving the food donations, rather than distributing them. Not many elderly people join the initiative. This is due to the high share of computer and internet work involved. BEB, on the other hand, is highly dependent on membership fees (or 100 euro), as it has legal restrictions to the project funding the initiative can receive. The fee is however considered too high for people with low incomes. There are almost no immigrant members.

Entry and internal organization within FS is based upon a quiz designed to make sure that members are aware of the shared values within the initiative (such as rejection of racism), regardless of their background. Specific positions can be obtained if one proves to have certain qualities (through the quiz or in a different way). Since the initiative has a large number of geographically dispersed members, discussing and defining common interests and goals has not been easy. The strictness of the organizational structure is considered necessary, useful and democratic by some members, and limiting by others. BEB, on the other hand, has a formal hierarchical structure, where members elect a supervisory committee (six people) and a board. Given many members are working on a voluntary basis BEB cannot be as professional as they would consider it adequate due to the constant change of people. One of the board member states she has a lot of control over the cooperative, although the supervisory committee also plays a central role in management. Some of the shortcomings associated with the initiative’s growth relate to the flow of information and transparency, which have been addressed by issuing an internal newsletter. While many decisions are made by the board and the supervisory committee, important issues are discussed at the general assembly which can be attended by every member.

Both groups have a large number of alliances: In the case of FS these are larger organic food stores, organizations collecting food for homeless people and bicycle associations. In the case of BEB these are similar cooperatives in other towns, ethical banks and renewable energy companies.

**Romania**

The initiatives studied within this theme are **EcoBucovina (EB)** and **Cycling Club Napoca (CCN)**. **CCN** has a formal organizational structure where decisions are taken through voting in the General Assembly and all members are expected to contribute. The association is however perceived to function both formally and informally, where member initiatives’ on topics perceived as important is highly appreciated. The general atmosphere of decision making in the organization is reported to be transparent and based on mutual confidence. All members are volunteering (there are no employees at present). Membership criteria are perceived as clear and people join naturally, when they feel committed to the idea of sustainable transport, and drop out when they feel they do not fit any longer. The initiative is perceived as growing organically, based on the level of volunteers’ involvement. In terms of inclusion, the number of male participants is higher. While some members claim that there is no gender discrimination with respect to membership, others described the profile of the ideal member as being an ambitious and motivated young man in his 40s with specialized knowledge in the field. Although the initiative is open to people belonging to particular minorities or marginalized groups they are not represented among the members. Overall, the initiative has not reflected upon the inclusion of diverse profiles of people among their members. They are generally students or university graduates, coming from Cluj and therefore representing the interests of people from the area. Nevertheless, age and so-called expertise has been a barrier to participation. In some public actions people without given expertise and below the age of 35 have not been welcome to join. Younger people have thus felt excluded, which has been a source of conflicts. Older members, on the other hand, tend to access the management structure more easily. At the same time, people in their 40s have less time and motivation to commit to the association, which eventually shrinks the base of (active) members and deepens frustration.
The organizational structure of **EB** is formal and hierarchical. Decisions are taken by the board of directors, which consists of five persons guided by a president. The association tries to involve and attract people with expertise through periodic recruitments. Besides the active members, the association aims to get motivated younger people involved.

Both groups perceive transition as a peaceful and gradual process mostly driven by putting pressure on local and national authorities. Achieving results requires flexibility and a certain level of direct confrontation with the administrative system, as well as expert knowledge. A common barrier for both CBIs has been the dominant mentality, characterized by conservativism and apathy, as well as the level of corruption in public authorities. Some respondents felt that the initiative actions are hindered by the community itself, which is reluctant to adopt environmental goals. The population is caught in the trap of surviving economically and social change is not a priority. There is a sense of a lack of ecological culture and distrust for civil society organizations.

Nevertheless, respondents believe that their initiatives have contributed to the improvement of environmental policy and environmental awareness in general. One example of CCN’s achievements is the enforcement of stricter controls over the wood and furniture industry, which created a tension between local industry and the environmentalists. CCN claims to have had a direct contribution to social change including the saving of 15 protected areas, helping 100 organizations formally register, the establishment of bicycle routes, stimulating the use of bicycles and raising environmental awareness. Yet, if they were supported by public authorities, the CBIs believe they could have a greater social and environmental impact.

### Spain

The initiatives analyzed within this theme are **Som Energia (SE)**, **Totacucaviu (TCV)** and **Aurora del Camp (AdC)**. All of these work towards establishing alternative forms of energy/food generation and the promotion of ethical, or ‘politicized’ consumption, underpinned by the ambition of transforming the current food/energy distribution system into one that is socially and environmentally just. The main contribution of such initiatives relates to the possibilities and imaginaries they open in terms of values and organizational models. Participants have a pragmatic approach and a realistic and down-to-earth vision, focusing on the achievable and material objectives. Members of initiatives imagine a transition in relation to consumers’ choices, feelings of responsibility and consciousness. In terms of their oppositional political context, TCV and AdC were created with the overarching idea of undermining the dominant agro-industrial model of food production and distribution, while SE works to destabilise the energy lobby and the macro corporations controlling the energy sector in Spain.

Internal power dynamics are inherent to all three CBIs but are generally unrecognized or mentioned briefly. While horizontally organized, the CBIs tend to reproduce some of the patterns of the hegemonic (hierarchical) organizational models. This is especially the case with SE where a technical office, a board and multiple local groups are the ones taking the decisions with varying degree of responsibility. The concentration of decision-making has provoked a number of conflicts and tensions, eventually discouraging participation of volunteers in the local groups. AdC, on the other hand, is formed by two partners with three immigrant workers. Its internal organization is more hierarchical than the two cooperatives which are organised horizontally. In terms of relations with external “power”, the lack of legal regulation facilitate the existence of initiatives such as TCV. The demands made by CBIs such as SE and AdC towards public institutions are for more equitable legal regulations, where corporate businesses are not treated preferentially. Lack of dependence from external funding makes groups less constrained by bureaucracy and therefore free to steer their initiative.

The initiatives are composed of the mostly white, educated, middle class individuals, or people with similar worries and priorities who have organized themselves to avoid conventional markets. Their focus on consumption and pragmatic goals such as economic stability and subsistence tends to prevent higher social considerations, such as the role of social and economic privileges. Inclusion of economically or socially disadvantaged individuals within the
initiatives is generally missing. The low participation of disadvantaged individuals can also be
determined by the homogeneity of cultural coding and languages used in the initiatives. The
problem (of inclusion) is, however, perceived as a structural one, or as something which cannot
be dealt with by the initiatives alone. Yet, a model based on volunteering, is difficult to
replicate and sustain in lower-income neighbourhoods. At the volunteer-based initiatives,
transparency and horizontality help to avoid internal conflicts, while flexibility and openness
facilitates the entry of new people.

The success of the initiatives is perceived in terms of their persistence (being able to survive
and fulfilling their function as a food cooperative), economic sustainability (providing food or
energy), opening new possibilities and imaginaries, sustaining a collective activity, stimulating
behavioural change and consciousness of people. Within these criteria, most participants
perceive the initiatives as already successful. The system of a professionalized initiative (farms)
which works to serve a number of volunteer-based co-operatives works well, especially when
supplemented by additional networks of producers and consumers. However, volunteerism and
precariousness (uncertainty about members’ incomes) in the food cooperatives do not always
go well together, implying that cooperatives with low-income members cannot always sustain
small organic farms (on their own). However, if productive initiatives pay less attention to
economic sustainability and planning, while focusing more on social aspects their very
existence is put in danger. Strong networks, cooperation with similar initiatives, and
collaboration with public institutions seems to contribute to the economic success of CBIs.

UK

The two community initiatives studied within this perspective are SHIFT and Huntly District
Development Trust (HDDT). Shared Planet, the community café part of SHIFT, seeks to
provide cheap, healthy food for students and anyone else who chooses to visit. Meanwhile, the
initiative uses the small profit generated operations to fund political activities, and uses the
space to raise awareness on what it sees as injustice and inequity. Shared Planet is therefore a
bit of a hybrid organisation with both political and apolitical faces, where food-provision and
political organising are seen as complementary. The Sustainable Futures part of SHIFT works
on training students to save energy and does not engage in political debate or action. Some
members of the Shared Planet society were quite critical of the approach taken by Sustainable Futures, saying that it was geared towards individual skills enhancement rather than contributing in any way to social justice, equity and inclusion. The Environment and Ethics committee, also part of SHIFT, is engaged with lobbying the university to become more sustainable and to change its policies and processes where possible.

HDDT is geared towards working with other bodies, mainly in the public sector, but is also
open to anyone who shares their ideas and aims. However, HDDT want to be distinguished
from the local authority. One of the interviewees described how people had become passive and
expected the local authority/public bodies to provide services, whereas his aim was to make
people and communities more active by taking responsibility for their own services and quality
of life.

For the members of Shared Planet the social transition was necessary before any other form of
change could happen. Members of HDDT put less emphasis on the socio-economic transition
and more on building up the organisation (i.e. the Trust) through which they could benefit
people and the local area around town, e.g. providing more opportunities for local employment,
entertainment, and facilitating a stronger connection to place. HDDT thus sees its contribution
to social change in terms of local action, while SHIFT interviewees favoured political action to
enhance social justice and personal behaviour change.

In terms of models for social change, while for SHIFT the cooperative model is perceived as
the most appealing, it is not necessarily seen as providing a strong enough alternative to
dominant oppressive and entrenched socio-economic systems. In SHIFT the transition
imagined is much more political, directed at confronting decision-makers both inside and
outside of the university, and those in power who are considered to be operating unjustly. There
is also political opposition to systems and ideologies that perpetuate inequality (capitalism). These systems were targeted through marches, rallies, petitions and demonstrations. The campaigns that Shared Planet support and contribute to are generally social, although they have recently supported a Fossil Free campaign, in which they tried to persuade the university to divest finances away from fossil fuels. Other campaigns include tackling housing issues for students, removing VAT/tax on sanitary products and supporting the cooperative movement. The students see the café as a political space, designed to encourage activity and education that challenges current political orthodoxy. In contrast, volunteers in the café saw Sustainable Futures as accommodating rather than challenging existing political systems.

In HDDT the model for social change is the development trust model of creating your own income, usually through asset acquisition. Raising money was very important for HDDT, and not only fundraising or getting grants, but having a regular form of income, even to the point where it competed with the social importance of a project. For one of the board members funding underpinned everything else the Trust did – from projects right through to employing staff, and generally filling some of the functions which the local authorities used to provide.

For SHIFT, the challenges to bringing about social change are seen as keeping momentum when the people who keep spaces political leave, or graduate from university. In HDDT, interviewees mentioned the importance of “doing something” rather than talking or consulting or planning. For the Trust, focus is set on achieving greater local autonomy. Yet, HDDT continues to be largely dependent on public funding and on grants from the local authority. Their relationship with the local council is further complicated by the fact that the Trust offices are located in a council building, although the Trust pay no rent. An outsider would not know this – they would just see the office in a council building and assume that they are part of the council.

In order to become financially independent, and to move away from grant funding, HDDT have been trying to put up their own wind turbine. In trying to do this the Trust have come up against a number of obstacles. The barriers to community ownership of renewables are at least three-fold: getting access to land (buying land or renting from a landowner), getting planning permission (local authority and others, e.g. airport authorities for radar interference) and then getting connection to the electricity grid (operated by big national energy suppliers and distributors). External power structures are thus not set up to encourage or facilitate community-led transition, despite policy rhetoric which often puts this discourse forward.

Both HDDT and SHIFT commented on the fact that they were highly dependant on volunteers. In HDDT, the lack of a hierarchy was seen as changing management styles (from ones typical of large commercial/public organisations) to ones based on building personal relationships and providing more space.

Both CBIs operate in a precarious environment without a reliable source of income. Only Shared Planet has a regular income flow, from its three food-related activities, which ensured its existence for over 15 years, while creating a politicised space that aims to challenge wider structural problems. In contrast, Sustainable Futures and HDDT are largely dependent on grant funding and a lot of their energy goes into trying to keep going. Shared Planet was not immune from problems though. They were well aware of the exploitation of volunteer labour to turn even a modest profit.

Perhaps the biggest achievement of CBIs is that they empower local people and communities encouraging them to voice their opinions and to create a space for ideas and alternatives to emerge. The politics of possibilities can be considered is the most important contribution that CBIs make to politics and participation.

2.3 Key insights on “Governance and governing relations”

Overarching research questions:
How is governance conceptualized and experienced by CBIs? How do policies and regulatory structures hinder activity or enable particular possibilities within CBIs? What spaces of creativity, experimentation, and potential are opened up through local engagement with regulatory arrangements? In what ways do local initiatives emerge as governing actors – intervening in and generating new political spaces through their activities?

Role of governance and the wider regulatory structures

- The strong commitment towards renewable energy on the side of local authorities tends to play a key role for the establishment and growth of energy cooperative CBIs (Finland)
- Public regulations, such as capital requirements for managing the municipal electricity grid, can be a limiting factor for energy cooperatives (Germany)
- Governance failures at preventing food waste and launching an energy transition towards renewables are some of the key factors for the emergence of CBIs (Germany)
- A common discussions taking place within a CBI can be summarized as two opposing positions oscillating between: negotiating with public institutions versus rejecting collaboration with state-based authorities; participating as individuals in public consultations or as an “association”;
- In one case, while certain activity (recycling bulky objects, for example) is key for a CBI's existence and survival, their relation with the institution authorizing it can be fragile (Italy);
- Overall, many CBIs pursue autonomy from (dependence upon) public institutions (funding) for their day-to-day activities. Collaboration with public institutions is often contingent upon the receptivity, openness and personal interest of public employees. Certain CBIs are (not) tolerated by today’s vested interests precisely because their transformational impact to date has been (substantial) minimal. (Spain, UK)
- Values and practices dictated by the globalized market-based economy are seen as a major obstacle to collective organization (for cooperatives) and constraining producers (for farmers) (Spain)
- CBIs are influencing public institutions through strengthening the social fabric and reinforcing deliberation and democratic practices in communities (Spain)
- Cities with vibrant communities characterized by critical reflection on social processes provide a fertile soil for CBIs (Germany, Italy, Spain).

Internal governance/organizational structure

- CBIs requiring more professionalism, lobbying and policy making activities, tend to have a more hierarchical organizational structure (Germany)
- Initiatives born in a democratic, participatory and grassroots culture can nevertheless accept a hierarchical structure for reasons of efficiency (Germany)
- The shift from informal association to a legal entity (in the case of bicycle workshops) is recognized as a positive step for ensuring openness to a wider circle of people and for avoiding the risk of frequent and sudden evictions (Italy)
- Being volunteer-based (and thus having low costs) versus having employees (thus ensuring professionalism and higher time commitment/working hours); and growing in space/ members versus staying small and replicating itself; are two organizational approaches that emerge within the same CBIs sometimes conflicting each other (Finland, Italy, UK)
- One internal limit to the wider impact of CBIs is their focus on operational and economic aspects required for survival, while leaving little leeway for socio-political interventions (all countries)
• Asset ownership is perceived as a way to reconnect communities to their local environment and resources (Finland, UK)
• Investment in renewable energy offers the prospects of generating a core income and decreasing dependency on external funding, thus maintaining core staff and pushing forward local projects (UK)
• CBIs' desire to recruit people with a professional background and desire to be inclusive of a broader demographic tend to clash (Finland, UK)
• The need to dedicate a disproportionate amount of resources and energies to securing funding in highly precarious circumstances partly contributes to CBIs’ difficulties in building a strong and extensive local base (Finland, UK)
• Some CBIs view success as the moment when there will be no necessity for their work, or when their organization will become redundant (Germany, UK)

Inclusion

• Avoiding the use of money as a means of exchange (within a CBI) and the promotion of new forms of social organization based on collaboration allows for higher degree of social inclusivity for economically disadvantaged individuals (Italy)
• Another common set of opposing positions within a CBI concerns: joining the CBI for economic reasons (lowering costs, earning an income) versus for political or environmental motives (Italy)

Finland

The initiative analyzed within this theme for Finland is the Eno energy co-operative. Its first material infrastructure was initiated with funding provided by the local municipality. One of the factors influencing its establishment has been the opinion of the mayor who was inclined to cease collaboration with oil companies. The co-operative has effectively made use of the opportunity and skilfully negotiated the involvement of the municipality in its planning, identifying the influential people and talking to them.

Three different actors have played a role in the establishment of the cooperative: the municipality, the local forestry centre (the developers) and forest owners (the members). Each of them had different aims: The municipality pursued local employment and independence from oil companies. The forestry centre aimed to utilise wood left over after logging as well as the trees and branches unsuitable for industrial purposes, thus improving the condition of the forest by removing small-diameter trees. Last but not least, the forest owners aimed to develop a profitable business.

Eventually, the co-operative bought the heat plant from the municipality and became (infrastructure-wise) independent from it, while investing in the expansion of the infrastructure and its distribution network. Currently, the cooperative is financially sustainable. It has multiplied its heat plants over the last years and the reach of its distribution network is now 10 kilometres. When the co-operative started operation, the municipality stopped using oil for heating in its buildings. All interviewees stressed the importance of local factors for their operation in terms of relying on local raw material, benefiting local wood owners and entrepreneurs, replacing imported oil with local wood, thus benefitting the local economy. Nevertheless, given the structure of the urban settlements, heating isolated buildings further away (more than 10 km) has not been possible.

The members of the cooperative have been actively acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for its operation. The co-operative has been professionally led meaning that responsibilities such as administration, forest procurement and plant management have been matched with proper skills. Among its members, who are relatively old and all males, the majority have been involved in the co-operative since its very initiation. The annual general meeting of all members is the highest strategic decision-making body of the co-operative, while day-to-day
decisions are taken by an executive committee and a core group of members who have been active in the co-operative since its start. Members oscillate between having a stronger risk-taking entrepreneurial focus and being rather risk-averse. Conflicts of interests and political positions are rare, or under-reported. One of the internal discussions concerns the choice between investing profits in expanding the infrastructure versus paying more to the wood suppliers.

The external actors with whom they collaborate are mostly the municipality, the local forestry centre and the local university of applied sciences. The CBI’s success is perceived as stemming from building good relations with the government, both internally and externally. The role of agency, in relation to continuous learning and building diverse ties with public institutions, has strongly contributed to its success.

**Germany**

**Bürger Energie Berlin (BEB) and Foodsharing** are the two initiatives studied under this theme. Both CBIs have a pyramid structure with only a few people on the top, consisting of founders and highly engaged people, and a broad base of members involved in the daily work. BEB and Foodsharing have charismatic leaders and ‘faces’ to represent themselves to the media and the general public. Foodsharing has a relatively decentralized structure which is open to the involvement of anyone (in decision-making). Although (at FS) an „executive team” has been put in place, the work is done in a decentralized way, where groups of responsibilities are established and divided into lower levels and smaller units. Work is distributed in small teams where people organize themselves, even in Berlin where they participate amount to 10 000. This creates a feeling of team integration and relative independence. The organizational structure is slightly more hierarchic in the BEB case, perhaps due to its high dependence on external sources of knowledge and expertise, and the requirement of dealing with political figures, especially when it comes to running the energy grid in town. Both initiatives are nevertheless born of a democratic, participatory and grassroots culture and have developed their respective organizational structures themselves, through a bottom-up process, thus accepting a hierarchical structure for reasons of efficiency. In terms of member participation, BEB members who have financially contributed to the project by purchasing a minimum share of 500€, are more influential. The members who cannot afford that cost are excluded from certain decisions. Thus while BEB is a bottom-up project, it represents only a small portion of interested people. This is not a concern for most members, though.

Both initiatives emerge driven by civil discontent and frustration with two particular situations: one is the profit-oriented company owning the energy grid in Berlin, and another - the enormous quantity of food wasted by supermarkets and retailers. BEB was launched as a way to strengthen democratic participation and achieve a more progressive climate policy, which the government and the companies are failing at. They are critical of privatization and demand remunicipalisation to limit the influence of big companies, (such as Vattenfall) on municipal energy policy. FS was initiated because citizens’ concerns with the amount of food being wasted were not being addressed by the government and public policy. For Foodsharing, on the other hand, big companies have the potential to raise awareness and spread the idea of Foodsharing. FS is thus interested in cooperating with big supermarket chains so that more food could be saved.

In terms of politics, while they distance themselves from party politics, BEB is highly reliant on influencing political leaders and therefore works extensively on making and maintaining contacts with public figures. In their attempts to buy the energy grid of Berlin, BEB cooperates with the city government and needs the collaboration of local officials. The insecurity about obtaining the license for the grid, caused by external agents and politicians, is nevertheless limiting the extent of their campaign work. FS avoids getting involved in party politics or influencing the law for fear of losing independence. Most of their members do not call for a radical transformation of the society, but for a change within the boundaries of the current system. They try to raise awareness on a smaller scale and believe to have influenced society to some extent through the promotion of certain behavioural changes.
Concerning external regulations, the work of BEB is subject to strict controls (restrictions) which eventually hinder their work. Regulations on ownership of energy infrastructure which can only be met by companies with a lot of capital represent a clear barrier for community-based cooperatives to manage the energy grid. FS are also subject to legal insecurity. The law perceives them as food-traders and after receiving the recycled products, they have to guarantee the health standards for everyone they donate the food to. However, FS emerged due to the strict regulations on the date of product expiry. Their work is therefore perceived as a solution to governance failure.

BEB has not reached its goal of purchasing the Berlin energy grid, thus their success should be measured using different criteria, in terms of their campaigning work, and having started an important discussion on public participation in decisions concerning energy infrastructure. The general frustration with the status quo and growing demand for public participation among citizens in Berlin have been some of the important drivers of their campaigning success. Other important factors are the financial donations and media attention they have received, as well as their well-defined organizational structure. The same factors hold for FS. Moreover, Berlin provides an encouraging environment for their development due to the high-level awareness and critical reflection of its citizens.

**Italy**

The initiative analysed under this theme is Ciclofficina Centrale (CC)/Ciclonauti. The initiative was triggered by the difficulty of cycling in Rome and its intense traffic. The ‘ciclofficine’, or social bicycle workshops, emerged from the Critical Mass movement more than a decade ago, when the use of bicycles in urban environments was promoted as a form of social and political action. The use of bicycles has ever since increased, driven by inadequate public transport and growing unemployment, where the “ciclofficine” responded to the needs for low-cost transportation and vehicle maintenance.

CC has a history of having workshops in occupied social centres which have been evicted and put under pressure by public authorities. After the eviction of the building where the ‘ciclofficina’ was based, part of the team established a legal entity giving birth to Ciclonauti association. Through the newly established association, CC reached an agreement with the municipality of Rome for renting a low-cost space in the same (central) area. CC has a strong relation the local neighbourhood, (Monti), which is a both central and accessible (for students, foreigners and various people).

The Association has a formal structure, consisting of a board of directors with a president, treasurer, secretary, as well as currently around 500 associates, or regular users. The shift in terms of governing relations, or becoming legal, is recognized as a positive step for the members of the association mostly for not having to suffer the risk of evictions as in the past. Nevertheless some of the founding members of CC did not agree with the shift and opened another ‘ciclofficina’, called Ciclosoccorso, or „Bike aid“, in an occupied building. CC is a member of the “Popular Ciclofficine” network in Rome uniting bicycle workshops which do not have tariffs, nor charge for their services and survive on donations.

CC participants are critical of the current neoliberal system, which they find unjust and environmentally unsustainable. Their overall aim is guaranteeing bicycle access to the biggest number of people within a higher political aspiration of making the city more sustainable, liveable and just. Their political position can be summarized around four pillars. The first of them is promotion of socio-economic justice, which they pursue by refusing money as a means of transfer and the promotion of new forms of social organization based on collaboration and exchange. For example, it is considered unacceptable for CC members to earn an income from bicycle reparation using the common workshop. Their second pillar is the promotion of a more environmentally sustainable society. CC is very critical of the excessive car use, while dedicating a lot of attention to recycling and sustainability in a wider day-to-day sense. Their third pillar is making Roma more liveable and increasing quality of life in the city. Apart from their positive environmental effect, bicycles are perceived as an effective means for stimulating
social interaction. To this end, CC organizes social events, where bicycle users meet and interact. The forth pillar relates to the idea of an inclusive society. The use of bicycles in a society of exclusive consumption is perceived as an instrument of social integration for its easy and low-cost access, use and maintenance. To this end, CC is open to anyone regardless their social or economic background.

The aims of CC remained unchanged after its legalization. Their activities however, diversified, including the organization of social events, courses for schools, production of T-shirts and various promotional materials. CC considers itself less radical and more inclusive than the other bicycle workshops from the network, which facilitates their interaction with a wider community rather than people from the same activist circles. Moreover, CC has replicated itself, through members who at certain point decided to open up a “ciclofficina” after learning the know-how and having the experience with the existing one.

When compared to the other bicycle workshops in Rome, a distinct feature of CC is its commitment to the neighbours and opening every day. As a result, the number of people attending CC has increased substantially over the years. The process coincides with a general increase in the use of bicycles in Rome over the last decade, to which CC has contributed. To cope with the growth in both members and workshop attendants, the initiative has established more structured mechanisms for decision-making. Decision making, still largely informal, is done through consensus at general meetings (attended by about 20 active members, or half of the volunteers included in their internal mailing list).

Over time CC have been having a number of discussions, either more or less explicit, emerging out of their fragile position between a formal association, a critical grassroots group, and a workshop with growing attendance and demand. These can be summarized as: being volunteer based (thus refusing money, and having low costs) versus having employees (ensuring longer opening hours and accepting money); increasing the space versus staying small and replicating elsewhere; negotiating with public institutions (on issues of cyclists infrastructures) versus rejecting collaboration with the municipality; participating as individuals in public consultations or as an association; using bicycle for economic (lower costs) reasons versus a for political or environmental motives.

In terms of relations with public institutions CC has agreements with two authorities, one is the municipality of Rome (for the use of its space) and the other - a semi-public organization in charge of waste collection in the city, (AMA). The relationship with the municipality is fragile and based on a verbal agreement given years ago (by someone who might no longer be at the municipality). CC has little interaction with it beyond paying the monthly rent. It is very critical toward the local government, especially with respect to their lack of engagement with cyclists. It was the inertia of the municipality and the need to fill a vacuum in the promotion of sustainable transport which provoked the establishment and diffusion of “ciclofficine” in the first place. The inertia of the public administration is constraining and limiting the expansion of the CBI’s impact. In terms of the second institution, once a month members of the CC take bicycles and other useful material from the bulky waste left on the streets of the city and collected by AMA. CC is the only ciclofficina in Rome having such an agreement. Thus, it invited other “ciclofficine” to join the collection of objects thrown away. While the possibility to collect bulky objects from the streets of Roma is key for the CBI’s existence and survival, its relation with the authorizing institution is relatively informal and fragile.

Spain

The initiatives studied under this theme are Som Energia, Totacucaviu and Aurora del Camp. Governance for the three CBIs is conceptualized as external and internal. External governance not only refers to relations with institutions but also to the partnerships and networks established with other initiatives, organizations and groups. The networks which the initiatives support economically or politically are seen as fundamental and something which needs to be further strengthened. Some networks are formally constituted but others represent informal cooperation between different types of actors such as small business, family business,
cooperatives, informal groups, lobbying groups, social organizations, NGOs and individuals. Together with these partners, initiatives manage to form autonomous economies which are able to deal with an unwelcoming institutional environment.

Overall, the three initiatives pursue autonomy and feel they do not need support from public institutions for their day-to-day activities. This is especially the case with food cooperatives. While some members state that engagement with state authorities is lowering the activity of social movements on the streets, others see collaboration with public institutions as necessary for broadening their social impact. Local or regional governments, for example, can play an important role in an initiative’s development, and act as their allies if they accept to “renegotiate” the rules. Som Energia, for example, is open to cooperation with local and regional institutions, while avoiding potential dependency on them. Their engagement with public institutions depends on the willingness and ability of public employees to understand the need of a paradigm shift. In the food sector, international regulations are seen as a constraining factor to the success of small-scale organic farming projects. Regulation favours industrial non-organic and organic agriculture, while subsidies keep prices of food low. Farmers claim that institutions should take into account all the externalities that industrial/conventional agriculture generates such as health problems, environmental damage and rural displacement.

Internal governance is considered important for all three CBIs and the impact of external structures on internal dynamics is recognized. For TCV, for example, internal governance is highly precarious due to the high mobility, or “liquidity”, of citizens in the central area of Barcelona, as well as the entry of members who are not familiar with participatory/horizontal decision-making and organization. Values and practices dictated from the globalized market-based economy are thus seen as a major hurdle for collective organization. The aspirations regarding internal governance are related to higher rates of participation and political engagement. While some people think initiatives should be more active in the political arena, others argue that they should be open to everyone: to people who are critical and politically engaged as well as to the ones who can commit less. In the professionalized groups such as small farmers, internal governance is perceived as being less relevant. One internal limit there is the focus on operational and economic aspects for their survival which leaves little leeway for socio-political interventions.

There are some signs of the CBIs permeating public institutions, but the impacts of such incursions are still unknown and will depend on their ability to negotiate and local governments/policy makers’ willingness to make adaptations of the framework. While some collaboration seems to be positive for the CBIs, others involve concessions to the system. For collaboration between CBIs and public authorities to happen, more interest, receptivity and knowledge is needed from the holders of decision-making/governmental power. A stronger social fabric would require stronger interlocutors from the institutions. In this respect, Aurora del Camp is less politicized but working closely with the regional agricultural department and several agricultural and environmental research centres. Som Energia, on the other hand, has successfully influenced some local governments.

On the other hand, communities might be influencing the institutions by strengthening the social fabric, which is reinforced by the deliberation and direct democracy practiced within. The main mechanism by which initiatives impact people’s imaginaries is through increasing the visibility and political aspects of consumption, in both food and energy sectors. This politicization is most of the times implicit, but effective anyway. The replication patterns that are reported can be considered as an indicator of their socio-political impacts. TCV replicated itself into another food cooperative, inspiring people to take initiative and form a consumer group.

Perceptions of governance is highly influenced by the enormous change in the institutional political arena in Spain throughout the economic crisis (2008 – ongoing), especially after the 15M where people went to the streets demanding ‘real democracy’. New parties, which are strongly connected to society’s needs and claims, have emerged, both at national and local level. Many of those now govern in many municipalities across the country.
This theme has been developed on the basis of interviews with members of Huntly and District Development Trust (HDDT) and Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust (Colglen). This memo also adds a few insights drawn from qualitative data (open-ended survey questions) with the social enterprise ‘Remade in Edinburgh’ (RME).

The perspectives and issues that emerged around governing relations for HDDT were orientated very much by the Trust’s current focus on becoming more ‘self-sustaining’ through investing in renewable energy. HDDT’s efforts to render Huntly more sustainable in terms of energy production could be perceived as aiming to re-orientate social and economic practices in town rendering it less dependent on fossil-fuels. The progressive tone of their actions, however, tended to be somewhat obscured by the pragmatic objectives of cutting costs.

As for many other local organisations in Scotland, investment in renewable energy offers the prospect of generating a core income year by year, and decreasing dependency on external funding bodies. With that in mind, two years ago HDDT bought a nearby farm (with funds from the Scottish Land Fund), with a view to building a community-owned wind turbine and solar panels on the site. It was hoped that planners would look favourably on the scheme, as the turbine would effectively ‘blend into’ the windfarm immediately next door to the farm. It was hoped that the annual income earned through the electricity generated will enable the Trust to maintain its core staff and push forward local projects. Thus far, HDDT has been able to surmount two significant hurdles: gaining final planning permission for the turbine and securing a grid connection. If they are able to successfully fund the infrastructure itself, with the support of energy shares bought by members of the local community and probably also a bank loan, they hope to have the turbine up and running by October 2016.

However, adopting a business approach was not necessarily perceived as the most appropriate way to serve community needs (by all members). The collective orientation of the Board has been defining of the direction of the organisation (rather than members themselves), somewhat throwing into question its validity as a grassroots body. Nor did they necessarily purport to be part of a particularly grassroots organisation – the implication was rather more that it was a grassroots body in the making. Moreover, a governance system that relies heavily on a small highly autonomous Board may not always have the knowledge or expertise needed to take decisions on diverse projects. HDDT staff and board members often spoke of the difficulties of making strategic decisions on the direction of the Trust, partly because of the need to reflect the desires and concerns of the Huntly population (which were hard to assess). Lack of local interest in the Trust’s activities seemed to be the greatest source of anxiety. On the other hand, the connotations of the community involvement, was said to possibly put off the kinds of experts that local energy projects demanded.

Development trusts are furthermore being called upon to deliver on services that councils can’t fulfil due to budgetary constraints. This government approach facilitates certain forms of possibility over others. Available funding seems orientated towards asset-purchase or towards the delivery of quite specific projects that fulfil the pre-set parameters of the governing bodies awarding them. In this sense, Huntly Development Trust appears to be extremely closely bound to a governing agenda that has shifted considerably (with austerity policies) towards “entrepreneurialism” and “self-sufficiency” creating greater dependency on project funds tied to the delivery of services previously provided by government. The need to dedicate a disproportionate amount of resources and energies to the ongoing struggle to secure funding in highly precarious circumstances partly contributes to HDDTs’ difficulties in securing a strong and extensive local base, while throwing into question the celebration of Development Trust’s “ground-up” status.

Yet, this is not by any means the full story. Firstly, the dynamism, creativity and commitment of (some of) the actors involved in the Trust opens up spaces of local possibility and experimentation. Secondly, the changing dynamics of funding may push them into a scenario where their core funding draws on assets they control, enabling them to move towards realising
projects that genuinely reflect local needs and concerns. The community share model – building on cooperative and peer-to-peer traditions and networks that are emerging strongly across Europe – offers a potential route towards greater autonomy and self-management. The feed-in tariff, which has offered a lifeline to HDDT, however, is just another source of state funding giving the lie to the notion that Trusts – in general – are somehow stepping outside of the government control. Whilst HDDT is one of the lucky ones, and will be able to secure core funding for its staff through the Greenmyres turbine and Cairnborrow wind-farm, it seems that they will continue to depend substantially on state-issued funding in order to develop further projects.

Apart from the four members of staff employed by the Trust, most of those who actively supported the Trust were involved on a voluntary basis. Both Board and working group members were all volunteers. Overall, success is constituted primarily in terms of survival. Currently, the intentions of staff and board members is not so much to build a vision and a local base, but to garner the resources that will enable the organisation to be in a position to do these things within the next few years.

The initiatives Colglen emerged out of the need to meet a need that is not being delivered by the local government or other actors. Colglen emphasizes regeneration of the fragile local economy, creating new local employment and training opportunities to keep young people in the region, or encourage families to move in, reversing the long history of economic decline and depopulation. This role is presented as one of ‘reconnection’: of the community with itself, with its local resources, with external government and with other communities.

External grant funding has been critical to the emergence and development of Colglen. They have managed to leverage an impressive amount of funds for a very small community which has enabled them to progress a wide range of projects, such as community facilities, certificated training courses to increase local employment opportunities (on themes like first aid and forestry). The CBI is, however, often tempted to plan their funding proposals according to the boxes designed by funders, focusing on short-term outcomes, rather than being in line with locally set priorities. Some of the policies of the Scottish Land Fund, such as the ‘Right to Buy’ and the National Forest Land Scheme have been highly influential for Colglen. Bringing land and buildings into community ownership is viewed as an opportunity to generate income and become self-financing, creating jobs, generating skills or providing housing. The model is furthermore perceived as creating a virtuous circle that supports community action and empowerment, opening up opportunities to generate income in line with initial principles and providing a better long-term support than (donor-designed) project funding. Crucially, asset ownership is perceived as a way to reconnect communities to their local environment and resources.

On the one hand, Colglen aspires to create new, more participatory and inclusive planning and decision making structures that give local people a sense of control over the future of their community. It aims to be an enabling and facilitating body, encouraging projects (like community polytunnels) to emerge, spin-off and become independent. Similarly, the social enterprise, Remade in Edinburgh, is keen on expanding its influence and impact, rather than its size, by encouraging spin-offs following a ‘social franchising’ model. In this respect, the Development Trust approach tends to attract more entrepreneurially minded board members, who can be easily frustrated by the length of time taken up by more participatory approaches. In this respect, Remade, talks about the positive role of the “benign dictators”, in making strategic decisions. While, many of the priorities for the direction taken by Colglen came out of extensive community consultations in the early stages of the trust, several interviewees felt that the board ought to be more inclusive and engaging with people. There is a tension around how ‘representative’ a Development Trust should aim to be. In particular, the desire to recruit people who have a professional background and the desire to be more inclusive of a broader demographic tend to clash. The Board of Colglen, has had the same Chair since the very beginning (seven years ago) whose entrepreneurial approach has had a strong influence on its trajectory. Moreover, it can be difficult for a charismatic founder/leader to step back and let...
others move in. On the other hand, being on the board requires considerable commitment of time, where both staff and volunteers tend to exploit themselves, working long hours and burning out.

In the long-term, Colglen (and most other initiatives) view success as the moment when there will be no necessity for their work, or when their organization will become redundant. In the short term, their success depends on finding ways to work within the current system, taking advantage of whatever opportunities are offered by Government policy, funding streams and local circumstances to start changing norms, achieve tangible outcomes that keep people engaged whilst creating a glimpse of an alternative future. The factors mentioned as contributing to this goal are: having passionate staff embedded in the community and able to quietly influence others, good political connections to local and Scottish Government, groundwork and engagement, as well as enabling board members to step down when they need a break.

The local government in Scotland is seen as very remote and largely irrelevant, with very little day-to-day contact or interaction with community organisations, even where (as in Colglen) a local councillor is on the Board. Whilst Colglen have been able to use the existing National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS) and Scottish Land Fund to acquire a forest, one stakeholder suggested that, in general, the NFLS has benefitted investors rather than improving forest management. Overall, the extent to which Colglen (and the other initiatives) are succeeding in transforming the current system is questionable. In fact, it may be that such initiatives are tolerated by today’s vested interests precisely because their transformational impact to date has been minimal.

2.4 Key insights on “CBI’s Rationalities and Aspirations”

**Overarching research questions:**

The theme focuses on the initiatives' aims and ways of achieving their aims and rationalities. What is the diversity of these aspirations and rationalities? How are these being negotiated? How are tensions dealt with? Can aspirations and rationalities be interpreted as storylines? What are the insights that emerge from such a perspective in relation to the dynamics within the initiative?

**Aspirations/rationalities concerning CBIs organizational structure**

- There seems to be a limit as to how big a co-operative can grow without changing its original (horizontal, volunteer-based) organizational structure (Finland)
- One CBI which functions through non-monetary exchange (without monetary intermediation) faces a number of limitations such as the amount of time volunteers can dedicate to the project (and the amount of social services they can offer) (Italy)
- Participation (in some CBIs) is not always perceived as an easy and enjoyable act, as it implies having less free time, or sacrificing family life (Romania)
- While the role of leaders (founding members) can be key for CBIs, active long-term (core) members need to keep rotating in order to encourage inclusivity and new entrants who commit to the initiative (Romania)
- Moving from paid employees to volunteer-only-structures can be an option that increases campaign efficiency (Romania)
- Sharing the workload in a fair and equal way is one of the major challenges for some community supported agriculture projects, especially when commitment to (and compliance with) the required number of working hours varies between members (Finland, Spain)
Rationalities concerning financial/economic approaches

- Rationalities and aspirations tend to change with regards to the pursuit of income. Asset ownership can be perceived as a trade-off between spending present time on getting the finances in place and having enough money to serve the community with the generated income in the future (UK)
- The drive for financial sustainability of a CBI could come at the price of not undertaking any projects which may be more meaningful for the community at present. In focusing on asset-management and adopting a business-like strategy, a CBI emphasizes and searches for different skills, while tossing aside those associated with community facilitation (UK)

Aspirations/rationality dilemmas/clashes

One of the common conflicts identified between CBIs in the sample concern (all countries):

- Having political (left-wing/social) and apolitical (environmental only) aspirations;
- Giving more priority to changes on an individual level or on a system level;
- Working within the system or confronting (avoiding interaction with) public institutions;
- Adaptability to institutional framework (in formal project requirements) or escaping the logic of achievements and efficient performance;
- Having paid staff or being volunteer-based;
- Focusing on having a good public image or defending core values, ignoring what the ‘others’ might think; Sticking to ideological ideas versus being realistic (managing high-quality organic agriculture production, including renting a field, farming, maintaining a greenhouse, distributing harvest and organizing distribution, is sometimes viable economically only through a business strategy);

Aspirations concerning public institutions/social change

- Certain CBIs perceive social change as facilitated by convivial tools (bicycle), especially when used in an inclusive and open-access manner (Italy, Spain)
- Social interaction, openness and inclusivity are crucial to the success of certain CBIs (in terms of outreach) (Italy, Spain)
- The unresponsiveness of the public administration to CBIs’ demands for improving environmental conditions could be a bigger hurdle to their activities than financial stability (Romania)

Finland

The Herttoniemi Food Co-operative (HFC) farm has been analysed under this theme. It is considered one of the largest, older and most successful not-for-profit food co-operatives in Finland. It has been an example for similar CBIs which have emerged ever since. The main aspiration for joining the cooperative has been having access to local, clean food, cultivated (collectively) by familiar or known faces. The overarching aspiration for members of the initiative has been the enhancement of both social sustainability and low carbon agriculture.

The CBI counts very much on voluntary work and from the very beginning, it has had a loyal group of active members. Many of them are women with families, in their 30s or 40s. HFC is regarded, above all, as opening the possibility for people with similar interests and values to join hands. Some interviewees expressed the belief that if the same kind of operations, from renting a field, to farming, managing a greenhouse, distributing the harvest and organizing internal communication were managed by a private company, the enterprise would not survive.

The cooperative is described as being flexible, adaptable and involving little risk for members. Overall, the role of the (farm) employees is considered very important and acknowledged by
the interviewees, although the pronounced role of the (personal) farmer was questioned, and complaints have been raised as to the farmer ignoring member opinions in decision-making. About 10% of the members are reported to participate in general assemblies. The board, which does not have a background in agriculture, is looking for various ways of handling the problem with the lack of volunteers in the field and for paying a wage to the executive manager who has been working for free.

In this respect, the cooperative has been facing a number of dilemmas. One of them concerns the clash between ideology and realism for the key people involved in the cooperative. This is taking place between those having a broader perspective and the ones having more pragmatic one, related to the concrete work in the field.

Another conflicting rationality relates to organizational efficiency and can be phrased as commitment versus social prestige. Sharing the workload in a fair and equal way is one of the major challenges, as some members do not comply with the minimum required number of hours. Several interviewees saw membership as being a matter of status, rather than actual commitment. The solution to reaching those who (almost) never come to the field, called ‘free-rider’, has been the establishment of a minimum limit of 10 working hours, which each member should contribute to the CBI.

Another contentious theme is growth. There seems to be a limit to how big a cooperative can grow without changing its original organizational structure. Growth is perceived as involving higher complexity and losing focus, having higher level of bureaucracy and more employees, more crops but higher membership fees, and increased requirement for voluntary work. Improving commitment and finding new ways to enhance external participation (e.g. among unemployed, or young, citizens) and equality within and outside the cooperative is considered more important than growth per se.

Radicalism or participation in political movements is not favoured, nor found relevant for the success of the CBI. Interviewees furthermore commented that the initiative might be somewhat exclusionary, as participation is based on paying 450€ per season, which rules out those who cannot afford it, while granting easy access for others. At the same time those who cannot commit 10 hours to the fieldwork are given the option to ‘pay-themselves-out’, at a rate of 10 euro per hour. The CBI is furthermore exposed to changes in the landowner’s mind-set as he has the right to reclaim the plot that has been cultivated and fertilized and replace it with a barren field instead.

**Italy**

The Ciclofficina Centrale (CO)/Ciclonauti is the initiative analysed within this theme. The CO is a peculiar mix of political activism with practical approaches to catalyze change. It emerged in a “left-wing” environment which distances itself from radical rightwing movements while keeping an open mind to anyone who wants to join. Many respondents stated that they are apolitical with respect to alliances to certain parties, which differentiates them from other “ciclofficine” in Rome, a city where political beliefs are often at the core of social centres. Although many members have a history of more radical left-wing activism, they decided to make the CO a “less political” and more inclusive project.

The key ideas expressed by the interviewees reflect a (nonetheless political) vision of making and leaving the world better place, starting from the city. Bicycles are perceived as the medium through which a wider range of societal changes can occur. The activities of the CO are not merely centred on mobility issues (bicycle use) but they also extend to three wider, and more ambitious and socially relevant goals such as:

(1) **Sustainability.** The promotion of cycling as a means of transport is seen as part of creating more environmentally aware and ecologically sustainable lifestyles. Respondents related the activities that take place at the CO to sustainability, enhancing changes in people’s thinking and behaviour.
(2) **Inclusivity.** This is done by providing a bicycle for anyone who needs one (especially those who for social, economic or other reasons may not otherwise be able to have a bike); and through the creation of an open-access place where people with an interest in cycling can meet, regardless of their background or political leanings. Inclusivity is achieved through the alternative organizational form and socio-economic exchanges that lie outside standard profit-driven business undertakings. Inclusivity is furthermore promoted by campaigning for public spaces which are inclusive of non-motorized vehicles. In this context, inclusivity is perceived in the context of environmental and social injustice, subtly linking the use of bicycles to a critique of individual car use and bicycles having the right to reclaim public space.

(3) **A sense of community.** Creating the supportive environment for a community of people with an interest in cycling has been one of the means to achieve this goal. Building social capital by word-of-mouth and informal recruiting has been one important way that the CO has gained more members. The social interaction and conviviality that exists within the CO has proven crucial to their success. The CO organizes and hosts many social events, like fundraising parties and dinners. According to some of the members, bicycles are particularly effective in stimulating social interaction, reconnecting people and building a sense of community.

When it comes to group cohesion and decision-making, there is an element of reliance on key members to help attract people and be inclusive towards a diverse membership. Yet the decision making process and the negotiation of any proposals is carried out in a democratic manner with each of the volunteers having an equal say. Meetings are open to any member and all those who are present have the right to voice their objection to or support for a particular issue.

Discussion at the CO are considered part of the dynamics of community life. A number of debates are running through the group’s rhetoric. One of these revolves around money and charging for services. While the CO pride themselves as being a place for non-economic exchange some feel that changing this could help resolve some limitations they are facing. Some interviewees expressed the desire to employ someone at least part time, partially because there have been many volunteers in unemployment and willing to take on more responsibility. Most interviewees would like to see the CO offer more services, a wider variety of activities, simply because members are now motivated by more simple rationalities such as overcoming economic or financial hardships. There have been proposals to start operating a separate cooperative that would charge for services and using this to financially support the work of the CO. Despite much debate and serious consideration, it was decided that this would change the nature of the CO and go against the principles for open access and inclusivity and create a number of organizational changes that the group was not prepared to make.

Another point of contention concerns growth and expansion beyond bicycle related activities. Some respondents find that the lack of growth may hamper their ability to continue their activities. If they do not reach people beyond those who are already interested in cycling, CO may not attract enough new people to continue in the future. The CO has reached a saturation point in terms of how many people they can serve and involve in their activity. Some argue that the CO could up-scale and expand (in terms of members, physical space, and outreach) by working more closely with local government or other similar CBIs in a more “professional” project-based manner, as opposed to staying small and volunteer-based. There is a concern that the expansion of their activities, however, may risk losing a focus and identify. It is clear for most respondents that the volunteer based model for staffing the CO is functional for now: The CO is open every evening and their rotating schedule works quite well meaning that they are generally not understaffed. However, respondents also say that they could not afford to open more hours.

The “outreach” and work with a wider set of users, e.g. students, homeless people, and immigrants, has led to the diffusion of the use of bicycles in town and increased the popularity of CO. Their physical space has become more efficient, the organization of volunteers has become more structured and opening hours have been slightly extended. The success of CO in
Rome and the growing demand for their services have been key factors for these changes. Recently they have diversified further offering courses for schools, organizing dinners and other social events, producing T-shirts and other merchandise for sale. The CO sees children as key to enacting the changes in local attitudes and practices required for sustainable societies.

One aspect of how CO achieve some of their goals, without physically growing is related to their approach in diffusing “ciclofficine” throughout the city. The process of establishing new “ciclofficine” is highly informal, with people taking the initiative to open a new ciclofficina after having worked with a pre-existing one. Some stakeholders see this as an organic, positive and inclusive approach to membership which helps reinforce their message about diffusing and giving access to bikes. Strong social ties to the neighbourhood and good public relations are key for new “ciclofficine” establishment. The CO’s success in recent years can also be a response to economic hardships or merely the desire of many to seek out more convivial opportunities and a chance to meet like-minded people.

The key messages from the interviewees were partly a critique of the poor public infrastructure services provided by the local government. CO is a success because they respond to an unfulfilled social demand. An aspiration, referred to by many respondents, is that local institutions acknowledge the need for more cycling infrastructure and create policies and programs which could facilitate this modal shift away from individual car or motor-scooter use. Through demonstrating that it is possible to get around the city by bike and showing the benefits of having more cyclists, they hope to (indirectly) convince public officials to support cycling in the city.

**Romania**

The initiatives studied under this theme are **Cycling Club Napoca (CCN)** and **EcoBucovina (EB)**. Both CCN and EB were initiated with the broad aim of improving social responsibility and environmental awareness. In both cases, the rationality of setting up the initiatives was to fill the gap between the desired and the present society marked by irresponsible public institutions and low level of environmental awareness. Both initiatives were started as student initiatives, where CCN was launched 25 years ago and EB 4 years ago.

In both cases, interviewees have declared that one of reasons for joining the initiatives has been spending time with similar-minded individuals in serving a worthy cause. Participation is however, not perceived as an easy and enjoyable act, as it implies having less free time, and sacrificing family life.

Over its 25 years of existence, CCN has tried different approaches, from being a passive witness to acting as a watchdog and fighting with public institutions, which has led to their exclusion from public consultations or events organized by the city. Over time, their approach to activism changed and they are now counsellors and partners of the local administration, having a dialogue with a wide number of stakeholders.

CCN has furthermore supported the legal establishment of multiple other NGOs. It has had the advantage of having law specialists and a diversity of professionals, through which they could contribute to various legislative changes concerning bicycle transportation, natural preservation and water. Their evolution is described as being marked by ups and downs, in function of the time and resources of the members and leaders, and based on reacting to the socio-political reality.

The main aspirations of CCN founding members are still connected to the expansion of bicycle lanes, improving the quality of the bicycle infrastructure and the increased use of bicycles as a means of transportation. The role of leaders (founders) is central with a core of active members undertaking most tasks and attracting more members. Some of the active members, however, migrated to other countries or went back to their cities after graduation. Having a constant member involvement is thus interpreted as a success. While the CCN expanded from 50 to 150 people (formally subscribed), member involvement has been unequal. On the one side, coordination of a large number of members has been difficult and challenging for the core
group. After an intense period of managing projects and funding applications, CCN decided to abandon project-based work because of the excessive time/human capacity necessary to deal with the administrative burden. Most CCN members were employed in other organizations and contributed on a voluntary basis. On the other hand, active members report that new (member) entries are contributing less to the goals of the initiative. While they subscribe to the goals of the initiative, there is a commitment problem to the organizational tasks and CBI management. Currently, one of the major challenges for CCN is finding members that embrace the original vision and sustain their on-going activities while maintaining the volunteer structure of the CBI. Internal tensions are based on the limited financial, human and technical resources, or on discussions concerning the approach that the initiatives should follow: a radical versus less conflictive/more collaborative one.

Other major frustrations experienced by the CBI concern the unresponsiveness of the public administration to demands for improving environmental conditions, as well as the lack of openness to changes on the side of the local community, which tends to be suspicious towards more idealistically oriented groups.

EcoBucovina is only four years old and has gone through two lifetime stages so far: one of them as a student club at the university, and another as a legally established association which is managing funded projects. A key role in its initiation has been played by the figure of one professor who motivated the students and encouraged them to start the CBI, inspired by best practices from abroad. The key aspirations of EB are still related to environment protection, but the means to achieve them are changing. Members would like to move from a students’ club to a strong and professional organization, able to fight for environment preservation. Their aspirations are oriented toward consolidation and expansions of initial proposed activities through project funding. Obtaining funding and financing of projects and employing more staff is perceived as the main strategy for extending and diversifying activities and reaching their goals.

UK

Analysis on rationalities and aspirations is based on two study cases, the Huntly and District Development Trust (HDDT) and a cluster of largely student-led sustainability initiatives at the University of Aberdeen (UoA), called SHIFT (consisting of Shared Planet, Sustainable Futures and the Environmental & Ethics Committee). Starting with HDDT, the Trust undertakes a broad range of projects that fit under the umbrella of “community resilience”, ranging from improving employment opportunities, through making the town a nice place to live, to developing sports facilities.

The Trust has been shaped by a number of institutional sticking points which arise from its specific history and relationship with the Local Authority. The history in Scotland of public costs reductions and consolidating administrative district areas is said to have created less local representation and more demand for organisations such as the HDDT. Rather than sticking to an old practice, the organisation actively tries to define itself in contrast to and as different from the Local Authority.

There is a feeling among the members of the trust that the sheer breadth of their portfolio is a barrier to their success. Its mission is too wide, which makes it difficult to communicate and market itself to the outside world. Presently there is a drive to focus on a few bigger projects. Moreover, the organisational status of the trust predetermines the types of projects that the trust decides to take on: members of the board have a personal (financial) liability, which makes them risk-averse to certain undertakings. The Trust is furthermore limited by being a voluntary organisation in which each volunteer comes on with their own agenda and interest. Financial liability also prevents people from volunteering to join the board. One of the key determining factors of the change of rationality and aspirations over time has been the director who has enacted his vision for the Trust. On the other hand, without a strong leader, there is a concern that the Trust will suffer a lack of direction.
One of the main ways the rationalities and aspirations of the trust have changed over time is related to the pursuit of income. Beyond thinking about large social change, survival is a key aspiration. Being reliant on small pots of money is strenuous, time consuming and disruptive for the long-term vision of the trust. Driven by the reduction in public funding and the pressure from the Development Trust Association Scotland, HDDT decided to focus on renewables and obtained land (for the construction of a windmill) with the help of the Scottish Land Fund. The Trust almost see asset ownership as a trade-off between spending the time now on getting the finances in place, and then having enough money to serve their mission at a later stage. The sheer possibilities of Greenmyres farm (wind turbine) have sparked the imagination of the staff and volunteers. The process itself, of involving and managing a large group, with diverse backgrounds, who all chip in to help, has been inspiring and rewarding for those involved. For some of them, the participatory nature of the planning process is considered more special than the outcome itself. Nevertheless, as a result of its income-oriented focus, the trust has become more business-like. In engaging with renewable energy generation, it has had to evolve into a particular type of organisation – more professional and cost-efficient. This may not be what all envision for the Trust, and limits the work that they can do for the community in the short term.

The community is furthermore imagined as a more coherent body than it actually represents. While the “imagined community” is considered central to all that the Trust does, it is questionable how far HDDT can make an impact if their major ambition is condensed into being financially sustainable. Attention is shifted away from things that are seen as less profitable, – ultimately intangible things. In becoming more like a business, different skills have been emphasised, and others have been tossed aside. For example, people with backgrounds in business consultancy, marketing etc. are sought after and their skills are called upon at certain times. Others do not share this vision, arguing that this approach might be less responsive to the needs of ‘the community’. Focusing on income-generating projects is also seen (by some) as less responsive to the needs of the volunteers who get involved because they want to change something in their locality, something they are passionate about. Community involvement and financial sustainability is actually desired from different parts of the initiative, but at present, there is less emphasis on a community venue. Until now, one of the main successes of the Trust is that they have kept going and have survived.

In the case of SHIFT, each of the parts of SHIFT has multiple aspirations but in principle, these were coherent and compatible. However, there are stark differences between the aspirations of the different components of SHIFT. The implications of these differences are dependent on the degree to which the three parts want to (or have to) collaborate with each other. While Sustainable Futures and The Environment and Ethics committee have clearly defined aspirations in terms of outcomes (university divestment from fossil fuels) the aspirations of Shared Planet are more process-based and open-ended (e.g., providing a space for political interaction). This is closely linked to their identity and self-image. Sustainable Futures was set up through a specific Scottish Government funding stream for grassroots change (Climate Challenge Fund) and therefore the context of their aspirations is more mainstream, institutionalised, and providing tangible outcomes (through monthly reporting) and value for money.

Shared Planet problematize world trends as responsible for inequality, power laden politics, contaminative and exploitative food systems and therefore talk about system change through taking on ‘big issues’ such as fossil fuel free Aberdeen. They see their local action as a small drop in the ocean but nonetheless, a drop that can have ripples and make changes beyond individuals. Whereas much of Shared Planet’s members take pride in being alternative, left wing, unconstrained and “hippy”, Sustainable Futures contrast highly in that they are a professional body with paid employees who operate within the university bureaucracy and the stipulations of the CCF. Shared Planet’s ideal was radical change towards a less capitalist and more sustainable system, even though they recognised that this might be unrealistic. The E&E’s rationality, on the other hand, is predominantly to represent the students’ view on environmental and ethics issues in the context of the university.
Thus, SHIFT provides a rich area of clashes on the level of aspirations and rationalities. Some of these can be summarized as: a conflict between political (left-wing) and environmental aspirations within Shared Planet; between discourses giving more importance to changes on individual level (Sustainable Futures) and those directed towards system change (Shared Planet/E&S); between working within the system (E&E) and confronting it (Shared Planet); between project management requirements (Sustainable Futures), speed and adaptability (E&E) and having a space that is free from the logic of achievements, efficiency and academic performance (Shared Planet); between different forms of representation (E&E is elected; Sustainable Futures is consulted with students; and Shared Planet is volunteers-based); between award-chasing and appearance management (Sustainable Futures) and living given values as an organisation (Shared Planet); between sticking to volunteers and thus having a low economic pressure (Shared Planet) and paying people for increasing efficiency (Sustainable Futures).

The negotiation between these positions touches upon the roles, expectations and relationships of the three groups. Open communication on this topic is largely missing, allowing for certain tensions to persist. A range of approaches to communication and negotiation have nevertheless been used in SHIFT, ranging from structured meetings, AGMs, joint writing of a manifesto and more unstructured conversations. Disagreement over political views in Shared Planet, for example, is seen as less tolerable than disagreement over work in the café: members of Shared Planet reaction to a co-users’ critique on a left-wing poster was perceived as censorship and resulted in a manifesto that prescribed/fixed Shared Planet’s rationalities and approach. The group is rather defensive towards expressing their political opinion, institutionalising their rather fluid, performed, rather than stipulated idea of a political café. The key conflict in aspirations and rationalities is probably between different ideas of change as expressed by Shared Planet/E&E members on the one hand and Sustainable Futures members on the other hand. Each grouping holds a different implicit theory of change: systemic and radical versus behaviour-based and individual. Although both recognized that engagement often happens through the back door (e.g., via an interest in cooking rather than in political issues) and appreciated the others’ principles, the practical application of their approaches do not align.

### 2.5 Key insights on “Money and Community-based initiatives”

**Overarching research questions:**

How do community initiatives define, perceive and use money? What are the differences between the ways different CBIs relate to money? To what extent does the initiatives’ relationship with money contribute to the fulfilment of their mission and how? To what extent does the initiatives’ relationship with money contribute to their persistence/replication/up-scaling and how? Can we draw wider lessons/conclusions for society at large from CBIs’ perception of / experience with / use of money?

**Income generation as a measure of success and an objective imperative**

- Money is perceived as a measure of success, and financial sustainability is a key objective; initiatives’ impact and persistence are perceived as dependent on economic sustainability (UK, Finland)
- Success can also be perceived as a low dependence on grant funding (UK)
- Income generation is a major motivational factor behind participation in energy cooperatives aiming at local actions (Finland), and not highly relevant for members of an energy cooperative aiming at a wider social change and energy transformation (Germany)

**CBIs use of money and their organizational format**
• Money has one function in CBIs operating in the market (of energy, or vegetables), and another in spaces which serve a social (or community) need. For the former, money generation is a means to achieve a stated project objective, while for the latter it is not a priority. (Spain, Italy, Romania)

• Money and pricing could be a source of conflict between groups who collectively organize to lower the price of local organic food and the farmers producing it (Spain)

• While in some CBIs, money is not perceived to be a fundamental means to achieve a goal, its use and relevance is nevertheless be debated. Whereas some initiative’s members opt for a strategy of spreading knowledge and replicating similar projects elsewhere, others consider income growth as a way to improve their services and range of activities (Italy)

CBIs use of money and the legal context
• The capacity to diversify with respect to replacing official money with other means of exchange (such as local currencies) increases in the spaces and projects which are less dependent on institutional arrangements (Spain)

Money as a factor for CBI impact
• Income generation is not considered the most fundamental factor for CBIs’ emergence, nor a measure of success, but a useful instrument for instigating a social change, (such as a sustainable transition in the energy sector). Money is a helpful rather than inevitable condition for reaching a social goal (Germany, Spain, Romania)

• Quitting administrative work (project applications) could free time for campaigning and result in a higher marginal impact (Romania).

• Running a project on little or no funds could require increased creativity and strengthening social/supportive networks (Germany, Spain).

• CBIs which do not require income generation to carry on their activities tend to expand their socio-political impact through people’s solidarity and volunteers’ commitment (Germany, Spain).

Finland

The Eno energy co-operative is the initiative studied under this theme. Overall, its operations are heavily dependent on income generation. Perceptions of money are related to interviewees' entrepreneurial background, where income generation is a major motivational factor behind participation. Volunteer work was only done at the early stages, and gradually evolved into employment with skilled personnel ensuring financial sustainability. The profits which Eno energy co-operative started to generate were invested back in operations, in research or in the development of projects, although tensions existed between these options. Money has thus driven the initiation, development and maintenance of the co-operative.

At the beginning, Eno energy had no own monetary resources apart from the forest holdings of their members. The local municipality undertook the financial risk of building the heat plant so that the co-operative could start serving the local community. Eventually the cooperative matured and became independent from external funding. For all of the energy co-operative members, financial sustainability is perceived as a key measure of success and necessary condition for their evolution. Once it gained financial independence, the co-operative started participating in research, education and development projects. Some of the factors that contributed to its success, in terms of financial sustainability, are its strong ties with different local stakeholders such as the local university of applied science and its overall “local” approach (buying local resources, selling to local customers, creating local jobs).
**Bürger Energie Berlin (BEB)** and **Foodsharing** are the two initiatives studied under this theme. Neither of the two aim at generating profits and their members do not join for obtaining economic benefit. In the case of BEB, however, raising sufficient funds and demonstration of sufficiently large financial capital is central for making the bids to run the energy grid in town. Funds are raised from members who contribute with fixed amounts (up to 500€) to the initiative. Income from sponsors and associations is then used for campaigning and paying a few staff members. Having a higher budget for campaigning implies a higher level of members’ and trustees’ deposits and a louder voice, higher impact and chances to reach the previously determined goal. Income generation is thus not a goal in itself, but an instrument for shifting the energy mix and instigating a sustainable transition in the energy sector.

**Foodsharing**, on the other hand, does not consider money as an instrument to reach their goal, nor a measure of success and overall avoids working with money. Money is perceived as threatening the integrity of the project by causing dependence and external influences, whereas initiative members see their role in showing an alternative to the conventional (capitalist) model of business-as-usual. Infrastructure such as a server and a webpage are nevertheless required for the operation of the initiative and are either provided directly by sponsors or covered with private donations.

Dependence on monetary incomes could vary along the CBIs. For BEB money has been crucial in the initial phase of the project and remains such for reaching the final objectives. The initiative is built on a thin financial basis and is highly dependent on voluntary work. While money tends to play a role for BEB and Foodsharing, it is not considered the factor that lead to their emergence and existence. When short on funds, initiatives’ first intention is to apply a ‘do-it-yourself’ model, or to acquire expertise and knowledge from the social network. This would often mean asking for non-cash donations such as office space, free printing and website hosting. Thus, while money is seen as a helpful rather than an inevitable condition for reaching a social goal, running a project on little or no funds could require increased creativity and strengthening social/supportive networks.

In terms of money for the CBIs’ initiation, persistence and growth, financial sustainability is perceived as a factor that influences their organizational development in different ways. Many BEB members mention relying on external funding (donations, sponsoring) to get the initiative started. While BEB’s capacity to act upon their objectives is amplified by the presence of sufficient funds, Foodsharing’s (socio-political) impact is not highly dependent on monetary income. In the latter case, growth (expansion of activities) has been driven by non-monetary factors such as people’s solidarity and volunteers’ commitment. The question of organizational growth is, however, polemic as members have diverse opinions on the effectiveness of large versus small social structures. While organizational growth could imply having higher chances of being recognized and allocated donations, it makes CBIs more dependent on monetary incomes, thus limiting their activity.

### Italy

**Ciclonauti** and **Casale Podere Rosa** are the initiatives studied under this theme. Starting with **Ciclonauti**, the group’s only source of income is volunteers’ subscriptions (5 euros per year), random donations and public auctions of bicycles assembled by the team. Everything else, such as reparations, spare parts, technical support and use of tools is given for free. Users tend to leave a tip or something in exchange. Revenues are then used to buy consumable materials and to pay bills and rent. No shortage or problem of funding was reported and the CBI is very regular in paying monthly rent to the municipality.

The role of money did not change since the beginning and it remained the same also when the group passed from having an illegal to a legal status. Over its trajectory, the group does not demonstrate a high reliance on monetary incomes. Implicitly, money is not perceived as a success per se at all, nor is it considered the fundamental means to achieve their goal. Yet, its use and relevance has caused discussions. The older members believe that the use and the amount of money circulating in the initiative should be minimized and services should not be
monetized because that may change the nature of Ciclonauti. Conversely, newer members believe that if they could make more money this may help the group achieve better results, organize more initiatives, rent a bigger space and have more tools and workstations. The debate can partly be explained by different understandings of Ciclonauti’s underlying goal, which for the older members is the spill-over of knowledge and replicating similar initiative elsewhere, while newer ones consider higher monetary incomes as a means to improve services and activities.

Finally, the initiative’s environmental (educational) and social impact is relatively independent from monetary incomes. Their space is considered more socially inclusive than it was at the beginning, for focusing more on the promotion of cycling. The group has been capable of building a network of ties with regular bicycle workshops and the public garbage collection company (AMA), which donates useful (bike) parts and elements found in the trash. This collaboration substantially decreases Ciclonauti’s reliance on money.

For Casale Podere Rosa money is not a goal in itself but key for supporting employees and various projects. The initiative’s relationship with money reveals a clear path that started from a phase of relative prosperity in the mid-90s and declined in the mid 2000 mainly because of a change in the external economic situation and in the institutions’ attitude. CBI’s up-scaling is not a goal in itself, as the initiative offers a model that is alternative to the mainstream, commercial one. One of the local producers, for example, was not willing to grow its business any further, because this would have implied the risk of losing the close relationship with people and solidary purchasing groups, which was not compliant with their perceptions of sustainability. Yet, over time the need for a more structured management and participation emerged for ethical and practical reasons (more paid workers, less volunteers).

The importance of efficient financial management emerges clearly from the interviews, especially when institutional support declines and turns into institutional obstacle. The choice to proceed in agreement with the local institutions and to identify paid work as one of the core identifying features of the place was a rewarding strategy until few years ago. Currently, economic support is lacking, which requires a new approach towards fundraising while preserving the strongly not-for-profit identity of the Casale.

**Romania**

Cycling Club Napoca (CCN) and EcoBucovina are the initiatives studied under this theme. For CCN and EcoBucovina initial monetary support from sponsoring agencies has been important for their emergence. Both initiatives consider that while money is a necessary element for their operations, it is not a sufficient measure for success. For CCN money is perceived as a means to an end, rather than a goal. Its activities are almost exclusively organized by volunteers contributing to the CBI in their spare time. While at a given point in its long history CCN had employees paid through funded projects, the initiative decided to abandon funding applications in order to free time for campaigning. EcoBucovina, however, perceives monetary income and financial sustainability as a crucial to their success. The initiative is quite young (officially registered in 2014) and its members believe that the lack of money could be a barrier to sustaining their activities and work towards obtaining more grants.

**Spain**

Totacucaviu, Som Energia, Bicosxs, Can Madeu, Calafou and Kosturica are the initiatives studied under this theme. One of the key and reoccurring findings with respect to initiatives’ relationship with money concerns the role of beliefs and convictions. The major factor for the initial establishment of all projects has been a social, environmental or political vacuum in modern society, expressed in the form of various necessities such as: the need for communal organizing and mobilization; for provision of local organic vegetables with a familiar source and a sense of connectedness to the land; for transparent and democratic generation and distribution of (renewable) energy; for co-housing and co-living spaces where time and lives are managed in relation to needs and desires, rather than the obligation to earn (the standard
currency); for collaborative spaces, based on exchange, recycling and reuse, where trust and altruism are enforced.

Apart from the rather ‘utopian’ grounds of all projects, the diversity in the way money is perceived and used depends upon differences in the domain and activity of each initiative. None of the initiatives perceive money as a goal in itself. Its function differs depending on whether initiatives are operating in the market (of energy, or vegetables), or serving a social (or community) need. For some money is a means to achieve stated project objectives, while for others it is not highly important. The scale of dependence on money ranges with the size and orientation of the initiatives. Som Energia, which is oriented towards energy generation, relies heavily on the generation of funds. Smaller groups with less ambitious objectives and opting for recycling of buildings and objects would have negligible or zero dependence on money. The capacity to diversify with respect to replacing official money with other intermediaries increases in the spaces and projects which are less dependent on money generation. Creation of social currencies, or exchanging time for a service, seems to increase the feeling of autonomy and the quality of life for the members of some collectives.

Money and pricing could nevertheless be a source of conflict between groups who collectively organize to lower the price of local organic food and the farmers producing it. As illustrated by the case of Kosturica, there is an unresolved tension between the low purchasing power and precariousness of food cooperatives’ members and the tendency of farmers to self-exploit themselves to keep prices affordable.

UK

Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust (Colglen) is the initiative studied under this theme. Most members of the CBI perceive money as a measure of success. At Colglen money is used for accumulation and investment that create new job openings and regenerate the area (through renewable energy projects, opening a forest visitors’ centre, installation of interpretation boards, and encouraging tourism in general). Overall dependence on free labour (volunteers) is perceived as risky and the focus is largely set at achieving financial sustainability through business enterprises. Eventually land ownership, access to community land, and bringing more income to the community through tourism and job creation are the common strategies used by the CBI. Starting a business, generating income from renewable energy, or having multiple tourists stay at a community run hotel, are all examples of imagined future success. Financial sustainability is thus seen as one of the main goals, as this will bring employment and regeneration of the local economy.

Furthermore, the interviewees admit that while many improvements in the area and the community buyouts were possible thanks to the public funding such as the Climate Challenge Fund, the Scottish Land Fund and the Lottery Fund, the requirements set by the funders are often not informed by the community needs. One major barrier that Colglen have faced is the Scottish interpretation of EU State Aid regulations that limits the amount of grant funding the group can receive in any three year period. This has led to the reduction of money available for developing a touristic project such as purchasing a hotel. Thus, weaning themselves off dependence on grant funding, creating models of income generation that achieve their aims while being self-sufficient (financially) and able to employ long-term staff is perceived as another measure of success. Finally, issues of transparency in grant allocation and deciding on which projects money should be allocated to once the funding is secured, is one of the conflictive issues in the community. In the case of Colglen, some members argue that money has been wasted, or used for infrastructure which is not very useful.

Overall, since the initial goals of Colglen Trust has been the generation of the local economy through the creation of jobs, its impact and persistence are perceived as dependent on the availability of (public) funds through which projects can be started up.
III. Conclusions

The current deliverable provides a summary of all the data gathered and analysed within WP3, whose main objective is to assess the trajectories of community-based initiatives over time and space. In this WP we examine the processes and conditions that favour the emergence of bottom-up initiatives, evaluate the societal, social, attitudinal, and behavioural transformation processes involved, and assess the persistence of initiatives beyond the original project and potential spin-off projects for different sectors and domains. We also assess the limiting factors and constraints for initiatives’ institutionalisation and up-scaling. Last, we analyse how institutional arrangements and changes influence socio-technical systems aiming at transition. In this WP, we also assess the extent to which initiatives contribute to social and environmental equity and the constraints they face to be more environmentally just.

Overall, as seen in Appendix 2, Task 3.3 resulted in a rich pool of data which has been summarized and organized around the following thematic areas in each theme:

* “Trajectories of Community-based initiatives”, dealing with the evolutionary path of the CBI and the factors which influenced them along the way, on the way they confronted difficult internal and external stimuli/events/situations; their greatest achievements; future evolution and various conflictive events which played a substantial role in influencing CBI’s life;

* “Power and politics”, dealing with the CBIs’ intended/unintended or invisible/visible exclusionary patterns, such as power structures, hierarchies, discourses, dilemmas and imaginaries, as well as their ability to engage/benefit a diverse range of people, or be truly transformational in their societal impact.

* “Governance and governing relations”, dealing with the conceptualization of governance within CBIs, and the way policies and regulatory structures hinder or enable particular possibilities within CBIs; on the spaces of creativity, experimentation, and potential which open up through local engagement with regulatory arrangements, on the way through which local initiatives emerge as governing actors.

* “CBI’s Aspirations and Rationalities”, dealing with the diversity of their aspirations and rationalities and the way these are being negotiated, including the possible tensions within;

* “Money and Community-based initiatives”, dealing with the way community initiatives define, perceive and use money, and the relationship between CBIs’ economic strategy and the fulfilment of their mission but also their persistence, replication and upscaling.

A number of remarks should be made about the summaries of the memos and key thematic insights presented in section II. There is a natural overlap between themes and sub-themes which the author is well aware of but kept for reasons of completeness. Not losing the diversity of points raised by each author (of memos) has been the main concern, given themes will be later developed into individual academic papers. Currently, repetition across themes is difficult to avoid, given the key task of this deliverable has been to present a summary of the key findings as they emerge in each single memo. Our concern has thus been with not omitting particular language or nuanced phrasing/presenting of a particular issue, as coming from various memos, rather than restricting and classifying them, which is the step to undertake in the next deliverable (D3.3).

Another remark concerns generalizations. Summaries have been presented per country, as submitted by respective partners. Given the variation between the content and quality of each memo, classifying findings according to countries (and therefore authors) was the most logical and clearest approach. Title categories corresponding to countries, should thus, not be interpreted as generalizing traits of all initiatives pertaining to a particular country. They pertain
only to the particular initiative studied by TESS partners in the geographical area pre-defined by the project.

The main achievement of this deliverable is to have provided a complete and expanded picture of the qualitative data analysis developed by partners (memos) in correspondence to the key research questions on CBI’s trajectories, their aspirations, rationalities, and relations of governance, power and financial/economic stability. Most of the research questions have been covered relatively well, with some issues addressed more than others. The level of data coverage for each research question varies in function of its pertinence for the CBIs and the role/positions of the respective interviewees. Issues of financial stability, financial regulations and reliance on volunteers seem to be central for most initiatives.

The next steps for WP3 will be to analyse the key factors of success according to their evolutionary stages (emergence, persistence, resistance, growth and replication), as well as from the perspective of environmental justice as emerging from the memo and the data above. These are now being elaborated in D3.3. Moreover, the findings in each of the thematic areas above are being organized in the form of academic papers (one per theme), focusing on the research questions where most data has been gathered. These are being developed by the respective researchers who gathered and analysed the data under the leadership of a coordinator (for each paper). The insights they are bringing up are expected to enrich the academic literature in the field of social movements and grassroots initiatives, and improve our understanding of the strong social and environmental role they could increasingly play in the European society.
Appendix 1

Appendix 1.1

Exploratory Analysis WP3

April – May 2015

As partners start engaging more deeply with their data, it is important to take some time to write short summaries (approx. 3 pages single space) of exploratory analysis of the WP3 interview data (interviews with CBIs + with stakeholders), exploring the themes and issues that arose during interviews (in relation to our original research questions, but also over and above these).

We are aware that partners are still in the process of conducting interviews and transcribing the data, but we are asking for this document based on the trends in your data as of end of April/early May 2015, so that we can be fully prepared for the Edinburgh workshop. In Edinburgh, we will identify overlaps, common issues, and stories, etc across cases and come up with a plan for further, more detailed analysis. We will also dedicate time to coding methods.

This short exploratory analysis 3-page document should reflect preliminary answers/reflections based on the main research questions and themes at the center of WP3. Please write a paragraph or two of reflections based on the main questions below (these are our TESS WP3 research questions), highlighting trends and striking aspects in your data.

NB: Remember that you are trying to think across interviews and across your two key initiatives, even though you can add a brief note on whether a specific thought/remark applies more to one key initiative than the other.

Please upload your document by May 19th on the Google Drive under WP3 > Data Analysis > Exploratory Analysis. Each partner will also be responsible for reading the summaries posted by all other partners by May 26th so that our discussion in Edinburgh can be more fruitful.

WP3 Research Questions:

1) What does ‘success’ mean for participants in community initiatives (and other stakeholders?)? In their view, what influences success?

2) What is the role of individual agency in community initiatives? What role do individuals, with their own motivations, values, worldviews, skills and interests play in the development of an initiative? What role do specific events (eg, external stimuli, shocks) play in the development of an initiative and how do these interact with agency? How is individuals’ agency en- (or dis-) couraged?

3) What is the role of inclusivity and equity? Do our study initiatives attempt to (a) actively involve and (b) provide benefits to a wide cross-section of society? If so, how do they do that, and are they successful? How do they conceptualise inclusion and/or equity? How do they relate to objectives concerned with the inclusion of socially marginalized groups to benefit from environmental goods and services (environmental justice)?
4) What are the discourses of transitions? How are the initiatives communicated and ‘sold’, and how are storylines of single initiatives incorporated (or not) in wider discourses of social change? What are the implications of such discourses for the ways in which transition initiatives are enacted and succeed (or not)?

5) Do initiatives contribute to larger social and political change (beyond their direct members and beneficiaries)? If so, what are these contributions, and how are they generated?

6) How do initiatives’ trajectories unfold over time? How do initiatives adapt over time, in their different stages from emergence to consolidation and upscaling?

7) Input into WP4: the relation between the initiative and policy/politics, not intended just as specific funding but, more in general: did the initiative have any relation to any kind of political institution/stakeholder; did it benefit directly or indirectly from any specific policy/programme/funding scheme/etc; is there any law/regulation/policy that hinders rather than facilitates the initiative’s activities and/or its success/growth/up-scaling.
Appendix 1.2

MERGED PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS POINTS WP3

Two types of initiatives:

1) With members/projects whose survival and continuity depend on monetary income. They are producing jobs and services and have a strict budget. Business-like initiatives. More professionalized. More eager to engage with public administration in projects and beyond.

2) With members/projects who have a job outside the initiatives, are more generally volunteers and engaged in the initiative additionally. They do not have much funding and focus more on advocacy and on changing behavior. Less Professionalized groups.

SUCCESS/DISCOURSES OF TRANSITION

- Different intellectual foci in the initiatives (environmental vs political, economic vs community based) (JHI)
- Interesting to see such places as an intellectual and professional trajectory (UAB, JHI)
- Differentiate between personal versus ‘organisational’ objectives, and objectives versus actual impacts (which might not have been intended, or at least not acknowledged as an intention). (JHI)
- Uncertainty and precarity and unpredictability (JHI, CF)) Success as survival combined with financial/economic sustainability and independence and sometimes organic growth. It’s delicate to just survive (JHI, PIK, UAB Aurora, some members of the bike initiative in Sapienza, CF, T6, OUAS, CF). In some cases (Huntly), such a goal comes at the expenses of community-focused work and roots that can have a more direct impact on people. Focus on long term ambitious goal versus short term more community oriented work. Organizations are always a work in progress, with much internal debates and negotiations, which can at times endanger the survival of the initiative (JHI). Organizations can grow only up to an optimal point and then they work on replication (PIK, Sapienza)
- Better internal organization and work sharing (UAB)
- Financial failure has still inspired others (UAB)
- Success as inspiration on others (many)
- Success as appropriation by the group and by others (UAB)
- Growth is not necessarily a measure of success (Sapienza, UAB)
- Initiatives as escapes from traditional and non meaningful (coherent) daily life (routine, political boredom/disappointment in political system). Incorporation of initiatives’ in every day life (JHI, UAB, PIK) ongoing exercise in planning, partnership-building, and resource accumulation (JHI)
- Lose organizational structure, lack of professionalization, lack of regulations plays in favor of the goals of the initiatives (JHI) (PIK)
- CBIs are organized mess but with strong personal ties (JHI).
- Combination of technical with social skills as factors of success (PIK)
- Need to be relevant for local economy (UAB, JHI, OUAS)
- Strong networks inside and outside org (UAB, JHI, OUAS, PIK)
- Different visions on success depending on younger versus older members and on more efficiency/business prone members versus members more focused on community (UAB, JHI). Old founders are struggling to find younger people to take over a more prominent role (T6) (OUAS)
- Success in the short term might still produce diffusion and replication (UAB)
- More interest in external replication than growth (UAB, Sapienza, USV, CF). Growth might lose identity and expertise (Sapienza) while replication allows practices and discourses to spread (Sapienza, UAB). There is a critical size of an initiative after which growth is not desirable any more (Sapienza)
- Desire to help promote societal change beyond political/systemic failure and at times to be more radical and confrontational (Sapienza) (UAB) (USV) but this can vary over time (USV radicalism is good if focused)
- Need to have a self reflection on what is success and what can be achieved (USV)
- Achievement of concrete change (USV) (CF)
- Success measured as not being necessary any more (CF)
- People not necessarily clear about where they situate themselves in regard to transition and they are a bit confused (UAB, USV)
- Initiatives are instruments in the transition, but they are not what will complete the transition. The change should come from the institutions, not from the initiatives. Initiatives are examples of what is being discussed at the advocacy level by more political organizations, and they are useful to legitimate those discourses (UAB SE and Aurora)
- Growth does not matter (T6) but influence on changes of lifestyle matters

AGENCY
- Specific role of initiatives in different functions with quite some rigor, structure, and organization. Everyone does what it is supposed to do with good repartition of role and with different capacities (USV, JHI, Sapienza, CF, UAB). Distributed agency (UAB) Some roles of individuals pushing their own sub agenda (JHI). Role of founder (USV, CF, etc)
- Key role of people with financial management experience and projection (JHI)
- Role of founders with strong agency and charisma (OUAS) combined with either outside events (shocks, crisis, extreme weather) or support (PIK) (OUAS) (USV) (CF). For the professional and business like groups, there are key trained founders (UAB).
- Contribution of specific individuals to developing and sustaining the initiative (OUAS) and to making some activities reach a momentum (Sapienza)
- Taking over state responsibility (Sapienza)
- Uncertainty and overwork discourages agency (PIK)
- Variation between organizations with many active members and well distributed roles AND organizations with a few very active people at the top and less active members
- Key involvement in more concrete commitment is difficult (T6)
- Role of both young people and retirees (PIK, USV, Sapienza, CF, JHI)
- Leadership has to change according to different types of expertise needed at different stages and times (Sapienza)
- Power relations within the initiatives (especially around gender and decision-making and leadership) (UAB). Some initiatives seem very horizontal but they still have communication and transparency dilemma (UAB) and they also have very specific tasks, structures, and responsibilities, and difference in access to information (PIK)
- The way people get introduced to the initiative matter for their agency (UAB)

INCLUSIVITY
- Only one CBI seem truly committed to inclusivity and to have reflected on it (T6)
- Difficult to go beyond cultural boundaries (T6)
- Well educated, middle high income people (T6)
- Appearance of exclusivity, not always consciously or desired (JHI) (PIK) (UAB)
- Lack of relevance or of specific drive/attention to the question of inclusivity. “It is not for everybody”. Not a question that initiatives have often reflected upon or focused upon (JHI) (PIK) (OUAS) (USV) (UAB) It is not a specific or separate issue under consideration
- They don’t have the resources to intellectually and language-wise translate their activities for immigrants (PIK, T6)
- Lack of beneficiaries from working class backgrounds (JHI) and from racial minorities (Sapienza) Problem of access fees to the services (UAB, PIK)
- Feel a bit disconnected from social issues and lack of promotion to particular marginalized social groups (JHI) (Sapienza) (UAB)
- Some of the workers are immigrants (UAB) and some of the acities benefit the neighborhood as side effect (UAB)
- Consideration of inclusivity through the perspective on positive impact on the local economy or on local well-being, independent on people’s income/social marginalization (OUAS) (CF)
- Some initiatives clearly benefit poorer groups and actually everyone (or at least a wider cross-section) in the community, especially in a rural setting (CF)
- Inclusion of more disadvantaged groups would take up more time, resources, events (PIK)
- Tensions between the “farming” natives and the let it die attitude and the newcomers (CF)
- Attempt to reach a broad number of students and young people as representatives of a large share of users/beneficiaries of the initiatives and as representing the larger determinants for future societal change (JHI and Sapienza) (USV – about attracting a new generation)
- Inclusion of beneficiaries with mental health issues (Sapienza, JHI)
- Definition of marginalization as users marginalized in the broader development/political system (for instance bikers because of a lack of public infrastructure, an encroachment of public space for cars (e.g., parking spaces, new streets), and a general indifference on behalf of non-cyclists to recognize the right of cyclists to the roads/streets and to better health outcomes in a city overloaded with cars and air pollutants) (Sapienza)
- Some initiatives try to attract beneficiaries with lower financial means (USV, UAB – SomEnergia)
- Exclusion is perceived as something not present in social movements but more in formal institutions of power (UAB)
- Power and gender issues might emerge within the initiative (UAB)
- Local population shows a bit of suspiciousness towards board members and their legitimacy (CF)

CONTRIBUTION TO LARGE SOCIAL CHANGE
- attempt to link themselves to a larger network of food or energy coops (JHI)
- Different ways to conceive social/political change (OUAS, UAB)
  - difference between social and political change (JHI) (UAB)
  - different between politics (yes organizations are opening up spaces of debate) and Politics (lack of more radical questioning, organizations might accept larger grants) (JHI, UAB)
- Interest in spreading ideas (PIK) and behaviors and new consciousness about environmental behavior (JHI, Sapienza, USV), in creating new forms of group action and communitarism (Sapienza)
- Perception of modest and limited role towards transition, especially for the more business type initiatives (PIK) (UAB) (T6). Limited impact. The CBIs can not take over and create a new broader movement, especially from the youth
- CBIs legitimate the work of more engaged political groups (UAB). They make their advocacy more concrete and legitimate.
- Can take place over a longer period of time (OUAS) USV)
- Radical versus less radical goals (USV, less radical)
- Transition is also interpreted as transition to democracy (USV) not just socio-ecological transition
- Desire to help promote societal change beyond political/systemic failure and at times to be more radical and confrontational (Sapienza) (USV)
- Role of youth (Sapienza)
- Difficulty to engage with political leaders, failure to convince them (PIK, Sapienza) hence the need to first build a critical mass (Sapienza, PIK, UAB)
- Enablers/catalyst of broader change (CF)
- Community development and community empowerment through using some of the tools of the past. Revaluation of services, use of the environment to achieve a social goal. (UAB, CF)
- Quantitative impact is not something that initiatives value the most (T6)
- Local control of local assets, land, and buildings and resources is very important (CF). big movement of regaining community ownership of land, which can contribute to forestry projects (CF)

TRAJECTORIES
- lots of messy trajectories, might almost disappear because of a series of reasons (financial, internal organization, lack of focus on efficiency) (JHI) (USV) (UAB). Initiatives might start more political and evolve towards something more pragmatic but less radical (UAB)
- Future is uncertain and precarious (JHI). They are not just evolving naturally.
- oscillate between governmental support and independence (JHI)
- Increasing hierarchy and structure with time (PIK for Energy and Food, Huntly with time, OUAS) Hierarchy is needed as they grow
- Like to be called upon and to be accepted by other institutions and outsiders (PIK)
- Advice provider to similar initiatives (PIK)
- Increased professionalization, sophistication, and technicity (PIK)
- Some lose their political goals and trajectory to focus on survival (USV, UAB)
- Started with some illegal/grey aspects (Sapienza, UAA food)
- Some organizations have become less radical with time (USV)
- IMPORTANCE OF PROCESSES OF DIFFUSION, REPLICATION, AND NETWORKS (even as some of the initial initiatives encounter threats of survival and fail to fulfill their initial political goals) (Sapienza, USV, CF, UAB, PIK)-- to understand how community-based diffuse, replicate and scale-out, forming a variety of networks, and how such developments and networking produce both similarities and heterogeneities, based on an evolutionary perspective which highlight the role of micro (organizational), meso (institutional/geographical) and macro dynamics. Cells and myotic trajectories. Some of the offsprings/cells are very similar and others are different. Evolutionary patterns are different for the offsprings/satellites. There is a fertile soil despite a negative landscape, political, infrastructural, cultural, and societal contexts. Some organizations evolve by radicalizing themselves and others by remaining more in the system. The question is what are they still doing what they said they would be doing? Can they still partner with each others and work together? The conflict and debate is very productive. Organizations can grow only up to an optimal point and then they work on replication (PIK, Sapienza)
- Community-based initiatives up-scaling is not paralleled by the consolidation/standardization and convergence/diffusion of a particular model but, on the contrary, is characterised by increasing fragmentation, complexity and diversification/branching. Evolutionary patterns, on the other hand, seem path-dependent, influenced by organizational and geographical circumstances, and constrained by various forms of inertia and lock-in. The result is a complicated balance between homogeneization and diversification which, in the case of initiatives that are forms of political activism and part of wider social movements, can produce tensions among the initiatives and their networks. A crucial role in this regard, and more in general for understanding the specificities and evolutionary dynamics of community-based initiatives, is played by those ‘umbrella’ organizations or networks.
- Funding helped in the trajectory (UAB, CF, USV)
- Internal events too (more experience, more efficiency UAB but also fewer volunteers UAB)
- Negative external events (UAB SE)
- When part of the initiative becomes less radical and less political and focuses more on concrete outcomes, it can disintegrate (UAB)
- When groups get consolidated they can become more exclusive and less open (UAB)
- Contextual, historical factors shape the capacity and practice of the “democratic exercise”, the participation and debate within initiatives (UAB)
- Ability to navigate the big regulatory framework. What kinds of material and infrastructure issues do they have navigate?
- Move from professionalization and outside funding to volunteers with various training (USV)
- Support to the creation of other initiatives (USV)
- Quantitative impact is not something that initiatives value the most (T6)
- Political/ecological/social components are all coming together more or less equally for the non-market oriented initiatives

RELATION BETWEEN POLICY/POLITICS
- Some organizations are dependent on outside funding schemes (JHI)
- Difficulty to reach the higher level and concientize them (JHI) (Sapienza) (T6)
- Outsiders provide support to experimental spaces (JHI) (Sapienza). They provide physical space for the initiative to exist and implement its projects
- Lack of support from higher level policy makers to some of the key activities that could have wider societal benefits and help them implement their goals (Sapienza) (T6)
- Multiple and diverse ad hoc financial partnerships (JHI)
- Interest in cooperating with Mayor but difficulties when conservative parties (PIK). Attempts to reach out to higher levels but challenges in finding support and receptivity (Sapienza) (USV)
- Importance of other aspects in addition to funding (OUAS)
- Bureaucratic hurdles to implement work (Sapienza)
- Refusal to have local administrations as interlocutors and partners (Sapienza)
- Development of some initiatives linked to support from municipal decision makers (USV)
- Different types of engagement – from consultation to cooperation and to confrontation and protests (USV)
- Trust funds have managed to benefit from regulations and from funds, but lack of true collaboration and understanding between CBI and public funders/policymakers (CF)
- Some groups which are more business oriented are more interested in collaboration with policy makers and funders (UAB)
- More radical groups are opposed to engagement with state representatives (UAB)
- Importance of institution NOT in the way (UAB)
- Sometimes legislation has negatively impacted initiatives (UAB)
- Unpredictability and uncertainty of external funding (JHI) and of their trajectory (T6)
- How funding shapes what these initiatives do, which shapes the tone of what the initiatives do (Normative concerns about fulfilling concerns) and limits a more political and social emphasis (JHI)
- How does government/the state look like? Co-conspirators are times with local government. CBI is not that independent and autonomous. How state roles are navigated.
- Mainstream initiatives (OUAS) or less radical ones (PIK) versus more radical ones (Sapienza, UAB)
- Policies can enable or disable the initiative
Appendix 1.3

WP3 Qualitative Data Analysis Session
May, 26, 2015, 14h-18h
Edinburgh

This document proposes a summary of our first data analysis session for WP3 during the TESS meeting in Edinburgh. We have divided the session in a few activities meant to make the data analysis group work as productive and focused as possible.

**Homework:**
Please read everyone’s summaries of the main findings to date (to be submitted to Isabelle/GoogleDrive by May 19) before the meeting in Edinburgh. Are there any recurring ideas or observations? What are commonalities, what are the differences?

**Meeting Structure:**

**14h-14h45:** Large group discussion: Key findings per team
What finding does each partner find most compelling/striking/interesting in their set of interviews and field visits as related to the success factors and trajectories of CBIs? (5 min per team). Please report only on those aspects that you find most interesting – everyone should already have obtained a more nuanced and complete picture from the summaries that we wrote in advance of the meeting (See Google Drive WP3 > Interviews > Data Analysis > Exploratory Analysis).

**14h45-15h00:** Individual Work: Writing down ideas on cards
Everyone writes down their ideas and observations of recurrent findings across case sites, emerging commonalities, interesting questions to be followed up by detailed data analysis. (One idea per card!). What do we seem to have most revealing data on? Are there any patterns/interesting observations across cases? Maybe also: What are the main nuances/differences between cases? Etc.

**15h-16h:** Large group discussion: Clustering and exploring ideas
Everyone presents the ideas they’ve written on the cards to the entire group, and we group these into thematic clusters. These might or might not correspond to our original research questions. Our goal is to make the data analysis as dynamic and grounded as possible. We can then discuss and explore these clusters in more depth.

**16h-16h30:** Coffee Break

**16h30-17h30:** Small groups: exploring and developing thematic clusters
We form small teams (based on interest), which will each focus on one of the thematic clusters. What could be a potential ‘story’ (or main argument for a paper) behind these observations? What would be needed to turn this into a paper (and/or policy output)? How does this story relate to the literature and contribute to it in an original way? What data, exactly, do we need to make this happen? Including a reality check: is this cluster ‘big’ and meaningful enough to form a stand-alone output, or should we integrate it somewhere else? This exercise would, ideally, help us to develop a very first, coarse set of coding categories required for each thematic cluster.

**17h30-18h30:** Reporting back to large group and next steps
(We can keep this shorter if possible). Discussion about main conclusion from small group discussions, main unresolved points, and next steps.
Main goal of the day:
- To develop ideas for detailed analysis and write-up, grounded in our data, both in relation to our research questions (below) and beyond these.
- To form small teams of researchers to take these ideas forward, and to develop the required coding categories for each thematic cluster. Not every thematic cluster will be relevant for every study area, and not everyone will have to contribute data to all clusters. Some of the emerging ideas might be fascinating, but don’t benefit from a multi-case analysis – not all analyses have to be multi-case.
- Ideally we have 1-2 ideas for joint analyses that involve as many places as possible. Others might just involve two or three sites.

PS: Isabelle and Anke will work on preparing the Thursday morning session during the TESS conference on Wednesday.

Reminder about Research questions:
7) What does ‘success’ mean for participants in community initiatives (and other stakeholders)? In their view, what influences success? [This question is at the core of our WP as its remit is to analyse the factors that foster and constrain success of community initiatives – but the question what actually constitutes this success is not often explicitly addressed. We can then interpret the data in relation to the terminology used in the project proposal and the literature more generally; for example, how do participants’ concepts of success relate to ideas such as ‘persistence’, ‘upscale’, ‘outscale’ etc.?]

8) What is the role of individual agency in community initiatives? What role do individuals, with their own motivations, values, worldviews, skills and interests play in the development of an initiative? What role do specific events (eg, external stimuli, shocks) play in the development of an initiative and how do these interact with agency? How is individuals’ agency encouraged? [A large part of the literature focuses on the role of internal and external structures in the successful development of initiatives – here, we want to bring in a more psychological perspective, inquiring about agency in the context of these structures. This might be relevant for both ‘leaders’ and other participants in the initiative. For example, the collectivism/individualism construct might be interesting to explore. If desired, these factors can then, again, be related to the different concepts of success as investigated in RQ #1]

9) What is the role of inclusivity and equity? Do our study initiatives attempt to (a) actively involve and (b) provide benefits to a wide cross-section of society? If so, how do they do that, and are they successful? How do they conceptualise inclusion and/or equity? How do they relate to objectives concerned with the inclusion of socially marginalized groups to benefit from environmental goods and services (environmental justice)? [This set of questions arises from the observation that many initiatives and the transition movement in general is usually portrayed in the literature as ‘educated white middle-class’, with little ethnic and other types of diversity. Why is this? We want to investigate mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion (e.g., cultural capital, outreach to marginalized groups) in more depth.]

10) What are the discourses of transitions? How are the initiatives communicated and ‘sold’, and how are storylines of single initiatives incorporated (or not) in wider discourses of social change? What are the implications of such discourses for the ways in which transition initiatives are enacted and succeed (or not)? [This question arises from the observation that transition initiatives (both in the literature and in our own experience) are talked about in very different ways – for example, they are often portrayed as a small-step reformation/evolution that ultimately leads to fundamental change, without the need for a revolution. We have also observed that the discourses and broader political goals of initiatives vary a lot (e.g., compare Barcelona and Aberdeen). We want to investigate and compare the implicit assumptions underpinning such discourses. This question also relates, for example, to the question on understandings of success (#1) and to #5.]
11) Do initiatives contribute to larger **social and political change** (beyond their direct members and beneficiaries)? If so, what are these contributions, and how are they generated? [Looking at different scales from the direct beneficiaries of the initiative, to the local community around them, the municipal scale, the region, and society at large. This is linked to #4.]

12) Crosscutting: How do initiatives’ **trajectories** unfold over time? How do initiatives adapt over time, in their different stages from emergence to consolidation and upscaling? [This question will provide us with in-depth insights that are relevant for most of the questions above, for example:
   a. Relationships between phase/stage and understandings of transition (eg more revolutionary at the start, more mainstream when scaling up?)
   b. Changes in approaches to inclusivity and equity over time
   c. Changes in governance arrangements within the initiative over time, and their consequences (eg changing approaches to leadership, active/passive membership, interplay between different groups among the members, the role of professionalization)
   d. Changes in relationship with outside supporters or stakeholders, including policy-makers, community networks

Through this question, we will be able to explore in greater depth different factors that have contributed to the emergence, consolidation, upscaling, and outscaling of community initiatives. It will help us conduct an analysis over time and space of the initiative and of the internal and external changes it has gone through]

7) Input into WP4: the relation between the initiative and **policy/politics**, not intended just as specific funding but, more in general: did the initiative have any relation to any kind of political institution/stakeholder; did it benefit directly or indirectly from any specific policy/programme/funding scheme/etc; is there any law/regulation/policy that hinders rather than facilitates the initiative’s activities and/or its success/growth/up-scaling. What type of relation/engagement (for instance collaboration, negotiation, conflict, refusal of engagement) has it built with policy-makers (and the policies they support/have put in place over time?)
Appendix 1.4

Workplan and timeline WP3 – June-November 2015

We’ve formed small teams working on 6 broad themes (whose labels might change, and whose focus might be narrowed down – see list of teams below):
- Trajectories/growth/emergence/replication (coordination: Federico)
- Aspirations for change/conflicting rationalities (coordination: Anke)
- Relationships with governments (and other external actors) (coordination: Annabel)
- Capital and resources (coordination: Kirsty)
- Power, participation and community engagement (coordination: Isabelle/Lucia)
- Relationship with money (coordination: Filka)

Role of Coordinators:
- Each coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the different steps are met on time and that partners are on track.
  - For the first step (July 3), this coordinating/oversight work will be easily done as all partners should use the Google Doc under the folder “Preparation of Coding Outline” that is relevant for their theme and work from it.
  - For this first step (July 3), the coordinator should organize a Skype/Adobe connect call with all the members of his/her team to discuss the construction of the story for their theme and refine together the coding categories to be submitted. Probably plan this call around June 25th or so.
- Each coordinator should have a good knowledge of the existing and relevant literature for each theme so that he/she can ensure that the coding outline will reflect the most original contribution we can make to the literature. For three of the themes (relationship with money; trajectories; relationship with governments), they should also include in the end some headings relevant for the policy analysis needs of WP4 (since we need to provide data on how do different forms of government support (overt or not) and funding contribute to (or constraint) the development of the initiative).
- Each coordinator will build (with the support of the team members) the most original driving questions for the coding work and the paper writing
- Each coordinator will lead and oversee the summary reports to be developed by Oct. 10th.

STEP 1: By 3rd of July – Draft initial outline of story and of coding categories
1. Read your CBI- and stakeholder interviews, reflect on the data in relation to your theme, and discuss internally within your partner team members what are the most salient aspects of your data
2. Think about story (within each partner (UAB, PIK, etc) to develop based on data + existing literature – this does not need to be comprehensive in relation to the theme: focus on a perspective that is (a) exciting and well represented in the data and (b) really a contribution to the literature
3. Complete the google doc for your theme and for your partner with a very first outline of the story, and a first draft of headings/sub-headings for coding categories (a google doc has already been created for each team under the Google Drive WP3>Interviews>Data Analysis >Preparation of Coding Outline June 2015). Each partner should not be afraid of proposing headings/subheadings and writing them down in the google doc. They will be discussed during the Skype/Adobe Connect.
4. Have a Skype/Adobe Connect call to go over the possible story/argument outline and of the different headings/sub-headings. Probably best to have this call around June 22-23 or so.
5. Work to refine this outline and the coding categories (provide explanations for the coding categories) – be mindful of the workload you’re inflicting on yourself and other if you’re creating too many categories: *try* to make sure you only suggest coding categories that you’re really going to use.

6. Suggest case studies that you would like to include – this will be confirmed or discussed with the different partners over the next few months. For example, not everyone will have relevant data on relationships with governments even though we all asked questions about this. It depends on the type and orientation of the answer of the respondents. Use this Excel Matrix to record the cases to be included for each paper:

   https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xKnAVp2a7SmFEqJHWxoq2lDfhKWt0m1ELARy02VWTVE/edit

7. Complete work on Google Drive by July 3. Compilation of all coding categories into one framework, reconciling overlap where possible.

**GOAL:** Every team produces a very first outline of a potential manuscript (Introduction: a few bullet points on link and contribution to the literature; Results: what are the key areas and points to be analysed; Discussion: what is the type of message that could arise from this?), and, deduced from this, draft coding categories with explanation. You can organize this process as follows:

**NB:** Take into consideration that the draft story you will produce by July 3rd can be changed if the data ends up being very different.

**STEP 2: By September 1st – Testing and refining the coding framework**

We will test and refine the coding framework, and work towards a shared understanding of the coding framework. To do so, we will use two methods:

- All teams code one of the English language interviews. We will compare codings, and clarify diverging understandings of coding categories.

- All teams code at least one of their own interviews, to see if the coding categories are relevant for their case. Revision of the coding framework where necessary.

- Online meeting to discuss the (final version of) coding framework and approach to coding – September 3rd at 10am (Paris/Madrid time)

- Final decisions by country teams: which theme will each initiative contribute to?

**STEP 3: By October 5th – Coding**

Each team codes their data according to the themes (and coding categories?) they’ve signed up to.

**STEP 4: By November 10th – Writing data summaries**

Each team writes summaries of the data under each theme (structured according to coding categories) in English, with selected quotes to illustrate the findings. These summaries will be used (a) for Deliverable D.2 (summary reports on success factors) due November 30 and (b) as a basis for analysis across cases and write-up, to be led by the different theme-teams.

**Themes – WP3**

Please use the following Google Doc to update team members when/if relevant and needed. Please do this ASAP.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15B954EXcnI8rerw7yOlyknDoog4o3KWZeg_pF23KZTw/edit#gid=0
Appendix 1.5

WP3 – Guidance for coding and summary-writing

When coding:
- Remember that relevant information on a specific code can crop up at any point in the interview, not only in response to the specific question. This means that you need to look out for content related to all coding categories throughout the entire transcript.
- You can code passages under more than one heading.
- Generally, nothing should be coded under the main headings (except otherwise agreed) – if it doesn’t fit under any of the sub-headings we should create new ones.
- You can add sub-categories where you feel they make sense for your data – maybe it would be good to circulate your ideas during the process so others can do the same if it fits for them, or we can jointly refine it to something that makes sense for all of us.
- It is best to code passages that are long enough for the reader to be able to understand the context (e.g., rather than just single words). As we are not doing a content analysis that relies on counts of incidences, we are mainly interested in what people said (in context), rather than how often something was said.
- We would like to suggest the use of *memos* (up to each of us to decide if they’re helpful, but they can indeed be very useful). Memos are little documents that help you to remember thoughts and questions that you had while reading/coding /analysing the data (here: transcripts). They are usually linked to one or more particular passages in the transcripts. If you use coding software, there’s probably a function that allows you to stick those memos into the text at the place where you had a certain thought. For example, if I am not entirely if a certain statement should be coded under a certain heading, I can stick a memo in that reminds me to discuss this with my colleagues. Or if I come across a statement that I find particularly interesting, I can record my idea in a memo.
- Memos can also be useful to write little notes about what we find special about an interview in 2-3 sentences, or any other observations on the *structure* of an argument, or the line of argumentation. These could be very brief summaries of what we find important to know about an interview. This would help us not to forget the context of an interviewee’s statement (you can use them when writing your summaries).

When analysing and writing the summaries:
- Present the data (with quotes) but add your interpretation too, this will help us to identify key thoughts and ideas that might be worth following up!
- Please write complete sentences – bullet-point truncated phrases are difficult to understand for people outwith the context.
- In your summaries, please make transparent (where possible) where findings are based on explicit or implicit ideas (e.g. through quotes), and any other observations you find important, e.g., if people are hesitant.
- Make it clear if something is an interpretation from your side, or if the interviewee(s) have suggested a certain idea themselves. (“I have the impression that…” vs “one interviewee suggested that…”).
- Pay attention to the weight that is given to an aspect in the argumentation where appropriate. For example, which of the success factors mentioned by an interviewee is the one that they consider most important?
- We can indicate the prevalence of an idea verbally (eg by saying ‘most people expressed…’, ‘some people described…’, ‘only few respondents felt…’). However, generally we don’t use quantifications.

- It is important to keep the context of people’s statements in mind, so it will be necessary to go back to the original interviews throughout the analytical process. However, keeping the context in mind might also be easier if we write little memos (see above) about the argument that an interviewee makes etc. For example, does an interviewee have a certain theme/topic they always come back to? Does somebody offer to talk about a certain issue without being explicitly prompted by us? Etc.
Appendix 1.6

Summary Comments and Feedback on Test Coding work

WP3-TESS

In general, it seems that the test coding work has been smooth and that the coding framework and categories developed in June and July 2015 fit the raw interview data quite well. No partner reports major problems regarding the application of the framework they used for the data they coded. The use of Word for testing the coding framework and categories has eased this stage of the analysis, but does also create some visual confusion and does not allow researchers to easily pull together which raw data fits for which coding theme/category. Nvivo is a much handier and more appropriate tool for coding large segments of text and will ease this process of coding and data analysis.

Some minor issues and questions have emerged during the test coding work, to which we respond in a series of comments below.

1) Too specific VS too broad/general coding framework

Developing a coding framework and coding categories always involves a delicate balance between having a too broad and general coding framework vs. one with many intricate and specific coding categories. Some TESS researchers report that the coding framework for their theme is not extensive and is too general while others report that it is too specific and complex and that at times very detailed categories/subheadings seem to overlap.

In general, we recommend having a slightly more specific coding framework, which will help you gain time for the write-up of memos and analysis. Otherwise, if you have a very general coding framework, you will need to spend extensive time re-reading all the quotes that pertain to a general category to see how you can further group the raw data into sub-categories and transform a more general code into a more specific one. Using a more specific coding framework might be complex at first, but it generally helps researchers gain time in the mid-term as they already have very specific ideas/sub-narratives that they can develop in their write-up. They already have a good memo frame that is easier to organize into a cogent narrative with specific sub-themes (based on the specific coding categories). On the other hand, a too specific coding framework risks pushing the argument in a specific direction.

In sum, we would recommend to try to find a balance between a too specific vs. a too broad coding framework by discussing it internally within your own group/theme.

2) Editing, clarifying or proposing new categories to coding framework. Refining coding framework and outline.

It is part of the usual coding testing work to realize that some of the draft framework and categories originally proposed need to be refined and clarified. Many TESS researchers have noticed that their coding framework needs to be broken down into further sub-categories or that sub-categories need to be clarified (because their formulation is not clear enough and confusing). We have noticed that some researchers who have done the coding test work were not involved in the data collection and initial analysis, which can also add a layer of confusion.

Please send a summary of your proposed edits and suggestions by Tuesday, Sept 8th to the main coordinator of your theme so that he/she can integrate your comments and proposed edits and make appropriate adjustments in view of a final coding framework. TO COORDINATORS: Make sure that your final coding framework includes clear definitions and send back the final coding framework for final approval by Thursday Sept. 10th. TO EACH PARTNER RESEARCHER: Please make sure that who does the coding understands the data collection and the coding work very well.

3) Under-use of coding categories/sub-headings initially proposed in the coding framework
This point is directly linked to the previous one. Some of you have noticed that some of the coding categories/sub-headings of your coding framework did not get used a lot as part of you test coding work. This is normal and will just mean that it is possible that some categories/sub-headings will not be part of the memo/analysis you will write up – or at least not for your country CBIs.

4) Relevance of draft-coding categories for some countries but not others

This aspect is also related to the two above points. It sometimes happens that categories very relevant for a CBIs or a country CBIs are relevant and frequently used do not fit well for another country. This is also fine. It means that the realities of initiatives’ work, foci, priorities, etc differ from place to place – and this might be a particularly interesting aspect of the joint analysis. Some categories might be relevant for two or three CBIs/countries, but not for others.

5) Too short segments of text coded for a specific coding category

Some researchers tend to code too short passages of text (i.e., a line,a few words or single sentence), which means that you will be lacking context later on when you’re summarizing the data in a memo. Please make sure that you code a bit “around” the core data so that you can understand the context of the statement without having to go back to the full interview.

6) Density of coding

Some researchers code 8-9 lines of text (or even a full paragraph) using only one coding categoryeven though reading the content reveals that this segment could use an extra coding category or two (but it is obviously not always the case, it depends on the specificity of the coding framework and the actual content of the statement/raw data). In general, it is important to densify the coding work as much as possible to make sure that we maximize the use of the data.

7) Doubt on which coding category applies to which segment of text: The use of Double-coding.

At times, researchers seem to be struggling with which coding category/sub-heading applies to a particular segment of raw data. In this case, you should be double or even triple-coding this segment so that we are sure that we are not “forgetting” or missing important raw data that can fit into a theme.

8) Formatting of coding categories:

We noticed that some of the coding subheadings/categories include questions. We recommend eliminating this format of questions and transforming them into short segments of affirmative text, which will be easier to recognize and visualize in Nvivo.

9) Disagreements on coded text between researchers

If you realize that there is a disagreement in the coding of segments of text, you should discuss the coding work you’ve done with the other researcher(s). This will be the easiest way to resolve the coding conflict and understand why you and the other researcher(s) interpret the data in a particular way (versus another).

Additional Suggestions

1. Please be careful not to code words, phrases or parts of sentences – please code one or two lines both before and after the relevant section, so there is some context for it.

2. Keep categories broad – whilst the paper will be about Politics within CBIs, considering the broader meaning of Politics

3. As you code your material, I suggest you write in further specifications about the coding you are choosing using the ‘Memo’ function on NVivo. For example, you could write down the specific conflicts or dilemmas. This will help you remain fully aware of why you are coding as you do, and will help your analysis later on.
4. Where in doubt about which code to use, code multiple times! If there is something is not covered in the outline, create a new category and aware partners with an email that you have regarded some related interesting issue which is not covered in the outline.

5. Try to be very aware of what you are not coding and why. The coding may not always be obvious. Anything uncoded is likely not to be included in the your analysis, so it matters! If you are unsure about whether or not to code a section, code it under ‘unsure’, so that you can come back to those areas later.

6. Take a break from coding when you need to! Coding is an active analytical practice - boredom and tiredness will lead to less effective coding. We aim to get very dense and complete codings. And the experience is that once we get tired we tend to finish quicker.

7. Coding for various themes at the same time is possible if the number of categories are not too many. Try, but if you think it’s complicated or it’s hard for you to remember categories for all the themes, better to go though the same interview different times (coding on theme at a time)

8. MOST IMPORTANT: have always present WHY we are coding, and what for: remember our research questions and the issues we would like to discuss (all that is at the beginning of the document)
 Appendix 1.7

WRITING MEMOS WP3
OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2015

Memo Goals: Each researcher as thematic team member writes summaries of the data under each theme (structured according to coding categories) in English. Under each coding category, there should be some preliminary analysis of the findings, illustrated with selected quotes. These summaries will be used as a basis for (a) Deliverable D.2 (summary reports on success factors) due November 30 and (b) analysis across cases and write-up, to be led by the different theme-teams.

When analysing the data and writing the memos:

- There will be as many memos per partner as the number of themes you decided to contribute to, following roughly the structure of the categories in the coding framework.

- In order to help you with writing the memos, you get your software (e.g., NVivo) to display everything that has been coded under a certain category, or a specific combination of categories. It might help to print out the data coded under each category, and just write the key points of what the data is telling you (or means to you) next to it – this often helps to form a picture of what’s all in the data (almost like some sort of a belated line-by-line coding). It might also help to build a model/figure of the different parts, external influences, and feedback loops etc that might be part of the overall argument that you will write out to answer the main research question(s) for your theme.

- You then summarise the main ideas that emerge from this data, illustrating key points with quotes (in English). ‘Minority views’ are often also important to understand so don’t only concentrate on what the majority says.

- Follow the guidance on each of the themes (derived from the coding framework) as prompts to structure your memo. Of course you can also introduce additional points where you found them striking in your data, or critique or further develop the existing points, based on your data!

- Present the data (with quotes translated into English) but add your interpretation too, this will help the working group to identify key thoughts and ideas that might be worth following up!

- If you don’t have any data on a specific category, just state that – not all categories will be relevant for all case study contexts.

- Please write complete sentences – bullet-point truncated phrases are difficult to understand for people outwith the context.

- In your memos, please make transparent (where possible) if findings are based on explicit or implicit ideas (e.g. through quotes), and any other observations you find important, e.g., if people are hesitant.

- Write clearly about the character of the data, describing how the data was elicited and if it was difficult to get to certain points (e.g., “Interviewees usually described these issues without much prompting” versus “This was an issue that interviewees seemingly had some difficulties talking about, so a lot of probing was required” etc).

- Make it clear if something is an interpretation from your side, or if the interviewee(s) have suggested a certain idea themselves. (“I have the impression that...” vs “one interviewee suggested that...”). Similarly, you can comment on how (un)certain you are about your interpretation of the data.
- Pay attention to the weight that is given to an aspect in the argumentation where appropriate. For example, which of the aspects of initiative success mentioned by an interviewee is the one that they consider most important?

- We can indicate the prevalence of an idea verbally (e.g., by saying ‘most people expressed…’, ‘some people described…’, ‘only few respondents felt….’). However, generally we don’t use quantifications.

- It is important to keep the context of people’s statements in mind, so it will be necessary to go back to the original interviews throughout the analytical process. However, keeping the context in mind might also be easier if we write notes about the argument that an interviewee makes etc. For example, does an interviewee have a certain theme/topic they always come back to? Does somebody offer to talk about a key topic without being explicitly prompted by us? Etc.

- Another challenge is that the analytical process, i.e., the process of putting parts of an interview into categories, often tears the building bricks of the speakers’ arguments apart, and the coherence of their argument might get lost. You will have to discuss in your teams how to restore this coherence where it might be an important element of your story.

- Make sure to balance out the interpretive text you write down with the quotes you add. Sometimes, memos are too heavy on quotes, and do not present enough interpretive/analytical notes that bring quotes together into a short summary analysis. In other words, do not rely too much on your quotes, write up your main findings, and only use quotes as illustrations.

- Finish each memo with a two or three paragraph reflection on what your research reveals in terms of the most important factors for the development, up-scaling, replication, and/or diffusion of community-based initiatives IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR THEME. Such a reflection/conclusion is important in the context of our next deliverable to be submitted by November, 30th, 2015.

- Length: Try to make each memo for your theme between 6-12 single-space pages (Times, 12).

- Memos must be shared by November, 11th on the Gdrive under: WP3 >Interviews>Data Analysis>Memos.
Appendix 2

Trajectories and Evolution

Memo from JHI

This data is based on one case study, CBI1 on interviews conducted with 8 members +3 stakeholders; but also draws on our numerous field visits in both sites (including participant observation).

CBI1 memo is situated Scotland. It has around 300 members (active to various degrees) and is managed by a board of directors. Michael is the director and Ross is the manager of CBI1. It is a voluntary organisation, although Ross, Paula (project leader for the community farm), Stuart (project manager or the Green Travel Hub) and Debbie (administrator) are paid employees.

In total we interviewed 11 people from this CBI; Paula, Ross, Stuart (positions noted above), as well as one person – Arthur – from Community Energy Scotland who are the public organisation helping CBI1 develop renewables on The community farm. Andrew and Lizzie are both from the local community council, and Craig was involved in the Local Authority and in particular the partnership (Y Towns Partnership) which the CBI1 developed from. Finally, Josh and Sarah are part of the board of directors, and Fran was part of the board but has now retired.

Today CBI1 has a broad range of activities – it is developing a renewable energy project at the community farm (a piece of land they bought earlier this year) and a sustainable transport hub. In the past they have done different activities such as community consultations for the Local Authority (LA), developing signage for the town, setting up a farmers market and developing a footpath to connect the town with other towns amongst other things.

NOTE:

“LA” or “the council” or “Yshire Council” = the Local Authority i.e. administrative district.
All respondents have been anonymised. The names given do not correspond to their real names.

How has the evolutionary path of the CBI been shaped and where has it led the CBI?

A very brief history of CBI1 – ‘The partnership’ was an initiative set up in 1998 and can be understood as the first stage of CBI1. It was set up as a project by Yshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Grampian and Community Scotland. The idea behind it was to try and make the main settlements of Yshire better places to live, work and visit. In 2004 the partnership arrived at the town from and set up and ran (from 2004-2008) an organisation that was later to become the CBI1. Ross who is the manager of the CBI1 today also ran the partnership project. In 2007 the partnership funding was drying up so those involved with the partnership at that time asked the community if they should
continue their work in a new form (as CBI1), to which they said yes, and so, the CBI1 was born. The CBI1 began officially in 2009 (the partnership finished in Dec 2008). There was a period for 6 months when Ross was self-employed doing contracts here and there.

This history is very important and has strongly shaped what we see as the CBI1 today. The goals of the partnership have had an impact on the goals and development of CBI1. The partnership for example aimed for community development - this holistic and all-encompassing mission of the partnership is similar to CBI1s mission today: “a holistic approach where you looked not just at physical developments, but you were also looking at social development and economic development too, so you would try and build capacity within community organisations to get them more involved in decision making, on the basis that things would move faster, be more effective, last longer, if the communities were involved. From that perspective it was quite a ground breaking initiative – I mean we’re only now getting into that...back into that sort of area of thinking with the legislation for empowerment and stuff like that...” (Craig). This was a very innovative way of thinking, as Craig points out; this thinking has only arrived again in policy recently in Scotland. The CBI1 therefore was born out of a large investment by government to increase community capacity in a bottom-up way. The partnership was seen as a showcase for Scottish Government to forward its new agenda of community participation and bottom up action. With the budget cuts of the crisis this agenda reduced significantly with the onset of the onset of the financial crisis.

The Local Authority (LA) – Yshire Council, were one of the main partners and funders in the venture. Today as a result of this legacy, CBI1 also have a close relationship with the LA. This has had two main implications. Firstly it has been useful because Ross has been able to secure short term small contracts from them when CBI1 were in financial difficulty - this has meant survival for the CBI and a continuous trajectory, but secondly, it has also be problematic because many people in the village do not distinguish between CBI1 and the LA. There is a perception by some members of CBI1 that they must distance themselves from the LA, which has had implications for their evolution.

When CBI1 first began (when it first became the CBI1, rather than the Partnership) some respondents felt that the kinds of projects that it did could be performed more suitably by the LA -they were things that the LA should be doing - things like putting road signs and doing community consultations. CBI1 was seen as an arm of the state or a way to devolve responsibility from the LA to the community: “...my feeling was that they saw it as a way of kind of...devolving responsibility...[...] And, ehm... ...and a way of saving money in the long term....” (Fran). Today this has implications for CBI1 because it doesn’t have a clear true vision or identity for itself: “it’s very wishy-washy in terms of a statement [...] It’s...it’s evolved from ex-Council days.” (Josh). This is a form of institutional legacy that the CBI1 are grappling with at the moment and reacting against in their pursuit of becoming more focused.

The search for an identity meant that the CBI1 today tries to distance itself from the LA:
“Ehm but again I think it’s just a clear message as to what we are, who we are, what we’re trying to deliver, and how...how we can support the community, and sort of we actually need to sort of disengage a little bit from the Council...even though, you know, we have no direct...involvement with them but...ehm...we have to be seen to be slightly less...positioned I think.”(Josh), and has done so at the possible detriment of CBI1.

**Summing up**

- The CBI1 would not have started up (as ‘The Partnership’) without government investment, and the partnership of public bodies
- this first stage (the development of The Partnership) gave CBI1 and the community confidence that it was possible for them to ‘go it alone’ when the funding ran out, and that there was a need for the services they could provide
- This stage was important for CBI1 because it was almost like a practise run, allowing them to develop skills and expertise before the funding was withdrawn. Ross developed links with the Local Authority and other bodies which he would later work with, and draw on for funding in times of hardship for CBI1.
- CBI1 has inherited a specific institutional legacy from its past, meaning that its trajectory and future are shaped by what has gone before (i.e. having a very general objective, trying to make a name for themselves, trying to distance themselves from the LA etc.). It could be interesting to think about how CBIs are shaped by legacy, or look at how earlier stages of their ‘development’ influence their outcomes. How are CBIs bounded by previous stages of their development?

(1.2)

**Name: Endogenous processes - What influences how they evolve/evolved?**

a. Changing identities:

The past relationship with the LA and CBI1’s desire to be less associated with them (see above) has greatly impacted how CBI1 has been shaped over time. At one point the LA offered them a large sum of money (£100,000) with the attached condition that the money had to be spent on property development as a way to regenerate the city centre and provide a community hub. Accounts of this history show a contested story; on one had CBI1 was severely financially struggling and therefore they were not in a position to refuse the money, and this project would have been a successful example of community regeneration; “This is ridiculous, you’re talking about winding up CBI1 and yet you’re turning down a hundred thousand pound” (Fran). On the other hand the board chose not take the money offered because arguing that it was not financially viable. The rejection of this money was seen as a way for the board to distance themselves from the LA, and rejecting this money was a way to do this but the boards arguments were very persuasive, and their economic rationale trumped all others; “but then they were making the argument that there was not...the business case just didn’t stack up, you know, and without actually seeing what they were basing that judgement on, it’s very difficult to challenge, you know...” It is unclear exactly why this money was rejected, it could be that it was a mixture of the above factors.

b. Assessment of risk and personal liability

There are suggestions that actions of CBI1 are driven by the legal organisation of CBI1, and the directors perceptions of risk. Until recently CBI1 was a Limited Company
so the directors had to take responsibility if they made a loss (it is now a registered Charity). Now, the directors still have ultimate financial responsibility and have a legal obligation not to continue trading if they see that they cannot meet their liabilities i.e. staff costs. Also, if they borrow money, they can have liability for it if they fail to meet repayments.

Some interviewees have suggested that this personal liability encourages that CBI1 to focus on economic sustainability over other possible aspirations/rationalities and that the board are “risk adverse” as they are personally financially responsible if anything goes wrong: “You know, but... going back to those directors... They’re all volunteers...they have joined up to...steer CBI1 on behalf of others, they get no personal gain from it whatsoever, but their neck’s on the line if something goes wrong. So if we trade insolently, if we enter into contracts, if we don’t pull the plug when...when there’s no prospect of us meeting any commitments [...] you know, their...their necks are on the line, their houses are on the line, their... And none of them signed up for that. So I...I totally understand where they were...where they were coming from, but things...things got really quite ehm...fraught,” (Ross). Craig also suggests that this drives the board to be risk adverse and also one of the reasons why CBI1 has turned down the potentially lucrative contract with the LA (mentioned above) which could have been to the detriment of CBI1.

c. Shaping CBI1 – the importance of the staff

Because CBI1 is a volunteer based organisation and because they are unpaid there is a limit to how much they can do or expect others volunteers to do. Volunteers have to juggle family and work commitments with their volunteering duties. Being reliant on volunteers means that maintaining a drive is challenging because there is a constant flux of people coming in and out of the organisation, each wanting to do something different, and sometimes with little idea of what CBI1 has done in the past, ultimately pulling CBI1 in differing directions. Having paid staff means that CBI1 has time and skills base to search for funding opportunities, without this vital base of staff, CBI1 may not have the capacity apply for funding: “Having an organisation like ours enables you to have staff – if you have staff you can build expertise and fund applications, and build relationships with funders. And that is the route...to me, the thing that makes a develop trust successful. If it’s all run on a voluntary basis, you’re not going to have the time, the effort and the expertise to actually be successful in raising funds. And without funds you can’t do anything” (Michael).

d. Shaping CBI1 – volunteers, skills and willingness to adapt

The volunteers are also an important part of CBI1s trajectory. People volunteer are motivated to work with CBI1 often because they have a specific interest in a certain topic, and want to be involved therefore in a certain project. CBI1 is reliant on committed individuals who bring their own interests to the table as ideas for developing projects. As Arthur points out, one of the important determining factors of the trajectory and the determining if CBI1 would engage with renewables is down to “Well, primarily, probably the individuals within the group, “but there’s...their...ehm... ...their capability, I suppose their eh...just their general willing to take forward a project – to devote time and resources to, you know, a project of that sort of scale.”
Fortunately, Michael the director has a strong management background from former jobs and has the skills that enable him to apply for funds and also pursue the renewables; “obviously someone like Michael has the capacity to go through reams of bid documents and you know...or...or tender documents I should say, about how to get your bid in for a particular funding proposal, or he just knows the jargon, he might know the regulations quite well...”. CBI1 can draw on a strong skills base (Michael’s as well as others) and can do a lot of the work ‘in house’ and not have to rely on contractors; “they’ve got a surveyor, they’ve got an accountant, they’ve got a lawyer – and they’ll all chip in to do the things that they need to do... So between them, they have the necessary expertise...” Again without these ‘free’ services, CBI1 would not be able to continue.

Working in a volunteer organisation can be time consuming because it takes more negotiating and diplomacy that it would in a business context. Many of the board have come from a business context and therefore have had to be willing to adapt how they work with people to the CBI context. There are some key distinctions made that are discussed when working in CBI1; more time is spent facilitating processes and negotiating, rather than in a business where one boss provides a strong direction, so different skills are required; “So I think it’s just something that you’ve got to deal with, but you’ve just got to have a kind of...a level of diplomacy. ‘Cause you’ve got to think, well these are volunteers...you know...[laughing] you can’t tell them off particularly! You’ve got to keep them on...side, and keep them motivated and keep them...you know wanting to take part in the project and things, so... But it’s...it’s that sort of thing, it’s trying to sort of work out different...tricks almost, so that...you know that...that it’s diffused.”

e. Strong leadership and difficulty in finding good replacements

Much of what CBI1 does is driven by Michael and Ross. Michael has his own personal motto which guides how he leads CBI1, much of this is shaped by his former career in management consultancy in London: “So, I think I’ve had some success in building a good management team and a good board – that’s ongoing [laughs], because people come and go... Ehm... So, I think a determination to succeed, willingness to take risk, not having...a background that would make me timid about the potential of failure, emphasis on financial discipline and the bottom line...and, being able to get the best out of people...”

The difficulty in attracting a new Director is press CBI1 at the moment. Michael has been saying for a long time that he is going to leave, however they never find anyone to replace him. His house is for sale and he plans to move soon. People fear that the amount of responsibility that the individual in this post ensues is very high and very few people would want to take on such a task. His leaving will cause CBI1 great pressure. There is also a risk of burn out and people staying on longer than they should or want because they can’t get a replacement. This again may point to the limitations of relying on volunteers. CBI1 is very precariously placed, and could at any point take a tumble, based on who comes in or leaves.

**Summing up**

- CBI1 relies on skills of the volunteers; however it is also shaped by the interests of the volunteers. People come on board with specific interests and looking to pursue certain
projects meaning that they can drive CBI1 in a specific direction. It is unclear how this sits with alternative visions of CBI1 as being “community led” or doing what the wider community want. Relying on volunteers interests may be at odds with ‘community’ interests?

- CBI1 is in a very precarious financial position and spends a lot of time searching for financing opportunities that they can pursue. Developing bids and funding proposals can be time consuming and requires specific skills. If CBI1 only relied on volunteers this would not be possible. Having paid staff allows time for this, as well as provides a continuous drive and project management skills that ‘pulls everything together’

- Many of the board have business backgrounds however they have to be willing and able to adapt to work with volunteers. Volunteers are not bound by employment law and can leave at any time and therefore those leading them need diplomacy and facilitation skills which are often learnt ‘on the job.’

- CBI1 has turned down potentially lucrative funding because it did not fit in with the overall direction or vision that the directors had for the organisation. Not all funding is seen as positive if attached with conditions which ultimately shape the organisation in an undesirable way. Search for ‘unlinked’ funding – i.e. funding which does not specify too strictly what the money has to be spent on is most attractive to CBI1.

- The legal organisation of CBI1 has implications for risk adverse the board are, and ultimately the path they choose to take. Because the board have personal liability, there is a perception that it is more risk adverse and has driven a focus on profits, over other projects which may fit it’s over all aims in a better way.

(1.3)
Name: Exogenous processes - What influences how they evolve/evolved?

a. Fear of business failure

Linked to the drive for economic sustainability is the fear that the CBI1 could be like a nearby centre (Alink) that went bust. The centre received money from the EU but in the end it had to be bailed out by the LA. Surprisingly many respondents that we spoke to use the same anecdote to project their fears about a possible future for CBI1, and therefore as a rationale to explain why they must only take on financially profitable projects and why their key drive must be financial sustainability: “CBI1 can’t afford anything that sustains a loss – an ongoing loss... And therefore anything that we have to get involved with has to sort of make money and stand on its own two feet from day one... So, there is nervousness about doing another ‘Alink’.” (Josh). CBI1 don’t want to be another “substantial embarrassment” to the area.

b. Looking to others for example

The decision to invest in renewables was made based on CBI1’s desire to become financially sustainable. This was also partly driven by what they saw other community groups doing; they report that most successful groups in Scotland are trying to own and develop assets, including renewables: “And all the examples that we saw at that stage, both going to visit others and learning from people who came to talk to us, they were all about property, they were all about... And because people in The town...”

The need for community groups to buy an assets is a discourse that is communicated by government agencies as well as though the increasing number of community groups who were investing in renewable energy projects; “then we thought ‘OK, maybe
this is not a way to go, ehm, if you look at what other communities are doing, they've got themselves into the renewable energy field, particularly Orkney, ehm, and the Western Isles communities have been successful in developing, ehm, community-owned wind turbines... And what they'd been doing, effectively, was their asset was...that stream of income that was generated by the turbine that would come into the community for...twenty years, ehm, twenty-five years whatever it is, and support community regeneration... So we switched our focus on that, and at the same time there was quite a lot of renewable energy development going on in the area, you know, lots of external companies coming in and putting up wind turbines — you probably saw them if you came in through this morning...” (Ross).

c. Supporting the community

Some members of CBI1 states that they strive to involve the community in everything it does, Paula for example set up a series of community consultation events in the planning process for the community farm. The ‘community’ and their needs are at the centre of many conversations in CBI1, in particular with Ross, who sees CBI1 as being driven by the community and that it should aim to meet their needs. With this in mind, CBI1 recently changed its name to make it more inclusive and for the benefit of the wider community beyond the town where CBI1 is based.

d. The shrinking state and budget from Scottish Government

The political culture in the town is seen as something which is unique to the area and one of the reasons that CBI1 was developed and also has survived. Some thought that became popular in the area and responds to the people of the town’s perception that they are not represented by local government – for example the LA allowed Tesco and Asda to develop in The town which is seen as the reason the High Street has declined. The community were not consulted on this issue and has led to the decline of many local businesses. Member of CBI1 see themselves as being guided by the community as a form of locally driven development.

In 2008/2009 the financial crisis was also underway and then there was a budget cuts for community based projects in 2010/2011 and the public sector was significantly reduced. This meant that the level of demand for the types of services that CBI1 offer went up, but the budget to deliver these services went down. This was also around the time that the partnership funding came to an end. Ross describes the situation as we look at a graph on his computer: “basically it shows the widening gap between finance that’s likely to be available for, ehm, the public sector – sort of local government as a proxy for the public sector in general – and the level of...well, the level of demand is going to put on the, ehm...local government finance, and they have availability of the supply of public finance, and you can see that yawning gap that opens up...”. The CBI1 is therefore seen as responding to this gap, and as to have arisen from the political drive in the town to be represented by a local body other than the LA.

The drive to secure an asset and develop renewables is a response to declining public sector spending and declining opportunities to access state funding mechanisms which CBI1 had previously heavily relied on: “a lot of these organisations are reliant on, you know, crumbs off of the public sector’s table, and those crumbs are becoming more and more difficult to find... Ehm... Whether it’s in the form of, you know, Seedcorn
Securing funding is a way to become self-sustaining and be independent from the LA and other funding mechanisms, ultimately giving CBI1 security and “breathing space” (Ross).

e. Scottish Government drive from community empowerment

A strong part of Scottish government policy rhetoric in the last few years has focused on community empowerment. To deliver these aims the government has offers some funds to support communities in working together or to purchase assets. Craig discusses how CBI1 is therefore politically aligned with Scottish governments ideas for community empowerment and was able to start up and continue as a result of government drive to empower communities: “Scottish Government are really interested in what they call ‘community-led regeneration’...and they see development trusts as a vehicle, thanks...largely thanks I think to the Development Trust Association Scotland lobbying with them and saying ‘Look, this is what our members are delivering’... So they’ve given this start-up two-year pilot programme to, ehm, communities across Scotland, and we’re one of those twenty or so pilot communities to see what we can do in two years, how can that...”

DTAS (Development Trusts Association Scotland) is one (mainly) public venture that aims to encourage the growth of new development trusts and support and strengthening established development trusts. DTAS provided CBI1 with training and advise which were very important for their development. DTAS ran free directors training and also provides a lot of information about for example where and how to go about applying for funds. Interviewees noted how important their relationship with DTAS in their trajectory so far.

f. Scottish Government funding streams

In order to deliver government objectives, funding streams are available for community groups who wish to develop renewables or other assets. So far the process of developing renewables has been very complicated, time consuming and expensive. Without the funding that they received from government for the provision of costs for the feasibility study, in the form of a grant, as well as extensive advice in setting up renewables through CARES (Community and Renewable Energy Fund) CBI1 would not have been able to go ahead with pursuing renewables. They also purchased the land on which the turbine will sit through a government grant – the Scottish Land Fund. This funding programme aims to try and help realise the Government’s aim to put a million acres of land in community ownership by 2020. The Climate Challenge Fund is also a significant source of funding.

g. The grid, Feed in tariffs and the Renewable energy planning process

Because the process of getting a turbine up and running is so lengthy and complicated, most of CBI1s time is now taken up with this. In total the planning so far has taken 2 years and has cost over a million pounds. They have countless setbacks with planning permission, each time accruing new costs. Michael argued that community groups do not have the time or resources to risk in a development, also given that they can invest a lot of time and money and then be rejected at the planning stage, even with government money, make it a risky venture. There are no special dispensations given for community groups who aim on setting up a community renewables project, something which Michael thought should be changed; "just because you’re […] a local organisation, there’s no guarantee you’re gonna get planning permission... You have no additional Brownie Points when it comes to..."
planning, from either the councillors or the council officers, just because you are a community organisation – it’s a non-material planning issue. So there’s huge uncertainty there. And then of course we come to the really big one – financing. If you can’t get a CARES loan, you can’t do it... You simply will not be able to raise the finance from your community to put up a turbine, unless you get a CARES loan.” Even though Michael has the ability to fill in the forms required by the government to access funding, he acknowledges that they are very complex and require skills; “Yes, it does [take a lot expertise] Eh, you can get help from Community Energy Scotland and other agencies, but, you know, just...I mean I’m pretty adept at filling in these forms...” As mentioned above the CARES loan takes into account most of these costs, however it still has been very time consuming and meant that CBI1 has had to put a hold on all other projects.

Again, government support through the Feed in Tarriff (FiT) which guarantees a set income per kilowatt of energy produced is central to making this a profitable venture for CBI1. However to gain FiT one must export energy to the grid (the infrastructure that electricity is fed and distributed through).

CBI1s experience with accessing the grid has also been difficult; the grid is full in some areas, expensive to connect to and in need of modernising and updating. The company who owns the grid has little incentive to update it. The updates to the grid are demand led – if there is demand then they will invest in updates, however if the grid has to be updated then the one project who was first to ask to be connected in the area, or who it has to be updated ‘for’ has to pay disproportionately for the costs of upgrading it. Michael explains the challenges and complications in negotiating grid access “They say ‘Well unless we see...unless you put the turbine up, there’s no point in us putting in the connection ‘cause you might not do it’... The other issue is that if you...if you trigger a change in the grid network so they’ve gotta put in more transformers in your local, you know, transformer station, or a new cable, you’ve got to bear part of that cost, and if you’re the first in line, you’ve got to bear a disproportionate amount of that cost. So for example, we were quoted originally three hundred thousand pounds for a grid connection, and then they put it up to one point three million...” Even the Ross and Michael didn’t fully understand the changes in pricing and the logistics of getting grid access when we probed further; later they describe it as a “minefield” and a highly technical issue that demands specific consultancy skills, which are very expensive.

Grid access has shaped the trajectory of the Community farm project because until recently, no grid connection was available. This led them to discuss alternative uses of the energy including exporting the energy to the town. Discussions about alternative possible uses of the energy took place; could they encourage of high use energy companies like breweries and grain driers to work onsite?: “I don’t fully understand it, but all I know is we’ve got a huge issue, and we can’t get the...we can’t get the power out from there. So...but I...to me that’s actually a bonus, because it means that we’ve gotta be a wee bit creative, and if we’re about creating added value for local...for the local community, we certainly have an opportunity to create ehm...real added value here... Whether it’s...bringing demand to the site, so, bringing business or community uses or something about creating, like can we do something like in terms of...you know, hydrogen production there, you know, could we take the power and create green fuel for transport, and then that...use that to put into local...a fleet of local low-emission
vehicles...” (Ross). Now that the grid access has been granted, plans have focused on exporting the energy to the grid to gain the FiT, and shaping the rest of the farm plans more broadly around an adventure/retreat centre.

**Summing up**

- The board appear to take personal responsibility for the success (or failure) of CBI1 and its activities. It is unclear if this is purely because they have personal legal financial responsibility if it fails.

- Failure (being closed down) would be seen as an embarrassment. Many actions in CBI1 (focus on profits) stem from the desire to avoid this outcome.

- FiT as are all other funding related to renewable energy development and community purchase of assets are essential for communities to invest in these technologies (to become self-sustaining).

- The complications of the planning process and accessing the grid is a major barrier to communities taking this route.

- Government rhetoric and support of community empowerment and the development of facilitators and advice providers such as DTAS have supported CBI1s development.

- CBI1 looks to other examples of what community groups are doing to shape their own trajectory. Examples of ‘successful’ (long lasting) community groups are called upon to shape the path of CBI1.

- CBI1 reported that pressure was put on it to own and develop an asset – this comes from government, DTAS and other looking to other communities. Is this considered the only way that CBIs can successfully progress? Can CBIs today develop in a similar way without being asset dependant?

- CBI1 takes advantage of funding opportunities where they are available – the direction of CBI1 is ultimately shaped by the support that may or may not be in place from Scottish government. As such CBI1 is very contingent on community funding and other long term government investment in renewables and other opportunities that they can invest in.

**Name: How do they respond to internal and external stimuli/events/situations?**

This code was very difficult to code for. Mainly because it was challenging to map which stimuli the CBI were responding to and how what they were doing was related to past events. The main way that CBI1 has changed what they do relates to funding and their drive to focus on financial sustainability. There is also a lot of overlap with external and internal driver codes (exo and endo) which describes essentially why CBI1 does what it does.

**Pursuit of income and business focus**

One of the main ways CBI1 has changed over time is related to the pursuit of income. This became an imperative after the partnership funding ran out; “the pursuit of income to sustain CBI1 over the future became much more important, because the warm blanket of local authority funding had gone... So we were forced if you like, into pursuing commercial agreements – for example, as we have with one wind farm
developer. We developed a project to put an Archimedean screw into the River Bogey – a small hydro scheme... We pursued putting our own turbine up, and also we formed a partnership with a developer to buy ten percent of their project... So, all of that – the sustainable, the renewables – became very important, ‘cause otherwise there’s not gonna be an CBI1 in future... “ (Michael). As Ross points out the LA money came with a strong warning that spurred them into action “It’s a one-off seed money, you’re not going to be able to come back to us year in year out for more and more and more’. So that was the message from day one."

Previous to becoming more focused on bringing in income, CBI1 were financed by the partnership and therefore financing was less of an issue. During this time CBI1 engaged in community consultations, and other ‘less visible things’. Michael describes them as ‘intangible’, but he notes that when the funding ran out this drove an “emphasis on actually trying to do something tangible – you know produce something that people could see and do and use...”

In order to do this they have also clamped down on unpaid time that staff members carry out to try to focus more on finances and financial sustainability; "we’re pulled in all sorts of directions, a lot of them unpaid, ehm...and that’s another thing they’ve tried to clamp down on recently, which is why we had the discussion about, you know, was there any...ehm, you know, compensation for my time, you know some of it...some of it's paid... [...]So the...the big push for us just now is to try and...ehm, find these sources of unrestricted income – unrestricted in the sense that it’s not...dedicated to a particular project and has to be spent on the Green Travel Hub or on the Community farm, but that we can...we as a Trust can decide how we spend it. So that includes money that we earn through consultancy, or through selling merchandise, or through...ehm, tickets to an event or something like that.”

**Summing up**

- Because the funding ran out for CBI1 they have had to adopt more of a business approach – they have had to increase the resources that are dedicated to searching for funding, reduce unpaid work, and focus on more tangible pieces of work (that render an income)
- As such less tangible community needs can sometimes be ignored when CBIs have to strive for tangible outcomes that have funding attached.
- There may be a trade-off here between responding to what the community want/need in an area, and what is seen as bringing in funding.

**(1.5.)**

**Name: Achievements/elements of success - What does evolution look like for CBIs?**

The CBI has a number of notable successes; some of them are highlighted below:

- “A well engaged community”
- The CBI1 is a very well networked organisation. They have strong ties with the Local Authority and local community groups. Beyond the local area the Manager and Director are very well networked at a regional and national level.
- They also have a board with a lot of experience, and who have a lot of professional skills that they can draw on such as accountancy and a lawyer.
They organised an exchange with a group of people in Finland which is referred to as the "transnational cooperation project". They linked with 3 communities in Finland, did a cultural exchange and organised a number of events that focused on the music and skill exchange of the two countries.

They are working towards becoming financially sustainable. Their vision for this mainly revolves around developing a turbine on their community farm. Until now one of their main factors of success has been that they have survived and been able to keep going.

When asked about the biggest successes of CBI1 Michael notes “I would say...ensuring that CBI1 stays alive, and ensuring that there will be enough income in the future to keep it going...”

They have a large portfolio of projects including the car club and driving training programme to show people how to drive in a more sustainable way.

There was little distinction between what the future should look like and what the future will look like in the interviews. People talked about their aspirations but it’s not clear if these are possible realities or not.

There are two main aspects which will determine how the evolution will look like – these have been discussed above, mainly the success of the renewable energy project and the community farm, and if they find another director (also mentioned above). Therefore these two codes in this memo have been merged, and focus on the aspirations that people saw for CBI1.

a. Securing a future – being self-sustaining

Up until now one of the main successes of CBI1 is that they have kept going, and have survived. This is also a key future aspiration in CBI1. In particular survival of CBI1 is linked with financial sustainability. For some, CBI1 cannot survive unless it garners long term financially viable projects which provide an income to cover the core costs of the organisation. As Michael points out, securing finance is an imperative for him in the future: “I would say...ensuring that CBI1 stays alive, and ensuring that there will be enough income in the future to keep it going...” beyond this, securing finance will keep them going in the future: “But survival, not just in the short term, because with the renewables we’ve got coming on-stream now, that will ensure that there is a Trust in some shape or form for the next twenty-five years.”

Talk around securing sustainable funding points to the precarious position that CBI1 find themselves in. Over the years different bits of income here and there have given relief to CBI1, however these sources of funding are often short term and when they run out they have to search again for funding opportunities. Not only does CBI1 have to spend a lot of time on hunting for these opportunities, it also causes stress for the employees; one time Ross recounts sitting with the Director discussing his P45, at any minute he could have lost his job.
b. To have a resilient community

Some of the members understand CBI1s activities to be centred on developing a resilient community that can cope with change. Sarah discusses her understanding of the aspirations of CBI1: “[we are] “Working with others to build a resilient, inclusive, enterprising community capable of dealing with ongoing change’ [...] covers everything really doesn’t it?” There is an understanding holistic nature of resilience; resilience as a term that is multi-faceted; it can encompass local enterprise, community engagement, keeping young people in the area, having a sense of place etc., but at the same time it may mean nothing at all, because it is so broad. There is a recognition that all of these aspects of resilience are interconnected and depend on each other; by bringing in businesses, young people may stick around rather than going to nearly by cities like Y. Again, when there are social projects happening, people may get more involved and feel more included. All aspects of the idea of resilience work together to make the town “a better place to live and work”.

c. Visions of Community farm; imagination and cohesion

Some of the aspirations for the community farm centre around getting people excited and engaged in the project: “I hope it can be something that everybody can get excited about.” (Paula) For them the thing that is special about the farm is the participatory nature of the planning process, rather than the outcome itself. They have developed a working group and are planning together (with the community) what they will do with the land. The community farm is special as it brings people together and has aspirations are around team spirit and social cohesion now and in the future. It is seen as something quite innovative in that the working group are a ‘random’ mix of people with different skills and all come together to organise something that’s important to them.

d. The Travel hub driving lessons: reducing carbon emissions and making social impact

One of the activities of CBI1 is a sustainable travel hub which offers a car sharing scheme and lessons to teach people how to drive in an environmentally friendly way. The benefits of this are framed very much in terms of how to reduce the drivers fuel, rather than how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions: “Yeah just to give them a few...a few tips and techniques as to how to drive more...how to make their fuel go a bit further, essentially...”(Stuart). Nonetheless, beyond this Stuart (project manager) hopes that the project will have “a really deep sort of social impact" and that it opens up doors to work with groups “that we wouldn’t normally work with.”

To sum up...

- CBI1 undertakes a broad range of projects that fit under the umbrella of “community resilience”, these range from improving employment opportunities to making the town a nice place to live though having sports facilities or the look and feel of the place.
- There are however limits to what CBI1 can do because it is a voluntary organisation and although they have staff members, and have limited time to dedicate.
- The sheer possibilities of The community farm has sparked the imagination of the staff and volunteers, but the process itself, of involving and managing a large group, with diverse backgrounds, who all chip in to help is an inspiring and rewarding process for those involved (even though it may not be considered as financially lucrative by the board).
- One of the frequently talked about ambitions of CBI1 is the need to be financially sustainable. The precocity of their funding system - of being reliant on small pots of money can be strenuous, time consuming and disrupts CBI1's activities.
- Beyond thinking about large social change, survival is a key aspiration of CBI1. Most of CBI1's energies go in to simply survival. It is questionable how far CBI1s can make an impact when they are struggling.

3. Are there any conflictual element/process/events that played a substantial role in influencing CBI's life?

Much of this has been coded above in sections of what influenced the CBI – please look therefore information for this code. Only one or two further points can be added without repeating what has already been written.

Reducing the portfolio

One of the main challenges that the CBI has been confronted with is the reduction in funding from the partnership. This has driven them towards securing an asset to be self-sustaining. As part of this drive, some feel that Trust should take more of a business focus. The way this is envisioned is through reducing their portfolio of projects to focus on specific income generating projects. The precarious nature of their available funding means that there is a constant drive to secure new projects and as a result the some feel CBI1 has a very broad portfolio of seemingly unrelated projects that sit under the broad banner of ‘community development’; “we need to be clearer on the projects that we get involved with and...and actually...learn to say no on some of the projects...[...] when I read that kind of strap line I think ‘Oh wow, you know, this...it’s kind of...it wants to do everything, this organisation”

Becoming more business focused mean that they want to focusing on delivering tangible benefits; “emphasis on actually trying to do something tangible – you know produce something that people could see and do and use...” and move away from less tangible services which are more difficult to quantify and render an income from. There has been a move to delivering projects, rather than commissioning studies. As part of this CBI1 has had to change how it does things, change its language, outlook and how it approaches its work; “we’ve become much sharper – much more action focussed – than we were... ... People who work in the public sector... ...seem to use words like ‘debate’ and ‘report’ and ‘consider’ a lot, whereas those of the sort of private sector tend to think about ‘action’ and ‘achievement’ and ‘doing’” (Michael). CBI1 has become more focused on a mind-set of action, achieving and doing. In the past Michael goes on to say that this has changed from the past which was more about “studying, producing, recommending”, which is where he came to ask the question ‘Well what are we actually doing?’ Michael discusses the change in rationality as a shift in focus from deliberation towards producing action.

4. Summary

Description: Write here about what you felt the key findings were – what are the patterns that emerged from your data? Where do you feel your data is unclear, or where do you have questions? What is striking about what you found?

All summary findings are all noted in the ‘Summing up’ section above.
Beyond this I can say that these findings suggest that even the most ‘successful’ examples of CBIs are extremely precarious because of their constant search for funding. Rather than the grassroots as a space of inspiration and success, it is also possible to consider it as a space of difficulty and challenges, where all focus goes on to securing survival. What I see rather here is rather than a blossoming grassroots, is one that is highly contingent on securing an asset and dependant on government funding. Without government funding and securing an asset they can barely survive.

In focusing on becoming financially sustainable CBIs may have to become more professionalised organisations and may change in ways that may detract from their original missions and aims.

Focusing on securing funding can lead to CBIs to become finance driven and shaped by the types of funds that are available – in the example of CBI1, we see a shift in drive from from invisible consultations to visible projects that render tangible benefits. This again can limit the CBI and creates a hierarchy of outputs – some types of projects become more valuable than others, which may not align with community needs.
Memo from OUAS

CBI1

1. What and how the evolutionary path of the CBI was shaped and where it led the CBI?

In this memo, one Finnish energy co-operative utilizing wood for district heat production will be analyzed in terms of power and politics. The data used in the analysis includes 5 interviews with the members of the co-operative between 29.10.2014 and 14.11.2014 (the chairman of the co-operative, the person responsible for administration, the person responsible for wood procurement, an ordinary executive committee member, an ordinary member) and 3 interviews with its stakeholders between 19.1.2015 and 17.2.2015 (the former mayor of the municipality, a bioenergy expert in a forest advisory organization, a lecturer from a higher education institute) that they have had active collaboration with over their evolution, also as active participants in its establishment process.

Already decades before the co-operative was established, there had been aspirations of heating the local community with wood. However, it was told both by stakeholders and co-operative members that the local level politics had been one issue affecting this development so that it couldn't have been realized before the co-operative was established in 1990s.

“Uh, this had been planned little already decades ago the first time but time was not ready then yet, and then during 1990s there came.. There were the kind of, in the founding members there were men of action and they saw then a kind of opportunity in this then.” (an ordinary member, 6.11.2014)

The evolution process of the energy co-operative can be described to have been influenced by various endogenous and exogenous factors. The interviewees talked a lot about the role of individual people, the role of different organizations and the actual milestones in development. The energy co-operative was established in 1990s by a bunch of local people. What happened before this milestone includes decades of aspirations for wood heating, individual influential people changing their opinions (the former mayor of the former municipality) or finding an interest area in their own work (the bioenergy expert in the local forestry advisory organization), individuals taking responsibility for organizing meetings and gatherings (for instance the current chairman and the local forestry advisory organization), one founding member of the co-operative having his own wood chips fired heating systems at his own farm before the co-operative (the only one of the co-operative members who had own practical experience of heating with wood chips), motivating people and finding suitable people to join the co-operative (for instance the current chairman and people from the local forestry advisory organization), sharing financial risk (the municipality who did the first investment in heat plants and owned them) and contribution of different individuals and actors with their own expertise to the evolution process of the co-operative before its establishment. Overall, passion and interest for the things that individuals have focused on seem to be some factors for the evolution to become possible.

The evolution phase before the actual establishment also includes societal factors, changes and challenges that can be just partly detected from the interviews. The analysis of these external
factors would need an analysis of society in general at that time, including policy environment(s); local, regional, national and global social, economic, political, cultural and environmental changes; and external factors that have had a personal impact on different individuals such as attitude changes that may differ from person to person, yet the external factors and their changes may be the same.

The evolution phase after the establishment of the cooperative includes somewhat similar factors as before its establishment. However, for this stage the stakeholder interviewees give somewhat limited insight as they are not the people who are dealing with everyday issues of the co-operative, for instance the lecturer from the local higher education institute talked about the importance of the co-operative as a partner in education, research and development. All the interviewed stakeholders talked about for instance different aspects of internal governance (for instance the role of different people in the co-operative and its different functions), influence of money at different evolution stages of the co-operative, role of other stakeholders, policy environment is which they operate, the perceived values of the co-operative and future aspirations.

Yet the municipality did the first investment in the heat plant that the co-operative started to supply with heat after its establishment, the co-operative bought the facilities from the municipality after some years and build its own heat plants too. In 2014 the co-operative had tens of members. It had a couple of own heat plants and many kilometers of heat distribution network. It also supplied some external privately owned heat plants with heat. The co-operative could be called to be financially rather independent at the moment. They are actively collaborating with different actors in the area and they strongly emphasize local approach for instance related to wood raw material and employment in their activities.

The external stakeholders viewed the co-operative as a success not only internally but also externally, and emphasized also local approach and the endogenous factors of the co-operative for its success.

“Well, they are active learners to all the directions meaning that they follow operation models and analyze the best ones of them for themselves. And also the co-operative people are active in a sense that they are very experimental group meaning that they make new innovations and new business models. They don’t only follow others path but they create something new. This is very important.” : What do you think what kind of consequences or effects.” (the lecturer from the local higher education institute, 17.2.2015)

In general the interviewed co-operative members talk diversely about both endogenous and exogenous factors and processes and how they perceive their importance in the evolution process. When comparing the interviews it seems that the ideas about the evolution of the co-operative are mainly perceptions, yet there are facts that combine the stories together. Different interviewees emphasize slightly different issues and, thus, their own perception about their importance is at the same time revealed. The position of different interviewees in the evolution process is revealed not only through their own interview but also through other interviewees’ talk.

2. Endogenous processes - What influences how they evolve/evolved?
All the co-operative members talked quite a bit about endogenous processes in the evolution process of the co-operative. Many interviewees mentioned that there is a group of active members who basically run the co-operative and have been running it from the beginning. However, there were also some concerns from the active members’ side on how to get people involved. The interviewed younger executive committee member seemed to be uncertain about the importance of his role and made it sound as not so important compared to the more experienced members who have been involved in the daily administration of the co-operative even from the beginning of the co-operative. However, the older active members were actively pondering what will be the future in terms of administration and how younger people could be more involved. The older active members were implicitly and explicitly also questioning their own role in the future of the co-operative. The group of active members who had been involved in the co-operative already from its beginning didn't let their own role in the co-operative to sound unimportant though, yet they often mentioned the other active members and their importance in different functions, such as the importance of the person responsible for administration who for instance takes care of financial matters.

“Yes the the person responsible for administration deserves big thanks for this activity. He does valuable work for the co-operative and likewise the chairman is quite involved in it too.” (the ordinary executive committee member, 6.11.2014)

The person responsible for wood procurement described the importance of personal qualities for the evolution process. He could be described to be very entrepreneurial in his views but his reflection reveals more broadly what has happened in the co-operative: a few people have taken initial responsibility which has lasted over years, i.e. some people have been the active people working for the co-operative and the others have been involved as ordinary members.

“Well yes, uh, I have seen.. I have been telling about things in quite many small heat sector enterprises in Finland. So in them incapability to decide is often a big barrier. I know many places in Finland where there would have been a good place to make cost-effective enterprises based on domestic energy but they didn’t manage..uh, to have a small group that would have advanced the issue.---This is the kind of issue. Someone has to take the kind of that I will do. I don’t, in is a matter between the ears. Financial reasons are then another good justification but they are usually secondary.” (the person responsible for wood procurement, 14.11.2014)

The co-operative members are forest owners and, thus, forests as a physical resource have been in the core of participation, yet the co-operative seems to be open to everyone. Especially during the early development phase, the forest resources were important as they were also partly convincing the municipality of the ability of the co-operative to supply heat plants with wood. However, at the moment only a small share of the wood comes from the co-operative members. There was no clear reason why they don't sell for the co-operative, although the co-operative reported to pay more for the wood than they could get in the normal wood market.

External monetary resources and especially sharing the financial risk at the establishment phase of the co-operative seemed to have facilitated significantly the establishment of the co-operative. However, none of the interviewees told what was the importance of their own monetary resources in the establishment and evolution of the co-operative. It is unclear how much they have invested money for instance in their own enterprises in order to work for the co-operative, for instance the forest service company and the wood chipping company. However, one interviewed co-operative member mentioned that the wood chipping business of one member started only because of the co-operative being established, i.e. the member invested as an entrepreneur in his company to start a new type of activity that he had not done
before. Thus, it seems that individual members may have invested quite significantly to their own businesses which could be described to be an indirect investment to the co-operative.

What comes to social ties, the members are predominantly men (a few women only through inheritance) and they are native to the local area. Most of the active members are in their 50s and early 60s. One executive committee member is in his 30s and he is a second-generation member who got his membership in the co-operative from his father. It seems that this younger member has had some kind of social trust from the other members to be involved in the co-operative, yet this was not explicitly mentioned in the interviews. He told that he had to take this position of trust when the members voted for him there. It seems that the social dynamics between different members is something that has advanced the evolution of the co-operative. However, it is uncertain who got involved in the first place: was it a group of people who already knew each other at some level due to relatively small social circles of the area or were the involved people all just randomly involved without influence from their peers. What is striking also is that the long-term active members and major stakeholders from the local forestry advisory organization and the local higher education institute could be described to have been rather young men in very late 20s to middle 30s during the early development phase of the co-operative. It was not the "old guys" who made this co-operative to happen; it was the rather young guys who made it at the end. However, based on the interviews it cannot be said which proportion of founding members were young and if the young took responsibility instead of the older members. However, it is interesting that the same active members have been active over the years.

The rather homogenous group of members could be called a cultural resource for this co-operative as the members are native, they may have lived in the area since they were born and may, thus, for instance know the needs of the local area very well. Forests that the forest owners own can also be called a cultural local resource, yet the use of forests as wood chips for producing heat at larger scale was something new in this area. The idea of what forests are meant for could be described to have evolved from mere wood production for industrial purposes such as sawmilling and pulp making to becoming an active actor in using own forest resources for the benefit of oneself and the community.

3. Exogenous processes - What influences how they evolve/evolved?

Exogenous processes could be described to have been in a significant role particularly in the early evolution of the co-operative and continuation of it for instance in the stability of customers, especially the municipality. Exogenous actors such as the local municipality and the local forestry advisory organization and individuals within them seem to have had a significant influence on the evolution and establishment of the co-operative. They have been facilitating factors with their resources, for instance the municipality with the first financial investment and risk taking, and the local forestry advisory organization with their own expertise in bioenergy business. The upcoming co-operative was also working in cooperation with the municipality in relation to the first heat plant, i.e. they seem to have had a very pro-active role in the early development process, yet they did not make the initial investment in the first heat plant.

“Well, we had then suddenly at the beginning quite a big role. Namely the energy co-operative, it was a bit shy in building the first heat plant fired with wood chips. It did not want to start building it. And then a bit, I thought a bit that doesn’t it believe in this ideology then. But then when we discussed, we made the decision that we will then build it, the first wood chips fired heat plant. -- And then we got support for it, energy support, --. And it all this the co-operative people made preparation work for us so that they investigated these possible supports and
others. And this way they were involved in it.” (the former mayor of the municipality, 19.1.2015)

The former mayor also describes that at a later development phase the co-operative approached the municipality and suggested expansion of the district heating area without the financial contribution of the municipality.

“...and then we jumped to the next phase in which the energy co-operative had informed that they are willing to build a wood fired heat plant and the heat distribution network to another population centre in the municipality so then they went to build there already. We didn’t have to build anymore and we wouldn’t have build anymore as we thought that now, if they believe in their ideology, then they will do it themselves. And they didn’t suggest then that municipality would do but it was clear then.” (the former mayor of the municipality, 19.1.2015)

In political context the former mayor tells that the approach of the co-operative to deal directly with him instead of affecting only local politicians was a part of the successful approach that the co-operative had, i.e. the co-operative managed communication and knew who to talk with. According to him the establishment of the co-operative didn’t become a political issue which could have affected its success: if one political party took it as their own project, in which case the other parties may not have been willing to support it. Also the co-operative members were very reluctant to link the co-operative to any political action when being asked about it. The bioenergy expert of the local forestry advisory organization also emphasized the importance of communication, namely identifying and affecting the opinion leaders. When hearing the different sides of the story, it is clear how important the suitable communication was in the development process of the co-operative and what kind of things have been going on under the surface that may not be revealed in these interviews. Some of the exogenous processes are internal to different organizations and structures, and navigating through them seems to have been one precondition for success as the bioenergy expert from the local forestry advisory organization described (22.1.2015). Many kinds of intrapersonal skills seemed to have been needed during the early development phase from those who were actively involved in the process.

“...So these issues which are in the advancement of these issues relate to the politics making by little politicians. And I could say that when I realized this that the influential people who are opinion leaders there, these have to be involved first.” (the bioenergy expert from the local forestry advisory organization, 22.1.2015)

On one hand, external financial support was considered important. On the other hand, the instable support systems were seen as a hindering factor for development as the person responsible for administration of the co-operative describes. Overall all the co-operative members talked a lot about economic factors in relation to the co-operative and its evolution, both past, current and future.

“Well it has been this investment support...absolutely necessary. As I said when you receive -- and these machinery are...let’s say millions euros projects, that there is [kilometers] of heat distribution network and then already [many] own heat plants. -- Then it had not been possible to be done if there had not been external support and then also loan from a bank. So receiving external funding is absolutely necessary. Then it was well available this, also for building the heat distribution network.” (the chairman of the co-operative, 29.10.2014)
“Well, the support issues have been of course a bit instable, for instance the support for the heat distribution network has varied-- and for some reason another time we have received support and another have received nothing. So this has been quite burdensome that there it is now. But we have managed and really as an entity the supports are very important, I don’t underestimate them. But if there has been some moment of tension in this, it has always been if we get the support or not. When you can receive from there [significant amount of money] can come, then they are big money for this kind of small business. ---This support issue we have just then with own funding taken care of if we haven’t received support for them. So it is compulsory to try to get by somehow in it so that it has gone then through own funding, and there is nothing there. We have always managed and the financial figures have been moderate. The win-win idea was in this when we were established so not only the co-operative would manage but also these customers.” (the person responsible for administration, 29.10.2014)

The co-operative has had a lot of visitors from Finland and abroad across the years, for instance several hundred in 2014. Due to the big number of visitors it seems that the effects of this co-operative may be quite wide and it can be called to be an active part of the replication process of this kind of initiatives.

“There has been foreigners coming in quite constantly and we don’t always know what is the benefit of them for us. But we have wondered them. Hopefully they have got some knowledge from us. And we have got money away from these as we have commercialized also this service. ---”(the person responsible for wood procurement, 14.11.2014)

4. How do they respond to internal and external stimuli/events/situations?

The co-operative itself could be described to be a response to external stimuli, for instance the development actions of local stakeholders from the municipality and local forestry advisory organization. The municipality facilitated the establishment of activities by investing in the first heat plant. On the other hand, the co-operative was an active partner in development already in this stage by collaborating both with the municipality and the local forestry advisory organization. It seems that the co-operative has been a reliable partner from the municipality’s perspective, for instance the former mayor described that the co-operative had given accurate financial calculations as needed for the background material of municipal investment decisions. Also the lecturer from the local higher education institute (17.2.2015) describes their approach to be honest. Overall, it seems that the co-operative has been responding with honesty and honest work, meaning that they have tried to do things right and this way they have been also able to build trust and show commitment, which on the other hand has allowed the external stakeholders to commit too from their sides.

There has been active mutual collaboration between the co-operative and the local higher education institute already for years. The co-operative has been active in responding to these stimuli usually positively, and both actors have benefited from the co-operation at the end. Some co-operative members also described that there has been students coming to do their research and project works in the co-operative or in relation to it.

“Well, we have needed, on the education side, we have needed field sites in which the practical level education is given, an example is shown. And the co-operative has been a natural place for it. For instance as we don’t have an own heat plant here, then there have been heat plants in
this co-operative which their professionals have shown. And also, they have different training needs too. We have then produced there what they have needed. And a part of these needs we have invented, that we invented now this kind of thing, would you be interested (laughs), that do you need this kind of training. And they usually say that yes this is a good thing that there will be a couple of people coming from them. And then we offer the training also wider to other energy actors in Finland.” (the lecturer from the higher education institute, 28.11.2014)

When thinking about the responses of the co-operative to external stimuli, I cannot stop thinking that they wouldn’t have to do anything extra than just produce heat. But it seems that they don’t want to be a strict heat production initiative. It seems that there is something much more behind their work, yet all of the co-operative members emphasized the importance of economic matters. As the person responsible for wood procurement (14.11.2014) described in an earlier quote, the financial issues being secondary to taking action, it seems that the active core members in this co-operative have something much more profound in their attitudes, values and perceptions than just mere heat production in a profitable way. The person responsible for administration (29.10.2014) described the importance of benefiting also the customers, and many interviewees emphasized the importance of local approach and benefits related to it. The response to external stimuli goes then much beyond actual action; it goes to the values, attitudes and perceptions of individuals within the co-operative. And those who are the active ones seem to get their voices heard the most. If strictly profit oriented people were involved, the development trajectory of the co-operative may look very different. The core values of the co-operative seem to include local approach, environmental values, and advancing local social values.

“Well, increasing the use of renewable energy and replacing imported energy. They are very important. Resisting climate change is one of the biggest problems of human kind at the moment, or even the biggest. Climate change, resisting it from a small part, it is the positive issue in this big picture. So that we do this from a small part. And then this local approach, positive community feeling which this causes and all positive action between people, all this. Then of course we have to produce heat with something in these latitudes, then we can do rather with trees from the local forests. And in the mean time we advance forest management too.” (the person responsible for administration, 29.10.2014)

5. Achievements/elements of success - What does evolution look like for CBIs?

Many co-operative members describe success to be able to operate and provide heat, i.e. their measures of success are very practical and concrete, yet the most active ones often describe the success more deeply from the same perspective.

“When it was a little bit colder weather (laughs), then the most of the financial profit. But this has been quite smooth that I don’t think these. Always there are the kinds of ups and downs, it belongs to this. But I consider this stable. In the long run.” (an ordinary member, 6.11.2014)

Benefiting the local area can be interpreted as a success factor from all the interviewees’ responses. The local approach includes not only being located in a certain area but also benefiting forest owners, the heat customers, the forests and environment in general, creating employment. The success factors are, thus, very close to the co-operative members: they don’t want to conquer the world, they just seem to want to contribute to their own locality with their own actions, yet how small they are. One external success sign mentioned by the co-operative
is a winning position in a heat entrepreneur competition which the chairman’s talk describes to be an important achievement for them as a local actor.

“Well, I could tell now here that the energy co-operative was granted a prize -- for its good activity and of course there were some special notes because we were awarded at national level as this kind of regional heat producer. In my opinion, it has been the best achievement at the national level until now.” (the chairman, 29.10.2014)

The external stakeholders describe somewhat different success factors than the co-operative members and seem to see it also as a success of their own organizations or contributing to their own success. The former mayor of the municipality describes the co-operative having had effect on the local housing situation by bringing stability to the anticipated heat price.

“And yes, it has developed development of rented housing. I don’t have any facts on it but I have a feeling that it has kept the rent level of this housing moderate when you don’t have to. And that you don’t have to all the time with the oil price, whether it will increase or decrease, what it will be the following year and what it will then and what it will be now. And yes it has brought stability in this side. And it was like this for the municipality. We didn’t have to think much what the oil bill will be like.--” (the former mayor of the municipality, 19.1.2015)

The bioenergy expert in the local forestry advisory organization describes the co-operative to be one of many other successful examples in the new business field that has emerged in Finland, in the process where people from his organization have been involved in too. This stakeholder considers the success in much wider perspective than just one individual initiative, maybe because he has been one central person in these nationwide processes over years.

“This has become a new field of activity. It is briefly a new field of activity. We were laughed at the beginning of 1990s that these little village schools, small places, how you have the face, big actors that it is small scale dabbling. It started from little but at the moment the usage capacity is over 1.3 million solid cubic meters and it increases all the time. Just a couple of days ago there came a magazine that said that this has become a new field of activity in Finland. So we have been involved in this kind of thing.” (the bioenergy expert from the local forestry advisory organization, 22.1.2015)

6. Future - What evolution WILL likely look like for CBIs?

The future evolution of the co-operative is rather uncertain for the active co-operative members who have been involved in the co-operative since its establishment. They have more aspirations of how the future should look like instead of what it will be like. It seems that the interviewed co-operative members considered the activities to be quite stable and continue as they are also in future. The changes were anticipated more in the structure of active core people and how the co-operative will be managed in future. The ideology that the co-operative members have was considered something to be continued if someone wishes to continue it, and if not then changes would take place in future.

“--- And it can be, what I have been thinking myself is that we will face a day when we old boars realize to leave then there will for instance an employed CEO who will take care alone
our tasks that have been now divided to three people. So that this kind of change will come one
day.” (the person responsible for wood procurement, 14.11.2014)

From the co-operative members elaborations it seemed that the activities will stay as they are
and there won’t be many changes in them.

“Interviewer: Do you have plans to get more employed people?
Interviewee (the chairman, 29.10.2014): No we don’t have. It is the technology that that has
made it possible that there is no need for permanent employees, that this group is enough.--

7. Future - What evolution SHOULD likely look like for CBI’s?

The active co-operative members who have been involved in the co-operative already from its
establishment described somewhat similar issues on how the future should look like. Their
visions were at a very concrete level, namely related to the future management of the co-
operative which seems to be an important issue at the moment due to the active core members
getting older and the younger people needed to be involved or some other arrangements for the
management to be made. In general, they have aspirations for the younger people to be
involved and the co-operative to continue. However, selling the co-operative doesn’t seem to be
a viable option as the local approach is so strong in the interviewees’ discourse. The person
responsible for wood procurement mentioned that the younger people need to have their own
interest to the issue in order to be involved.

“Interviewer: Which factor would have affected, according to you, in the success which we
talked earlier about, from one year or five years from now on?
Interviewee (the chairman, 29.10.2014): Well, at this moment and thinking back, it has been
first the actors, the causes to do it together that start from the human chemistry (laughs). It has
to be interesting and encouraging and then still immediately after this it is good to think about
the followers, the forthcoming generations, they have to be encouraged to be involved in this
activity but well.. After five years from now on I won’t probably be involved in this but we
have already thought of followers and interested younger people exist. As this kind of co-
operative actor we have to think about the issue if there will be continuers for the same idea. In
this we have tried to make the people younger during the last years.”

In general the co-operative members do not have aspirations for big changes for the success
being possible in future. They seem to be content with their current level of achievement in
their operational area, yet it was mentioned by a few interviewees that the development of the
heat distribution network has been limited due to the rather sparse structure of the population
centre. The responses seem to reflect the very evolved stage of the co-operative and its
activities: they have had already years to improve their activities and seem to have reached a
stage in which it will be challenging to think about what could be better in future.

“Interviewer: Should anything change according to you so that success would be possible?
Interviewee (the chairman, 29.10.2014): No bigger changes but of course the quality
management of the raw material is always a very influential issue, so that we would get the
wood material to be burned as dry as possible from the forests. And this has been done for
years with our own expense that the co-operative has been covering the raw material, wood
material which is on the side of the forest roads so these piles have been covered. And well, there is always something to improve but not much. This way. If we want to continue cooperative model of activities, then this systems has been functional in itself.”

8. Are there any conflictual element/process/events that played a substantial role in influencing CBI’s life?

The co-operative members were very reluctant to talk about conflictual elements, processes and events when directly being asked about them. However, some tensions and conflictual elements could be interpreted from their other speech. The ordinary executive committee member (6.11.2014) raised fair payment for those who do the work as a conflictual element. According to him there had been tensions on the payment for wood that the members sell to the co-operative and the fairness of the price. The chairman of the co-operative (29.10.2014) was very diplomatic in his answer about possible conflicts and emphasized co-operation. The person responsible for administration (29.10.2014) told about conflicts related to administration such as how they dealt with a customer who hadn’t paid their bills, how they had disputed with taxation office on how one person working for them should be treated (as an employee or as an individual entrepreneur). The person responsible for wood procurement (14.11.2014) told about chemistry issues between individuals which had been solved. In general, the co-operative members were not very willing to talk about conflicts and tensions but some of them were revealed through other speech and which they may not have thought to be conflicts in the first place, yet they can be treated as such in academic discourse.

There seemed to be tensions between different interest groups within the co-operative, for instance the ordinary members vs. active core members. The ordinary members were reported not to always know or understand what is going on in the co-operative. On the other hand, the active members were wondering how to get people more involved in the co-operative and as wood sellers to the co-operative.

9. Any other observations

The co-operative is in an evolved independent stage and the interviews could be described to reflect the interviewees’ perceptions at this moment. How they view the past may also be different from how they viewed the different situations when they happened. All in all, each individual talks about the co-operative and its evolution from their own perspective, yet there are similarities in their stories for instance related to factual elements.

10. Summary

The main patterns that emerged in the data were the co-operation between different actors, importance of larger-scale societal situation and the importance of commitment of individual actors and their willingness to learn, social ties, and availability of local physical and human resources. They seem to have been able to develop over the years, they seem to have been able to work together with different internal and external actors and they seem have established themselves well in their operational area. Thus, they may be called a successful community-based initiative which has been able to develop past the years of aspirations and the establishment phase to a seemingly stable and independent actor in the society.
There would have been a need to know more about the early aspirations for heating with wood during decades before the co-operative was established: what were the social, economic, political, cultural, environmental and technological enabling and inhibiting factors for evolution before the actual establishment process started to emerge? As a researcher I may establish a landscape of these factors by studying policy environment and society in general at that time but I cannot know which ones of them had the specific influence in this particular area and for the particular individuals who were involved. For me it seems that this energy co-operative is a result of earlier long-term aspirations which were realized when different actors came together under promising circumstances and with a clear goals and motivations. What I would have liked to know more too is how the active actors’ rather young age at the establishment phase affected the evolution of the co-operative: were their ties strong to the local area with having job, family and own house there – what was their risk taking level for being able to live in the local area; what were their inner motivations for participating in the development of the co-operative and how this motivation has taken them where they are now? It would have been very interesting to know what their initial thoughts were when they got involved and how they would have described their motivation at that time. It is not either clear what kind of accessed social capital each actor had and if there were other core people involved in the evolution that were not mentioned in the interviews, i.e. was there mobilized social capital that affected the development but it was not explicitly mentioned in the interviews? For instance one interviewee mentioned that his wife was involved in local politics, and there may have been some other unmentioned people that had indirect roles in the realization of the co-operative. It is striking that this woman was the only woman explicitly mentioned having had maybe some kind of role in the actual evolution process. Other mentioned women were just mentioned as the former wives of the co-operative members who had inherited the share after their husband.

What is especially striking in the data in terms of trajectories theme is the alignment of the aims of different actors in establishing the co-operative. There had been aspirations to start producing heat with wood in the municipality in which the energy co-operative started to operate but these plans had not been realized until the three main actors came together: the municipality, the local forestry advisory organization and the local forest owners, and especially individual committed people within them who took responsibility for advancing the co-operative, even for years before the actual establishment of the co-operative. The lecturer at the local higher education institute (17.2.2015) considers the societal factors and local factors have been behind the similar ideas of different actors. His ideas seem to describe empowerment that has happened in the local area in which local people took active responsibility of their future by relying to local resources.

“Well, we were living after oil crisis, and on the other hand these actors were practitioners of forestry close to forestry. Added value was wanted to wood. And then we started to really see that we have lots of wood resources that why on earth we aren’t utilizing them in local energy production.--“ (a lecturer at the higher education institute, 17.2.2015)

Also the person responsible for administration (29.10.2014) describes larger societal changes such as climate change concern and availability of local wood resources having been on the background of the co-operative development.

“Yes I believe that at that time it was started to..this.. Climate change issues were the first time maybe somehow, maybe not so strongly but yes we [interviewer’s note: in society in general] were concerned about carbon dioxide emissions and of course just of imported oil. The perspective of national economy already then, that it is insane to transport oil from some Arab countries to Finland if you have own wood extruding and composting in the forests, so why it is not used?” (the person responsible for administration, 29.10.2014)
11. Reflection and conclusion

The preliminary analysis of this energy co-operative in terms of trajectories theme shows that co-operation between different actors, committed individuals, learning from others and willingness to learn, openness and relying on the local resources are some of the key success factors for development of this co-operative. The co-operative itself could be described to be a replicate of previous energy co-operatives to some extent. Yet, individual people involved in the co-operative make it what it turns out to be at the end.

In general, policy environment(s), societal changes and challenges did not emerge as core topics in the interviews, yet they were briefly mentioned by a few interviewees. Changes and challenges in the global, national and regional society such as emerging global climate change policy since early 1990s, Finnish economic crisis in early 1990s and increased unemployment related to it, joining European Union in 1995 and general technological developments over the years. However, it can be anticipated that these factors had some influence on the evolution of this community-based initiative but how much they exactly influenced in the evolution process remains unknown.

1.2.2. CBI2

1. Introduction

The CBI X is a non-profit actor in the field of recycling and environmental education. It is located in Finland, in a place with several big cities in the close by area. The mission of the CBI X is to improve the state of the environment by reducing the amount of waste ending up in landfills and by increasing the awareness about environmental issues and promoting sustainable models of consumption. Their main activity is running their recycling stores, in which they sell the items they have received as donations. In the stores they also provide information on environmentally-friendly consumer choices.

The CBI has been active for over 25 years and today they employ more than 400 people. Majority of the employed people were long-term unemployed people, who have had difficulties in finding a job from the open labor market. Because of this the CBI has also been given a status of a social enterprise, which means that at least 30 per cent of their employees have lowered working abilities or have been unemployed for more than 12 months. They also have volunteers working with certain activities, which include different kind of tasks than the ones the paid employees do. The CBIs main funding comes from selling the recycled products. They also receive pay subsidy from the government (Ministry of employment and the Economy) which they use to employ people. The CBI is also active in the field of environmental education. Part of the income is used at their own “environmental school” which organizes environmental training and consulting services for people, companies and organizations in the local area.
This data is based on one Finnish study case “the CBI X”. The analysis is based on five interviews conducted during winter-spring 2014-2015. The total length of the interviews conducted was 5 hours 56 minutes. The length of a single interview varied between 35 minutes to almost 2 hours.

All of the interviews were conducted using the study design provided by the WP3 leaders. The interviewees that had been members of the CBI for a longer time were naturally more versatile in describing the CBI and the reasons that have led to its success. The stakeholders interviews were shorter as the questionnaire used also contained fewer questions than the questionnaire used for interviewing the members of the CBI. The interviewed CBI members and stakeholders were: leader of the CBI “Jaakko” (male, 51 years, founding member, member in the CBI for 25 years), responsible for environmental issues “Kaisa” (female, around 35 years old, member in the CBI for 1 year), coordinator of the voluntary work “Leena” (female, around 40 years old, member in the CBI over 10 years), chairman of the board of the CBI for 20 years “Raimo” (male, 63 years old), stakeholder “Heikki” (male, 45 years, stakeholder and member of the board, involved with the CBI for about 10 years).

Note: All respondents have been anonymized – the names written do not correspond to their real names

2. The evolutionary path of the CBI

2.1. Past

The CBI X was founded in the late 1980’s. In the beginning the activity was very local and the members were mostly local activists, local active people, a couple of local NGO’s and third-sector organizations who were enthusiastic about recycling and worried about the amount of used materials and goods ending up in landfills. The original idea of organizing an “item exchanging day” was not entirely their own; in fact to some extent it was copied from Germany, where similar type of projects were run at the time. Back then the recycling activities organized by municipalities were not as efficient as they are today, so one could assume that the people probably felt the need to do something about the situation by themselves. In the beginning politicians were also active in promoting the CBIs activities; especially the Green Party was active in helping the CBI receiving their first outside funding from the Ministry of the Environment. With the help of that funding the CBI was able to stabilize its activity and instead of organizing sporadic events, they could open a permanent recycling shop, where the recycled items that people/organizations had donated were sorted and passed forward to customers visiting the shop. The first years after opening the first shop were tough in many ways. The biggest concerns at the time dealt with money. The activity was shadowed by a financial struggle.

“So after about two years we found ourselves in such a situation that we had to make a.. or find some other solution [for financing the CBI] to be able to…--- The original
model where very little money came from recycling came to its end --- so it was not possible to continue that way because financing the activities cost more than we had income and the owners i.e. the NGOs could not finance us.”

-OUASID00026 Jaakko, leader of the CBI 2014-

Some misuse of the service was found in the beginning. It lead the CBI to make changes in its course of action and financing model. The financial problems were solved by remolding the ownership base of the Ltd and the financing model of the CBI. The biggest change they made was that the CBI started to take money from its customers whereas before they had done the recycling for free.

“ So like I said I was involved in the very beginning and I saw that although there was this rather beautiful idealism in thinking that people would bring and take these items to the stores but I think that we – or the society or the human mind – might not be at that stage yet that we could act totally altruistic... And that led partially.. The fact that we gave everything away for free led to some obvious misuse of the service --- People would come and get the items for free and sell them forward elsewhere.”

- OUASID Jaakko, leader of the CBI-

These changes enabled the CBI to continue its activities. Had they not made these changes they would have had to quit. Also when the municipalities and the city of X (today their biggest owner) entered the CBIs activities as owners their precondition was that there has to be some income from the recycling activities because it is not in their interest to fund the CBI if they (the CBI) do not have any other income. Apparently this ideological change was not accepted by all members of the CBI in the first place, as their primary goal had been precisely to give the items for free. However, even the critical members soon realized that if they want to continue the activities of this CBI, they have to change the financing model and that is what they did. Today the word “realism” is mentioned by some interviewees, when they were asked how the CBIs course of action has changed over time.

” I mean the fact that we have set a price for the items has enabled us to employ more people, because without it we do not have a [strong economic] base. [I think] first we need to have proper preconditions, clear and professional management and then we can start employing these [unemployed] people --- So in that way there has been a change in attitudes and it has become accepted, now everyone agrees that it is not realistic to run these activities in these proportions without taking a charge from the recycled items.”

–OUASID00026 Raimo, chair of board 2015-

“I suppose there has been a certain change --- like I said in the beginning there were [among the members] these rather strong opinions about... --- Like it would be somehow wrong or a bad thing that we take money from people --- so maybe somehow there is more realism involved in the activities today.”

– OUASID00026 Jaakko, leader of the CBI, 2014-
Today most of the environmental services (education, consultation) are funded by reuse and selling the items, but originally the plan was the opposite, namely to sell environmental consultation and education and use the money received for the maintenance of the recycling activities. The environmental school seems to be really expensive to the CBI, but it is still kept alive, possibly for ideological reasons. A great help for these activities are the EU-funded projects that have been carried through during the 2000’s. Through them there is a lot of know how about project work in the organization, and they have become very skilled at seeking outside funding for their projects. Most of these projects deal with raising environmental awareness, but they have had successful projects aiming at for example providing jobs for the young unemployed local people.

The CBI stands out from the many similar initiatives in Finland as it is the only one that has been able to grow in such proportions and gain such recognition across the whole country. There are also differences between the goals of these different actors. There are still people working in the CBI that have been members right from the beginning. These people seem very committed to the action and developing of the CBI, nevertheless so are the people that have been involved for a shorter period. Also the employees seem to find it relatively easy give feedback to the management and ideas how the CBI could be developed are received gladly.

“Yes, we are quite passionate about working here, I mean everybody really wants to work here… And the atmosphere is so supportive here.”

-OUASID00026 Kaisa, employee, 2014-

The two main goals (raising environmental awareness and reducing the amount of waste) have remained the same during all these years, although new social goals such as creating jobs for the local long-term unemployed have increased their importance year by year. The importance of the goals varies a bit between the interviewees. All goals are mentioned by the interviewees but it seems that especially the interviewed stakeholders emphasize the social goals more than people inside the CBI does. This is understandable as the municipalities need to create jobs for the unemployed and for this the CBI offers a good possibility. In Finland it may be difficult to find meaningful jobs for unemployed people with lower education or who might have some education in a field that has no demand in the labor market. The CBI offers suitable tasks also for people with lowered working abilities, due to handicaps or other disabilities.

“In the beginning the employing of the long-term unemployed was mostly just a way to carry out our environmental work but in the course of time the social perspective of the employing has increased its importance”

–OUASID00026 Jaakko, leader of the CBI, 2014-

The CBI has been growing during the whole time of its existence. At times the growth has been slower and at times faster but it has been continuous. Especially during the 2000’s the CBI has had clear strategy aiming at growth, opening even more shops and opening a web shop. The activities have become more diverse each year and new models of action and ways of supporting sustainable lifestyles are being created all the
time. This requires a more **organized way of doing things** and common rules i.e. **professionalization**. During the last years they have been developing for example their voluntary work as well as their recruiting and management processes.

"There has been a lot of discussion about what could be additional ways to promote sustainable lifestyle. And it’s clear that when the organization has grown there are new ideas all the time, and the activities start to sprawl"

–OUASID00026 Raimo, chair of the board, 2015 –

"Well, as a matter of fact we have been making renewing in our organization as our activities have grown, I mean we have to make changes when the activities change.. We have been developing the processes in the board and of course we have to continue making sure that the processes are as efficient as possible."

–OUASID00026 Heikki, stakeholder, member of the board 2015-

The growth has probably been enabled by the **periodic poor economic state of the country** and **high national and regional unemployment rates** leading to lots of people needing a job and also lots of people with little money thus the need of cheaper goods. Another explanation could be the change in attitudes towards recycling.

"I feel like the message... Like the kind of action we do used to be considered... At least in the 90s people had prejudices, it [the action] was considered somehow scruffy, like we are basically next to a landfill, like our activities were considered unpleasant and no respectable citizen would ever visit the CBI's shop. So this atmosphere has changed, I feel like we have been able to contribute to that change [in attitudes]."

–OUASID00026 Raimo, chair of the board, 2015-

**The role of stakeholders seems pretty important.** The CBI is quite unique in Finland, as there are no similar CBIs of the same scale with common aims the CBI could co-operate with. The CBI is well-known among waste and recycling field of the country. There has been a lot of positive stories about them in the media, which has increased the **recognition** of the CBI. There is a tight connection with the environmental education sector of the city. The city of X is the biggest owner of the Ltd and most their common projects deal mostly with raising environmental awareness.

“Well, there are a lot of them [connections outside the CBI, e.g. municipal officials and decision makers, politicians, funders...] and we are quite dependent on them

–OUASID00026 Leena, employee, 2014-

“We have a separate process for involving stakeholders. This is something that many of the similar CBIs do not do at all.”

–OUASID00026 Kaisa, employee, 2014-
For the city of X this is a way to put their **environmental awareness aims** into practice and it is also seen as an effective and concrete way of doing it, as opposed to for example printing brochures or trying to raise awareness in some other less concrete way. This could been seen more or less an example of the recent trend of outsourcing the “traditional tasks” of the public sector to the third sector actors, while the public sector concentrates on the “core” of the public services (such as infrastructure, healthcare, education). However all the CBIs’ services bought by the city are done by using competitive tendering, which means it is not obvious that the CBI will be providing these services for the cities in the future. That being said, the city of X, the nearby municipalities and the CBI have such tight connections that it is hard to see how any other actor could succeed in providing such large scale environmental services for the cities and municipalities in the near future.

### 2.2. Endogenous processes

What mostly effects on how the CBI is being developed depends are the **people** working in the CBI and whatever their current aims and hopes might be. At the moment the CBI is very keen on developing its actions and keep on growing, but some people have found it quite consuming. However, the CBI has been active in promoting the employees well-being at work. The growth of the organization has brought about some challenges, but it has also enabled a division of the responsibility of developing the CBI, because for example some members are not as enthusiastic about developing the activities as others.

> “Because we are this big, not everyone has to be involved in every activity or project. Like we have made a decision, because we could see from some of the employees that they were getting tired of all the developing and growing, so we made this decision that one person is suggested to be working in one project at a time, and not all the same people in all the projects. Because there is a danger in when one is really enthusiastic about developing the CBI that you get involved in everything, so we decided to restrict this in order to prevent burnouts.”

–OUASID000026 Kaisa, employee, 2014-

According to the interviewees there seems to be a lot of good in the way the work is done by the CBI. The positive things mentioned were for example supportive working environment, trust in the personnel's skills, multiple tasks available, the possibility to change tasks depending on individual interest, the managers are easy to approach, individuals have the possibility to take part in the developing of the CBI, a possibility to plan your own work and low hierarchy of the organization.

> “The thing that I've noticed here is the way the way the managing is done by coaching. I have a good standpoint to these things because I have been working here such a short time. There is a big difference here compared to where I have been working before... I have never been appreciated this much! In the beginning I was sort of confused, like what's going on, am I really doing that much better job than before? But then I realized it was more linked to the attitude of the management, I mean like they
think everyone’s work is valuable and important and one does not have be “just working” here, and also there is flexibility in processes and new ways of thinking…”

– OUASID00026 Kaisa, employee 2014-

One of the processes that need to be remolded are the ones dealing with feedback to and from the management. It is possible to give feedback, but the respondents feel that it is one of the things that could be done better.

" But we might actually have too many channels for giving feedback, but I have not wanted to restrict them. But if you ask many people here they would probably say that we have too many meetings, but on the other hand we have seen them [the meetings] as a way of informing people."

–OUASID00026 Kaisa, employee 2014-

“It’s mostly done through the managers, like you can go talk to your own manager about these [developing] issues. And we are happy to receive the feedback. Actually I don’t deal with them that much… I mean there is definitely room for development of the process here…”

–OUASID00026 Jaakko, leader of the CBI, 2014-

Getting a permanent job at the CBI is not very common though some have been able to do that, for example most of the managers at the shops have been initially employed with the pay subsidy from the government, meaning that when they started working for the CBI their wage was partially paid with the subsidy during a two-year support period. It may be that these managers were successful in showing their skills and commitment to work in the CBI, so they when their pay subsidy period was over they were then employed as permanent workers with the CBIs own resources. However majority of the employed return to the unemployed register after they have been working at the CBI for a maximum of two years. However the working experience they gain is seen as important and valuable by the interviewees and they think the experience might help these people move forward on their own path to finding a job somewhere else. This is an example of the social goals and aims the CBI has, where the environmental and social goals go hand in hand.

Along with the growing of the CBI terms such as **efficiency, strategy, processes and brand** have come in to use within the organization. Most interviewees feel that changes in the organization are necessary but some mention it must not be the sole meaning of the CBI. In the beginning very little attention was paid to the organization, the growth could be describes as “organic”. At times the growth has been very fast, which has led to certain problems.

“I mean like the way we had our organization model was.. Well for a long time we did not think about it at all, the growth was organic.. And then at some point we started really thinking about it for the first time, like wait a minute what should our organization be like (laughs).. --- At that point we had been existing for quite a while. I mean like we had just done things in some way and things were shaped somehow. And then in
some point we thought: right, we have grown so much now that we really have to think about our processes over again. So we made this one bigger change then and since then there has not been any bigger changes [in the organization model]"

– OUASID00026 Jaakko, leader of the CBI, 2014-

The stakeholders are sectoral, meaning that each sector has their own co-operations and partners. The way of communication and co-operation with different stakeholders depends on the sector i.e. environmental awareness activities sector, recycling sector and employment sector. The CBI has some connections to similar CBIs in the Nordic countries and in Estonia, in fact the similar CBI in Tallinn, Estonia is a copy of the Finnish CBI. With most of the foreign CBIs there are no regular co-operations, they are mostly just aware of them (the similar CBIs). Inside Finland the communication between the similar CBIs is more frequent, regular and it has concrete outcomes.

The CBI would like to employ more young people many of them are interested in environmental issues and motivated in tasks related to recycling and the environment. However, the pay subsidy system favors older people who have been unemployed for a longer time. Also the municipalities have interests in employing older people, as it is more difficult to find jobs for them. It can be said that this creates some sort of an ethical dilemma because in the long run it will be more expensive to the society if young people become socially excluded. The sex ratio in the CBI is quite even as there are both males and females working in the CBI, only slightly more males among the people employed with pay subsidy.

2.3. Exogenous processes

The municipalities and shareholders have their say in the strategy of the CBI, so they are not completely independent. As an affiliated company of the city of X the CBI is directed like all the others in the consolidated company. In the beginning funding from outside (mainly Ministry of the Environment) was a definite precondition for the continuing of the action. Even today the government platform mentions that finding jobs for the long-term unemployed as one of the governments aims. The pay subsidies from the state government explain why the CBI is able to have such a large number many employees as only about 20 % of the employees are employed entirely with the CBIs own resources. Among the owners there are also NGOs who have their own interests. There seems to be quite a strong dependency in negotiation connections with outside actors such as funders, policy makers and decision makers. This might create some limitations concerning independency in CBIs own decision making. Nevertheless, the co-operation with the stakeholders is described quite positively.

" The offices and bureaus of the city have been very positive towards the CBI, especially the offices from the social services and also the office that rents the CBI their spaces --- There has not been any contradictions there. The attitude towards the CBI has been really positive."

–OUASID00026 Raimo, chair of the board 2014-
Some of the bigger trends in the society today, such as the change of work, realization of the importance of environmental issues or the disappearing of jobs requiring lower skills and economic recession may explain the CBIs development as an big employer in the sector. There is a continuing need to find jobs for the long term unemployed. On the other hand the steady number of unemployed people has guaranteed the fact that there are always enough people willing to work at the CBI, so in a way they have benefitted from the high unemployment rate. The changes in laws and regulations (both national and EU level) concerning employment and waste have had major effect for the CBI, in a way where

2.4. Responding to internal and external stimuli, events and situations

The CBI has been able to answer to the need of making concrete environmental activities that the citizens according to surveys made by the city of X have. The feedback from the customers has changed in the course of time. Before there were complaints about the poor quality of the items for example, but today there are very few such complaints. It seems like the CBI has been able to reach a public acceptance and its activity is nowadays considered

The current changes in the business (the growing magnitude of e-commerce) have made the CBI renew their activities, for example starting their own webshop despite the risk that these activities might not be very profitable economically.

"There's this talk about e-commerce that has sort of made many retailers are closing down their businesses... --- Like we don't want to be in that situation. And that's sort of the reason why we are starting our own webshop, although no one in the recycling business has been able to that profitably.. But we must react to that change"

– OUASID00026 Kaisa, employee, 2014-

Changes in legislation have had an effect on their activities.

“The current changes in legislation have already been responded to, for example we have started collecting waste from construction sites and it will keep on affecting our activities in the future too.--- There is this “must” involved in these changes so we will keep on reacting to these changes”

–OUASID00026 Kaisa, employee 2014-

In the past there have been some misunderstandings and negative conceptions about the goals and aims of the CBI. These misunderstanding might have been caused by the fact that similar initiatives in other places act differently which has led to confusion among the public. This has led the CBI to consider changing its’ name to clear the
brand in order to separate themselves from other similar initiatives in the country, that might be using a somewhat similar name. It seems like the CBI wants to stand out from the crowd as a unique actor, that has its own aims and goals that might be different from the other similar CBIs in the field of waste and recycling. However, according to the interviewees the CBI is really keen in strengthening their networks with other similar CBI, which seems a bit contradictory to their plans to separating themselves from the others.

“I mean I don’t really know these other CBIs (in the field) and I don’t mean to criticize them, but their activities are a lot smaller scale and it might be totally different from ours.. Anyway we do have this tight connection with them, but they are so different from us. Like the question about our name… I guess all organizations from time to time try to find a way to separate themselves from the others…”

–OUASID00026, Heikki, stakeholder, 2015-

2.5. Achievements, signs of success, contributing to sustainable change

The CBI has been successful in creating meaningful and attractive jobs for the long-term unemployed. Part of the people employed by the CBI have been able to get a permanent job at the recycling centre, and even if they haven’t, they will have gained good job experience while at the same time promoting environmental issues. For these people the CBI also offers a possibility to be a part of a community. Investments made to develop the CBIs human resources and human capital might explain the good experiences.

“They all want to come working here. And it’s sort of endearing to watch that. To see the happiness they get from working here and how proud they are of their own work. I mean we have people with all kinds of backgrounds here and the common thing is that they are so happy to be able to work.”

-OUASID00026 Kaisa, employee, 2014-

Another achievement is the CBI change in peoples’ attitudes towards recycling and overall environmental issues the CBI feels they contributed to in a positive way. The CBI is reconsidered a major actor in the field of environmental education in its'nearby area and actually throughout the whole country. Also the ability to offer goods at reasonable prices for people with low income can be seen as a sign of success and at the same time a contribution to sustainable social development. The environmental effects of the CBI are considerable. For example according to the calculations made for the CBI in the year 2014 their recycling activities saved 25 500 tons of natural resources, 2,2 million cubic meters of water and 6570 tons of CO2. These environmental effects are monitored and reported yearly, for example their carbon footprint is measured.
“The [CBI] is close to the citizens, and it is involved in various activities. All the time they are developing new activities and developing volunteering and such... And the link to the employing the unemployed makes it [the CBI] rather significant. So at the same time they are able to employ a great number of people and also promoting the environmental matters in a pleasant way, also for the employees. So they are dealing with the most fundamental environmental issues there.”

--OUASID00026 Heikki, stakeholder, 2015-

The preconditions to their success are strong economic base, good reputation, good networks (synergies with municipalities, co-operations, third sector) and stabilized course of action, which will not disappear in a moment in case they would face sudden changes within the CBI or the surrounding society. Getting the municipalities involved is also important as well as perseverance in actions, trust in the future and individual engagement. According to the interviewees the support of the public goes hand in hand with political support, meaning that once a CBI has a justification from the public for its activities, it is easier to gain recognition from the higher level, like politicians and other decision-makers too. When it comes to signs of success mentioned by the interviewees, most interviewees think that just the fact that they succeeded in the starting the CBI is considered an achievement.

"I mean to get this thing started was a huge achievement, like if I think about what it would take to start a CBI like this now.. There must have been so many people with so much enthusiasms, when they have taken things further in the beginning and made this CBI work. Another achievement is that we still do not just rest on one’s laurels, I mean 25 years.. You’d think that people would be like ok this is it, no need to grow anymore... And I keep wondering how they have the energy to come up with these new ideas all the time, like opening two new shops last year, like don’t they need to rest at all (laughter)? Like is this the normal situation that we keep expanding all the time? (laughter)"

-OUASID00026 Kaisa, employee, 2014-

3. Future

3.1. What the future will likely be like for the CBI

The CBI has plans to keep growing even bigger, so it can be said that the CBI is still very ambitious in that sense. Radical activism is not seen as an option, that kind of activities are considered more appropriate for smaller organizations. In a way certain cautiousness is seen necessary when being as big as they are. More realism can be seen in their objectives and aims and the ideological ambitions may have a smaller role today compared to what it used to be in the 80’s and 90’s. The growth desired will keep on requiring developing the organization, if they want to keep the organization efficient.
"I believe there is a good chance that we keep on being a strong actor within this business, both as an environmental actor but also as an employer of the socially excluded. The key is to strengthen our networks with other similar CBIs, that’s the main thing, like just doing what we are doing now might not be enough in the future.” – OUASID00026 Heikki, stakeholder, 2014-

For the newer employees the success may seem more obvious because they have not been working for the CBI during the tougher times. For the young people it might be more difficult to see the pace slowing down, because successful growth is what they are used to when working for the CBI. They have no experience on the tough economic conditions of the 90’s the CBI was dealing with during that time. When asked about the possible futures of the CBI there are some different views of the future depending on the interviewees. They all agree that positive future requires secure capital base and no sudden changes in legislation or the terms of receiving pay subsidy. Number of employees will likely stay the same or grow or diminish just a little. The supply of the employees will probably stay the same, as there will always be people that find it difficult to find a job at the open labor market.

The interviewees see that there is a continuing need for the basic activities of the CBI in the future too. The changes affecting the CBI are seen coming mostly from outside the CBI. The possible changes required by the operational environment are linked with the upcoming changes in legislation dealing with for example product manufacturers responsibility in recycling.

**3.2. What the future should look like for the CBI**

All interviewees agree that the CBI should keep on growing, but the growth has to be controlled and it should not be seen self-purposeful. The growth is seen both as a necessity and something they would do anyway. The main reasons why they think they should keep on growing are linked with legislation and their own ambitions. The establishment of collaboration and benchmarking with stakeholders, enterprises and similar CBIs is essential and it should be developed further. What they want to do is lift the CBI’s profile, and become more professionalized. Key element is strengthening the role of being an expert and a reliable consultant both in the fields of recycling and waste management.

“By networking with others our action could be a lot bigger in scale.. One opportunity is of course to keep on getting closer to the other similar CBIs, but it’s hard to see in what kind of timetable that could be happen.”

–OUASID00026 Heikki, stakeholder, 2015-

Some of the interviewees emphasize that improving the processes is needed in order to prevent valuable materials and goods being thrown away as waste. This would also improve CBIs the economic conditions. No big changes in the number of employees are expected, but the number of men among volunteers could be bigger, because at the moment there are more women among volunteers. Creating a systematic method for giving feedback to management is needed. The legal form of the organization would need to change in order to enabling many things (such as funding). They also want to be creating more benefits to the people living in the local area and employing more young people. There are some political aims too.
"We should be more active in trying to affect the political decision making so that there were less harmful decisions made and we could help developing these kind of activities in other places too."

–OUASID00026 Raimo, chair of the board, 2015-

4. Conflictual element, process or events that played a substantial role in influencing the CBI’s life.

4.1. The role of tensions or conflicts

In the recent years there has not been any larger conflicts or tensions. Their main challenges have mostly been caused by sudden changes in funding, changes in legislation or changes in public official’s interpretations. Also the developing of the organization lacking behind the fast growing pace, people getting tired of continuing changes due to growing, lack of trust from the stakeholders or difficulties in finding suitable and affordable premises has been challenging. As mentioned before there have been some ideological discussions too, mostly dealing with the funding (i.e. whether or not to take money from the recycled materials/goods), but these discussions belong to the past, and they are not current today. Today there is a strong agreement it is economically impossible to carry out the activities without taking money from the recycled items. Most other tensions are similar to what big organizations face everywhere, i.e. too much bureaucracy and too many meetings.

Today there are some slight contradictions between the aims of the CBI mentioned by the employees and stakeholders. The stakeholders wish to promote their own aims which may not always be same as the CBIs aims. This is the especially the case with employing the unemployed at risk of social exclusion. Employing is very important to the municipalities' representative, but the members of the CBI emphasize the importance of the environmental work done by the CBI. The CBIs members might not want to employ more people, because they feel that they have enough employees already. There are also some contradictions about the aims inside the CBI, such as how to use the money they receive. Environmental education seems to be very important to some, although it is not economically very profitable.

“There has been some discussion about our aims, like why are we really here for and how do we use the money we get from our customers at the shops. Like are we using the money so that those girls can go and talk about environmental issues at schools (laughs) like is that the most important thing, or might we need to employ one more manager here? All the time we are discussing and thinking about these things."

-OUASID00026 Leena, employee-

The sprawl of the CBIs activities has been a subject of discussion. It has been discussed what should actually be the main goals of the CBI. The board emphasizes focusing in the main activities i.e. recycling and employing, rather than expanding their
activities and campaigns dealing with raising environmental awareness. The chair of the board describes the situation as follows:

"But we at the board have tried to clarify that the CBI should focus in its main activities and be quite critical about sprawling to other sectors that do not actually belong to the original concept. Because that can easily take one away. It feels like it’s a way to make money and such.. --- And the original idea of the activities is left in the background."

-OUASID00026 Raimo, chair of board, 2015-

The organizations role as a non-profit limited company has caused some trouble with for example seeking funding. The organizations course of action has also raised some discussions. Some interviewees feel that the flexibility of the CBI has enabled many things but it is also a drag in a way that there is not enough official channels for giving feedback. There is a need for scheme for detailed planning in addition to just creating a strategy, but this would require resources that may not be available at the moment. Some interviewees feel that there are difficulties in holding on to decisions and starting new activities is considered easier than maintaining these new ways of doing things. The maintaining of networks especially on the employing sector is challenging. Finding natural interfaces for co-operation with partners is also found challenging.

7. Summary

The CBI is an example of how a grass-roots initiative can grow from small scale activity to a significant actor with both environmental and social effects that have a major meaning for the local people. In order to reach this kind of success the support from the municipalities and public is essential as well as a strong economic base. The skills of the people are important, for example the CBI has to have the know-how about where they can get (financial) support to be able to survive and as the CBI grows so does the need for good management. The current attitudes and values have contributed to their success, meaning that as attitudes towards recycling have changed towards more positive it has enabled the CBI to reach new customer groups. Also positive attention from the media (mostly newspapers and TV) might have helped the CBI to change the previous negative image that some people might have had of the CBI. All of the interviewees agree that it is very important to keep the CBI’s activities mainstream instead of radical, because if the activity is considered radical it may restrict many people from taking part in the activities. This is very typical in the Finnish operational environment, where radicalism is seen as a hindering factor rather than a promoter of activities. The CBI has to have a long-term vision about where they are going and what kind of decisions should be made. This is not possible if they have to struggle with economic issues all the time or if the people are not committed to working for the CBI.

One major challenge for this CBI have been the sudden changes in legislation and the contradictory decisions made by the public officials. So in a way the municipality on the other hand offers (financial) support but on the other hand the bureaucracy can create serious obstacles for the CBIs success and even survival.
Their way of managing seems to be appreciated by the workers and all in all there seems to be a good balance in people's possibilities to affecting how the CBI is run. The main critique concerns the fact that the developing of the organization has not been able to keep up with the growth, in other words for a long time the CBI was run like a small organization although the size of staff and offices had grown significantly compared to the beginning.

It would be interesting to search further what the effects of the municipalities' interests to the CBI, whether they are able to reach their own, primary goals if the owners continue emphasizing the importance of employing the unemployed? This might also create a threat to the continuity of the activities of the CBI, because the workers are mostly employed with the funding from the ministry and cities. This type of funding may be very uncertain and vulnerable and can be stopped anytime due to changes in legislation or interpretations of the public officials. A lot of CBI resources are used to running the pay subsidy application system. On the other hand without the funding in the form of the pay subsidy from the government the action would be significantly small-scale and its contribution to sustainable change and reducing the amount of waste lesser.

8. Important factors for development, up-scaling, replication and/or diffusion of community-based initiatives in the context of the CBI evolution trajectories and growth-theme

• Support from the local municipalities can be essential to the survival, development of the CBI. This support can be i.e. financial or providing affordable spaces for the CBIs activities. This support might be especially needed in the beginning, when the CBIs economy or strategy are not very stable.

• In countries with high unemployment rates CBIs could employ people with the funding from the government. In the long run it might be less expensive for the society to provide these jobs than pay the (social and economic) cost of long unemployment periods. This would also be a good way to provide the labor force the CBIs often lack.

• The communication between the CBI and its stakeholders is essential. Also communication with other similar CBIs is beneficial, mostly to learn new practices and share experiences in order to promote the development of the CBI.

• If the CBI grows significantly in time the organization should be developed along with the growth. Grass-roots initiatives may be managed by amateurs who do not have experience in running (big) organizations. The managers and employees need education and support in their work. This could be provided by local educational establishments or other NGO’s. The fact that the CBIs representatives might not be able to pay for the education should also be considered.
• Sudden changes in legislation or public official’s interpretations might be devastating to the CBI. Their activities are especially fragile when they are still small-scale, but also bigger organizations suffer from these changes.

• Large scale activities might not be possible based on just voluntary work because certain kind of professionalization is required if the CBIs want to achieve large-scale goals that will actually be valuable for the society.
Memo from PIK

**Foodsharing**

The initiative was founded in December 2012 and intends to save food from being wasted by distributing it between private households but also to save it from supermarkets which would otherwise just throw it away. Therefore, it aims at fighting against the daily wasting of food and tries to raise awareness for that problem through its actions.

The initiative is further referred to as “PIK 1”.

**BürgerEnergie Berlin**

This is not an initiative per se but rather a cooperative focusing on an economic output. It was officially founded in 2012. Their incentive is to buy 25% of the Berlin energy grid which was officially led by Vattenfall until December 31st 2014. They want to invest the money that they might earn one day in renewable energy systems. Thus, they also focus on ecological consequences of their action. Their approach is very much influenced by its democratic structure. Therefore, it has a social component. One can therefore say that at least their incentive is a very sustainable one (Sustainability in this sense is seen as a balance of economic, social and ecological interests/ factors). If they reach their goal or not is not to be foreseen yet because the senat still has to decide who will win the bid. The initiative is further referred to as “PIK 2”

(1.1) **What and how the evolutionary path of the CBI was shaped and where it led the CBI?**

The two initiatives had a very different past, nevertheless, some similarities are apparent.

Both saw a need for change. PIK 1 was inspired by the movie “Taste the waste” (2011) which was about the global food system in order to show how much food is wasted every year. During the process of making the movie the idea for the initiative arose and with the help of many of volunteers it was built.

PIK 2 on the other hand was established in December 2011 when it became clear that there would be a new allocation procedure for the Berlin power system when the contract with Vattenfall ended in December 2014. A group of around 15 people had started to work on it about half a year before it was officially the established. In the beginning, there were 3 people who initiated everything and then the group grew. But they kept the establishment a secret for a while before finding the right moment. Officially, they began working in April 2012.

In order to organize themselves and the private households they were aiming at, the initiators of the PIK 1 initiative created the website “PIK 1.de”. It then further developed and the initiative was aiming at bigger companies to take the food that would
otherwise be wasted there. The first one being “Bio Company” a supermarket chain that sells only organic products.

“The essential point (of PIK 1) that has changed was the sudden approach towards big producers and companies.” (Chairwoman, Older food collecting initiative; former PIK 1 board member, 2015, Interview E5)

For a better management of saving food from shops the website “Lebensmittelretten.de” was developed. In December 2014, the two websites were fused to form one website, “PIK 1.de”. The structure evolved further and participants got IDs and the first so called “Faireteiler” (fridges that can be filled with food; anyone can then take that food) were inaugurated.

PIK 2 followed another approach and looked for possible alliances with other groups and initiatives. Therefore, they connected with the Schönau project which was the first cooperative to buy back parts of the energy grid in Germany. Some of their leaders are also part of the organizing team of the PIK 2 cooperative now. In order to reach out to people and inform them about the cooperative they worked together with the media, organized so called “NetzGipfel” (Network Summits), and took part in demonstrations and other events to inform people about their initiative and to get more participants.

The beginning for the PIK 1 initiative was rather complicated because the website was not yet completed and much of the management work was done via Excel sheets which cost a lot of time and effort. Now the website is making the coordination much easier.

While developing the website, groups formed to tackle different tasks. They are also organized through the website now.

A very positive aspect was that a lot of new interested people in a short amount of time joined the initiative. Therefore, they had to restructure themselves. An organizing group and different responsibility levels were established.

“That has [the initiative] grown. So at the beginning we were just a mixed bunch of people and it was not clear who, what, when. But the increase of interested members was so big and so fast that it had to get a structure really quickly and in that moment he [the founder] was just awesome, that he has introduced it [the structure]. So the structure is definitely necessary. You can work together in an unstructured way if you are only 10 people but if you want to work with a few hundred or thousand people it doesn’t longer work like this. And the founder and the organizing team have done that very well.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 3)

The new structure also led to an organizing team which is in charge of the decisions and the further evolution of the initiative.

“Earlier there was no management style because it wasn’t really organized and since it is organized, the organization team decides [...]” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 3)

PIK 2 on the other hand could already profit from its established network shortly after their formation. There was a referendum on the recomunalization of the energy supply in Berlin in November 2013 during which 600,000 people voted for the referendum. It didn’t succeed as they needed 625,000 but the awareness for the topic had risen. It also left the chance open for the cooperative to cooperate with the state of Berlin.
Right now the cooperative has to wait for a decision by the senate first. Since in the past the senate had some issues dealing with the gas grid they are being cautious concerning the energy grid.

Another aspect that is holding back the process is the change of the political leaders in Berlin in December 2014. New people have to work themselves into the topic which costs time and the cooperative has to wait.

It looks a little different for the PIK 1 initiative. They had some problems establishing themselves, but are now on a good position to grow even more. An important step in the history of the initiative was to find the legal framework to be able to work together with different stakeholders, esp. shops and supermarkets.

“So one aspect is very important – the legislations. That we are working within a specific framework of these rights agreements. Every higher-ranking member signs it and many shops or stores would not participate if it didn’t exist. This, of course, if we wouldn’t have this sponsorship by the two law firms that have looked really into it and have proven that it is legally secure, certainly not so many shops would work with us and say: ‘Yeah we do that. We give you food!’ Because usually the danger of handing over [possibly bad] food lies in the hands of the retailer [and any consequences that go along with that]. But by signing up as a higher-ranking member on the website the Higher-ranking member agrees to not demand any liability from the donor and this is a crucial point.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 9)

To make sure that the values of the initiative would not get lost, a quiz was invented which would have to be taken before one could take over a responsible position.

At the moment, PIK 1 is working on establishing separate organizing teams for Switzerland, Austria and Germany rather than having a single one for all three countries.

(1.2) Name: Endogenous processes - What influences how they evolve/evolved?

Both initiatives profit very much from the volunteers they receive help from. Without them, both initiatives would not have been able to establish and grow the way they did.

For PIK 1 it can be said that it only works because of all the local volunteers and their local association. There is a feeling of a shared identity and support which helps the team to work on the evolution of the initiative. But while supporting the initiative it is very important, it is also important that the Higher-ranking members are very nice and understanding in order to work together with the stores for a long time. It is also expected that they are reliable and spend some time doing the work, otherwise the whole system would not work.

“Which factors have an influence on the success [of the initiative]?” (Interviewer)

“People! People who really engage themselves. Those to whom it is important. The ones who are dying to not waste food but to save it. Those are deciding! Who really invest their time […].” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 3)

Almost the same applies for PIK 2 and for them as well volunteers are very important for handling the work. Most of them are students, but there are also retired people who have the time to engage themselves. The work load is distributed between different working groups. But the individual people who are helping are changing constantly. Therefore, the most important changes are discussed during the general assembly where everyone can participate and raise their voice.
A very important influence for the PIK 1 initiative was their lawyers who voluntarily made a contract that provided security to the supermarkets and other stores that they would not be sued when giving away their products, making it possible for PIK 1 to work with these partners. The lawyers checked the legal possibilities and drafted a legal document that the Higher-ranking member and stores have to sign.

“We actually checked the design of the two websites for legal pitfalls and then thought of how we could develop something around this “three-person-constellation” between food donors, so the supermarkets, the higher-ranking member, so the one who collects and distributes food and the recipient of the food. We had to find a way so that possible liability risks are avoided for the food donor. The goal was of course to take away the fear of liability on the side of the food donor although they indeed just wanted to do a good thing.” (Lawyer, PIK 1, 2015, Interview E4)

For PIK 2 the development was a learning process through which they gained knowledge about different aspects of the topic. They also gained expert knowledge through their ever growing participant number. One example being the IT experts who set up the website and are still managing it.

The board however was and is very important for the overall evolution of the initiative. It is a heterogeneous team that works together in a very productive way and also decides a lot of things.

“It is like that. Within a team there are decisions made by the team. But concerning the cooperative the chairman and the board of directors decide.” (Active member, responsible for info booths)

One person (Vorstand 1 PIK 2) however is named quite often as being important for the cooperative as she is very engaged and pushes everything forward. At least a couple of people mention her in that way.

“Does the organizational structure of the cooperative have an influence on the success?” (Interviewer)

“I would say yes. Especially the broadness of the initiative is very much dependent on the individual perception of how he or she feels about being part of the cooperative. And if I stop working for it or stop drumming up business then it will run into a crisis very fast or will stand still or something. If that gets lost the initiative would be history because a professional team of communication experts couldn’t carry that out. They could try and could organize great internet campaigns and could print flyers and distribute them and so on. That’s all possible but I think it would be useless. Important is the personal response and it has to come from everyone individually.” (IT Manager, PIK 2, 2015, Interview 8)

For PIK 1 something similar applies. After the first phase during which the initiator did most of the work it was necessary to form working groups to split up the work load internally. Some working groups also help to build up new PIK 1 structures in cities where PIK 1 had not worked before.

In the beginning it was a lack of IT knowledge was hindering the initiative. However, a very enthusiastic person helped to develop the website and that was important for the further evolution of the initiative.

“In the beginning we were only picked up at Bio Company and everything worked manually. So the person responsible for a specific Bio Company store would manage it with an Excel list at home or by phone. Now we have the website and everything is
organized there. One guy, a programmer voluntarily developed that site so it didn’t cost us anything. And it wouldn’t work as good in all its complexity with all the groups, all the stores and Higher-ranking member if it wasn’t for the website.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 13)

In general, it can be said for both initiatives that individual persons were important at different stages of the evolution. It was usually dependent on the amount of time they invested and their specific knowledge about a certain topic.

(1.2) **Name: Exogenous processes - What influences how they evolve/evolved?**

The two initiatives get support from third parties which were very important for both of their evolutions. Without this help, both of them would not be at the point where they are right now. However, there are also exogenous influences that are hindering their evolution.

PIK 1 is working together with the media in order to promote themselves and their cause. It helps them to reach out to many people although word-of-mouth recommendation is also very important. The initiative cooperates with different institutions. Such institutions provide places and electricity for their “Fairteiler” (fridges that can be filled and emptied by anyone passing by there) but also support them with free printing etc. It also helped that BioCompany as a big organic supermarket chain works together with the initiative and sends out a signal to other supermarkets.

PIK 2 gets support from several supermarkets as well, but in a slightly different way. They support them by renting out a space for their info booths for a decent price. This enables them to get in contact with a lot of potential new participants. Other companies support them with money such as “Naturstrom” or “EMobility” and also with goods and services. One large supporter from outside the cooperative is the Schönau cooperative. As one of the founders of this cooperative, is also part of the PIK 2 board and they help by providing their knowledge and experience (advice).

The main drivers for the initiatives were different though. For PIK 2 it was the new allocation procedure for the Berlin power system (Strombetriebskonzession). For PIK 1 it was the prohibition of the so called “dumpster diving” which led to the idea of finding a legal solution for it.

“I think that the prohibition of dumpster diving is a big point. It just wasn’t legal to save food out of those containers. Therefore, some people wanted to find a way to circumvent this prohibition. That I believe is an important aspect.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 10)

For PIK 1 the possibly to connect via the Internet was a major driver of the initiative.

“What I think is really important is the media driven society and the Internet that make it [the initiative] possible. I think in earlier times it wouldn’t have been that easy to coordinate everything on such a big level. Certainly there would have also been initiatives like that but I believe that it would have stayed within the limits of the cities and wouldn’t have developed on a German or European scale. I believe that this also a very important precondition.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 10)

Some higher-ranking members mentioned that they also profit from starting their initiative in the city of Berlin. It is a good place to start such an initiative as a lot of different people come together but it also gives a lot of opportunities to start something new.
PIK 2 profited from the so called Energietisch that was very important for them as it raised the awareness for the topic as 600,000 people signed for the referendum (2014) and it also changed the parliaments view on the topic.

“I think the referendum, even though it just about failed concerning the majority but it moved quite a bit in the parliament. That there was a resolution after all of establishing a municipal utility, an eco municipal utility, without the referendum it would have never happened in the first place.” (Politician, SPD, 2015, Interview E8)

In general, it can be said that the cooperative is very dependent on political decisions. But they have the hope that if they reach enough people that they can influence those decisions.

“I would say that 95% of it is a political decision. So is it either desired or not. In the end it is an offer to the politics who will then make the decision and of course we can try to have an influence on that decision and it will be influenced by it. We had the feeling if there isn’t a social initiation there is no movement in the politics and that is what we are trying to do and why we participate. In the end it will depend on how many people we have reached, how many we can put in the balance in order to say “Look at us we are standing here with quite a lot of people behind us” and not just 3 persons.” (Chairwoman, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)

But those political processes can take a while which is hindering for the development of the cooperative. Time wise they were also held back by the change of the senate in November 2014. As new people are now in charge of political relevant positions they have to work themselves into this topic which takes some time. Nevertheless, or because of that, they have a close relationship to political parties in order to inform them constantly. Some political parties even support them indirectly by trying to convince other parties of the idea.

In general, there were and still are a lot of different people/ experts who influence the cooperative with their knowledge.

“One could say that this guy from Greenpeace Energy who was part of this Power to Gas, this was interesting but I wouldn’t want to single him out. He joins the ranks of a group of people who contributed their expert knowledge. They all influenced our actions.” (Member, volunteer PIK 2, 2015, Interview 6)

(1.4.) ......Name: How do they respond to internal and external stimuli/events/situations?

In the history of both of these two initiatives there were different stimuli/ events that influenced their evolution.

For PIK 1 the legal arrangements concerning the handling of food were very important and forced them to react to it in order to push their goal forward. As it is officially not allowed for supermarkets or any other stores working with food to give away food because of legal restrictions, thus they developed a contract that would ensure that the companies can’t be sued when working together with PIK 1.

Legal arrangements or legislations are also crucial for the development of the PIK 2 cooperative. The act for the economy of energy (Energiewirtschaftsgesetz) is one of the most important ones for the cooperative as it provides the legal framework that they can work within. As it is often very vague they have to consider all the possibilities and possible outcomes with their lawyers. One legislation (bafing-Gesetz) actually forces them to invest their money even though they still have to wait for the right moment to buy the energy grid. Nothing in the legislation, however, says when they have to invest
the money. The cooperative set the goal of collecting 100 million euros because it is the upper limit of another legislation. If they would collect more than they would have to deal with other legislations as well.

But both initiatives also receive stimuli from their members. PIK 1 has regular meetings to talk about new developments and the need to change things. Every active member can take part in this. For the PIK 2 cooperative there were concerns by some members at one stage regarding the safety of their data which led them to a change of their security standards on their website.

On the other hand, PIK 1 also had some problems with their members. As the initiative grew they had to find a way of making sure that everyone knows the main principles. Therefore, in 2014 they invented a quiz which was launched in December of the same year. One has to pass it in order to be able to take over responsible positions and to become a Higher-ranking member rather than being a normal member. The quiz also helps to get an overview over active and inactive members. However, some members also see it as an obstacle to actually get involved.

A former PIK 1 member even states a rather negative view on what has influenced the initiative. The leader of the older food collecting initiative who was also part of the PIK 1 board in the beginning states that the media had an influence on the initiative and their evolution. She says that it was the media that influenced them to approach bigger companies as well. It must be said though that she is not in favour of how PIK 1 has changed and that she could have just said that to cast a shadow on the initiative. However, this appears to be a personal conflict among the initiators and other members are quite positive about it.

“The initial strategy was to save food in private households from being wasted and to share it among the people. This way it would support a value-based community. Via cooperation, via exchange, a real exchange. That was the approach from my perspective. That is how I understood it. It changed through the media. It became clear that “higher, faster, further, better” is always good for the media. That’s why we expanded and all of a sudden we also approached the big companies.” (Chairwoman, Older food collecting initiative; former PIK 1 board member, 2015, Interview E5)

For PIK 2, it has been beneficial that the topic of the energy transition has been in the public eye for a couple of years already. A lot of other energy cooperatives have been founded throughout Germany which also helps. This helps them to explain people why their cooperative is important.

For some members it is very stimulating that they only have a short time span to actually be successful with their idea.

“So that is the motivation I have. That it is a special situation, this effect or this part that there is only a short period in which you can do something and then the door is shut again for 20 years or so. That is a special situation which is important to me that is still the most important aspect.” (Member, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)

(1.5.) Name: Achievements/elements of success - What does evolution look like for CBIs?

Despite their short history both initiatives have accomplished lot of things already which can also be seen as successes.

The members of PIK 1 are quite positive about the initiative and mention many successes. One success is the increasing recognition for their initiative and their cause
which has risen since they started to become larger. Moreover, the growing rate of their members itself is a success.

“The bigger or the more influence an organization has the more it is heard. Yes, it has changed. Yeah I am pretty sure. At first it was smiled at and now it is taken more seriously.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 7)

The growing rate and reaching a lot of people also applies for the PIK 2 cooperative. This was also influenced by the events that they organized already.

“Eventually it is a success already that we talked to so many people about it and sensitized them why those energy grids play a crucial role and what role different stakeholders play in the ‘energy landscape’. ”(Chairwoman, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)

Other success factors for PIK 1 are the amounts of food that they already have saved and that larger companies like Bio Company have started to team up with them as they are growing. For PIK 2 it is the amount of money they have already collected (~10 mio. €).

Among the PIK 2 members the organisation team is seen as a success as they managed to get the initiative through hard times. Therefore, it is also seen as a success that they are still fighting for a share of the energy grid while other companies have withdrawn. Success in the future would mean to be a shareholder of the energy grid in Berlin or at least being a cooperation partner. However, it would also be a success for them if Vattenfall would no longer own the grid, even though their ability to influence that are limited (my own interpretation).

The interviewed Higher-ranking members agreed that the website was a success itself because they could not have accomplished what they did already without the website.

“The website is a big achievement. A big milestone. Without the website we wouldn’t be 10.000 people or 5.000 people who pick up so coordinately.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 9)

Other successes are the Fairteiler (the fridges) and the development of a legal framework to be able to cooperate with different companies and helping other initiatives to stay alive through a partnership.

Finally, it can be said that PIK 1 will be successful “When it (PIK 1) is not needed anymore.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 12)

2. What about future evolution?

(2.1) ............................................Name: Future - What evolution WILL likely look like for CBIs?

Both initiatives have future plans even though for PIK 2 it is vague as they do not know if they will win the bid and are very much dependent on the outcome of the political decision. PIK 1 on the other side “only” has to build on what they have accomplished so far.

PIK 1 will try to get more large companies like Bio Company involved. The members believe that the initiative will grow in Germany and Europe.

“The project is not that old yet to say that in 5 years I see the saving of food on the entire European scale. There are some countries that have joined and I think it will further reach out. Of course it is also not nationwide, in all of Germany yet. I see a
prospect for Europe, that it will get bigger.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2014, Interview 2)

If they are actually growing on a European scale some members think that they will have to change their organizational structure in order to be able to operate.

Some interviewees expect that the member structure of the initiative will change into a more heterogeneous one. Some groups that are not represented very much yet will likely be included in the future when they grow.

For PIK 2 the year 2016 will be very important for the initiative because it will then be announced who will win the bid for the Berlin energy grid. It is also possible that the state will win the bid and will cooperate with PIK 2. No matter what happens they will have to work more like an economic enterprise and become less political.

“So if it does work out then we will have totally different tasks than if it doesn’t work out. But what, in my opinion, is necessary in both cases, what really has to happen is that we turn more into an economically working energy cooperative and be less like an action group as having a political working character.” (Chairwoman, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)

If they win the bid the members expect a fast increase in the number of new members and will have to save some of the money they will earn eventually to reinvest it in several projects related to the energy transition topic. If the plan does not work out, all the members will get their money back if they do not decide to invest it elsewhere.

Members from both initiatives mention that they will not pay any more members in the future. The Higher-ranking members very much agree on that. In the PIK 2 cooperative there seem to exist two opinions among the members. Some say that they are not planning to pay any more workers as it is all paid by donations and they don’t want to use the cooperative’s money for that. Other members state that if it does work out (the bid) they have to pay more workers as it is a way of professionalization. Professionalization is also the reason why some members say that in the future they will have to reconsider their organizational structure. They think that the organizational structure will not work much longer in its current form.

PIK 1 will rearrange its website to an open source one so that people can help to build it and can also use it for their own initiatives. The purpose is to spread the idea. They will continue to work as an initiative as long as it is necessary to save food from being wasted. And they believe that this will still continue for a while.

“Yes, I think that, like the founder always says “We stop with the initiative in the moment when there is no food to be saved anymore”, meaning when no food is dumped anymore. Then we can say “Now we have accomplished our goal”. And we will continue because every day there are new tons of food that want to be saved.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 3)

(2.2.) .....................Name: Future - What evolution SHOULD likely look like for CBIs?

One aspiration both initiatives share is the growth of their initiative and the spread of their cause. Both wish that it will be copied by other cities. PIK 1 is even going a little further and says that it should get to the stage where it is a global norm to save food. Therefore, the initiative and the idea should be institutionalized in a way that it can be applied in the whole world. Their goal is that food will be no longer wasted. However, it is also a goal to tackle social inequality and the destruction of the environment. There
should be a collaboration of different stakeholders to fight against food waste. Some even state that legislations should already prohibit the waste of food.

“I think there is a ‘reduced’ goal. That really no food is wasted anymore and then there is a secondary goal which is the social redistribution. That there is more to it. Meaning a reduction of social hardship but at the same time also the protection of the environment. But I think we can also be okay with the ‘reduced’ goal. That we say that wasting less food does not only help the one who eats the food because he saves money but it also helps the environment because less food has to be produced. Therefore, it is a win-win-situation. I am pretty much convinced that this will work out.” (Shop owner who is offering a Fairteiler, PIK 1, 2015, Interview E2)

PIK 2 on the other hand is focusing on economic approaches and their goal of being a shareholder of the energy grid (25%). If they do accomplish that goal it should be in a cooperation with the state of Berlin.

“But the main goal is still to get a relevant share of the grid. This has specialized in so far that in the beginning we could have imagined of buying the whole grid or go into a cooperation with the state or with other independent third parties. But we have buried this plan because A it is not realistic and B substantially not reasonable. And we have already started to work on the option of cooperating with the state and why this is important.” (Chairwoman, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)

They focus on the economic part rather than being too political and try to convince many people with a small budget, but also a few people with a larger budget. The members are certain that they should be able to collect more money once/if they win the bid. In the long term, they wish to collect 100 million euros and to double the number of members. Also, they wish to engage in several other energy projects. Once they do get a share of the energy grid they plan to take good care of the energy grid and produce and use renewable energies.

Members of PIK 1 stated that their structure should be redefined while it is growing. It should be made more transparent so that the organizational structure is better understood. Moreover, the members felt that the initiative should become more professionalized. Several interviewees mentioned educational trainings for example:

“Professionalization through trainings is about time and advisable. Especially in the process that it isn’t only 3 days old. The initiative is working for more than a year now.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 2)

Other members were in favour of the professionalization but also mentioned that the organizational structure should not be too strict and formal. There should still be enough freedom for individual decision-making.

Professionalization is also important for the PIK 2 members. They believe that if there is a chance of winning the bid they must professionalize the cooperative and to force their board to be able to go along with the development and the tasks that lie ahead. Moreover, they should also try to reach out to more people. However, while growing they should keep the democratic structure of their cooperative for transparency and participation reasons.

Both initiatives agree that they should focus more on public relations activities to gain more attention for their topic and use the media to promote their cause. The Higher-ranking members think that the politicians should have a focus on the topic, but it should not engage too much with the initiative itself. On the other hand, the PIK 2 members believe that they should keep in contact with policymakers and collect more
information. If they have to cooperate with a partner other than the state of Berlin, they should not cooperate with a big energy company that is using/producing nuclear energy. One interviewee mentions that it should be accomplished that the people have more rights to influence the energy, gas or water grids.

3. Are there any conflictual element/process/events that played a substantial role in influencing CBI’s life?

Challenges or conflicts have influenced both initiatives and they both have had to overcome different challenges.

For PIK 2 it is a big challenge to receive financial support because as a cooperative it is difficult and in many ways not possible to get funding. PIK 1 on the other hand is working without money and does not face this problem. For them, some legislations were a problem. In the beginning it was a challenge of how to deal with the transfer of the food without making the donor responsible for any possible disease outbreaks after consuming the food by third parties. They handled it by checking the legal status and writing a contract that both sides sign. Thus, the donor is not responsible for any further problems concerning the food. PIK 2 also had some issues with some legislations. The act for the economy of energy (Energiewirtschaftsgesetz) is very important for the cooperative as it provides the legal framework that they can work in. As it is often vague, they have to consider all the possibilities and possible outcomes with their lawyers which is time consuming.

Many challenges and conflicts are internal ones. That applies to PIK 1 as well as to PIK 2. For PIK 1 it is certain rules that everyone should obey. But if someone forgets to pick up the food or if the person doesn’t behave the right way, it is documented by the ambassador and can lead to exclusion. It is usually settled among the members, but if it cannot be settled the ambassador will try to solve it. If this also doesn’t help, there is also a mediation team to work on those things.

“I, myself have not experienced it but if something didn’t work out with the collection [of the food] then you can give that person a so called “sleepyhead” on the website. That I know. Or when somebody totally forgets to pick up food and doesn’t tell anyone. This doesn’t leave a good impression on the organization. But I personally have never experienced that. Or if you pick up at Bio Company that you sort out the bad food but don’t separate the plastic from the food before throwing it into the organic waste. That happened before and it is posted then. The responsible person for this specific shop will then contact his team that it didn’t go well. And that they have to pay attention to it. [...] Yes, it is offensively handled.” (Higher-ranking member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 7)

There is a large potential for interpersonal conflicts within the initiative. One interviewee therefore suggests that seminars on the topic of non-violent communication could be introduced; however, this has not yet happened.

PIK 2 experienced that at one stage there were some interpersonal difficulties among the board members, but it was settled once a member left and now they are able to work well together. Their internal problems are more organizational. It is a challenge to keep up a certain professionalism based on voluntary work. In times of a lot of work it can get intense – also the relationship between the volunteers can hinder the work if too many people are stressed. Moreover, sometimes they cannot handle all the work at once and it can be hard to find enough volunteers for certain jobs and to coordinate. This results in some work being delayed which also results in frustration. In those cases, they just try to explain their situation and usually people understand it and are ok with the delay (if it is for third parties for example). Another aspect is that some volunteers
cannot decide whether it is worth spending the money on certain things (like paying a specific amount for their info booth in a certain place) it is fairly easily handled by passing on the decision until someone feels in charge of what to do. In those (sometimes) difficult cases their structure works quite good. It is also a challenge to keep up the motivation of the engaged members as it is a long process and the topic itself is rather hard to explain to people/potential new members.

“I believe it is really important and at the same time a big challenge to keep the political debate running. I Think it is not that easy actually. Especially if the topic not very present in the public view. To keep up the attention for the topic. That is an important task and I would say it is extremely important for us.” (Chairwoman, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)

On the other hand, it is also rather difficult to have the full knowledge of and to stay on top of things to really make a difference inside the cooperative. Especially if most of the people only work a few hours per week on it on a voluntary basis.

The PIK 1 initiative on the other hand had to handle other challenges. Sometimes there is somewhat of a potential for a conflict between different social groups. There are some people who would get free or cheap food in places where the Higher-ranking members now pick up the food. The same applies for dumpster divers who might not find anything in the containers where they had found food before. This problem has not been solved yet. One interviewee mentions the “Fairteiler” (fridges) which are openly accessible for everyone is a potential danger. No one can actually retrace the donor. Thus, it could happen that the food is poisoned or otherwise infected and could lead to an epidemic. This potential problem has not been discussed any further though (from what is evident in the interviews). Another challenge for them is to convince shops of joining the initiative as well as coordinating new shops with the volunteers. They try to handle that problem by communicating a lot with all the different stakeholders. They also had some problems with the website when the initiative grew very fast at one stage.

Further challenges concerning the PIK 2 cooperative are related to political topics. It was a challenge to convince the politicians that they (the cooperative) can actually accomplish their goal. This challenge they have had to face more than once, as there was a change in leadership of the city (Berlin) and new politicians have been elected who are now in charge of dealing with the cooperative. One interviewed politician even states his doubts about it being all too much for the cooperative: It could be too much money and work for them to handle.

A member also said that they had to argue that Vattenfall was proposing numbers (concerning the value of the grid) that were not reasonable. They also have had to clarify that they are not part of another initiative (Berliner Energietisch) with whom they share a somewhat common goal, but a different approach. Another challenge is to gain more members as the bidding procedure is paused at the moment and they have to wait for the politicians to decide how it is going to evolve. The procedure itself is seen as a big challenge as many of legal arrangements have to be dealt with in order to stay on top of things. One politician suggested that it would have been easier if they would have worked together with another company; however, this was not mentioned by other interviewees. Instead, the other interviewees focused on the state of Berlin as a partner.

Reflection

Below is a brief reflection on important factors for development, up-scaling, replication, and/or diffusion within the Growth and Trajectories theme based on
interviews from “PIK 1” and “PIK 2.” We focus on factors for the development, diffusion, and replication of the initiatives as there is evidence for these in the memo above.

Important factors for the development of these initiatives include: volunteers, cooperation with other organizations, and legislation. Volunteers were important for the development of both initiatives. Volunteers developed both PIK 1’s and PIK 2’s website and volunteer lawyers also drafted PIK 1’s legal contract that allows it to work with supermarkets. Involved volunteers are also important for keeping the momentum going in both initiatives and specific volunteer individuals were important at different stages of the development of the initiatives. Moreover, cooperating with other organizations has been influential on the development of both initiatives. PIK 1 uses third parties to promote themselves, to provide spaces for the refrigerators, for printing, and cooperation with supermarkets allows them to gather food. PIK 2 cooperates with other organizations for information booth space, to gain experience, and to gain monetary resources. Lastly, legislation has had a large impact on the development of both initiatives. For PIK 1, it was the legislation regarding food handling that has mobilized their movement whereas for PIK 2 it is the constraints found in legislation on cooperatives and the bidding process for the Berlin energy grid that influences their trajectory and development.

Important factors for the diffusion of the initiatives were media attention and a well-functioning website. Media attention has allowed both initiatives to grow their membership and to let others know about their mission. An important factor for the diffusion of PIK 1 was a well-functioning website to which it credits its growth, so much so that it will make its website open sources so that it is available to other initiatives.

Lastly, PIK 2 is in fact a replication of another cooperative from Schönau which was able to purchase their energy grid. Schönau has been instrumental in the success of PIK 2 through providing knowledge and working together. Some members of the Schönau cooperative are now on the PIK 2 organizing team.

Memo from Sapienza

**Memos for the Trajectories and Evolution theme.**

1. CBI’s Evolution and growth

(1.1) What and how the evolutionary path of the CBI was shaped and where it led the CBI? Short name: “1.1.Traj-Evo_Past”

Description: What happened from CBI’s birth and before its actual birth (i.e. establishment date or similar) to present time. This aims at exploring whether the CBI grew/shrink/repli...

The CBI object of this analysis is a community bike repair shop (or people's bike workshop as they self-define); their main scope is to promote alternative (yet sustainable) mobility through the diffusion of the urban cycling culture.
The context into which the experience of this CBI flourished is of dramatic importance in understanding how it was born, and how it evolved. Indeed, the evolution of the CBI goes side by side with the evolution of the cyclo-movement in Rome. Sometimes the path taken by the CBI is more in line with the mainstream characterizing the discourse of "alternative mobility" in the city, while some other times it follows a divergent trajectory from the main stream. Both orientations heavily contributed in shaping the CBI as it appears now, and in marking it success both in terms of achievements as in term of a recognized established landmark for the whole cyclo-movement in Rome.

One of the stakeholder collaborating with the CBI and with a long experience in the cyclo-movement in Rome briefly summarized the history of the CBI in this way: "... they [the community bike workshop Ciclofficina Centrale] were born when there were already few other community bike workshops in Rome. It was initially installed in a recently occupied social centre called Angelo Mai. When the police cleared the occupied social centre some people within the CBI decided to constitute an association (Associazione Ciclonauti, which in Italian means Ass. Cyclonauts) and obtained from the public administration a space where to do their activity. This was the same place where they are located now."

This happened in a moment of great expansion of the cyclo-movement in Rome, which was fuelled, boosted and inspired above all by the international cycling movement of protest known as Critical Mass. As reported in a document written by the network of the Roman People's occupied social centre Bike workshops: "In Rome the Critical Mass get together started thanks to the personal initiative of few brave urban cyclists" in 2002. At the very beginning it relied solely on the stubborn effort of 20/50 cyclists that spontaneously met the last Friday of every month. Although the euphoric momentum boosting the movement at this initial stage - when the surprise faded away - regular traffic and population strongly opposed to it, thus slowing down its take off. But inertia is fundamental; especially for a movement that aim at reaching a Mass considered Critical. Thus, the most active members of the movement realized that meeting once a month was not enough for the cycling movement to "reclaim the right to be traffic per se", as the oldest member of the CBI said; something more was needed. Although the Critical Mass philosophy refuses the idea of having leaders and official structures, there was the need to put landmarks in the city; recognizable places where the movement could grow and spread. In other words, :"in order to augment the protest audience and efficiency, in order to crunch the gears of the system, and to effectively promote cycling through all strata of population, there was the need to create safe places where every urban cyclist could feel part of something bigger. Head-quarters equipped to repair and tune their bikes, social places where to learn from each other" while reinforcing their motivation, enclaves where the protest could organize, heal and grow.

Is in this context that year 2003 welcomed the dawn of few places willing to serve those purposes; the preferred form was a community bike workshop - or as they prefer to say "people's" bike workshop - usually hosted in a social centre. This fertile soil for the popping out of several community bike workshops was the realm of the multiple movements characterizing the political radical left scene in Rome. Hence, community bike repair shops were not seen exclusively as places where to repair a broken part but become think-tanks and innovation laboratories for alternative and sustainable mobility activism. In 2004, coincidently with the first international Critical Mass get-
together organized in Rome, a new community bike workshop opened. This was the "Ciclofficina Centrale" (which translates from Italian into Central Community Bike Workshop). The adjective central refers to the position and not to the importance, in fact it was initially located in occupied social centre near the Coliseum, in the old city centre of Rome. Is in this context that community bike workshops' appeal was initially also augmented by the fact of being entities politically recognizable even if a specific brand was not visible. An old time member and experienced cyclomechanics says: "I joined the community bike workshop because I wanted to satisfy my crave for political activism that had to be stopped for few years due to personal reasons. The CBI seemed to be the right place for this, because it is a place where you can go and understand immediately what is all about even if you have been missing from the scene for a long time".

Meanwhile, the movement kept growing, Critical Masses reached an important magnitude: "few thousands cyclists". Thanks to this increasing participation: "with a monkey wrench in the hands the Velorution starts its diffusion, and here in Rome assumes one of its most radical declination"

The occupied social centre hosting the CBI in 2006 was cleared-off by the police; this was a harsh time for the CBI but as one of the stakeholder collaborating with them said: "their experience did not get lost: the Association Cyclonauts was founded, and after a long negotiation with the Municipality of Rome it obtained a space where to do its activity". This was not an easy turning point. Some people did not agree with the formalization process and with the dialogue with institutions, so they quit and they founded another people's bike workshop in a occupied social centre a little further away: "A group of the cyclomechanics from the Ciclofficina Centrale did not join the Association Cyclonauts, and opened another bike workshop called Ciclosoccorso (which translates into Bike-aid in Italian)"

In the last 11 years the CBI grew, refined its activities, people within it changed, someone left, some others joined. This period helped the CBI to reach a maturity stage, and as such it is an organism per se that could live independently from its members, one of the young member of the CBI said that: "this place is so strong that it stays like that... People have changed almost completely, but there is no need for someone to tell and explain how and what to do. Everything is written down in details so it is human-proof, it is a project that started really well...".

Although, almost all members agree that something has changed, maybe not in scope or aim, but in its character. Probably the strong political polarization characterizing the CBI in its initial stage faded a little with the change of people, thus helping the CBI to became more inclusive and consequently increasing its numbers (volunteers, beneficiaries, bike repaired, opening hours, etc.). An old member said: "for sure from being a place for the social aggregation of only one kind of people it turned into a place more inclusive oriented also to different kinds of people. However what continues to attract people is the promotion of the cycling culture..."

(1.2) Name: Endogenous processes - What influences how they evolve/evolved?
Short name: “1.2.Traj-Evo_Endo”
Description: Endogenous processes influencing CBI’s evolution. How CBI’s evolution was influenced by its members and their resources (physical/non-physical resources e.g. monetary resources, cultural resources, social ties)?

One way of portraying the evolution of the CBI is by an analogy with nature: its birth was like an offspring of another CBI, and during its growth it gave offspring that installed similar CBIs in other places, as one of the oldest member reported: "The community bike workshop at the occupied social centre Angelo Mai (the Ciclofficina Centrale) came from the community bike workshop located at the social occupied social centre ex-SNIA called Don Chisciotte, and later it also helped to found other community bike workshops".

The initial stage of the CBI was strongly influenced by the philosophy of Critical Mass and strongly oriented towards the radical political left ideology. This was a consequence of the kind of people frequenting the CBI and the social occupied social centre where it was located. It was not something intentional but a collateral consequence; in fact it was very frequent for the people participating in the activity of the CBI to meet also outside the CBI for other sort of activities dealing with political activism or demonstrations and protests. One of the oldest member of the CBI stated: "there was a first phase somehow more directly political. The people frequenting the CBI were very similar for ideology and political inclination. It was very frequent to see each other outside of the CBI in a public protest." The frequentation of the CBI on the one hand fuelled its activity and growth but on the other hand shaped the CBI and made it ideologically recognizable.

Later the CBI changed path due to an internal conflict. This was facilitated by the fact that the public institution decided to clear off the occupied social centre where it was located. One part of the CBI left and founded another community bike workshop, while another part decided to opt for a characterization more inclined to dialogue with institutions. This moment was marked by the passage from an illegal to a legal status with the foundation of a recognized association. This moment was extremely important for the evolution of the CBI, in fact it is now a reason of pride and distinction for them to be the first community bike workshop in Rome that made this transition. One of the oldest member of the CBI said: "we are the 3rd community bike repair shop in Rome and the 1st that have founded an association!". Their example has been followed lately also by other CBIs.

This transition facilitated the inclusion also of different people that were not strongly politically polarized. Thus, the wider social inclusion was the element that favoured the sparking of ideas and activities within the CBI that had a strong social component. One of the fresh member of the CBI stated: "I believe that even the beneficiaries agree that the CBI is a place that’s more welcoming, less radical in its rules and principles ... there are others where there is a stronger political involvement, others... with a specific target... and then there is us... a place where you can find a wider variety of users".

Somehow the political characterization faded out - although has never disappeared completely - facilitating the inclusion of multi variegated types of people with a common
passion for cycling. As a consequence, the popularity of the CBI and the number of participants grew rapidly.

With the increase of popularity also the number of beneficiaries augmented, but the space remained limited, thus in order to maintain a smooth and conflict-free working environment a more strict regulation was implemented. The way decision were taken did not change and it was always based on consensus: "One thing that’s important is that even we have the structure of the association ... the decisions are taken by consensus but we never vote, they don’t raise their hands, we continue the discussion until we find a solution". In fact, the implementation of regulation regarded the regular activity (e.g. number of people that could work simultaneously, where to put the tools, how to do certain things, when and what to buy)

Consequently, the variety of activities that took place in the CBI diminished. Most of the social activities linked with cycling but not expressively focused on promoting cycling were lost or saw decreasing participation, because most of the energies diverged onto cyclomechanic work. One of the oldest member of the CBI said: "many activities that were done within the community bike workshop have changed. For example the cyclo picnic, which were social gathering events dealing with food, literature and cycling organised by the CBI or by people coming at the CBI. The number of dinners and social events hosted by the CBI was a lot bigger". The motivation in this reduction in the organization of social events has nothing to do with the will of social gathering of participants, but it was necessary to optimize space and resources in order to prioritize the cyclomechanics service which is the main scope of the CBI: "this sort of activities were reduced to augment the service offer to beneficiaries".

Although the evolution from a beginning stage to a phase of maturity brought several changes, in terms of activities done, political polarization, social inclusion, and organizational procedures, what has never changed is the identity that the CBI had since the beginning. Main scope and values of the CBI were never modified nor strongly questioned. In fact what really characterize this experience is that it promotes and foster cycling by repairing bikes from recycled materials, and also that the exchange of service is done basically for free and shall not be mediated by money. Who wants can leave a donation, but nothing is never asked. So the identity remained always the same even if the volunteers turnover is quite high. One of the oldest member said: "I do not know if the identity will always be the same, people change quite often, even though the context remained always the same, is the same as it was in the beginning".

(1.3) Name: Exogenous processes  - What influences how they evolve/evolved?

Short name: “1.3.Traj-Evo_Exo”

Description: Exogenous processes influencing CBI’s evolution. How CBI’s evolution was influenced by its stakeholders and their resources (physical/non-physical resources e.g. monetary resources, political cultural and social context)?
Exogenous processes influencing and shaping the CBI as it appears nowadays are not so evident, although how the CBI builds its relationships with external entities is quite interesting to understand its characterization. In the beginning was the will to focus more strictly on promoting the use of bikes and less on the left political opposition that brought the CBI to somehow keep distances with the most radical left movements although being always strongly influenced by them; the CBI was somehow more inclined to embrace the philosophy fostered by the least radical part of the movement.

Another element that made the CBI a stable landmark within the panorama of community bike workshops in Rome is that it promoted in 2008 the creation of a Network of the Roman Community (or People's) Bike Workshops so to better coordinate their action and to help each other when needed. This will to increase the number of ties with other institutions or social entities was not a goal per se rather a way to amplify the echo of the activities done by the CBI: "The main objective is to promote the use of the bike. Therefore it's not that they searched for other associations or to involve other people" thus the CBI presents himself as an open group where everybody can join. This message is easily readable within the CBI and makes it easy for people outside or belonging to other group to join and attract other types of people. :"... then others come and it's part of the involvement process, it’s natural and it can’t be any other way – like a domino effect".

Also in the case of the relationship with other groups, what distinguishes the CBI is the fact that it is nearly always the first one to be ready to help someone else: "I think that we were always among the first, and still are the first, to help others... they always ask us to give them space, to help them for meetings, for the auction, to get closer to us. I think that maybe we are the ones who are more supportive towards others than the other way around. But it’s ok that way!", and probably this is also why the CBI has such a great success in terms of outreach and social inclusivity when compared to other CBIs of the same kind.

The relationship with institutions that the CBI was able to build is something that was not seen well by other people's bike workshops in Rome, but the most important relations that the CBI has with institutions are the ones that grant its survival. On the one hand there is the tie with the municipality that give them the right to set in space that is property of the municipality and for which they pay a subsidized rent. The second tie that the CBI was able to build is the one with the municipal garbage collector company, due to an agreement with it the CBI get the right to collect most of the materials from which the bikes that are put up for auction come from. lately, also this mechanism has been replicated by other CBIs of the same kind.

The relationship with the population and with city is sometime conflictual :" It is a city very much diffused, with a downsized and problematic public transport system and with a bad attitude with public transit in general, with lots of traffic and with a bad attitude with the use of cars as well. It is a city that is thought to be lived with cars, and as everyone could access at any time and everywhere a car." Is a city where is also difficult to convince people to change habits, to shift towards a more sustainable mobility because the most of the people consider urban cyclist as an
"obstacle that has not the right to claim to be traffic per se". Although this is a perverse mechanism because: "the more bikes on the streets the fewer cars, the fewer cars the less traffic, the less traffic the faster commuting the healthier environment and the fewer accidents" but is difficult to change the mind of people.

However, when talking about exogenous process that may have contributed to the growth of the CBI and influenced the evolution path chosen, is not possible to neglect to consider two elements that seems to be more evident than others. On the one hand, the recent economic crisis is very likely responsible for an increase of the total number of users of the CBI. In fact the CBI saw the demand for its service exponentially growing between 2008 and 2011. Consequently also the numbers of volunteers increased, as it is not so unusual that many people got in touch with the CBI first as users and then start also volunteering. One of the fresher member said: "Well then, I started participating to the initiatives of the CBI first as a user, in fact I needed to repair my bike and I went there; then since it was an environment particularly warm open and welcoming I thought it was worth to invest my time in volunteering for them as well". On the other hand it seems that another element that may have helped to shape the CBI in building up his reputation and may have helped the CBI in outreaching volunteers and beneficiaries is the cultural change and public opinion in regard of urban cycling. In fact, recently also in Italy and in particular in Rome, the public society's opinion of urban cycling radically changed. At first urban cyclist were very few, they evoked surprise in the eyes of both pedestrians and drivers, and they were treated as an endangered species, one of the oldest members said: "many years ago who was riding a bike in Rome was seen as an Martian... it was like a camel walking in Piazza Venezia (very crowdie central square with tons of buses cars and taxis at any time of the day and night)... first reaction was surprise... then to slow down because his reaction was unknown when a car was passing by him and could be potentially dangerous ... now there are lots of them, they are annoying because they slow down traffic.. so drivers are careless of speeding nearby cars.. because they think if cyclists fall is their fault, better take a car next time". This change may seem as an obstacle to urban cycling diffusion, which is partly true, but is also true that a large part of the public society - although still being politically characterized at left - modified its perception in regard of urban cyclists. This is a consequence of the fact that urban cycling was born within a specific cultural environment with a strong political connotation; when the strong political connotation faded out, the nature of the political orientation remained but with a milder connotation and nowadays it is mostly perceived as something cool or fashion, a sort of avant-garde of urban mobility : "recently, at least in Rome and within a cultural environment politically identifiable, urban cycling became something widely accepted, actually became something "cool", thus it is seen well commuting by bike and one's reputation grows [within that cultural environment] with urban-cycling".

Nevertheless is quite challenging to determine whether the cultural change boosted CBI's activities and reputation or if it is the cultural change to be influenced and inspired by the CBI's activity.

(1.4.) Name: How do they respond to internal and external stimuli/events/situations?

    Short name: “1.4.Traj-Evo_Stimuli”
Description: This help describing how CBI has recalibrated its activity and to what extent in order to respond to external unexpected stimuli.

The most important external stimuli that influenced the CBI is probably the fact that police cleared off the occupied social centre where it was initially located. This event sparked a discussion about how to evolve, either changing place and moving to another occupied social centre or to pass from a legal status and start a dialogue with the institutional power in order to be given full right to occupy a public place in the same neighbourhood. This transition facilitated the inclusion also of different people that were not strongly politically polarized. Thus, the wider social inclusion was the element that favoured the sparking of ideas and activities within the CBI that had a strong social component. One of the fresh member of the CBI stated: "I believe that even the beneficiaries agree that the CBI is a place that’s more welcoming, less radical in its rules and principles ... there are others where there is a stronger political involvement, others... with a specific target... and then there is us... a place where you can find a wider variety of users". This internal discussion made the CBI evolve and realize that an alternative mode of protest to promote the same values of the beginning is still possible. After this event the CBI seems to have reached a maturity stage, the same maturity that brings it to reflect about the role of other things on their everyday activity and on their evolution. For example now they are aware that education represents an important element. Not solely in the sense of the transfer of knowledge to younger generations, but also as an intimate recognition of the fact that what inspired people to start the CBI was to have had a good education that prepared them well to engage with environmental and social values promotion. One of the oldest member of the CBI said: “being stimulated by good teachers is fundamental... culture is not just about notions, but is to translate what one reads and studies into his everyday life. ..at least for me [education] has been very important in influencing my decision of actively joining such CBI”.

(1.5.) Name: Achievements/elements of success - What does evolution look like for CBIs?

Short name: “1.5.Traj-Evo_Success”

Description: Are there any relevant achievements or signs of success worth to mention?

The aim is (be pragmatic and broad in this sense) to capture what can be considered elements of success for the CBI and if they reached any.

The Members of the CBI believe that there are multiple element of success. As a first reaction the most tangible elements of success of the CBI are twofold: the auctions that are organized to give away bikes in order to fund the initiative :"... I think that maybe the success is when we have the auctions... that’s the most tangible part during the year". These events have seen an increasing number of participants over times. Especially after the first expansion peak occurred between 2008 and 2010; in this period the CBI :"had a great success for many reasons; fundraising achievements, people influenced to take a bike, bicycles given to people
coming from abroad, logistic management of Critical Masses get together etc."
The second element is the environmental footprint, not solely for the number of km
done with bicycles and consequently for litre of fossil fuels spared, but actually in terms
of kg of materials recycled in order to produce working bikes, "I believe that in terms
of materials upcycled, that are not wasted and that get into a mechanism of
reduce, reuse, recycle, our ecological footprint is not negligible at all".

At a more deeper analysis of what success means for the CBI more things emerged. In
this case the oldest member of the CBI where more accurate in responding.
The first reaction was some sort of difficulty in finding what success means for the CBI
and how to quantify it:" The moment of success hasn’t happened yet because
our growth has been slow the first two years ... and from 2008 we have gone
forward with a lot of fatigue in part because the type of activity changed and
also because it has expanded too. What is success for CO? this is the problem.
We can’t measure it because anyway for us the result most important isn’t how
many bikes we can repairs, or how many people leave happily every night, but
the overarching scope is to live in a better city. This hasn’t happened yet...
going around by bike in this city is still something hard and dangerous. To start
a change we shall not to stop now..."

However, one element of success that emerged clear both form members (old ones)
and from stakeholders is that replication and knowledge spill over is surely an element
of success, even if it does not come directly from the CBI. :"I do not know.. I believe
that is a natural growth process, I consider this a positive thing that some
people leave an build another community bike workshop somewhere else... 2
CBIs are better than 1.. it is not dispersion of energies but it is proliferation.. it is
not a loss of volume, but an increase in mass". Furthermore when this process is
direct consequence of the CBI's activity this is also consider as something to be proud
of :"well if someone opens a community bike workshop is always a success;
then if ti happen to be something that started from us is even better and we are
happy about it"

2. What about future evolution?
(2.1) Name: Future - What evolution WILL likely look like for CBIs?
    Short name: “2.1.Traj-Evo_Future”

Description: It basically responds to which evolutionary path the CBI is likely taking.
This is “possible futures”, which of course can be negative or positive

About how the CBI will likely look like in the future, the opinions were not really
coherent however there is a common vision that the CBI will remain in principles
similar to itself, but its future will probably feature few differences. These differences
are better identified with the following code "How the bike workshop SHOULD look like
in the future". What is clear is that the CBI evolved to a maturity stage were growths
reached its limit, thus further growth will mean necessarily to change something
(replication versus organic growth). :"There is not really a real strong
organizational goal of any sort. What I see is that the growing trend has stopped; the CBI has been now around for a while and it is a positive and fruitful experience. But, as for any other CBI at some point you need to re-think and re-do a strategy... because comes the time when you need to recap and think about what you can do to maintain the positive wave of activity, otherwise there could be a downward trend". So, how this growth is going to happen is quite unclear, probably because this transition has not happened yet :"We are at the beginning of this phase" as one of the fresher members noted. The problem has not really something to do with difficulties in outreach or because they do not have ideas for other activities or that they are lacking volunteers or beneficiaries; in fact :"The neighbourhood where the CBI is settled has a lot of students, foreigners, people who are randomly showing up. It’s not difficult to find new people showing up".

The problem is shaped as a matter of scale-economy. In fact, just like for private business companies, it seems that the CBI reached its physical limit in terms of stable energies that can be put at work and spaces where to operate, thus it seems that the CBI stands at an evolutionary crossroads; one of the oldest member describe the situation in this way :".. well, I see that there is still a growing trend of people coming to the CBI. Although we reached a plateau in regard of the number of people that can fruitfully benefit from our service..and this is just because our space is limited..". This is probably the very first cause that prevents the CBI for growing even more, but the reason for not having decided yet which evolutionary path to take has its roots in an internal debate on which is the right path to take :"We can have very small variation in terms of beneficiaries and volunteers... to increase these numbers we should move and take another spot, bigger, with a similar subsidized rent, somewhere else nearby... but it is not possible to find such in that district, and for us is fundamental to remain where we are, where our connection with the local neighbourhood is so deep-rooted".

(2.2.) Name: Future - What evolution SHOULD likely look like for CBIs?
Short name: “2.2.Traj-Evo_Aspiration”

Description: This was added to better portrait the possible dichotomy between what the evolution WILL look like versus how it SHOULD look like (if any, of course). This code aims also at capturing the aspirations of the respondent for the CBI, or what he/she thinks would be beneficial for the CBI to achieve

How this growth is going to happen is quite unclear, probably because this transition has not happened yet :"We are at the beginning of this phase". The problem has not really something to do with difficulties in outreach or because they do not have ideas for other activities or that they are lacking volunteers or beneficiaries. The problem can be characterized as a double faceted problem: one side deals with the contingent nature of the debate; so the need of a bigger space versus the will to remain in the same place, :"theoretically speaking there is a physical limit to our growth, because if 14 people come all at the same time to repair a bike we do not have enough space to put them at work". But this is the mask for an ideological problem that sees the will to grow as a single entity, to repair more bikes, to make more money and to put more bikes on the street, opposed to the will to replicate the same experience somewhere else, to spill over knowledge, to teach new generations, to reinforce social ties and focus on social promotion. This debate within the CBI is live and vibrant, not violent, but keeps popping up every now and then; it can also be noted as a generational clash. In fact fresher members are the one that are more incline to
expands, move to another place where they can have more working stations, repair more bike to auction in order to make more money to fuel their activity. Somehow they are the same that do not see: "...money as the devil" and that are willing to restructure the CBI in order to make it more profitable to do what they do, and these are also the ones that would not neglect to consider to hire people for specific role. Fresher members expressed the aspirations to structure and organize activities even more, with a clear communication strategy behind and a clear operative plan ahead: "I believe that an expert in communication strategy would take just a blink of an eye to multiply by ten the number of potential beneficiaries". Someone else said reinforced this opinion by saying that it is not just a personal point of view but a shared vision within a restricted group, : "What I have seen from my point of view, which is a personal critique that I have also shared with others, is that in the past 3 years we have been doing less mechanic work on the bikes... and I’m sorry for that because it’s one of the founding parts, why we exist and why the CBI was funded for".

The clash of vision is not about the aim of the CBI, in fact they all agree that it is : "When you put a person on their bike with their bike on the street, this is the thing that makes a difference" but the debate is on how to more efficiently reach that goal.

The fresher members would like to have a place open 24/7: "In my mind I would like to have a place open almost 24 hours a day where you can maintain a place organized like it is today with volunteers and the sharing of knowledge and who wants to learn how to fix bikes and then can have possibility and the space and tools to do so" but to do such a thing the sole work of volunteers is not sufficient, thus they are also open to the fact that the CBI can have some room to make profit, and this profit can serve to pay for some people to work for the CBI, for example: "Well, first like I said you’d have to change the way we see the CO, the way we organize it and putting an approach which is different but also completely voluntary. To guarantee being open like that you’d have to integrate other activities and until that point you can’t do it with just volunteers".

On the other side older members of the CBI oppose resistance to this wave of renovation, because they are culturally more related to the evolution of the CBI and to the roots from which the CBI has generated. That is the cultural political background of the beginning. They already evolved and went through the institutionalisation debate, and now they are the one resisting to the profit oriented growth debate. The reason for this opposition is in part ideological and in part pragmatic. On the one hand they refuse to accept the logic of profit and exchange based on money as a medium because they want to maintain the character of inclusivity and openness that characterized the CBI ever since. The pragmatic motivation for the above mentioned resistance is the fact that from their experience the oldest member of the CBI believe that now is the time to work on social transition by investing on building social capital. And to do that a bigger and newer place is not needed, but a recognizable landmark with an authentic taste it is: "We need to work also in a cultural context, social, to make change happen."

The older members believe that it is not so relevant now to increase the number of bike repaired or auctioned, but to invest in social activities that can build up long term social ties and yield to long term beneficial repercussions. These are not the social bonding activities that characterized the CBI at the beginning, but focus instead on the spill over of knowledge towards young generations. The CBI in fact has recently organized few course of Cyclomechanics for teenagers of secondary schools. One of
the oldest member said: "surely one point of success in 5 years is to build a lab for cyclomechanics with several schools with students. This the right age, because they are surely the people most receptive in receiving our message". It is clear that they are not focusing on short term success but on a long term success plan. Besides older members consider also replication a good way to spread cyclmehcanics knowledge and urban cycling culture, this is the reason why the approve and encourage the birth of new community bike repair shops in other neighbourhoods even if these are being opened by former members of the CBI, :"We want to see others born in a similar reality as ours, we have gotten to a certain critical number of people and see that its hard to manage". Some migration towards new neighbourhoods has already happened but it is not seen as something harmful for the CBI but as something natural and favourable for the whole movement because there are still a lot of places in the city that do not have a community bike workshop :"we already had some migration towards new CBIs... but in regards of the diffusion of this sort of CBIs there is a lot of room to reach a real success, there are a lot of places that would benefit from a CBI like us".

3. Are there any conflictual element/process/events that played a substantial role in influencing CBI's life? Short name: “3.1.Traj-Evo_Conflict”

Description: This aims at exploring the role of tensions/conflicts in characterizing/influencing the evolution of the CBI.

The role of conflicts in shaping the history of the CBI is extremely relevant. Probably the most important is the one that caused the CBI to split in 2006. In response to the clearing of the social occupied social centre were the CBI was initially located, one part of the initial group of members founded an association in order to operate a transition from an illegal status to a legal one; thus allowing them to be a liable interlocutor with the public administration. The other part of the initial group decided not to dialogue with institutions and to move and install a new people's bike workshop in another social occupied social centre. What caused this tension is how different opinion groups within the CBI decided to cope with institutions. Initially the cultural background in which the CBI was born was the context of the political radical left, thus a culture in complete oppositions with the current public institutions of that time. Once the municipal administration decided not to tolerate any longer that a social occupied social centre was happening few steps away from the coliseum, this external conflictual relation generated an internal conflict, causing the CBI to split into the two groups afore mentioned. In one group prevailed values such as the link with the original territory, with the people living that territory, and the will to not lose the experience and the work done to set up a place and build a recognizable landmark. In the other group prevailed the will to fight institutions even if that would have meant to abandon a fruitful experience. This may sound counterintuitive, in particular if we examine that the nature of the conflict little has to do with the main activity carried on by the CBI but with collateral activities done within the CBI; however is easily readable if we consider the cultural and political heritage that inspired and influenced the birth and diffusion of such CBIs in Rome. One of the oldest member of the CBI remembers :" We were the 3rd community bike workshop in Rome. The 1st was run by a cultural associations, they were tied to occupation of spaces abandoned, private, and positions of contrast with the institutions. We were the first reality to collaborate with the institutions and access take a space which was abandoned, but with
The second conflict is the one that may be responsible for shaping the CBI in the future. It is a lively debate within the CBI that deals with the juxtapositions of two visions about how the CBI should evolve. In fact everybody seem to agree that the CBI reached his capacity limits and should evolve, but how that should happen is the critical point. On the one hand fresher members are pushing for a physical expansion, enabling the possibility to serve a higher number of people, repairing and auctioning a higher number of bikes and extending opening hours to 24/7, although this may will imply to start making some profit or/and to start hiring some people to keep the CBI open. On the other hand the oldest member of the CBI are worried that the expansion-path may corrupt the spirit of the CBI and transform it into some sort of regular bike workshop that makes profit and hire people. Instead, they favour replication and spill overs rather than expansion; they prefer to focus on investing on future social capital rather than on a return in profit. This juxtaposition features also different timespan within to reach success, the first is a short term growth supported by profit, the other one is a long term plan based on education and social investments. External stakeholders seem to agree with the older core of the CBI. In fact, from their point of view replication and knowledge spill overs are considered as an element of success, but also a consequence of the natural evolution process of the CBI :" i believe [replication] is a natural growth process, i consider this a positive thing that some people leave an build another community bike workshop somewhere else... 2 CBIs are better than 1.. it is not dispersion of energies but it is proliferation.. it is not a loss of volume, but an increase in mass". A probable explanation for the fact that external stakeholders opinion seems to be more aligned with the one of older members (not age-wise but experience-wise) is because they share the same cultural roots and they have seen the whole evolution of the CBI. The fact of giving more importance to knowledge transfer rather than to increase in size fits very well the philosophical paradigm that inspired the proliferation of community bike workshops in Rome at the beginning of a cyclo-movement in Rome; when the urban cyclists joining the first Critical Mass events realized that :” it was necessary to create spaces for social aggregation where anybody could learn and teach how to repair and tune his/her own mean of transport [bicycle] by sharing and spreading knowledge and cyclomechanic skills”.

5. Summary

Write here about what you felt the key findings were – what are the patterns that emerged from your data? Where do you feel your data is unclear, or where do you have questions? What is striking about what you found?

Dual relationship with institutions: on the one hand the CBI was born in an antithetical way to institutional power in fact it was hosted in a occupied social centre, mostly frequented by people close to the radical left political ideology, and where the Critical Mass inspiration was really strong. This relation was so conflictual that police was sent to clear-off the occupied social centre, although not all occupied social centre in Rome underwent the same resolution. After this initial stage an internal conflict at the CBI brought the most radical and anti-institutional part of the CBI to leave and open a new
place (like a release of offspring) while the part most incline to dialogue with institution, even if only in an utilitarian perspective, decide to start a transition that brought the CBI from an illegal status to a legal one and thus made possible the negotiation with the institution.

The dualism of the relationship with institutions is not exhausted to the dichotomy afore described, in fat that one could also be simply explained as a growth process that achieved maturity through time. But what is important to underline is that this dualism characterizes the whole history of the CBI. It is best explained through the fact that on the one hand the relationship with institutions is vital for them (e.g. with the Municipality for the subsidized rent of their location, or with the Municipality Garbage Collector Company that grant them the special right to get broken bikes or spare parts that are still reusable) and they hardly want to maintain this relationships even if that is not perceived really well from other sister CBIs in Rome. Actually, this relationships are what characterized the CBI, made it different from all other CBIs, and now it is taken as model from other CBIs that are willing to replicate and mimic Cyclonauts operative framework. On the other hand the dualism is completed with the fact that the CBI is among the harshest critics of the institutions responsible of regulating traffic, deciding transportation laws, and implementing public infrastructure.

To briefly summarize the path taken by the CBI in an evolutionary perspective we can identify the following phases:

Birth: it started as a spin-off of another CBI, it is characterized by a strong political polarization and in opposition with institutions, its activity is not strongly structured.

Maturity: the CBI modifies itself following an internal ideological conflict. An offspring similar to how the CBI looked like at the beginning was released, while the main core evolved and passed from an illegal to a legal status, consequently favouring a dialogue with institutions.

Affirmation: the CBI keeps growing and modifies itself, it passes from being a place where social aggregation was a relevant part of its activity to a phase where social gathering is a collateral experience to facilitate the main activity. Although being more social inclusive it focuses mostly on offering a service of cyclomechanics to beneficiaries. Thus the main focus is refined and reinforced. This process is coupled by a "generational" turn-over and by a growth in numbers (volunteers, bike repaired, opening hours, materials recycled, beneficiaries, etc.) and by an increased level of internal self-regulation and organization. The CBI's offspring carry their experience gained in the CBI with them in different places. This stage brings also the fact that the CBI has been the object of knowledge spill overs and replications in other places of the city. This leakage is seen as part of the growing process; for some is also an element of success that should be favoured for the future.

6. As per Isabelle's instruction

Finish each memo with a two or three paragraph reflection on development, up-scaling, replication, and/or diffusion of community-based initiatives in the context of our theme.

Development:
To briefly summarize the path taken by the CBI in an evolutionary perspective we can identify the following phases:

**Birth:** it started as a spin-off of another CBI, it is characterized by a strong political polarization and in opposition with institutions, its activity is not strongly structured.

**Maturity:** the CBI modifies itself following an internal ideological conflict. An offspring similar to how the CBI looked like at the beginning was released, while the main core evolved and passed from an illegal to a legal status, consequently favouring a dialogue with institutions.

**Affirmation:** the CBI keeps growing and modifies itself, it passes from being a place where social aggregation was a relevant part of its activity to a phase where social gathering is a collateral experience to facilitate the main activity. Although being more social inclusive it focuses mostly on offering a service of cyclomechanics to beneficiaries. Thus the main focus is refined and reinforced. This process is coupled by a "generational" turn-over and by a growth in numbers (volunteers, bike repaired, opening hours, materials recycled, beneficiaries, etc.) and by an increased level of internal self-regulation and organization. The CBI's offspring carry their experience gained in the CBI with them in different places. This stage brings also the fact that the CBI has been the object of knowledge spill overs and replications in other places of the city. This leakage is seen as part of the growing process; for some is also an element of success that should be favoured for the future.

**Up-scaling & replication:**
Part of the CBI sees up-scaling as a goal, other parts do not and would rather foster replication and knowledge spill overs. It is a lively debate within the CBI that deals with the juxtapositions of two visions about how the CBI should evolve. In fact everybody seem to agree that the CBI reached his capacity limits and should evolve, but how that should happen is the critical point. On the one hand fresher members are pushing for a physical expansion, enabling the possibility to serve a higher number of people, repairing and auctioning a higher number of bikes and extending opening hours, although this may will imply to start making some profit or/and to start hiring some people to keep the CBI open. On the other hand the oldest members of the CBI are worried that the expansion-path may corrupt the spirit of the CBI and transform it into some sort of regular bike workshop that makes profit and hire people. Instead, they favour replication and spill overs rather than expansion; they prefer to focus on investing on future social capital rather than on a return in profit. This juxtaposition features also different timespan within to reach success, the first is a short term growth supported by profit, the other one is a long term plan based on education and social investments. External stakeholders seem to agree with the older core of the CBI. In fact, from their point of view replication and knowledge pullovers are considered as an element of success, but also a consequence of the natural evolution process of the CBI :" I believe [replication] is a natural growth process, I consider this a positive thing that some people leave an build another community bike workshop somewhere else... 2 CBIs are better than 1.. it is not dispersion of energies but it is proliferation.. it is not a loss of volume, but an increase in mass"

**Diffusion:**
The diffusion of the "model" represented by the CBI is quite peculiar. In fact, at the beginning the fact that the CBI decided to go through a process of institutionalization and to open a dialogue with public institutions is an element that distinguishes this CBI from the other CBIs belonging to the Roman Network of People's Bike Workshops. By the way, the success acquired by the CBI showed that this model is effective and can yield substantial results. As a consequence several other places now are willing to replicate and mimic Cyclonauts operative framework. Furthermore, some offspring were directly released by the CBI itself, in fact it happened that people from the CBI decided to leave and open a sister CBI in different neighbourhoods.

Memo from UAB

1. Introduction

The data below is drawn from diverse types of initiatives, the first one (Totacucaviu, TCV) is a cooperative of 23 households who organize and commit themselves to purchasing (seasonal) fruits and vegetables from a local organic producer on a weekly basis all year long; the second type is their (Totacucaviu's) local organic producers – initially Kosturica (K) and consequently - Aurora del Camp (AdC); the third one is the energy cooperative Som Energia (SE) consisting of individuals who jointly purchase energy with a green certificate, while slowly starting to invest in alternative energy capacities; Several stakeholders of this loop of initiatives have been interviewed for obtaining external perspective. On the side of SE, these are a member of the Xarxa de SoberaniaEnergètica (XSE), and the head of SantCeloni sustainability office (SC), and on the side of AdC, a member of a farm from their network of fellow producers (ConreuSereny, CS) and the head of the regional agriculture office in Maresme.

(1.1) What and how the evolutionary path of the CBI was shaped and where it led the CBI?

In order to describe the evolutionary path of the initiatives in the field of food, a distinction will have to be made between first and second generation small-scale peri-urban farms and their food cooperatives.

The second generation small-scale peri-urban farms

One of the local organic farms in the sample, the four-year old Aurora project started off as a spin-off of a food cooperative. After spending 8 years in one of the Barcelona food cooperatives, two of its founding members decided to “close the circle” and start producing for it. In this way they could count on a customers’ pool of 40 family units right from the start. Over time more cooperatives in Barcelona subscribed to receive the vegetable baskets of Aurora. An important feature of the process was the social links between producers and consumers which were constructed slowly through assemblies and communal lunches or fiestas on the farm site.

Gradually the project kept growing in terms of cultivated land, production, planning and technology. Starting by working only manually, its members constantly went looking for new techniques, thus moving on to the use of a bicycle-tool for removing weeds and eventually to the use of tractor.

The geographical and socio-political context of the project has to some extent determined its character and success. The project is located within the range of 20 km to Barcelona rather than far in the mountains as its members considered it important to keep in
touch with the city “where their culture is rooted”. The project members furthermore state to feel part of the local agroecological movement through which consumers are put in contact with the producers of their food, and agriculture is understood as part of both the “natural and human world”. This vision is reflected in the particular location of Aurora. The farms stands at 500 meters from the beach, on the verge of luxury houses built for speculation during the period of cheap loans and construction boom in Spain on one side and a small textile factory on the other. The terrain is property of an investor whose intention to convert its statue from agriculture to constructible land and build luxurious housing failed due to the crisis. The farm thus creates green lungs for the nearby village and a biodiversity reserve for local bird and animal species.

**The first generation small-scale peri-urban farms**

The other productive project in the sample, Kosturica, is one of the oldest in Catalunya. It started in a very different socio-political context. In the beginning there were hardly any projects where consumers unite with producers to provide local, seasonal and fresh food, produced in equitable, or socio-ecological conditions. Thus in the beginning Kosturica could count upon a large number of highly motivated individuals, who perceived consumption as a political act, or a tool for social transformation and committed to working together with farmers “shoulder to shoulder” (M., a member of K.). This facilitated the growth of the project enormously.

Kosturica was started off after an assembly in the countryside, where they proposed to produce vegetables for 15 families, among which members of the future Totacucaviu cooperative. Until the end of the first year the number of family units reached 60 and kept growing ever since. Like Aurora, its founders did not come from farmer families. Rather they gathered practical experience by travelling and seeing other projects. Kosturica was started by 3 people who initially earned their living through part-time jobs outside the farm while working for free on its establishment. One difference between Kosturica and Aurora is the clear cultural-political positioning of the former group. The members of Kosturica state to come from libertarian collectives defending horizontal, participative mode of decision-making, whereby newly entered members of the team have as much decision-making power as the old members. Having a bigger team was considered more socially acceptable in order to rotate tasks and give members possibility to take time off and thus reduce the feeling of “being slaves to the land putting off a lot of young people from the farmer profession”, M., a member of K.. Thus their project aimed at:

"Giving more stability to the small producers through commitment on the side of consumers which reduced the feeling insecurity which markets give; and on the other hand - at finding the maximum horizontal way of working so that the feeling of slavery is avoided”, M., a member of K.

They used the principles of a complete economic transparency and a constant communication through which they presented their annual accounts of incomes and costs, including salaries, to the members of all cooperatives. While being open and welcoming, the team of Kosturica did not have the skills to run an economic enterprise. Its evolution involved many changes on the side of the producers and among consumers where big fluctuations were taking place. Many people passed through the project and its production team. Many of them decided to become farmers afterwards, starting a project of their own later on. In that sense Kosturica has been "a sort of a learning ground for many", (M., a member of K). This educational aspect of the project is, however, a source of both joy and grief for its members. Despite the amount of work they put in production its economic sustainability was never satisfactory for both external and internal reasons. The external conditions changed, competition intensified making organic vegetables more accessible, and the number of committed members of cooperatives decreased with time.

"On the one hand we are happy that the sector has grown and ecological products have become more accessible but this has had a very high price for us because this has happened on
the cost of discrediting or changing the social model which we thought should have been adopted, a model which gives more stability and dignity to the small farmer.” M., a member of K

The story of the food cooperative Totacucaviu

Right in the start, the group of people who initiated Kosturica and Totacucaviu was very integrated. Some of the people within wanted to go to the countryside and produce and the other spent about a year analyzing the possibility of starting a food cooperative based on the synergies and alliances with the rest.

“It looks like one of these projects where consumption and production are not so separated in the beginning. So both initiatives started in the same time and went on separating throughout the years”. R., a member of TCV.

Totacucaviu was nevertheless initiated as a project based on the synergies of several girls living in the same house and various other “coincidences”. Most of the people who started it were female activists connected to the neighbourhood of Ciutat Vella in Barcelona. Having participated in various projects together and living in the same flat or neighbourhood acted as a “detonator” for the start of the cooperative. Its initiation has been long and complex, and involving an entire year of meetings. The horizontal organizational model has been placed at the core of the cooperative, as its initiators were coming from groups and movements based on direct democracy.

Initially Totacucaviu was one of the groups with highest level of commitment both politically and practically, contributing to collective working days in the field and attending general assemblies of the farm.

The case of Som Energia (SE) energy cooperative

The initiative was started in 2009 by one person who had a clear idea, entrepreneurial skills and experience in the field of energy cooperatives. His idea to set up a cooperative which purchases renewable energy at the liberalized energy market and sell it to its members with very small margin to members quickly got the support of experts and activists working in the field. The cooperative was started after one kicked-off assembly. One of its innovative aspects is starting with purchasing and re-selling, rather than generating its own energy. Another concerns its organizational model, with autonomous local groups, a decision-making council and a technical office doing the administrative work. In that way, from its very conception, Som Energia created the space for volunteers to contribute in the ways they could, eventually attracting laywers, graphic designers, engineers, and activists.

“There was room for the participation for all those who ... knew that the current model of energy provision is completely unsatisfactory and wanted to co-create something new”. D., a member of SE.

Over time various local groups of the cooperatives emerged in different cities of Spain, consisting of people who joined spontaneously, without previously knowing each other.

“It was the force of the project that united us”, A., a member of SE.

The growth of SE was thus stimulated by both the knowledge and entrepreneurial skills of its founder, and the vacuum within the social movements for projects which offer an alternative to the present energy oligopoly.

“People joined intuitively, without knowing much about the energy system”, A., a member of SE.

Over time multiple local groups emerged, with different level of activity. Initially local groups started only after expression of interest, while later when the cooperative gained
popularity new groups and members joined after asking for the requirements and associative process needed. Cohesion between local groups is maintained through a virtual platform and an annual meeting and a summer school, where all members are invited to participate. While some of the groups are not legally established, others are juridical entities which legitimizes them in front of local authorities.

"SE Aragón does not exist because the group has decided it. Its existence is legitimizied through its own assembly" A., a member of SE.

Yet, the project grew without much governmental involvement. Over time, for reasons of clarity and upon insistence from experts in the field of energy it had to change its presentation from “we guarantee the delivery of 100% renewable energy” to “we guarantee that the delivery of 100% of the energy that has been introduced in the system as renewable”, because anyone who knows a little about the energy system knows that the energy comes from a common pool”, I., a head of SC sustainability office.

(1.2) Name: Endogenous processes - What influences how they evolve/evolved? Short name: “1.2.Traj-Evo Endo"

Certain factors are pertinent to both farm projects and others more to the first, or second generation ones. Starting with the common ones, dedication should be the first one. Starting a small organic farm from scratch requires working more than full-time and with little holiday leave in the first years, where big percentage of this effort goes without remuneration. Such physical, economic and psychological commitment can only go along with given belief in the ideas, which this project would demonstrate.

"We have worked like hell. The first two years we did about 80 hours per week. Now we start to take more time for ourselves”. R., a member of AdC.

The second factor has been the importance of networking. Both AdC and K. have initiated networks of like-minded producers from their zones.

“We were eager to get to know other agriculture workers who shared our ideas and agro-ecological vision, where social aspects and local dimension are also incorporated, as well as the idea of working with consumers, which were far from the vision of ecological agriculture”. M, a member of K.

Kosturica contributed to establishment of the Xarxeta network of organic farmers from the region of Valles. The process involved the development of a shared vision on agroecology and establishment of an own system of guarantee, or certificate. The Xarxeta “stamp” guarantees that various social and production scale aspects are taken into account. The network is furthermore managed through organizing meetings every month and a half on the land one member’s farm so that farmers get to know and “inspect” each other’s projects.

The specific feature of the first generation peri-urban farms which eventually marked their evolution is its socio-political positioning in organizing its work. The farm worked for many years on the basis of direct democracy and horizontality, meaning: equality in salaries, decision-making rights and ranking between new and old members. The members of Kosutirca present their annual accounts to all their customers for inspection and discussion. Applying these political and ethical principles has proved to be “inefficient”, or time-consuming, which has had a repercussion on the price of their production. Furthermore the project has been initiated without much prior information on the load of labour and other costs involved. This led to setting a price of their vegetable deliveries which appeared too low and not easy to renegotiate in the longer term.
In contract, the second generation peri-urban started off with strong entrepreneurial skills. The capacity of AcD to innovate and efficiently manage their work and various events they initiate is mentioned as one of their inherent characteristics. Having an entrepreneurial vision from the very start has facilitated the project enormously.

“They know very well what they want to do, and thus ask questions at which you can respond with precise answers” A., head of agriculture department in Maresme.

Overall, given the strong competitive (market) pressures for small peri-urban farms, presence of heterogeneity of skills is an important factor over their life frame. One of the members of Aurora, for example, is reported to have good negotiation and organizational skills, while the other – a good knowledge on farming and working with land. Yet, heterogeneity of skills, alone would not work if actors are irreplaceable or not much transversal. While the combination of expertise has been important, exclusivity in the execution of tasks has not been an option. Roles are not strictly fixed and could be exchanged whenever needed. Such rotation, however, could only happen when having complete trust in the other member/s. In this context, achieving time and resource efficiency has been given a key consideration for AdC . This is done by making a precise estimation of the duration of each farming action and constantly working to improve the practice and technology used on the side.

Finally, the presence of emotional intelligence rarely comes in when talking about small-farms, but it has played a fundamental role for the project.

“These type of projects are not for people who do not have emotional intelligence”, G., a member of AdC.

In the case of the food cooperative, two groups of endogenous factors can be extracted as having a key role in their development. These can be summarized as, on the one hand - their socio-political stance, or “action beyond the cooperative” and related to the functioning of the initiative.

- Action beyond consumption.

The early days of the cooperative were strongly marked by the presence of particular movement represented by ecologically-minded people, as well as ones related to the political, anti-globalization and various other groups working on the level of the neighbourhood. The founders perceived the cooperative as an agent of social transformation, and consumption as a political act rather than a private decision, which only satisfies needs.

“My motivation to join was both political and concerning personal health....I knew that here I would find similar-minded people”. V., a member of TCV.

A main priority for the cooperative has always been the direct contact with the producer, rather than buying it all “eco” regardless of its social consequences, even if this implied investing a lot of time.

While some members come from the same networks, all interviews state that there is not one single profile of the participants. One of the members talks about two extreme typologies among which participants are distributed: one, represented by people who only want to consume ecological, who come, take their basket and leave; and the other who invest time in all maintenance activities, such as participation in commissions, doing the weekly turns and bi-monthly assemblies.

“This [diversity] is both a virtue and a problem. It is a virtue because we have a diversity of people in the group. It is a problem because sometimes the traditions and ways of acting are different which makes it difficult to reach an agreement. Nevertheless, there is a common base which we all share…I come from political participation, I was linked to other movements, and now have daughters who I am taking care of…I am still in the cooperative as this is my space for social intervention and political action” V., a member of TCV.
One of the politically active members of the cooperative who recently left still perceives it as a “platform for doing action together and connecting with other collectives within Barcelona”, R., a member of TCV. Some of these include the (co)organization of events in the neighbourhood together with other local associations such as football tournaments and documentary screenings, followed by discussions. Conditions for taking joint action beyond the common administrative tasks within the cooperative, however, improve during times of wider social unrest or mobilization like the occupation of the central square, known as the “indignados movement”.

- **Horizontality and openness, while limited number of members**

Decisions are taken at the general assembly, after discussion and a facilitated search for consensus; voting is rare; anyone able to pay the weekly basked of vegetables regardless of her/his activist profile or background could enter and influence the process. It is not a juridical figure and can thus be considered as being beyond the control of the state; the group has intentionally opted for being an informal group of consumers who get together to buy using a bank account of one of its members.

Unlike is the case with SE cooperative, growth in size or members is not seen as a positive trend among the members of the cooperative, especially because it becomes difficult to auto-organize horizontally.

- **Commitment and human factor.**

Organization requires a high level of involvement and trust; nevertheless upon entry each member makes a small deposit of 60 euro, with which collective debt can be assumed. In that way one creates a social network which goes beyond the food cooperative, which turns into a place for socialization and building friendships.

**In the case of SE**, some of the key internal elements for the initiation of the cooperative have to do on the one side - with the personality of its initiator and his skills, and on the other – with the energy, work and trust which the people who supported the project put into it, and more than anything – their local groups. One of the strong internal features of SE is the use of participative techniques while trying to address the needs of society. As in the other initiatives, the principle of horizontality is deeply nested in the functionality of SE, which centers its activity in groups of local members (called local groups). Their meetings are a central tool for innovation, resolving organizational problems and undertaking changes. The constant interest in redefining itself, its function and way of coordinating with the commercial structures is one of the internal strengths of the local groups.

“I am the president but I keep a low profile. The task of representation which could give higher visibility to a given person is completely distributed….My idea is not to promote leadership”. A., a member of SE.

“I think that the local group works because it does not have one or two leaders.” S., a member of SE.

Some of the key features of SE emerging from the interviews can be summarized as follows:

- **An imperative for economic consolidation.**

“Want it or not, SE has to be a profitable business to teach its goals”. S., a member of SE.

- **A key role of local groups.**

The fact that the cooperative would not have grown to this extent were it not for the local groups comes out on many occasions by different members. The evolution of the cooperative and its local groups is therefore marked by the personal and work lives of its members and by
the changes in their enthusiasm to create something “bigger than themselves” and bring it to the world ‘outside’.

- **Deliberation.**

The local groups of SE are often perceived as spaces for deliberation and discussion. As in the food cooperatives, views can probably be situated along two opposing extremes: these oriented towards more technical solutions and interventions or technological improvements, coming from electricity generation and thinking of the promotion of renewable energy as a central goal; and these who embrace a wider framework and work towards education and communication, and changing of the overall energy model. Both profiles which are not perfectly neat categories The skills and contributions of create the stability, durability and growth potential of local groups.

“There are people who never deliberate even when they know the truth very well. I prefer to be in total confusion but to deliberate. We have to look for these spaces for deliberation”. D., a member of SE.

SE is defined as a project which contributes to participants’ vision, experience and knowledge.

“We all need to feel part of something bigger and collective. There are groups which transmit positive energy and you feel like joining them... This goes beyond agreeing with each other...it is rather related to the collective process and the persons involved. United in local groups they create alliances which extend beyond the cooperative.” D., a member of SE.

- **Financial transparency and self-financing.**

The project generates trust, because all financial and other information is placed at the disposal of SE members. Unlike the oligopolies in the sector, such as Endesa, whose advertising message avoids mentioning prices and SE talks about comfortable living, SE goes directly to the point of costs and revenues. Investment in renewable energy generation capacities is done through self-financing, or the collection of small loans from members (rather than a bank).

- **Selective collaboration with local authorities**

The discourse of SE changed over time, moving from …”a utopian sounding to more realistic way of presenting the project” (I., a member of SC sustainability council) which increased the confidence of the public authorities. From the perspective of one local municipality which contracted their services, the presence of experienced technical staff with sufficient knowledge in the field of energy and cooperatives was a necessary condition for joining, especially when having the support of local politicians. The motivation and role of the local group to get the municipality on board is reported as being key for the process. The municipality of SantCeloni perceived their participation in the cooperative as an instrument for raising awareness for all citizens in town.

There is disagreement among the interviewees on the capacity of public administration in driving the socio-ecological transformation, with one arguing that state has a clear role and should be acted upon as much as possible, and the others stating that the only demand they would have from the state is not to be obstructed.

“I do not need to be contracted by the public administration....We have no reason to go beg on their door”. D., a member of SE.

On a final note, while some of the interviewed believed that SE should grow as much as possible in order to change the status quo, others argues that “SE is not an end in itself”, P. a member of XSE. The promotion of renewable energy and reduction of consumption are the objectives that overarch the existence of Som Energia as such.
The list of exogenous factors which contributed to the evolution of both first and second generation peri-urban farms and their cooperatives can be summarized as having a positive perception and financial support (subsidies) from public authorities, presence of supportive networks of producers, type of location and finally factors related to the relation with consumers and demand for local organic vegetables.

**Public administration and subsidies**

The representative of the local agriculture department responsible for distribution of the subsidies describes Aurora as farmers who are very willing to work well. The projects got a significant subsidy for starting young farmers, which they could invest in machinery and eventually - time-efficiency. The agricultural department collaborated in organizing joint training activities which could be of interest for other farmers. The older project, Kosturica, for example, could not obtain a subsidy. While they got approved to receive a subsidy, in order to obtain the money they had to spend it first. This implied they had to have the cash on hand, or get a loan. As the bank was unwilling to give a loan to the project, they had to resign the funding. Another issue they had with the subsidy is that it only reimbursed new equipment. Second hand machinery could not be purchased, which run contra their ideas about the importance of reusing equipment.

**Supportive networks of producers**

Both Aurora and Kosturica contributed to the creation of a network with the nearby organic producers, which gave them the feeling of being “a grain of sand within a larger, bigger movement”. G., a member of AdC.

In the case of Baix Maresme, the region of Aurora, none of the local organic producers could provide 100% of the vegetables they needed for their cooperatives and consumer groups and previously had to buy from outside. Joining forces they could provide each other with the missing items (or produce for each others’ food cooperatives) and make big orders of fruit in order to save on transport costs.

“We are bigger now than being alone. There are weeks when our biggest buyer is the other farmers...It furthermore implies providing it here, rather than going to Barcelona. It is the closest client who buys at a fixed price all year long”. G., a member of AdC.

**Location**

In the case of Aurora, obtaining organic certification was easy because the land had not been in use for many years. Maintaining its agriculture status has been key for keeping rents low. The success in terms of growth and economic sustainability of this project is largely determined by its nearness to Barcelona and its consumers

“They call it the ecological monster”. G., a member of AdC.

**Supportive networks on the consumer side**

The network of consumers that maintains the peri-urban organic farms in the sample is key for their evolution as it give them certain continuity. As one of the members of Aurora said:

“Our advantage is not having the consumers of conventional farmers”. R., a member of AdC.

As the case of Kosturica illustrates, however, this advantage has sometimes had a “back” side. The pool of non-conventional consumers can sometimes shrink or stop expanding. At its initiation in 2000 Kosturica was one of the very few projects of the kind in a context of high demand for “politicized consumption”. This defined and led their successful growth during the
first years. From 2012 competition increased and one of their food cooperatives dropped out, forcing them to dedicate much more time to the commercial promotion of their produce. The increased supply of ecological products coincided with a turning point in many of the food cooperatives. After years of expansion and replication food cooperatives reached a point of slow down. This is being explained with

“newly entered people do not understand the idea, or no one explains it to them (that this is not about supermarkets) …and eventually leave, but also the rest of the group do not always have a good relation with new members” M., a member of K.

Yet, once the initial pool of politically active and aware members move onto other projects or places, the new entrees tend to come from a different culture, where experience or knowledge about direct democracy and a sense of communal responsibility are not necessarily present.

What happens with the food cooperatives, however, should be understood in a wider socio-economic and geographical sense. The Totacucaviu food cooperative, for example, is situated in a sociologically complex neighbourhood in the central parts of Barcelona (Cuidad Vella), having high percentage of young people many of whom are in flexible labour conditions. One of the interviewees talks about the so-called “liquid society” in this part of town, composed of young people in precarious working situation, who move a lot in the search for a good life-project or a job. They are attracted to the idea of the food cooperative, but unable to commit to living and contributing to a place and a project for long, which, on the other hand is problematic for the functioning and processes of the food cooperative.

At the same time, in comparison with other parts of town the number of consumer groups in the neighbourhood is high. One of them is an offspring of Totacucaviu, while the other two are more commercially oriented, or with paid intermediation between the farmer and consumers.

In the case of Som Energia two general exogenous factors which influenced the emergence and trajectory of the initiative are identified. One relates with the economic crisis and so-called democratic deficit in the energy sector of the country, another with the socio-political history and profile of Catalunya where the initiative was generated.

**Need for energetic socio-economic transition**

Many interviewees mention that SE emerged right on time.

“For those of us who carry on years working in the field of renewable energy this was a huge surprise. I guess it has been a good moment”. P., a member of SE.

According to one of its members it “occupied an empty space within the solidarity economy” and came in right in the moment when new actors and forms of organizations in the renewable energy sector were needed.

“No one in the solidarity economy networks was talking about the energy sector when we started” A., a member of SE.

All interviewees referred to the vacuum in the field of non-oligopolistic non-for-profit forms of organizing the distribution of renewable energy which preceded the emergence of SE; as well as the economic crisis in Catalunya and Spain as factors which contributed to the development of the cooperative. Its appearance mobilized pioneers in the social movements having different backgrounds. Many people joined as a protest against the abuses in the energy sector, rather than for pure environmental reasons, saying:

“Ah, I want to join SE in order to leave Endesa. Where do you want my 100 euro?” A., a member of SE.
In sum, the emergence of SE has been strongly favored by the coincidence of social mobilization for deepening democracy, the economic crisis and a widespread frustration with the oligopolies in the energy sector in the country.

The location

The strong third sector in Catalunya and its multiple non-for-profit entities is brought forwards as creating favorable conditions for the emergence of SE. Others mention the democratic culture of Catalunya and its historically strong cooperativist movement (from the 1930s) as providing beneficial base for the initiative evolution. The so-called social texture of the city and its associative and cooperative culture has facilitated the growth of SE a lot. Many Catalan federations and other cooperatives supported the development of SE. Furthermore, in comparison with other local groups, the Barcelona-based SE team, for example, could always find spaces for meetings and public activities, having either municipal civil centers, libraries or other forums at their disposal.

“The big number of people who joined as members and keep joining is the big surprise. This had never happened in Spain. This is related to the desire for cooperation in Cataluntya”. P., a member of SE.

Another factor explaining the growth of SE is being the first. As in the case of Kosturica, the cooperative was the first project of the kind, emerging in a context of when a clear need for new actors in the energy sectors had been identified. As one of the members of the local group exposes:

"The Catalan society is quite “worked out”. All major figures in the sector know each other. Thus when SE appeared out of the blue and a bunch of unknown figures, it generated a lot of interest and curiosity” P., a member of SE.

As in the food cooperatives in Barcelona, the local group of SE in town is strongly influenced by people “liquidity”, where members keep changing and rotating for personal and work-related motives.

When it comes to legislation and relations with public authorities, there is something common between the food and energy cooperatives studied. Their emergence has not been influenced by any public regulation or incentive mechanisms. On the contrary, they exist because the legal framework does not obstruct their operation, nor have they been successfully coopted by the public authorities so far. One of the members of Totacucaviu referred to the “law that does not exist”, as the most favorable form of regulation they have. At the same time both food and energy cooperatives tend to be very positively received by the people. The positive image of local public authorities of SE is worth noting, which has not been based on a proactive attitude on the side of the cooperative in the form of self-promotion.

The external stimuli, which the initiatives in the sample have responded tend to differ for the different groups. While for food cooperatives, the biggest challenge is how to maintain operating in a context of lower interest or less active participation, for the energy cooperative current concern is how to respond to the growth in members and keep its momentum. Nevertheless certain features of the “liquid society” pertain to both, when it comes to local groups in cities. On the side of the peri-urban farms the external pressure they are working to respond concern competition and the entry of big business in the sector, as well as the shrinking of the food cooperatives or the “softening” of commitment on the side of their members.
Having fewer and less-interested members

In the words of its members, Totacucaviu ended up watering down its original mission for political intervention and now represents only a consumer group with modest pretentions for political intervention.

"We have critically reviewed some of our implicit objectives with regards to our (reduced) capacity to intervene in society, or in terms of loyalty to certain political projects", V., a member TCV.

Part of this change can be explained with the entry of people who have only seen the so-called “capitalist culture”, where production and distribution takes place through market relations and vertical economic organization in the food cooperatives. In the words of one of the interviewees, the horizontal operational mode of Totacucaviu, where solidarity, loyalty, or friendship are given higher priority to (time- and money-)efficiency, creates a cultural shocks for the new members. Some of them manage this shock by trying to adapt the structure to their culture; others try to create a fraction within the cooperative which defends professionalization, or just keep a low profile manifesting their discontent through zero involvement.

Responding to an increased competition with the ecological agriculture industry, the economic crisis and the slow-down in food cooperatives

Competing with cheap ecological tomatoes coming from the south of Spain; freezing in the price of vegetables; an increase in VAT; higher prices of petrol and thus eventually – higher costs; are just few of the external challenges which small peri-urban farms have to address. For Aurora the response has been through “taking economic sustainability of the business more seriously”, (G. a member of AdC) and increasing efficiency. This implies a constant search for improving the way production takes place, through experimenting various techniques, many trials and well-trained personnel.

The response of Kosturica, has been to soften the requirements for receiving the vegetable baskets, resigning on the one-year commitment demanded on the side of the consumers, reduction of the minimum number of baskets needed for a food cooperative from 10 to 5, adaptation in the format of the basket and possibility of ordering. Initially the common operational model which most cooperatives adopted was through the so-called ‘closed baskets’ which was designed by the farmers in function of the vegetables available rather than by the consumer. Eventually more producers started to shift to an “order what we have” mode of functioning.

“The 'closed basket' means a commitment on the side of consumers which allows producers to design the baskets with the maximum possible diversity. Alternatively, when consumers order you cannot program; you never know whether you will be able to sell what you plant. The movement towards order rather than closed baskets has done us a lot of damage”. M., a member of K.

Responding to spontaneous/unplanned growth?

The quick growth of the energy cooperative where most of the work is done voluntarily, created a problem of coordination. Once local groups were created and established, the attitude towards the cooperative changed. People started to ask permission for joining, rather than simply jumping in. One of the ways the cooperative responded to this has been an improvement of its communication tools for all members who are willing to participate.

"Before you could help as you wanted, and now the people see the concrete tasks which needed to be done”, A., a member of SE.

Decision-making has also got increasingly more complex with higher number of local groups and members. The growth of the cooperative firstly required a separation of decision-
making pertaining to the general council from the ones concerning the technical office, or the so-called political from the technical discussion. The role of local groups in decision-making was further clarified. Taking a decision on the criteria for investment in electricity generation plants, for example, firstly requires a preliminary debate in the online platform which all members and local groups are encouraged to access, participate and contribute to. Once the discussion matures, the initial proposal is elaborate and voted upon.

Another organization change in response to the growth in numbers has been the introduction of a decentralized decision-making where local groups could take the final decisions on projects which concern their territory. This change did not go without faults. The use of agriculture land for energy generation has been one of the ardently debated topics among the criteria for investment in renewable plants. Eventually, after the voting the installation of photovoltaic cells on agriculture terrain is considered acceptable only if exceptional circumstances are present. In one of the debated cases, while the local group on whose territory such project has been proposed was in favor, the group in Barcelona has been against.

"Yet, the safeguard clause that ... the people and groups who might have some concern with the project should be consulted was not put in practice in Seville. The food sovereignty association, local agriculture union and neighbors’ associations who have big photovoltaic installations were not consulted”. I., a member of SE.

In terms of energy-generation strategies, the criteria for funding an electricity generation project also changed, moving from the 300 KW for photovoltaic generators, which various members found restrictive, to 1000 KW, allowing the inclusion of industrial barns’ roofs. As loans for energy generation capacities have been considered risky by private banks and therefore difficult to obtain the cooperative has moved to a system of self-funding, offering members to invest small amounts which will be later repaid in discounts from the price of energy, obtained in the future. The repayment in KWh has proved to be attractive for SE members and lead to the generation of two million euros.

**Respond to the quick rotation of change of people within local groups**

The challenges faced by most urban horizontal collective, whose work is organized around voluntary contributions, are present in the local groups of SE. Problems arise with both very active people and the lack of active participants. In the first case, very active people self-exploit themselves, while (implicitly or no) accusing the rest of lower involvement; or their leaving creates a slow-down in the group. In the second case there is the difficulty of knowing what is to be done by the technical office and what by the local groups. Yet, despite the non-permanence of members, the local group in Barcelona has kept renovating itself, incorporating new people, who gradually have assumed responsibilities and generated enthusiasm for being part of the group. The growth of SE has furthermore started to attract different member profiles, moving from more activist-oriented ones to people with experience in the field, or having a small business in the renewable sector.

**Engagement with public authorities**

Members of the energy cooperative have diverse perceptions on the importance of engagement with the state. Some argue that establishing a collaborative relation with the city of Barcelona would be highly beneficial for the local group, and others - that such interaction has never been, nor should it be, a priority. Over the years, the increasing popularity of the cooperative drew the attention of local municipalities.

On some occasions collaboration with state authorities is perceived as cooptation, and on others – as something having a positive contribution to the cooperative:
“The [previous] administration of Barcelona city made an attempt to collaborate with the SE...as a way to compensate for its low citizen participation”. D., a member of SE.

“We started to have a lot of demand from municipalities and public entities”, A., a member of SE. The collaborations between the municipality of the small Catalan town of SantCeloni and SE, for example, is valued very positively by all members. The municipality became their member and eventually contracted a number of social houses and public buildings, despite a large number of administrative hassles.

(1.5.) Name: Achievements/elements of success - What does evolution look like for CBIs? Short name: “1.5.Traj_Evo_Success”

Success is perceived in multiple ways depending on the evolutionary stage of the initiative. For established food cooperatives and their producers the act of continued existence is a success in itself since it provides a socially and ecologically sustainable alternative to mainstream food production and distribution which is viable and easy to adopt. For the energy cooperative success is mostly understood in terms of growth in members, investment projects, which also in terms of providing an environmentally and socially just alternative to the energy oligopoly in the state. All initiatives tend to see success in terms of constructing networks of like-minded people who collaborate towards a common socially acceptable goal. The organization of various public events attracting people outside their close circles is mentioned as an achievement by many of the interviewees.

Achievement as existence; as defense of real alternatives to mainstream food production and consumption

For many interviewees the very act of being there and maintaining the viability of their initiative as an attractive working example of food production and consumption that is socially and ecologically just is a success in itself.

“For me the success of Aurora are they themselves”. I., a head of Maresme agriculture department.

“Maintaining an agroecological project which is economically, ecologically and humanly sustainable is both a challenge and an achievement. We achieved it to some extent”. G., a member of AdC.

“For me we are already a success. For the life we have. For what I eat every day. For the work I do every day. And nothing else”. R., a member of AdC.

“If you ask me about the keys to the success I will talk to you about the key steps to resistence” M., a member of K.

“For me the achievement is just being there. It is those of us who keep on being there after 10-12 years...It is the promotion of agro-ecological consumption and agro-ecology itself”. R., a member of TCV.

“What we want to have – good food every week – is already a success. It is not trying to make it bigger than it is”. T., a member of TCV.

“The achievement is that now, after 15 years the cooperative keeps working: ..there are so many people with whom we have learned together so much; that we have not given up to the market despite the difficulties”. V., a member of TCV.

The existence of many community initiatives in the field of sustainability implies a continuous resistance to the multiple difficulties faced along the way in terms of member drop-off, competition with big business or regulation difficulties. Their existence is lived through as a symbolic promotion of agro-ecology and the opportunity to put given principles of socially and ecologically just production in practice. In the case of food cooperatives, their existence is
perceived as a success, because of the reality and learning opportunities they provide for their members. Food cooperatives work because of their small size and possibility for inter-personal relatedness and, to some extent, the low dependence on money for managing the organizational tasks horizontally. For this reasons, growth in members has been always perceived as something negative by the members of the cooperative. Group stability and long-term commitment of members is stated to have a priority over its expansion. In that sense, for some of the food cooperative’s members consumption is used as a forum, around which socially and politically active people could get together. Unwillingness to grow, however, does not imply closure to new entries; but rather to a model of growth based on replication into multiple autonomous units rather than expansion of one single one.

On the side of producers, the networks of peri-urban organic farms that provide for each other are seen as successes. It enables the model and experience of providing a complete food offer (of fruits, vegetables and animal products) with a local stamp, guaranteeing given socio-ecological standards, possible. This is eventually one of the aims initially set by many producers and consumers.

Success as outreach, education and actions beyond consumption

The organization of various events for either farmers and/or consumers is also seen as one of the possible successes a community initiative could have. One example is the training for transfer of know-how on technological innovation for local farmers, initiated by Aurora together with the members of the local administration. Eventually these trainings ended up in the annual program of activities organized by the regional department of agriculture. Its first episode included demonstrations on bicycle-based soil cleaning and similar mechanical machinery for manual work used by Aurora. It attracted more than 100 farmers in a time of the year with the heaviest workload and lead to the spread of innovative practices in the field of soil management.

"Having the capacity to carry out a project, to continuously improve (and search for improvements of) the system of production, and the ability to communicate this to the others is one of the factors behind the success of Aurora." I., head of Maresme agriculture department.

As one of the Totacuca viu member states, participation in one of the food cooperative tends to involve not only consumption but getting in touch with the culture of direct democracy and collective horizontal organization. For many members the participation implied a lot of learning experience which cannot be gained elsewhere. Success is furthermore understood as being well connected with the agroecological campaigns in Barcelona and Catalunya.

“Participating in the social and political struggles of the neighbourhood and in a Barcelona is already one success; but also being in contact with the network of cooperatives and producers [la Repera] and the agroecological worlds”. R., a member of TCV.

The annual collaborative public event of the cooperative, when they join hands with associations in the neighbourhood for the local football tournament is also perceived as an achievement. The special feature of this event is the integration between local white, activists and members of the cooperatives (some of whom middle-class) with immigrants from Africa from the neighbourhood. The football playing has been found as the best common ground or meeting place for people from different religions, classes and professions in the neighbourhood.

“The tenth annual tournament. I believe this is one of the biggest successes of Totacuca. ...we organize it with many other group. This year we had a group of lawyers playing against young Moroccans. So you have this group of semi-wealthy, say middle-class, white, playing in male-female teams, young and old. And music, announcements on different political topics; the square is more active, people working in the community garden, artists painting, a photo-exhibition with the history of Forat. It is a really beautiful day”. R., a member of TCV.

Unlike the food cooperative in our study, for Som Energia energy cooperative, success tends to be seen in quantitative terms: as growth in members, clients and investment projects. Yet, like
the initiatives in the food sustainability sector, capacity to create networks of likeminded individuals and challenge the oligopolic model of energy generation and distribution and provide a viable and attractive alternative are other aspects of initiatives’ self definition of success.

Growth in members and economic sustainability

The most common perception of success among the individual related to the energy cooperative SE concerns the growth in their members and customers, as well as the speed and ease at which this expansion has taken place. Furthermore, this growth has been facilitated by the cooperative’s ability to learn and adapt. In addition, the competitiveness of its prices, due to the small margin between the price at which energy is obtained at the market and sold to members, is an important factor for its attractiveness for both individual and public customers.

“The key success has been our growth in such a short time, without dying along the way… in the first year we have 1200 members, in the second 5000, in the third 12 000 and now 19 000”. A., a member of SE.

Economic consolidation where workers in the technical office have their salaries paid, with sufficiently large financial buffer and no debt is also perceived as an achievement by the members of the cooperative.

Another measure of success is the high member participation in the summer schools for internal education which the cooperative SE organizes on early basis. At the same time none of the members perceived endless growth or expansion of the cooperative as an end in itself. Concern with avoidance of monopolization has been expressed by two of the interviewed members.

“What we definitely not want is a new Endesa, or that there is only one cooperative in all Spain”. S., a member of SE.

Having state support is furthermore not considered a prerequisite for this success, nor a necessity for its expansion.

Investments in electricity generation

Mobilization of funds for investment in electricity generation is mentioned as one of the big achievements of the energy cooperative.

“We managed to gather more than 2 million euro. We are now about to launch a project for 5 million euro, involving 2.7 megawatts”. P. a member of SE.

A strong network of local groups

The birth of the cooperative has been simultaneously adjoined by the creation of a network of individuals who espoused its goals and disseminated its ideas and practices to a wider public. For many one of the biggest achievements of SE concerns the creation of the local groups, consisting of individuals having expertise to present and defend the message of the cooperative and promote the new model of energy provision and distribution. The creation of SE local groups has also had the side effect of creating networks of people who are able to organize socially and politically beyond the very requirements of the energy cooperative.

A ecologically sustainable model which counterbalances corporate power

The innovative aspects of SE concern not only its cooperative structure which has so far been very uncommon for Spain in the energy distribution and eventually – generation sector, but the different model of participation that it provides.
“The participative model of the cooperative contributes to the generation of social wealth, while contributing to the democratization of society. It is the symbolism of having something that works, something that generates identification, a learning experience for citizens”. P., a member XSE.

As is the case with food cooperatives, the very existence of an alternative which has established and expanded itself is considered a success. On the one hand, it provides a learning ground for what works and what not, and on the other – it contributes to the formation of a counterforce to the companies which monopolize production and distribution.

**Replication**

The emergence of new initiatives inspired from the food and energy cooperatives and their producers is seen as a success. Many people who passed through Kosturica throughout the years dedicated themselves to agriculture and started their own projects. Kosturica has inspired or influenced a wide range of farms, among which Verdurada, Raba Negra, Verdurea, HortViu, Mas Puid, Paratos, La Quintana, Has dela Natura, La Nana, Esqualtera. Given Aurora who provides vegetables for 200 families, one member of the farm makes the rough calculation of the number of small farms needed to feed the metropolitan area of Barcelona. Given this implies nourishing approximately 500 thousand families, he calculates that about 2500 projects of the kind will be needed, which is certainly difficult. As an illustration, the two peri-urban farms (Aurora and Kosturica) work in a network with about 12-13 producers each.

On the side of Totacucaviu, the replication of consumer lifestyles oriented towards sustainability and the organizational form offered by the cooperative, rather than “visualizing techno-fixes and market-fixes”, (T. a member of TCV), is seen as a success.

One concrete example is the initiation of a second cooperative out of Totacucaviu. Its creation has been driven by two coinciding factors. One of its drivers was the occurrence of neighbourhood assemblies emerging out of the civil unrests and occupations in the central city squares in Spain (the Indignados movement) where members of Totacucaviu actively participated. At the neighbourhood assemblies the Totacucaviu members explained how their cooperative functions and motivated people to form a self-managed consumer group of their own. Another factor has been the number of people waiting to enter as members in Totacucaviu, or the long so-called ‘waiting list’. At this moment the food cooperative consisted of 30 family units which the maximum number of members which the cooperative had decided to keep for reasons of efficient self-management. The only way for new people to enter was by people leaving. Thus a small group of people from Totacucaviu organized a meeting where people from the cooperative’s waiting list and those from the neighbourhood assembly could come, learn and receive support for starting a new self-managed consumer group. This lead to the establishment of a new cooperative, which three years later is still in operation.

“What normally happens with Barcelona food cooperatives is that when they grow too much a new one is started. This is what happened when we initiated Las Horteras.”. V. a member of TCV.

“What we should be talking about is that these small initiatives, that are local and grass-roots, or on-the-ground, are successful already. We can look at them as examples of successful projects to learn from, to replicate other types of consumption patterns, this is all”. T. a member of TCV.

Two of the members of Som Energia argue that the emergence of their cooperative inspired the raise of similar initiatives in the field of communication (Som Conneccio), as well as in other regions of Spain. At the same time, members are far from agreement on the replicability of the energy cooperative in other countries or regions.

“SE is what it because it started here. The context influences its form. The people who participate from Barcelona are not the same as the ones who participate in Galicia”. S., a member of SE.
2. What about future evolution?

(2.1) Name: Future - What evolution WILL likely look like for CBIs? Future

(2.2) Name: Future - What evolution SHOULD likely look like for CBIs? Aspiration

The desired future evolution of SE has two aspects, one which pertains to the cooperative as such and another which concerns its wider socio-political impact. The aspiration and potential evolution of the cooperative itself concern its growth in members, customers and installed energy-generation capacity and organizational improvement. Its wider societal impact could imply building alliances with social movements, contributing to increased energy sovereignty and energy democracy.

Carefully targeted growth

Growth in contracts is among the most frequently mentioned aspiration of SE members.

“In Spain there should be 23 million electricity contracts. We have 23 000. We have to grow in members, activists and contracts”. A., a member of SE.

This type of growth is not perceived as a goal in itself. “Our final goal is certainly not a company that sells electricity”. P., a member XSE. It is understood as tool in the hands of citizens to change the energy model in the country. The growth in contracts would imply more decision-making power over energy generation capacities. The aspiration for growth also implies further economic consolidation which will allow the generation of all the energy the cooperative sells to their clients, which is currently only 5%. This means having good energy storage capacities, either using the current electricity network, or creating a new one.

“The challenge is to arrive at 100 000 clients…to a critical mass which can genuinely influence the market”. P., a member of SE.

“We as a municipality have to support such initiatives and the change of the current model of energy consumption and production. I believe that if they are able to produce all they are selling this would be a very important change”. I., a head of the sustainability department at SC municipality.

While the growth of the cooperative is clearly recognized as a central role by many of its members, the perception that SE should not be the “biggest”, or that it should have “sisters” in other parts of Spain and Europe is also there. The importance of replication and spin-off is mentioned by several members.

“More cooperatives should emerge. The cooperative model in the renewable sector should become stronger, so that alliances are generated and potentials for bigger impacts increase”. S. a member of SE.

Improved internal and regional organizational structure

A continuously adaptive organizational structure with regional offices is an aspiration noted by several members of the cooperative.

“The organizational management of a relatively small initiative are one, and the ones required for passing over given thresholds are other….This is required to avoid collapsing”. P., a member of SE.

One of the suggested tracks for organizational improvement is through selective professionalization. Here, respondents stressed the difference between professionalization of the cooperative, which is not a requirement per se, and having more professional staff, which is
required for its economic activities and future evolution. Decentralization of the technical office, or having professionals located in regional offices and responding to all consumer requests is mentioned several times as a desirable future evolution, which could reassure clients that the cooperative is something real and with a human face. Others talk about a structure where each group of one thousand customers come together and agree on a common framework of investment and distribution represented by one technical office which offers all necessary services. The basic idea is having an office where non-active members could go when they have a concern or a problem.

Organizational improvement is furthermore understood as a involving a diversity of member profiles where more social classes and professions are represented, and where leading positions are open for new people and ideas.

“I should withdraw as I already did what I had to, we now need new people, new ideas and ways of doing things”. A., a member of SE.

While issues of economic inequality do not easily enter the scope of the cooperative, one of the interviewees talks about the importance of the social aspects of energy generation, or having renewable power generation capacities controlled by communities. Others mention the need to have bigger economic buffer, so that a social tariff for economically disadvantaged members could be introduced.

Diversity of skills and approaches

One member of SE talks about the importance of combining theoretical, or abstract, work with day-to-day practical activities as key for keeping the impetus. Having both activist and non-activist profiles, of people coming from business, engineering and social movements provides a richness of the membership texture, which allows for more adopting an approach which appeals to a wider audience for absorbing a variety of characteristics.

Alliances with other actors and energy sufficiency

The creation of a viable and stable model of energy democracy (based on sufficiency) seems like a common long-term goal for many members. Some, for example, aspire at seeing the energetic transition of Barcelona through projects of efficiency and self-sufficiency. The creation of alliances with social movements and other actors around the theme of energy transition is perceived as something which is still pending. Many SEE members and stakeholders perceive it as an instrument to democratize the energy system, moving it towards the renewable sector. To this goal, some see generating synergies with other platforms and movements as seen as instrumental. While the establishment of SE as a player in electricity distribution has created a reality of its own where growth is welcome and desired, some of the stakeholders in the cooperative consider it as an element of the transition. This might also imply that at in the distant future, once the goal of communities managing their own electricity is achieved, the cooperative becomes obsolete and disappears.

“They have to bring the system to its limits...showing this what people are asking for”. P., a member XES.

“Community-based electricity provision and distribution is unavoidable”. A., a member SE.

As in the earlier case, for the food production and distribution networks aspirations either pertain to the initiatives as such or the society at large. In the case of producers, improved efficiency, productivity but also personal ecological and social coherence is very much needed for future evolution; the food cooperatives find attracting and keeping engaged long-term members, improving power relations within the group and having the capacity to participate in the wider social and political movements in town as some of their key aspirations. The self-
perceived imperative of acting on societal level comes out in some of the members of Totacucaviu as a desired evolutionary path.

**Balancing between ecological, social, and economic sustainability, while avoiding self-exploitation**

The ideal future which Aurora, and to some extent Kosturica, express is achieving a fine balance between ecological and social sustainability and profitability, which is not based on self-exploitation and voluntary labour. Feeding your family and kids, and living a life which is not considered “hippy” by the mainstream, is among the frequently mentioned desirable evolutions of the peri-urban farms. As is the case with SE, this implies growth in workable land, efficiency and productivity, and therefore – higher revenues. The viable example can then be followed by others. As a counterpoint to this vision, the peri-urban farm of Kosturica does not clearly envision its future in terms of growing production, but rather – in consolidating the number of clients and promotion of agroecological model of production and consumption. They also envision free training for small farmers on administration and marketing so that their visibility is improved.

Many of the agriculture workers brought forward the limitations of organic certification, as causing extra costs while omitting certain major social aspects and environmental damages (such as transport, or monoculture). The creation of an individual stamp, which takes social, labor and transport aspects into account, or adopting a wider approach to food production is one of future projects for Aurora and its network.

In a more philosophical and educational sense, the evolution of the initiatives working on food sustainability would necessarily involve rethinking or revaluing the job of farming, and its lost prestige over the last century. This would also involve changing attitudes towards the way food is produced and distributed.

“The direct sale to consumers is something we should strengthen as a network”. D., a member of CS.

When it comes to consumer groups, growth in members is not something explicitly sought, nor desired. The desired future evolution concerns presence of engaged long-term members which compose the majority of the cooperative. This comes from the current state of affairs in the food cooperative where the burden of organizational work falls upon several hard-crushed members, who have been involved in the cooperative the longest.

“I would be successful when family units consolidate at staying minium 2-3 years and know how to work together; and consist of 30-50% of the cooperative”. R., a member of TCV.

Another track for desirable future evolution of Totacucaviu concerns its internal organization. On the one hand, when rotation of new members becomes more frequent ‘older’ members lose patience and motivation to enthusiastically introduce new entrees.

On the other hand improved entry of new members, so that these are made feel home right from the start could encourage and motivated to participation and even keep members longer time. The increased female participation in assemblies and decision-making is seen as another key factor for the successful reproduction and replication of the cooperative. Gender balance in verbal expression and female empowerment implies changing attitudes and ways of working within the initiative.

“So yes, we can say that the biggest problem in Totacuca is participation….if there were more gender balance, in terms of how the meeting was run, maybe more of the women would participate”. T., a member of TCV.

Another vision for the future evolution of the food cooperative, which is rather minoritarian is its potential engagement with a workers (or workers’ cooperative) who are paid for organization and administration of the food distribution. This implies bringing back the
intermediation between producers and consumers, this time not through supermarkets and shops, but by employing given individuals who take the tasks of contacting producers, ordering food and managing its distribution and administration.

A platform for joint (political) action and education

The wider social-societal impact of the food cooperative, its joint actions beyond consumption have been withering. They these are still seen as having place in the the desired future trajectory of the cooperative.

“If you do not come together as an act of commitment to support the existence of a small local farmer why on earth do you form food cooperatives?” M. a member of K.

The key role of consumption, around which multiple individuals and groups could organize, has a transformative force which can be used for educational purposes. The common perception of the “older members” is that the cooperative can be an actor that spreads new ideas and practices on critical consumption among the people who have been trained in the “capitalist and productivist culture”; that it can be a source of support for other social political struggles – such as the ones for limiting urbanization and pressures of tourism in the neighbourhood, promotion of social housing and multiple others.

“The cooperative can serve as a platform for politicizing in other senses and manners”. R., a member of TCV.

3. Are there any conflictual element/process/events that played a substantial role in influencing CBI’s life? Short name: “3.1.Traj-Evo_Conflict”

A number of implicit and explicit points for debate, representing inner or outer contradictions has marked and continues marking the evolutionary path of all initiatives. Below I expose them in their extremes for reasons of clarity, considering however that categories are never clear-cut. In many cases the debate is shaped between those for whom one of the visions prevails, while the other is also present and being recognized. In the case of Som Energia, these have been identified as:

- “Small and beautiful versus big and non-ugly”, which implies staying within a small group of like-minded individuals versus opening up to wider set of members and ideas with the respective advantages and disadvantages of both strategies; a subset of this debate concerns the strategy of selling energy of renewable origin from the market pool versus buying directly from a respective producer; Moreover there are different nuances of the discussion, where “big and open” could be done through professionalization or volunteerism.
- “Horizontality versus efficiency”, or being inclusive and horizontal (including all local groups) rather than efficient and professional (deciding within the technical office and council) when it comes to taking key decisions;
- “Volunteering too little or too much – is there a balance?” Volunteering tends to never reach the fine balance between intensive work for a successful projects, and superficial involvement and little social impact.
- “Social change by defending a given structure/strategy or opening for a variety of methods/actors”? This debate concerns the extent to which the cooperative can be considered a political actor which brings about a wider social change, and the diversity of strategies which social and environmental sustainability might require.
“Small and beautiful” versus “big and non-ugly”

“The dilemma between being pure while marginal; and larger while non-polluted, is constant”. D., a member of SE.

Initiatives like SE tend to have a space for friction between what they are and what they are desired to be by their members. Some members refer to this friction as driven by the “excessive conditioning” which the founding principles demand. For them, the subtle differences in the founding principles between members create “excessive dramatizing”, driven rigid perceptions about ‘the truth’. One of the members talked about the ‘truth’ which, while based on the founding principles, is more diluted, in the sense of including a variety of points of view. The alternative is remaining alone, or isolated for defending a minority position within the group, a problem which is part and parcel of horizontal decision-making, either based on consensus-searching or not.

Another point raised by members of SE concerns openness to new members. When an initiative turns into a group of friends, it tends to become more exclusive toward new people. The common traps for many groups working on volunteers is that the high affinity among the members and the atmosphere of friendship and closeness makes it that less efforts are invested in attracting and engaging new people. Eventually if no efforts towards engaging new people are put in a context of high member fluctuation (“the liquid society”) the group could easily lose grounds in the long run. The motivations of members can vary; some join because they enjoy new revolutionary initiatives but lose excitement when these get stabilized and more widespread; others prefer participating in something which is already widespread and recognized as a movement.

“If we want to be bigger we cannot be only activists. .. there are people in your group who are not activists, but you have something in common which explains why this person has decided to be here and not in the ologopolic company”, D., a member of SE.

This vision defends the importance of gaining the confidence of ‘non-activists’, of the image of “reliability, responsibility and solvency”, rather than a group of ‘freaks’, or a group of “Hippies putting a solar panel”. D., a member of SE.

The opposing vision deals with the dangers of adopting a strategy which is based on attracting maximum numbers of members, including ones who do not have strong socio-environmental convictions. The strategy of offering lower fixed costs and same electricity pricing as mainstream companies, which the cooperative adopted, has been a major attraction force for many. The cooperative’s intention of being cheapest and therefore very competitive, could override certain ethical principles over time.

“I prefer being with less people, but that all of them are convinced of the [socio-environmental] cause, even if we had to pay more”. I., a member of SE.

One of the reasons for the low price, for example, relates to the purchase of electricity. Rather than purchasing bilaterally from renewable producers, the cooperative buys directly from the liberalized energy market, implying that the money placed there goes also to nuclear and other non-renewable energy producers. Stated differently, the documents certifying the origin of given electricity are separated from what one buys from the market.

“The system with the certificates is very deceptive, with many dodgy projects which could be formally presented as renewable.... Also such strategy does not lead to a change in the number of installed capacities.”I., a member of SE.

The point raised above represents a vision of a minority. Yet, its message can be considered worth noting, as it warns for two of the dangers which the cooperative can be possibly confronted two. One is that the aggregate installed capacities for non-renewable electricity generation stay unchanged (together with the total consumption of non-renewable energy), despite the large number of people consuming with SE. Another danger is that the desired movement towards electricity generation by the cooperative itself increases the price of
electricity, causing a mass withdrawal of members. Overall, minority positions, though rigid at times, are key for preventing the long-term integrity of the initiative as they bring attention to the weak sides of the project. A comparison with the evolution of some food cooperatives in Barcelona can be worth mentioning here. One of the SE members compares the trajectory of cooperative with the one of food cooperatives, which start off highly motivated and politically-minded but their commitment dwindles over time for financial reasons, undermining some of their producers. Similar problems would affect SE.

A third vision on the size and strategy of SE relates to the profiles which the cooperative could accept as members. Due to the small margin for administrative costs, the cooperative cannot assume much loses; implying that public bodies such as hospitals, where electricity cannot be cut, “can sink the company” if for some reasons they are unable to pay. Reliance on clients that never fail is therefore considered a limiting factor to its expansion.

**Big and professional versus big and volunteers-based**

This debate is related, though not identical to the point of the cooperative’s size.

“*The fact that it all goes through the volunteers makes it last forever. Two years ago we presented them with a project and still do not have a response. We do not want have a positive answer, just tell us something, an expression of interest or no*” I., head of the sustainability at SC.

This is a complaint on a side of a representative of a small municipality which contracted with the cooperative. What is considered “a professional” way of acting is expected from the players in the energy market. This is, however, difficult to achieve, when multiple tasks lay on the hands of volunteers, who have private lives and may very well be working full-time elsewhere. The uncertainly in the level of engagement with the municipality has created certain level of distrust with its representatives, mostly due to the lack of clarity as to the features which make the cooperative distinct from the other companies which sell green energy without having a cooperative form. The perception is that while the environmental part is well explained, its social, or cooperative side of ES is not so clearly communicated.

**Horizontality versus efficiency**

“It all worked fine until we had to start taking decisions”. D., a member of SE.

“There is a clear difference in the speed at which local groups formulate, discuss and take a decision on a proposal and the way the technical or more operational office handles it”. I., a member of SE.

Both comments pertain to the tension between horizontality and efficiency. Yet, there is no explicit polarization of visions on this aspect, as no single vision is being defended by either of the members or stakeholders. Yet, a number of discussions which emerge are illustrating this tension. One of these concerns the level of decision-making and inclusivity of third parties in decisions on investment projects for renewable energy generation.

“If a local group, takes a decision, until which point would it be acceptable that Barcelona says “no way!” D., a member of SE.

The difficulty in reaching an agreement between the two local groups can be explained with the multiple actors present in either of them, represented by not only social movements but people with non-activist background. While they tend to agree on the general motto of the cooperative, such as the need to change the energy generation model, disagreement on how to implement a particular project becomes inevitable.

One of the voices in such situations is calling for quality leadership in the long term, while recognizing the important role of “chaotic” organizing.
"Until now the chaos has worked. If we had tried to organize it we would not have reached that far. ...but I start to wonder as to how long should it last...after some time the bad parts of the chaos would emerge, such as distraction, fatigue, disorganization”. D., a member of SE.

While this voice does not reject horizontality and rootedness in local groups, it calls for a better separation of functions, moving away from spontaneous actions and toward a better planning.

A slightly different position concern the capacity of local groups to uptake certain roles and tasks which require a substantial investment in time and training.

“Despite its high engagement with dissemination and education, the capacity of the local group of Barcelona to find and initiate investment projects, to estimate their viability, and ...represent the cooperative in front of the local institutions is debatable”. S., a member of SE.

The criteria for distributing certain tasks has to do both with the implicit need for remuneration for the amount of time and efforts, but also with the separation between the technical office, council and local groups.

The third position in this respect concerns the different roles of the technical office and the local groups.

“Although it is very positive that people feel part of the cooperative and participate, it is also important to define who does what, what is being decided by the council members, and - by the assemblies and local groups”. E., a member of SE.

“It is sometimes difficult to know until where is the limit between the role of the local groups [the unpaid] and one of the technical office [the paid]”. D., a member of SE.

Volunteering: finding a balance between too much and too little?

The feeling of being a victim of the group for contributing and working more than the rest is a common trap for people dedicated to an idea or a project. Such situation is more straightforwardly managed in the presence of labour relations. Resolving it in a context of volunteering and horizontal structures is, however, more complex.

“I exploited myself a lot in the past. You devote yourself to something you love ...until one day you feel like an idiot; ...you dedicate so much of your time and no one recognizes your work, no one pays you. We should try to avoid this and managing it is not easy.” D., a member of SE.

The perception associated with this position is that when one works too much, or more than the rest, voluntarily, or out of passion it should be treated as a matter of personal choice, rather than something imposed by the group. The best volunteer, or a member, could therefore do is learn how to avoid burn-outs in the future. This means maintaining a constant internal debate and knowing very well what one could give.

“I dedicate many hours because I want, not because someone asks me...I disagree with those who devotedly do something and then ask for a reimbursement. I am not interested in such activists”. D., a member of SE.

Another approach is to perceive the overburden which some individuals tend to take as a result of the low activity of the rest of the members, or the perception that everything might fail if one retreats.

“If the situation is like now, that the group is a bit sleepy, and if there are no at least three active people to push things, and one gets alone, things start to destabilize because people start to burn out”. I., a member of SE.

Social change through increased market share or collaborative actions
Some of interviewees have joined the cooperative with the perspective of the radical changes it could invoke in the model of energy production and distribution. Over time they become aware of the limitations of a single entity and strategy to bring about a socio-ecological transition. For this motif some more politically oriented members feel an inner tension as to keeping to the cooperative or moving onto a different social project, which has a more political message.

"Many people join because they see it as innovative but in the end it is not that much. I always wonder whether I should not invest the 200 hours I put in SE in ..a more political project... some people are more apt at working towards changing the energy model". I., a member of SE.

"The prospects of arriving at one million members cannot be considered realistic because of regulatory pressures. Without substantial political and social leverage it would be difficult to overcome the monopolies in the energy market in Spain". D., a member of SE.

Here the debate which characterizes many social movements goes between those who believe in the structure as a goal in itself, and those who not. SE is at a stage of expansion. It is relatively young and still open for debate, which allows for having a variety of positions and actors characterizing a diversity of social movements and positions. It furthermore allows for different levels of action – from having more long-term and strategic debates to more pragmatic approaches towards energy distribution. Still this diversity could sometimes create frictions on the level of the member, between those who believe that transition requires certain level of opposition, or confrontation, and those focusing on the alternatives only. On the one side, tackling the limitations and contradictions which the system poses to developments which are socially and ecologically sustainable would make alternatives really needed in the long term. On the one hand, members perceive the “very existence and growth of SE as an act of confrontation in itself” P., a member of XSE. Still the debate on the capacity of SE to be a political actor concern only the members of the cooperative itself. From the perspective of the movement a diversity of strategies is perceived as necessary, including such that target regulatory pressures and public institutions.

The dilemmas faced by the initiatives in the field of sustainable food production and distribution can be generally framed as a tension between pressured for economic profitability and price affordability and overall socio-political commitment. Some of its aspects can be summarized in the following subtitles, considering that titles suggest more clear-cut categories than their content for reasons of clarity.

- For producers: strong socio-political positioning versus economic sustainability. This tension concerns farms’ organizational strategy associated with maintaining horizontality and inclusivity versus adopting a more managerial and efficient approach oriented towards lower production costs; self-exploitation or marketing/searching for new customers;
- For cooperatives and consumers: prioritizing low prices or commitment to a political agroecological project which members consider worth supporting; focusing on organizing food distribution or undertaking wider socio-political action; consuming from little shops or joining a cooperative; stimulating participation in the fragile ground between new (unpoliticised) versus old (active) members;

Can horizontality and socio-political commitment be combined with economic profitability in food production?

Kosturica is initiated in a moment of very high demand for ecological products and grows very quickly nourished by a high demand on the side of committed consumers. At given moment the project has had to refuse producing for newly emerging consumer groups for reasons of insufficient human capacity. Thus the favorable conditions and positive disposition on the side of consumer groups made it so that the project did not have to recourse to marketing tools, innovative management, increasing efficiency or keeping high interest of food cooperatives. It was thus initiated and grew a niche protected from the market and competitive pressures.
**Strong socio-political posture versus economic-sustainability**

Kosturica is one of the early thinkers and defender of the so-called ‘agroecological’ model of production and consumption, which is later adopted by a wider network of farmers. In a nutshell it implies that environmental, social and political criteria of agricultural production should go hand in hand. In practical terms it involved paying attention to issues of geographical distance and relatedness between consumer and producer, to interaction and horizontality within the team, to transparency and good labour conditions which prohibit exploitation, respect for the wild nature in a wider sense, thus defending a diversity of crops and avoiding monoculture production. The agroecological model, however, has a heavier economic cost, which makes it difficult to survive in the free market. It requires its protected spaces, which cooperatives of committed consumers aimed to provide.

Having the moral support of food cooperatives, the project starts from scratch and, unlike Aurora, without a reference for the size of the production and associated land. The project starts with no recourses or subsidies, few tools and no machines. The friendly ambience, however, could have made the project less careful in terms of keeping good track of costs and revenues. Thus the encouraging climate in which the initiative emerged and its innovative socio-political proposal and position, have both stimulated and hindered the evolution of the project.

As the project opted out of public subsidies, its financing came from doing a large part of the work for free. Like many small farms, in the first years, the team worked 80 hours per week, with little holiday leave.

“Any autonomous small agriculture project implies certain self-exploitation”. M., a member of K.

Despite the increase in demand for organic production over the years, 15 years after its launch the project never reached the desired level of economic revenues, nor the point of working less. “It is hard that after so much time we are still precarious, and now more than ever”. M., a member of K.

Over time economic inefficiencies start to emerge, leading to the generation of losses. One of the problems taking place over time has been the mismatch between the number of people employed and the production and sale of vegetables. Eventually losses were so large that the team had to shrink and avoid closure. Yet, the meager economic prospects had another explanation. Being critical of commercial enterprises, Kosturica hardly engaged with the typical tools used in businesses, such as production management, schemes for higher efficiency, marketing of sale or organizing distribution, which could reduce costs, expanding production and outreaching to more consumers.

“We ended up doing it all bad. We did not know how to manage sales, marketing, nor had an efficient management of production… the distribution is also very questionable because in our network of producers we end up doing the same route every week in different vans, which all travel full”. M., a member of K.

One of the key decisions and difficulties for the project has been the pricing of their production. Trying to make it affordable for low-income cooperatives, and thinking that savings from the intermediation could be substantial, the team sets its vegetable baskets “below costs”.

“Yet, in the beginning we set it so low that we were working practically gratis for many many hours...This was the big error, which required that afterwards the cost of the baskets had to be adjusted upwards every year.” M., a member of K.

The process of adjusting the price of their production was, however, highly conflictive. It implied yearly meetings with the food cooperatives, where the annual accounts of the farm have been presented. One of the food cooperatives, Totacucaviu, was the only one which was
not accepting an increase in the price of the baskets. Their reasons were, on the one hand – having mostly students with a low purchasing power and on the other – the lack of association between price and quality, which makes the basket a luxury product.

The position of the remaining cooperatives was supportive of Kosturica. While some of these were composed of older members, having higher incomes, others did not have members who were in stable economic situation either. Nevertheless they accepted the 1 euro rise in the weekly price of the baskets, and were sympathetic to the attempts of the farmers to have reasonable remuneration, which they never had over the preceding 10 years of precariousness. The conflict between Totacucaviu and Kosturica eventually escalated in the cooperative taking the decision of leaving Kosturica and moving onto another producer in 2012. This deepened the economic instability of the farm.

Apart from the economic factor, the relation between food cooperatives and farmers could be ridden by a number of other difficulties. Firstly, it requires trust and appreciation on both sides, which at some point got lost, more strongly on the side of the cooperative. Cooperatives are however not uniform in terms of member profiles, as participation is open to anyone and decisions are taken horizontally. Thus when new entrees are not properly introduced with the conditions of initial commitment and socio-political stance of the cooperative, they could generate discontent and demand changes in its organization and provision. Furthermore, once the relation between the cooperative and the farm became tenuous, changing it has been difficult.

Secondly, from 2010 on, however, the agroecological defended by Kosturica has been gradually undermined by the world-wide boom of ecological production and consumption, augmented by the entry of bigger and more industrial organic producers, oriented towards mono-culture. Bigger organic producers and distributers have the capacity of reaching to more people by making a better use of marketing tools, while making it possible to ordering the vegetables that you like, rather than the ones available on the land. The increased accessibility of organic food (though not necessarily produced in agroecological way) makes the members of food cooperative who focus mainly on the ecological consumption (ecological) more at ease about the commitment with local peri-urban farms initially made.

“Nowadays it is harder to find people who commit to our project than earlier. ...now a cooperative does not start up making a presentation ...but you have to go, convince them, make many talks, make special offers and discounts, because otherwise people do not commit”. M., a member of K.

On the third place, apart from the external conditions, the project is strongly influenced by a number of internal factors. One of these is horizontality and socio-political commitment.

“Kosturica has always given the same salary to the new people, we never made a difference...and this has been a problem, although it is difficult for me to accept it. Because you lose on efficiency”. M., a member of K.

Another feature of the project is decision-making. All new and old members take one afternoon per week for a general assembly to discuss and coordinate their activity. A large number of hours have been dedicated to the introduction of new people, which eventually is counterproductive for the work efficiency. Over the last years the team has been going up and down, with people staying no longer than year and a half.

“Perhaps these new people should not have participated during their initiation phase; we could have had the experienced members decide first and then gradually start incorporating the new people ... In this respect I, (and I am here from the very start of the project) made a mistake, because I could not make a difference between working in a mutually respectful and horizontal way with the team and perceiving the ranks which every person has within the project, and the fact that those of us who have worked years in the project have more right to decide” . M., a member of K.
Competing with the market or resting on social networks

As in Kosturica, one of the challenges for Aurora has been starting from scratch. Yet, the initiation of Aurora is marked by an ambience of increased competition and demand for organic produce. The project starts with a clear business plan and a vertical form of management, where quantities and lands needed for efficient cultivation are carefully planned so that a competitive price could be achieved. Its members adopt the strategy of constant innovation to increase efficiency and develop a sales plan.

“The biggest challenge was to produce, using a land which has been abandoned for many years. This implied huge investments in labour, machines, seedlings, land and all”. R., a member of AdC.

“We are changing the way to cultivate all the time”. G., a member of AdC.

To avoid the uneven battle with industrial monoculture-based organic producers Aurora also needs the protective niche space, ensured by food cooperatives interested in “agroecológic”, local, direct, and fresh produce, which is not luxurious in terms of price. Commitment on the side of food cooperatives is also key for the sustainability and existence of Aurora. The project is also constantly looking for diversifying of clients, including local schools and restaurants. While being more vertical in its organizational form, through its existence Aurora defends (and complies with) the principles of agroecology, in terms of good employment conditions for workers, attention to plant- and bio-diversity, local rootedness.

Cooperatives dilemma: low prices versus (political) commitment to a project

The conflict between cooperatives, representing conscious groups of consumers, willing to impulse a change in the food production and distribution system and their small-scale peri-urban producers has multiple aspects. Firstly and before, members Totacucaviu appreciated and respected Kosturica for its transparency and political positioning, as well as for being the pioneer in the field.

“We had closer relation with Kosturica. As it started together with the cooperative there were certain communication channels established from the very beginning...Kosturica was more transparent, as it always published its accounts. I knew perfectly well how many people worked at Kosturica, how many full-time and part-time positions, salaries”. R., a member of TCV.

“The project of Kosturica is a well-defined politically”. V., a member of TCV.

“Within the world of agroecology Maria is a reference...their project is nice and worth supporting. Withdrawing our support all of a sudden is contradictory, because we did like the project”. R., a member of TCV.

Secondly, the members interviewed were aware of the contradiction between their decision to abandon the project and the initial mission which the cooperative had established, namely committing to support small-scale organic farmers as an act of transforming the food production and distribution chains. They were aware of the potential impact of their withdrawal on the farm and believed damage could be off-set if the farmers were informed sufficiently long in advance.

“We were aware that this would affect Kosturica and informed them long in advance”. V., a member of TCV.

Yet, they could not foresee the eventual impact and the deep economic crisis which their withdrawal caused, mostly for being unaware of the relative disadvantages of Kosturica in term of competitively and marketing.

Yet, the decision to leave was not previously discussed with the farmers; it was rather communicated through a letter and a meeting, where Kosturica received no leeway to react to the discontent. Some members of the food cooperatives were conscious of the
information distortion which was driving this conflict, namely consumers not being aware of the reality of production, and producers not finding the right approach to express their concerns.

“Certainly someone who only consumes would not know all that goes wrong with production...And certainly we did not always understand it when they asked for the micro-credits or for the increase in the price of the basket”. R., a member of TCV.

Thirdly, the food cooperative cannot be perceived as a single entity but as a group of people functioning with horizontality decision-making, where some voices tend to be louder, or more convincing, than others; where the entry of a new group having distinct political background could have a strong influence in terms of decision-making.

The justification to stop consuming from Kosturica which the members of the cooperative presented has two aspects, which have played equally important role. One is the explicit, or more objective, side and the other – the implicit, which has a more subjective bearing. The explicit one is dissatisfaction with the quality and variety of the vegetable baskets it provided.

“We knew that the low quality vegetables would keep reoccurring...But they have problems with the land, their production is very much conditioned by the geographical zone. Their farm is located within a little Siberia inside the Valles Occidentales, while Aurora work in a zone which is very close to the sea, very sunny and therefore have a higher productivity”. V., a member of TCV.

Another objective criteria used by one member was the desire to support a “more precarious project”. Yet, level of precarity, or economic instability, ended up higher at Kosturica, especially after the withdrawal of Totacucaviu, than at the new farm. The very withdrawal of the food cooperative deepened the crisis which was inevitably facing the project. The food cooperative thus left the farm for its relative disadvantage in comparison with the other producers, such as quality of land, higher costs associated with horizontal management, less experience with commercialization and marketing. Thus in its attempt to support a new and more precarious producer, the cooperative eventually chose a more efficient and business-oriented model, which eventually offered a lower price.

The implicit or more subjective justification for changing their provider concerns “the difficulty associated with having a dialogue”. The members of the food cooperative perceived the attitude of Kosturica as ignoring their concerns with respect to costs and prices. The cooperative felt isolated in its “critical spirit” in comparison with the other consumer groups buying from Kosturica. While leaving Kosturica has been difficult given the strong history and personal relations established with the project, the perceptions of tension and “tenuous communication” were an important driver of the decision to withhold support for the farm.

Stimulating participation in the fragile ground between new (un politicised) versus old (active) members

The food cooperative is one of its most difficult moments in its evolutionary trajectory, for both external and internal reasons. Externally, organic food becomes more accessible through standard market structures which creates turmoil among all cooperatives in Barcelona. Internally, the percentage of members who join for reasons of personal health and prefer lighter and more flexible commitment increase.

“Food cooperatives are not in a total crisis. They are all looking for people...I don’t believe that people become more conscious now”.M., a member of K.

“I have lived through difficult moments in Totacucaviu ...but now the situation does not seem very good. ...life gets more expensive, people do not find work, leave the center and move on; ...others eventually prefer the market; ...more and more consumers only care about buying
organic without taking the social (employment and proximity) aspects into account.” V., a member of TCV.

“From 30 family units and a waiting list of almost 15 people we went down to 23 family units. Now we are looking for people. This happened after the simultaneous departure of 10 activists from the cooperative.” T., a member of TCV.

On the other hand the management of the cooperative reflects the reality of many young adults in the neighbourhood of St Pere, who cannot easily find a meaningful job in town and have to move on. When many new members enter and leave within several months, older ones tend to adopt an attitude of closure and impatience, eventually spending less time introducing them.

“It is very difficult to consolidate practices …between the members... when constantly have to introduce new members ... who are often completely new to the culture of horizontal ...organization. We were not able to design a horizontal process and apply it in a context where people have no time to dedicate to the project, and moreover, where people are mobile and moving a lot”. V., a member of TCV.

The different perspectives of older and newer members eventually lead to a number of conflicts, associated with the marginal participation of new members. The discussion was marked by a shift of members, where the long-term committed well-trained activist profiles were less numerous, replaced by fresh entries of young adults with different backgrounds who were less reliable in terms of long-term commitment. The people who had spent many years at the cooperative had difficulties handling the rotation of new members and felt alone with the burden of work, which the organization of the cooperative demanded. At the same time, they were faced with low levels of participation and lower overall interest than in earlier years. Their frustration was often made explicit through verbal criticisms.

“The new people who felt this aggressive position were repelled …and it was not that people did not want, they did know what they could do in the cooperative. I would see so many new people coming nervous and intimidated, not talking, just taking their basket and leaving ...People were always telling me “there was a problem” ...I said, ok, let's talk to the new people right away, let's get them excited and empowered, let's get them responsibilities, you know – be nice to them! be nice to them!” T., a member of TCV.

Some attempts to resolve the clash between the older and newer members in a way that stimulates participation have been done through improving the introduction of new members. Initiated by one female member, the introduction committee changed course and started giving people a ‘positively framed’ orientation to how the cooperative functions, so that they could be motivated to participate, as well workshops on how to facilitate group meetings better so that participation can be stimulated.

“And the new people started taking more responsibility!...it was the attitude of the people who had been part of the cooperative for many years and did not want to change anything, acting as gatekeepers on the one hand, and empowering people to participate, to feel that the cooperative is theirs ...on the other”. V., a member of TCV.

Eventually new members were assigned tasks and became involved from their first days, in the management and general meetings. This strategy created a shift in attitude of older members, who started being more open and less judgemental to the new people.

“They are smiling more, they are more social now. I noted a change with the old members too. They are a bit more relaxed.” T., a member of TCV.

The participation of new members has one further aspect, which has to deal with the implicitly assumed roles and ranks in the group. When a member assumes too much responsibility, participation of new ones is foreclosed as they do not assume it is needed.

Being there for longer and knowing how the cooperative functions, older members tend to take more verbal space in general meetings, thus dominating debates and expression. The cooperative undertook some work in this aspect, based on members’ self-reflection of their
roles and impact on the rest of the group. Participating improved when facilitators of the general meetings took a stronger role, trying to motivate that more people talk.

"I realized that I should not talk so much at the meetings but listen more". V., a member of TCV.

“We have been detecting the roles we have been assuming in the group and became conscious of the effect”. R., a member of TCV.

In sum, the change in the membership structure of the cooperative moving towards shorter-term members who are not trained to horizontal decision-making has led to a crisis on the one hand associated with the bigger workload of older members; yet, the group dynamics associated with detecting hidden power structures and group roles ended up being a learning experience for all newer and older participants, which could serve them beyond the scope of the cooperative. Older members realized that in any volunteer-based group there would be those who are more and those who are less involved. Criticizing, punishing and excluding the ones who do less does not seem to have worked, as it carried no learning experience and creates more closure. The positive approach of involving people from the very start, and making it easy and worth for them to participate has changed the atmosphere and communication in the cooperative.

One of the details which remain on the agenda is the participation of women in general assemblies. One of the members identifies a deeper issue with the cooperative way of functioning, which is common for more consumer groups in Barcelona. It is something she refers to as “boys-club”, or the dominance of males speaking at assemblies in a non-empathic way.

"We do not need to see and watch men shake each other’s hands, talk to each other and not make eye contact with other people. Facilitators half asleep. Yeah, I have a huge problem with the assembly...it is very difficult to change these patriarchal attitudes. The biggest problem is participation. But in my view, this exists because of a power structure. And if you look at how power structure and the group works, ...we are all the same, it is true, if you look at how informal power structure works, it is very masculine, in my opinion”. V., a member of TCV.

A food coop only or a socio-political actor; consuming from little shops or joining a cooperative

Another dilemma for many food cooperatives and Totacucaviu in particular concerns the wider objectives of the group. While initiated as a cooperative aiming at having long-term influence on the sustainability of food production and distribution over time objectives have kept adapting to the profiles of the members. Some individuals participate in the cooperative for its capacity for wider socio-political intervention, while others as a way to access healthy and organic food. In its initial phase the vision of the cooperative as a socio-political actor was more widespread among its members, and joint promotional events on the topic of agroecology were organized together with Kosturica. In the later, more mature years participants’ structure changed and more people interested mainly in the consumption entered. This change reflects a wider transformation taking place in social movements in Barcelona, where people participate in multiple initiatives and tend to start new ones when they feel the older structure does not sufficiently reflect their ideas and goals.

"Now we lack people who understand that the cooperative is not a goal in itself, but a platform for joining hands and participating in other political movements in Barcelona”. R., a member of TCV.

“I don’t think that we have the capacity to stimulate social action...now maintaining the existence of the cooperatives is most important. Our project is in the phase of survival, rather than expansion”. V., a member of TCV.
As a result of the large administrative volume of work, which is not counterbalanced with more socially-engaging, or political, action some members moved onto other projects. Others adopt a more integral position where the very existence and resistance of the cooperative is seen as a political act, as it avoids passing through the market.

The economic crisis affecting Spain in the first decade of 21st century did not have a significant impact on the boom in the demand for, and production of, organic food. Joining a food cooperative when faced with less time-consuming options for obtaining organic food still implies a certain level of preference for, or support of, cooperative, or non-commercial structures. Stated differently, what seems a mere act of consumption some years ago, in the current historical context, can be perceived as something more political.

As a means of closure, the dilemmas for many of the initiatives were taking place on several levels and resolving one often implied moving onto another expected one in the shorter or longer term. Social movements are never clean or clear form dilemmas and conflicts as these emerge out of diversity in visions and ideas eventually being a source of creativity.

Furthermore, given the hurdles faced by both groups – cooperatives and producers and to the extent that these are produced by their own internal features and dynamics, in the first case – insufficient attention to new members and lack of inclusivity at general assemblies; and in the other – insufficient attention to economic sustainability and efficiency; it is very likely that these problems have collided and fueled a bigger lack of receptivity and empathy for each other than normally.
Memo from USV

Introduction

We will refer in the memo to both key-CBIs selected by USV: Club for Bike Napoca (CCN) and EcoBucovina Association (EB). The names of the members and stakeholders will be mentioned by using their names initials.

CCN describes itself as a civic and ecologist association, with activities meant to improve the responsibility of citizens in the field of sustainable transportation, especially by promoting the bike as a transport alternative in the cities and for tourism. Additional to this, they have moved to actions dedicated to environment protection, watchdog role and initiators of local regulations in the mentioned fields. CCN is nationally and internationally well connected, with an extended network of partners.

EcoBucovina is formed mainly from students and graduates of the Faculty of Forestry of the Stefan cel Mare University Suceava. The main aim is to promote and support ideas and actions for a clean and healthy environment. They have started the initiative through volunteering for environmental cases, and then slowly they have initiated and developed small projects and partnerships. The association as organizational form came as a normal step in order to increase their credibility in the eyes of partners, stakeholders and public institutions. Currently there are more than 20 volunteers actively involved in all activities, and others involved from time to time. The main stimulus to involve is represented by the general attitude and by the feeling of contributing to society development. Some members have declared that the main motivation is "that we succeed in raise awareness among people to make a difference between good and bad in what concerns environment protection and sustainable development".

1. What and how the evolutionary path of the CBI was shaped and where it led the CBI?

   Short name: “1.1.Traj-Evo_Past”

Both associations are assuming an important role of “activist” of social society where they are acting. The life-timeline of initiatives is different and the members involved in their activities as well: CCN started in 1992 and Eco-Bucovina in 2012 (Club) and in 2014 in this structure. As well CCN has evolved and developed a trajectory after different strategies and actions, after experiences made in cooperation with members and public institutions. Informal relations, parallel with formal structure specific for NGOs are dominating for both initiatives.

As most CBIs in Romania, both CCN and EB were initiated with the hope to improve the social responsibility in various fields and with the goal to implement the changes that the members wanted to see in the society. Almost all interviewed members have declared that they wanted to get involved in groups or organisations, with the aim to improve the society. Such organisations were difficult to find and for this reason they agreed and search other colleagues/persons motivated by similar goals.
CCN has tried in their 25 years of existence different approaches, from passive witnesses, to dog watch actors, to fighters for their ideas with public institutions. They have changed the approach and now are counsellors and partners of local administration institutions than radical opponents. In the last described approach, they have faced opposition from the city hall and they were not invited anymore to different events or public consultations. CCN is cooperating with a lot of similar initiatives in Romania and abroad. They offered support in start-up of initiatives, in writing the status for NGO set up. They are members and they have initiated the Federation of Bikers in Romania and several years they have contributed for running and consolidating the federation. As well they have formed a coalition for environment of all NGOs in Cluj, called ECO Cluj, but the networking is not very intensive in last time, because that all organization are quite busy in surviving as volunteers and in acquisition of EU founds for running the associations. The connections at international level are with ProVelo from 2012, International Bike Federation since 2008. They have financed actions of National Bike Federation (participation to international Bike European Federation VeloMondial). As well, they are not only networking with national Bike Federation, but they are as well undertaking some activities in their name, in order to help and support the federation.

CCN has started, as they declared, as a “group of friends who have decided to activate and something more official and formal than the strictly informal part”. They have realized over the time that “some things you cannot do without a certain organization, unincorporated, while getting involved in more complex things and gaining experience and so on, there was a certain degree of professionalism, let’s say, qualitative”. RM (executive director of CCN) mentioned that there were some changes over the years. The descriptions presented here are showing the different stages: expansion, organic growth and institutionalization, downshifting and return to volunteer-based organization.

“Between 1992-2000, it went on a thing very little institutionalized, meaning that there was not a functional office, no staff and so on. We were all volunteers, we met regularly in various places, usually in some areas obtained at various universities, at which we spoke to let us meet at nightfall in an auditorium or in a space of their own. Since 2000, then, after 8 years of operation, we thought we should take the step and we rented a proper office and from 2000 to 2005 we had also employee personally, well, it was a little inappropriate called employee, meaning they were between 1-3 people, but somehow they were paid on projects and, often, it was more voluntary, there were periods when they had to donate the salary back or the payment was symbolically for what they have worked, but formal there was stuff. It was at a time and not only a matter of objective necessity, but also of seriousness. Many were not able to enter into certain projects or certain activities such serious if it was seen as a matter of disabilities. “Oh, you have no employee? You are a nobody, you’re not serious enough, you’re not institutional developed”. And in 2005, at the end of the year, we decided to give up at the office and go back to the situation before 2000, meaning that you only meet. In the spring of 2006, I have renounced in December 2005 at the stuff and from the spring of 2006 I gave up at the office and we became the organization we were in the 1990s, no personal employee, without its own building, which has many advantages and many disadvantages.” (CCN, RM).

EcoBucovina initiative (EB) identified in their lifetime two stages: 1. the student level, acting at the level of the university, and 2. the legal statue of the association from now, managing more important projects. According to L.N. from EcoBucovina, “the aim, as
far as I perceive, has changed. The association started with the idea of an organization within the Faculty of Forestry, in response to current problems in forestry, it started some time ago, when these things were not yet in media attention.” So it was an internal reaction. Currently, the purpose widened much more. They intend to become members of the Association Coalition 2000, to take over all nationwide environmental issues and discuss them locally”. According to EcoBucovina, radicalism is good only if you stand up for very simple actions or ideas. If the problematic is much complex, radicalism is not the appropriate solution.

LN (external stakeholder, lecturer that has supported the formation of EB initiative) mentioned “the approach they had until now is a proper one, because it is a start point for each NGO, they have not started from the top (and to stick above somewhere with no life or no activity), it was a bottom-up process. They have no resources, are based on volunteer-work and it look to me that each initiative should start like this. The initiative started from some ideas of the students, some local initiatives. I think they have a good strategic direction” (EB, LN).

According the LN, EB has followed the ”normal” path for a new initiative. They tried to gain as many supporters as possible, for their actions and field of interest, via social media, Facebook a.o., are counting a lot on the good relations that they had with the students from other faculties. There were helpful the informal meetings or the contests that they have organised. All those helped us to become visible. They have used as well mass media as partners, because the environmental issues are ”in trend” and are gaining rapid support. They have organized actions like “Come to green” and other non-formal actions in forestry in environment domain. LN (external stakeholder) formulated recommendations that should lead the actions of EB from “intuitive approach to promotion and actions, to a more strategic approach of their activity” (EB, LN).

(1.2) Name: Endogenous processes - What influences how they evolve/evolved? Short name: “1.2.Traj-Evo_Endo”

The responses that we have centralized have a subjective touch, and the evolution of initiatives (especially of CCN that has a longer life-time) is reported to the personal experiences of the members in the initiative along the time. Still, we could identify some common factors that could be nominalized as endogenous factors:

- Heterogeneity vs. Homogeneity of members;
- Profile of members (studies, homogeneity, age profile, best practices from abroad, diversity of professional experiences a.o.).
- Changes in the structure of membership (entering of new member, initial members have left for their home cities, after graduation);
- Reshaping the strategy of initiative;
- Different degrees of involvement of members in the activities of initiative (lack of time);
- Financial resources.

Heterogeneity vs. Homogeneity of members.
Both CBIs are quite different in what concerns the structure of the members. CCN was formed back in 1990 from students from different study programs. This was transformed over the years in an internal advantage: the members were qualified in different sectors, and the activities of the initiative were diversified. Almost all members of the initiative are graduated in medicine, law, physics, chemistry, engineering. This aspect in influencing the complexity of the issues and perspectives they are dealing with, has influenced the organization and activities of the initiative. Compared with CCN, EB is oriented to a narrow action-field: forestry and environment policies.

**Profile of members (studies, homogeneity, age profile)**

The evolution of CCN was strongly connected with the profile of the members. In 1992, at the beginnings, all the members were students or young graduates, while now the average age is between 30-40 years, and the members have a professional and a family life, aspects that are shrinking the free time that they could invest in the activity of the initiative.

**Best practices from abroad, diversity of professional experiences a.o.**

The members of CCN, especially, have explained that the experience gained abroad has contributed a lot to the work and the expansion of the initiative. RM, executive director, has a close relations with the Euro Velo Associations in Germany, other members have worked abroad. They had a vision formed on what they saw in other EU countries, and wanted to implement at home the same practices.

"Yes, yes...for me it was an interesting experience, let’s say so, that I was in Germany and I have lived there almost for 5 years, I took my PhD. In Heidelberg and there the main way of transportation was the bike, so...a pleasure. Additional to this, it was the cheapest way for practicing sport, to go outdoors, in nature, and then I was not alone, I was with other bikers." (CCN/LP)

The same factor had an influence over EB initiative as well, but in a different way: the students have no international experience, but the professor LN, initiator and the "visionary" of the initiative, has experience as researcher abroad, “we understood the good practices from other countries, especially Austria, Finland”,a.o.

**Changes in the structure of membership (entering of new members, initial members have left for their home cities, after graduation)**

The change in the structure of the members has influenced the evolution of CCN. A lot of members have left: the members that were students in Cluj, where CCN has the headquarter, an important university-city, left for their home-cities; another important good specialists have emigrated in EU, USA and Canada.

“...And our former members who were students in Cluj, graduated, went home, local organizations were set up there, others were in initiative groups, we contact them, help..."
them, I was writing the Statute, helping them to develop, we were doing projects together and so on. Similarly, at Cluj, we started doing contacting, sectorial coalitions, to do to make the secretary of the coalitions, to make county forums, NGOs and so on, so from zero. ” (CCN, RM).

LP, another member of CCN is describing the situation:

” (...) Secondly, most of those who are the kind of people we would need in our organization, determined people, dynamic, with ideals, they are those that in our days are very, very busy or they go to work abroad. As other NGOs from Romania, with our formal members, we could open branches in Canada, USA, Germany and so on. Most people from the best went and somehow, just a few crazy people remain here to fight for certain ideals. And there is the factor, as I said, in the 1990s, people had time. Those who were students usually were not students at two universities, they were not working as students, so it was” (CCN / LP).

The same issue will affect over the time the other initiative EB: the graduates will leave Suceava (headquarter of EB) and will return to their home-cities or to other localities to find themselves a job. The change in the structure of members will be as well significant. For instance, is not the case, the initiative being quite young.

**Different degrees of involvement of members in the activities of the initiative (lack of time):**

The members that have founded the initiatives are more connected with the goals of the initiative. Some of them are feeling that somehow, the new entered members are not so deeply connected with the goals of the initiative. This is the case of CCN, EB being a new initiative. The identification with the vision and goals is related as well to the loyalty of the members.

"If you came after many years and it was a cohesive organization with a certain organizational culture, then you are not so spiritually connected and maybe this is why you don’t stay so...." (CCN/RM).

The goals, the objectives reflected in the original stage of the initiative, were associated with the people that have started the initiative, because they shared with the same vision and same interests.

"That's the problem, there is a core of 1990, people who have not gone and did not intend to go, but because of those who come later, many members have left for other horizons and then, we fail to have the new generations, people who remain, to develop, which remain at a high level, that can keep in the arms, do not lead to a qualitative decline of activity." (CCN/RM).

**Financing the initiative: Project-oriented or not**
The EB are in an early stage. They intend to apply for financing projects, in order to consolidate their activity, for employing additional staff. At the same time, CCN has crossed a similar experience, but, after an intense activity, when they had projects financed by different foundations and organisations, they decided that they have not the capacity and the time for a more intensive activity, that the project-work is time demanding and generator of stress in the given conditions, with all members employed in other organisations, and involved as volunteers for the club. LP for example, described the situation: "We had a growth at a time, through the years: the late 90s up through 2005 was a period when we had an office and there was a place where we met and it was very, very cool, that anyone, anywhere, could come and leave, may have some business in town, he let his bike and went, it was somewhere in the middle and very practical. - Who had financed the office? - That was financed by some projects we have worked in, I do not know exactly all the details, but I know there were some fundings. We could not keep the office, because there was no time for applying for other projects. We realized that to write an European project, is implying too much paper work and overload for an NGO, and we are all volunteers and all we do is voluntary.” (CCN/LP)

**Additional staff. Lack of personnel**

Both initiatives are supported only by volunteer work. At some point, CCN had employees paid from EU financed project. The lack of administrative personnel is limiting the options that they have, the time that the volunteers could invest in the initiatives being limited.

"At the staff part, the big question mark is the sustainability. As an organization that is not carrying out economic activities of any kind, no activities to generate income, you could only support our activities from projects and other stuff like donations, contributions and so on. The person that we have employed through and for projects, has not increased qualitative or quantitative the activity of the initiative. That person has completely absorbed with the implementation of projects, so you have a balance sheet at zero, somehow. With projects, at contrary, you give out other money to support that person and, the activities, the other member should be involved for supervising, controlling...We cannot afford to employ good persons, because the payment expectations are too high. So, we have opted to involve ourselves rather as volunteers, though theoretically, we are working almost like the employees, in terms of invested time.” (CCN / RM).

**Diversification of initial goals over the time**

Both CCN and EN have proven that they filled in some gaps existing in the society, and they have developed additional functions and goals, either those were not stated or formulated at the beginning.

"...and so, as a profile, I can say it was a change, I initially went with the bike and the environment, in 1992, in 2000 there was a significant change of Statute, technical and local... youth and civic. Youth and civic because...in fact, in 1995 he got youth and civic in the Statute, the civic part, we, at the beginning, we have not intended to deal with the development of the NGO sector or civil society in general, but we found that if there is a barren land, you, if you want to be one plant, you do not really work. And wishing or not, we
needed allies and we had to do educational work, to deliver help in the creation and development of other organizations, in our field and in other fields, in Cluj, and at national level, so it seems we were the first organization with our profile” (CCN/RM).

(1.3) Name: Exogenous processes - What influences how the

The entire evolution of the initiatives is influenced by the external factors: partners, events on the society, politic environment, reaction of public administration to their action, reaction of society a.o. Their actions are motivated by some needs identified on their on-going activity.

The kick-off in starting the initiatives was given by external experts, other best practices observed abroad, other networks or initiatives.

In the interviews done for both CBIs, there were mentioned the following relevant exogenous factors: local community, public administration, other initiatives in Romania or abroad, other similar NGOs that have done (or not) their job, technical agencies (USAID, GTZ or others) that have encouraged at some point the consolidation of social society through different structures, municipality, professional associations and organizations (Forestry Administration for EB), international networks connected to the initiatives (especially in the case of CCN), national network and partners, financing opportunities for the CBIs activities.

The experience made by the members of CBIs abroad could be also interpreted as an exogenous factor that contributed to the trajectory and development. We cannot speak only by unilateral influences, is an influence and interdependence in both ways.

CCN was initiated and has supported a lot of new initiatives in different places of Romania, with similar activities or in similar fields of environment protection. RM, executive director, describes this contribution:

"And wishing or not, we needed allies and we had to do education as well, to help in the creation and development of other organizations and in our field and in other fields in Cluj, and at the national level, so it seems we were the first organization with our profile. Our former members who were students in Cluj, graduated, went home, local organizations were set up there, at others were initiative group, we contact them, help them, I was writing the Statute, helping them to develop, we were doing projects together and so on. Similarly, at Cluj, we started doing contacts, then sectorial coalitions, to take over secretary-work of the coalitions, to make country forums, NGOs and so on, all from zero. By 1996-97 began to grow the proportion of actor in the NGO sector and civil society, in general, and in today’s issue it is strong, many years we have functioned informally, even as a kind of NGO resource center and even today we are, at the national level, even with such a role and we publish guides for setting up NGOs and so on.” (CCN/RM).

The relation with public administration (mainly with the city hall of ClujNapoca, the town where the headquarter of CCN is) is described as tensioned. An external stakeholder GBS, from Bucharest, has mentioned, in a picturesque way, that "CCN and Cluj City Hall are on both sides
of a very heavy and impenetrable fence. By each arrow send to city hall, the fence was growing and growing” (BS/GBS). The same stakeholder (as well a bike association) has admitted that CCN had the proper instruments and competences, the director of CCN being a lawyer, and have gain some “battles” with the city hall, related to bike infrastructures, to abuses done by city hall.

For both CCN and EB, external stimuli were important for setting up the initiative. In the case of EB, an important role was played by the professors that have explained to the students that they should take initiative and stand up for a cause in their field of interest (forestry and environment). One of the interviewed members, AI, explained “to a course we have discussed, at Ecology and Environmental Protection, about a group of initiative; we started to think about some possible trajectories, strategies, steps to follow in order to follow the objectives”. (EB/AI).

(1.4.) Name: How do they respond to internal and external stim

Both initiatives are responsive to the external and internal factors. They have arisen as a response to the passivity of society to some precise problems.

The on-going activities are reported to the current actions of the stakeholders. The most reactive actions are generated by public administration mostly. As well, during time, they had a pro-active or reactive attitude toward the actions undertaken by the outside stakeholders.

Example of reactive actions: CCN has protested against the limitations of bike trails in the town, compared with initial plans, EB has initiated public campaigns against massive forest cuts in Suceava, or against the building of a waste-dump on the top of the mountain.

In the testimony of CCN members, they admitted that the relation with public authorities was with ups and downs, and they have reduced the radical attitude that they had for a long time. They were excluded from the process of public consultations, and they gain difficult access to the information related to the activity of CBI.

The pro-active reactions are mostly toward the external partners (national, international, similar CBIs) and to the members that are involved in the decisional process.

Some actions were generated by inappropriate regulations in the fields of CBIs: transport, environment and waste management. As well, the initiatives responded or have activated in a proactive way: they have identified weakness or problems in their specific action-field and they have took action in consequence: CCN for example have promoted the signage of bike trails in Cluj, have proposed law-projects for signage of bike trails in all Romania, have promoted the prolongation of Euro-Velo along the Danube and other similar actions. EB similar have initiated campaigns of reforesting.

The external stimuli we could identify from the description delivered by the interviews were: local community, the citizens and their will, the public authority, other national and international organizations connected with the initiatives.

“What, often, the authorities do not understand, but I have always tried to keep this, and from our point of view, we are still trying to have a constructive relationship with the authorities and, rather, from their part comes the reluctance. This situation was in the period between 1998-1999, then I changed the direction and became a militant organization and with the watchdog solution, not just the classic advocacy.” (CCN).
The local authorities are contributing to a continue adjustment of the strategies approached by the initiatives.

The actions of CBIs are planned and generated by their own members, and the entire activity of the initiatives could be interpreted as result of the members decisions. The participation of members in the decision making process is described as being important for both CBIs.

(1.5.) Name: Achievements/elements of success - What does

In the interviews were many references to “success”. This is described in different ways: increase in the number of members, extension of initiative, implemented regulations, watch dog campaign organised over the years.

"Quite many, at least 100 NGOs in Romania are mostly thankful to us. So, we have many cycling organizations, bicycle, in the country, which were made even from former CCN members, who were students in Cluj, they have finished and have moved or have moved with the job to another city, others whom I contacted, I met with them and after that I knocked on the head: "Well, why don’t you make there a local organization? We need it!", " Well, I do not know, I don’t have with who", " Come on, find some people" and we’ve done from A to Z, including that I wrote the constitutive Statute from zero, acts, I directed them, I did, I took them by the hand to put them on the feet, afterwards, the institutional development. I have tried, therefore, and on the bike and on stuff of NGOs, environmental and so on, that and because we comprehend well and we were involved in this part of the NGO legislation and everything and I am a professional lawyer and dealing a lot with NGOs acts I still do this stuff, it's not a week without sending them some models, to review them, give them advice and so forth and in addition I have and on the side, so not only to establish organizations and develop existing organizations and on the part of networking. So, we put on the feet all sorts of coalitions, we do secretary for many coalitions and local and national coalitions, we put on the feet the Cyclists Federation in Romania and we provide the presidency, we represent Romania in some international federations and so on" (CCN/RM).

The success was measured by CCN in a quantitative (number of members)and in a qualitative way. Qualitatively, we evolved a lot, in the sense that if in early 1990s, most were students or graduates, now three-fourth of the people are people somewhere at 30-40 years, graduates, many have liberal professions or so on, technical, so, somehow, the expertise level is much higher in the organization, but time and resources availability, has decreased in proportion to the situation and that's not really positive, the increase in the average age, because, while we strive and try, we fail to provide a flow of constant activities. (CCN/RM)

The steps made forward through militant actions or campaigns, or changes introduced in the legislation are associated by CCN also with success:

"On the militant part, however, there can be seen some changes over time. In 1990, I said, "Well, we're at the beginning, we are a weak organization, and financially, I do not know,
fame, recognition, and so on, there is a total ignorance and reticence at public authorities towards the NGO sector and so further”, that, we hold back from confrontation strategies. We went from 1992 to 2000 only on information and cooperation strategies. How often we didn’t convinced, I said this is it, next time we will try to be more convincing, however, I have noticed on this thing, apparently, a greater openness, we become members in all sorts of interdisciplinary committees, in all sorts of working groups with the authorities because we just made some suggestions, they did not accept and that’s that. When I noticed that things go in very bad directions and that we almost become moral accomplices as long as we remain only at the pleading stage and no public attitude contrary, we have seen us forced to move at the strategy of confrontation. At that time, we have achieved some successes, we have successes, but, unfortunately, so, in the sense that we have delayed or diminished bad things that might have happened on the legislative and national level and at county and local level, but from the time, when we entered the strategies of confrontation, was enough to give a more critical press release or in a meeting to fight open to the proposals of the authorities, you get blacklisted” (CCN/RM).

For CCN, different stages could be identified in their existence: early stage, with an orientation to promotion of bike as a safe and health way of transportation, diversification of field of action to environment protection, initiation of regulation, watch dog campaigns, radicalization. The evolution is not necessary planned, but more as a result of the reactions that they had on society realities. They have developed a network of good practices in all over Romania, new initiatives were started thanks to their inspirational example. They are connected as well to international networks and associations. They have contributed to the expansions of the Europeans bike trails to Romania (Eurovelo) and have mitigated for bike roads, they have initiated legislations and they have coordinated lobby actions to different ministries.

“Definitely, that's both good and bad for the organization, because in the early 1990s several factors were clear: once it was a hope and enthusiasm and mobilization, which today no longer exists. Today is much discouragement or cynicism, new generations say that there's no point, you get no change or the report is disastrously between the effort invested and so. It doesn't'worth, simply not worth to put my shoulder, I do not think anything is going to change soon or so.” (CCN/LP).

“... and so, as a profile, I can say it was a change, I initially went with the bike and the environment, in 1992, in 2000 there was a significant change of Statute, technical and local...” (CCN/RM)

“...youth and civic. Youth and civic because...in fact, in 1995 he got youth and civic in the Statute, the civic part, we, at the beginning, we have not proposed to deal with the development of the NGO sector or civil society in general, but we found that if there is a barren land, you, if you want to be one plant, you do not really work. And wishing or not, we needed allies and we had to do education as well, to help in the creation and development of other organizations and in our field and in other fields in Cluj, and at the national level, so it seems we were the first organization with our profile. And our former members who were students in Cluj, graduated, went home, local organizations were set up there, at others were initiative group, we contact them, help them, I was writing the Statute, helping them to develop, we were doing projects together and so on. Similarly, at Cluj, we started doing contacting, sectorial coalitions, sectorial coalitions, to do to make the secretary of the coalitions, to make county forums, NGOs
and so on, so from zero. By 1996-97 began to grow the proportion of actor in the NGO sector and civil society, in general, and in today's issue it is strong, many years we have functioned informally, even as a kind of NGO resource centre and even today we are, at the national level, even with such a role and we publish guides for setting up NGOs and so on. ” (CCN/RM).

The EB is in an early stage. They intend to apply for financing projects, in order to consolidate their activity. In the same time, CCN has crossed a similar experience, but, after an intense period of activity, when they had projects financed by different foundations and organisations, they decided that they have not the capacity and the time for more intense activity, that the project-work is time demanding and generator of stress in the given conditions, with all members employed in other organisations, and involved as volunteers for the club. LP for example, described the situation: “We had a growth at a time, through the years: the late 90s up through 2005 was a period when we had an office and was a place where we met and it was very, very cool, that anyone, anywhere, could come and leave, may have some business in town, he let his bike and went, it was somewhere in the middle and very practical. - Who had financed the office? - That was financed by some projects we have worked in, I do not know exactly all the details, but I know there were some funding. We could not keep the office, because there was no time for applying for other projects. We realized that to write an European project, it is required too much paper work and overload for an NGO, and we are all volunteers and all we do is voluntary. ” (CCN/LP)

The EB have a different approach, perhaps due the fact that they had no previous experiences with financed projects, but they are hoping the move through projects toward a professionalization of their association.

Success is defined by both associations in number of the members. CCN (RM) has declared: “And perhaps the greatest success would be to see that you have a dozen people involved constantly and so on, on which you can count and they are few... because, that is in fact, the rest, the lack of financial resources or materials is a symptom, not a cause, it is in humans. That would be the great success and sustainability, to see that you have again a nucleus of people, as you had in the 1990s” (CCN/RM).

EB is associating the increase in the number of the initiative like a success factor, like a growth process: “I think that we will not stop here. I would like to believe that the society will raise other persons capable to contribute to protection of environment, to ecology. It is an ascension process and I don’t think that we will stop here” (EB).

It seems that not only the number of the members is a reference to success or impact, but as well the number of persons (members of community) involved in the campaigns or volunteering for the initiatives: “Here I only want to point out a little longer, that part with the impact on society. Surely, for example, in Cluj, we can have, at least for Cluj, the claim that we had a visible impact, because in the moment when you have more than 100 monthly cyclists marches, when you put them in the city and everyone sees you, when you take your children for years on the bike’s clam, when you go by suit and tie for years and now when you see that more people do this, as long as you did several shows on radio, on television, in local media, hundreds of public screenings over the years on a topic and see that things are starting to spread, sure that it's not only your contribution, is also the fact that people have open their minds, have
went abroad, they saw, but you can claim that a part of the share is yours and because you succeed to open eyes and to generate a bit of imitation” (CCN/RM).

2. What about future evolution?

(2.1) Name: Future - What evolution WILL likely look like for C

The values presented above are connected with the present point (2. Future evolution), because the CBIs would like to continue their present policy. Both CBIs have declared that the future plans are connected with the evolution of economic and social context of the field in which they are active.

EB declared that they intent to grow and to become more professional, through attraction of new members, of experts, through projects gained by the association.

CCN intention is to disseminate further their experience that they have gained in all those years.

“And on the training side, here we have the know-how, here we have good people, with much experience, unfortunately, the time and of those who might be trainers and of the volunteers does not exist so that you can make those formal training. I would like very much and we are doing now more for the people from outside, we make presentations and I, personally, and other colleagues who were invited to the universities and we kept things for the students pretty often, and we have made public presentations and briefings and so for free, for whoever wanted to come, but all the things were somehow punctual, about 2-3 hours or shorter modules, but substantial stuff from lack of time, both of those who had to teach, and those who are educated, even if it was free, it was a big problem” (CCN/RM).

For EB we can hardly discuss about changes of plans or visions, due the short life-time that they have. They are streaming for professionalization, for increase of financial power via EU projects. The most members explained that was not a change in the goals and aspirations (”The association is too young for this” EB). We could describe their aspirations as being oriented toward consolidation and expansions of initial proposed activities.

Some other members of EB have declared that they have moved from a student club to a responsible and community oriented initiative. The have set up an NGO and they have made changes in the inner organisation. The management of the association is structured on fields of activities (communication, ecology and waste management campaigns, public debates).

“Ecology, waste management. Are different goals, yes.... But I don’t think that the goals have changed over the time. I think that they were just amplified” (EB/G.N.)

(2.2.) Name: Future - What evolution SHOULD likely look like
The members of EB haven’t described relevant changes for the future, and as well they don’t think that significant changes should occur, excepting the move toward professionalization. The changes that they are expecting are from outside, especially from the side of the public administration.

“The only need that we are expecting is a more open and supportive approach of the public administration. If we will have the support of public administration, we could change a little bit more, we could have more trust and more courage to continue” (EN/IN).

“Well to start as any NGO or association began shyly, do not know the order was implementing policies or best environmental practices and public awareness. That was about. (...) Well, from the beginning when I was a student association, so to speak, I tried today to keep in touch with students, the projects we run, we had before, but we’re working on older stuff, so with bigger budget. Professionalization is a good thing when we're not, we're just getting started, and people who know these things will guide you. In other words we try to attract people who are experts in the association in a particular field.” (EB, IN).

The members of EB have mentioned that they are hoping to write and to apply for financing their activities through EU projects. The financing projects are perceived as a chance for professionalization, for extension of the activities and for diversification.

“And even if don’t have yet financial strength, I lead them or help them to earn some financing through projects.” (EB, LN external stakeholder)

The same stakeholder, LN, is mentioning that from the outside, it looks that the goal of EC has changed, and that this will lead to further changes, mainly expansion of their activity.

The goal, as far as I perceive, has changed. The association started with the idea to be an organization within the Faculty of Forestry as a response to current problems in forestry. So it was an internal reaction. Currently, the purpose widened very much. Think that they have become members of the Coalition 2000, an association nationwide, that I believe that assumes all environmental issues and discuss them locally. But that idea, that something that was focused on forestry, had such a development, that a student went to represent the area to national workshops, in issues related to local environmental.

The diversification strategy is not an alternative for EN. The large initiatives are wasting their forces on too many fields, and is hard to have expertise in many different domains. EC fears that if the diversification will occur, they will not have the technical capacity to solve the problems that they will deal with. This opinion was formulated by LN (external stakeholders): “The goal is good. The problem with these big initiatives is, that if you expand a lot the activity on different fields, is hard to have in expertise for all these. From my perspective the members should stick to their initial goal. They could be more professional if they will stick to the field of environment, forestry and waste management, natural parks, natural reservations, in this domain”. (EN, LN).

3. Are there any conflictual element/process/events that played a
At CCN, the growth of the initiative from 50 to 150 adherent members brought additional concerns and internal implicit conflicts, because of the unequal involvement of members. As well, the initiative has no staff, and is led only by volunteers. The coordination of a quite large number of members is difficult and the organisation of some activities is, as well, a challenge for the most active members (almost the same that are involved in events, campaigns a.o.).

(...) So, we started with a few dozen people and still we are, as active members, somewhere around 50, 150 adherent members, these are coming rarely, a few times a year or more outgoing. So still, we are a small local organization, as, unfortunately, are mostly from the sector of NGOs. For example, environmental NGOs, from a total of 200 active in Romania, almost all, about 95%, have no paid staff and somewhere between one and three dozen of members, more or less active. So that's the typical model of organization, here we are also, unfortunately. As number, it has not been a change, it has slowly growth in the last 10 years, but it's slow, it's not very significant. That is, the number of members obtained, in addition to the number of members lost. (CCN/RM)

Conflicts in CCN are generated as well by frustration associated to lack of time and different level of involvement. Similar with other initiatives, “there is a group of over-motivated persons that are leading the things ahead, and those are over-worked with different tasks and activities”.

“And then we ended having a stronger image than in reality, we cannot get involved either 10% of what we want and we know and where we have the know-how and the will and so on. It's simply lack of time. How many changes in legislation, many proposals for cooperation, how many opportunities to get to I don’t know what and you already clench your teeth and run with a big...The biggest problem is that <let's do that, that> after that, <Good, who is in charge, who takes it?><Oh...well, you know, I'm not sure, because I do not...>. And then...that happens, so 90% of the stuff is not done because there is no one to do it, in particular, because there aren't available human resources”(CCN/RM).

It appears that due the long-life of CCN, the present stage is characterized by a lack of fresh enthusiasm, concretized in a reduced involvement of all age-segments of members. The president of CCN is explaining: “That's the problem, there is a core from 1990, people that remained and did not intend to go, but from those who come later, many left for other horizons and then, we fail to have the new generations, people who remain, that can develop further, which could take over the leading of the club, at a higher level, that can keep up the arms, that could keep a good quality of our activities. We fear a decline of activity. We cannot get involved either in 10% of what we want and we know where we have the know-how and the will and so on. It's simply lack of time. So many changes in legislation, so many proposals for cooperation, so many opportunities to go for... ”(CCN/RM).
An outside stakeholder of EB, with a main role in creation of the association, has formulated a similar causality: “Definitely, that’s both good and bad for the organization, because in the early 1990s several factors were clear: once it was a hope and enthusiasm and mobilization, which today no longer exists. Today is much discouragement or cynicism, new generations say that there’s no point, you get no change or the report is disastrously between the effort invested and so. It doesn’t worth, simply not worth to put my shoulder, I do not think anything is going to change soon or so.” (EB/LN).

Both initiatives have mentioned conflicts with external stakeholders, especially with public authorities: “If once you were on a theme in tension with one authority, usually on any topic in the future, unlimited, you are in those blacklisted that were not invited to the debate, that were not announced, the world welcomes you so, by eyes, that my bosses shouldn’t see me that I know you, they correspond from anonymous E-Mail addresses, like verdeimpârat@yahoo.com who writes you at tonight, <take a look tonight, so, at 11 PM to see what our institution is publishing>, backdated with 9 days and ends at midnight the observation period and things like this. That happened and that was from 2000, when we passed and on the strategy of confrontation, but we always went not only on strategies of confrontation and I have always come up with proposals and solutions and analysis, although it would not be always necessarily this the role of an NGO” (CCN).

4. Any other observations

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5. Summary

Despite the differences in length of life of the initiatives and in field of operation, we could identify some similarities in the evolution, values and actions of the analysed CBIs. For both, the mains influences are generated by the actions or passivity of the public authorities in the specific action field of the initiatives. They seem to face similar problems, related to shortage of human resources. Thought, EB is more enthusiastic, perhaps due the fact that is at the beginning and they have not registered periods of lack of motivation.
Power and politics

Memo from JHI

1. Introduction

This memo summarizes some of the key findings emerging from the qualitative interviews with the two key case studies for JHI in relation to the power and participation coding framework developed along with Barcelona, OUAS and PIK. The research question underpinning this coding and analysis activity is:

- To what extent do intended/unintended or invisible/exclusionary patterns (power structures, hierarchies, discourses, dilemmas and imaginaries) constrain CBIs’ abilities to engage/benefit a diverse range of people and be transformational in their societal impact?

The sample includes 24 interviews between 1.5 and 2.5 hours long. 12 individuals were interviewed, individually, from CBI 2, a student-led food and energy initiative which is part of the Students Association of Y University. CBI 2 is organised into two main parts – CBI 2.1 (comprising a café, a veg bag scheme and a small wholefood retail ‘shop’), and CBI 2.2 which is training students to be energy aware and then to go out to charities and train others how to use less energy. CBI 2.1 is also politically active in organising political campaigns among students in support of e.g. food poverty, affordable rent and so on, and also lobbies the university to change practices/processes that it sees as unsustainable. CBI 2.1 is headed up by the President of the Environment and Politics (E & P) Committee, a sabbatical position for a student within the student association, who is elected & serves for 1 year. The café, veg bag and wholefood shop are all run by student volunteers. Around 30 students volunteer each week during the university term time.

CBI 2.2 is run by a project manager employed by the university (although it is under the student association) and is publicly funded from the Climate Challenge Fund with match funding from the university. There are 3-4 other staff and 2 paid student interns. training sessions for students on energy efficiency, and then match the students with charities within Ycity to audit their energy usage. CBI 2.2 also run events and promotions on sustainability issues. The aim of CBI 2.2 is thus individual behaviour change, while for CBI 2.1 the focus is much more on lobbying and calling for structural and systemic change.

The data from CBI 2 comprises interviews with 12 people; 7 with students (6 volunteers in CBI 2.1/Veg Bag/The food shop& 1 student intern in CBI 2.2), and 5 with staff of the university (2 employees of CBI 2.2, the Union’s environmental rep, policy advisor in planning and governance, and the utilities manager). CBI 2.1 has been running in one form or another for around 10 years; CBI 2.2 was created with Climate Challenge Funding in 2012 and ended in 2015 when the funding was not renewed. CBI 2.1 continues to operate as a student initiative since it is not grant-dependant and makes a small profit from the café.

The remaining interviews (n=11) are with people associated with X District Development Trust (CBI 1), a community enterprise group in a historic rural market town of around 4,500 people in Yshire, some 40 miles (60km) from the city of Y. The aims of CBI 1 are broad and are summarised by one interviewee as
“it’s to make X a better place to live in, better place to work in, better place to enjoy yourself in, to...to entertain yourself in” (CBI 1, Trustee, 2015)

Five interviews have been coded from the CBI 1 data for this memo (6 I didn’t have time to do before the deadline but will attempt to do them in the next weeks to see if they add anything to existing coding). The interviewees included here are two members of the board, an employee of the Trust, two local authority employees (regeneration and economic development officer, & sustainability officer). Those still to be done include two members of the community council (interviewed together – 1 interview), two members of the Board, employee of Local Energy Scotland (administer of grant funding), and two employees of the Trust.

CBI 1 emerged in 2009 from an earlier organisation set up with funding from the local authority. It formalised its constitution and became a development trust in 2009 when the earlier funding dried up. It is organised as a Board of Trustees (around 12 people – known as the Board) with a wider, but largely inactive membership of around 400. It is open to anyone in the X postcode area (around 10,000 people – so only a few have joined) who pay a token, one-off membership fee of £1 (around €1.50). There are also 4 employees (2 FT, 2 PT) who manage the everyday running of the Trust on behalf of the Board/Directors. The Board are not paid. The relationship between the employees (especially the Trust manager) and the Board (especially the Chair) is therefore crucial.

Power and politics emerge quite differently in each of these initiatives of CBI 2 and CBI 1. On the surface, CBI 2 and especially the CBI 2.1 part of the initiative, seeks to provide cheap, healthy food for students & anyone else who chooses to visit the café. However, the initiative uses the small profit generated from the café to fund political activities, and uses the space of the café to raise awareness of what it sees as injustice and inequity, and ways to challenge this. Funds have been used to directly support other groups, and to pay for students to attend marches, conferences and other events. The president of the E&P committee also lobbies the university to become more sustainable and to change its policies and process where possible. CBI 2.1 is therefore a bit of a hybrid organisation with both political and apolitical faces. This ‘split’ between simply providing food, and being a political organisation came up in many of the interviews, where it was not necessarily seen as a split but as something that was complementary:

“I think there are sort of...there are at least two ways to understand success for CBI 2.1. One is that we get involved with loads of campaigns and we help them keep going, and we help organise them. The other is that we provide people with a space to be...just to be happy in” (D, CBI 2, student, 2015)

CBI 2.2 does not engage in political debate or action at all. Some members of the CBI 2.1 society were quite critical of the approach taken by CBI 2.2, saying that it was geared towards individual skills enhancement rather than contributing in any way to social justice, equity and inclusion.

So there is a bit of tension at times between CBI 2.1 and CBI 2.2 even though both are part of the student association of the university. In many ways they can be considered as separate initiatives. At the end of our research, in June 2015, CBI 2.2 was not able to secure further funding and ended. CBI 2.1 continues to operate as one of the student association societies.

In CBI 1 the approach was towards partnership working with other bodies, mainly public sector but will work with anyone that shares ideas and aims. However, CBI 1 want to be distinguished from the local authority. The politics in CBI 1 was not traditional right/left ‘capital P’ Politics, but was a more subtle way of trying to create local democracy and be more responsive to what people wanted to see. One of the interviewees described how people had become passive and expected the local authority/public bodies to provide services, whereas
his aim was to make people and communities more active by taking responsibility for their own services and quality of life.

2. Transition imaginary

For both CBI 2 and CBI 1 the transitioned imagined was predominantly social and economic, rather than environmental. For the members of CBI 2.1 the social transition was necessary before any other form of change could happen, and greater social justice was the most important transition that must take place. There was a strong and recurring discourse of bringing about change in the CBI 2 interviews, which was less strong in the CBI 1 interviews.

“What is really crucial to the success of CBI 2.1 is that we get loads of volunteers, and that they have loads of different interests, eh like... you know we want people to be really excited about the kitchen and to think that... yeah, to think that’s really cool... We also want people to be really politically involved... in my opinion, if people weren’t political, CBI 2.1 wouldn’t be successful, they’d just make a lot of soup…” (D, CBI 2, student, 2015)

For CBI 1 members there was less emphasis on transition/change and more about building up the organisation (i.e. the Trust) so that the Trust could do things to benefit the people and the local area around the town, e.g. providing more opportunities for local employment, entertainment, a stronger connection to place. CBI 1 thus sees its contribution to social change in terms of local action rather than through political change, while CBI 2 interviewees favoured political action and change to enhance social justice, and personal behaviour change.

Both initiatives had strong models for social change. For CBI 2 this was the cooperative model, to which they aspired and which they supported with funds to other groups sometimes. One interviewee described the strength of the coop model being found in the sharing of skills and responsibility, as well as the social elements:

“...like that’s why the coop model’s good because I know I wouldn’t... I don’t have the... organisation skills to be able to just go and start that myself, like it would just go into the ground, but... you have to work as a group in that, and everyone shares the responsibility – no one’s got the weight of the world on their shoulders” (CR, CBI 2, student, 2015)

While there was strong support among interviewees for the cooperative model, there were also reservations expressed about how successful it could be in changing capitalism as a system. So while cooperatives were seen as being important in providing support and wellbeing, and tackling some issues of injustice, they were not necessarily seen as providing a strong enough alternative to dominant oppressive and entrenched socio-economic systems:

“We’re seeing people dying on our streets every day, we’re seeing people... forced out of work, we’re seeing people forced out of housing by constant rises... Eh, it’s an uncontrollable private rental sector... Just... I don’t think cooperatives can do too much to solve issues like that…” (LMc, CBI 2, student, 2015)

In the student interviews there was also a discourse/recurring theme of uncertainty about the future – ‘I hope we can keep doing that next year’. The interviewees expressed concerns about who would be coming in as volunteers, who would be the new president and so on. In CBI 1 this uncertainty was not present because there was not the same annual change in the population or staff. For CBI 1 uncertainty was created around whether or not they would have enough income to keep going – the attempt to develop the farm and to have renewables was driven by this lack of reliable/dependable income. Thus there is a sense of fragility, of precariousness, just under the surface of both our initiatives, due to external
circumstances/environment.

In CBI 1 the model for social change was the development trust model of creating your own income, usually through asset acquisition.

“Because, what we encouraged all of them to do, and what was – the Development Trust Association was behind this as well – was ‘Get yourself an asset!’ Other people will come in there, and they will get behind you, and they’ll fund it, but the asset is the thing that you need to have at the end of the day’... And when X got to the end of it they never had an asset…” (BC, CBI 1, councillor, 2015)

Generating your own income was seen to enable groups to become more secure financially rather than be chasing grant money all the time, becoming independent rather than grant dependent, would enable longer term planning, and be released from restrictions around the use of public funds. For one of the board members funding underpinned everything else the Trust did – from projects right through to employing staff.

In CBI 1 transition/social change was imagined very broadly, and linked to quality of life. One Board member described it like this:

“So it’s a very broad remit, and it covers things like, you know, town centre regeneration, improvement of sports facilities and leisure facilities, ehm...and we’ve got some achievement in that area... Eh...finding funding for worthwhile social investment projects that won’t otherwise be funded – fundraising is quite a big part of our remit... Eh and encouraging other groups...to be...enterprising – to help them find funding, to help them, you know, draw up project plans and things like that....” (RH, CBI 1, trustee, 2015)

This description also shows how the kind of transition imagined by CBI 1 involves working with and alongside others, both individuals and organisations, acting in an enabling capacity to help other groups to deliver ‘socially useful’ projects. In CBI 2 the transition imagined was much more political, directed at lobbying decision-makers both inside and outside of the university, and those in power who were considered to be operating unjustly. There was also political opposition to systems and ideologies – capitalism and its specific injustices were mentioned by several interviewees – and these systems were targeted, through marches, rallies, petitions and demonstrations as needing change.

Raising money was very important for CBI 1, and not only fundraising or getting grants, but having a regular form of income, even to the point where it competed with the social importance of a project:

“also I think I’ve emphasised the importance of...although we’re a social enterprise, of never entering anything for purely social reasons without their being at least the opportunity or the likelihood of breaking even, and even generating surplus revenue…” (RH, CBI 1, trustee, 2015)

Challenges to bringing about change are seen as keeping spaces political, and what happens when the people who keep spaces political move on. This was a big concern for one of the CBI 2 student volunteers, who credited the individuals currently running the student initiative as the main driving forces behind the political momentum of the initiative:

“My other thing that I’m worried about for what we’re gonna do with CBI 2.1 next year, is ‘D’ and ‘E’ are the people who really organise stuff for the cafe, but they’re also the big political...eh...people, like they really are very engaged, they’ve got big networks of campaigners that they know... And everyone talks to them. Next year we won’t have them... So, if we don’t want the sort of...and like CBI 2.1 is a really left-wing organisation, and if we don’t want that to die out, then...it’s up to, I suppose, myself
and ‘L’ in a big way, as well, to make sure that there’s this sort of big political engagement And it takes organising – it takes a lot of organising. And it’s difficult to keep people interested... So, yeah, that’s the biggest challenge for next year, is making sure that CBI 2.1 is still a political space...” (D, CBI 2, student, 2015)

The interviewees talked about the process of bringing about transition and the importance of having something to show for their efforts. One of the student volunteers emphasised the importance of focusing on a few campaigns so that they could demonstrate what they do, and show that they can achieve something:

“...you can envisage circumstances in which that team was part of a... an institutional sustainability team – so they’re almost... they’re almost separate, in terms of the... in terms of the student body, ehm... ... I’m not... I’m not sure that, ehm, short of continuing to... advocate the kind of change that they and we and I recognise is required” (FL, CBI 2, university staff, 2015)

Some of the interviewees from the CBI 2.1 café were quite critical of the activities, organisation and bureaucracy that they saw in CBI 2.2, and which they thought was absent in, and thus did not hinder decision-making and the ability to act, in CBI 2.1. They thought this made CBI 2.1 a much more active organisation because they did not have to consider their actions so carefully, e.g before organising events:

“Some of the stuff of CBI 2.2 is just... ...[sighs] really slow, when we tried to organise an event a few weeks ago, and... ... I dunno, I’m just a really active person – if it’s like ‘We do this’ then I just start making Facebook events and invite people, and they have to write like three emails to assure if we really do it.” (LN, CBI 2, student, 2015)

In CBI 1 the internal power dynamics are between the Trust manager (an employee) and the Board of Trustees (technically responsible for the direction of the Trust but all volunteers). The relation between the Board and the employees of the Trust is
generally very good but there was a sense in which the Trust manager has to convince the Board of the direction that the Trust should take, and then persuade them to get them onside, get their support:

“Challenge number one I think would be best to say that it was, ehm...it would be...probably a small challenge, but it was to convince the...to convince our Board that it actually was the right thing to do – so renewables is a logical, right thing to do, and that was fairly easy one to do, because we could show...the likes of Westray and ehm, other communities that have done this...” (RH, CBI 1, trustee, 2015)

student volunteer in CBI 2.1 described the way that the two parts of CBI 2 complemented each other through their different focus and activities, but without CBI 2.2 having any power over CBI 2.1:

“They don’t have any say over what we do, ‘cause we’re a society in our own right – they maybe had some power over Veg Bag and the wholefood shop until the swap, but...even then, like I don’t know what they really could’ve done... But I think they kinda use us as...a platform to get their events and stuff out – like we’re quite useful to them because the people that would maybe go to their events are the people that would be coming to the cafe, ‘cause it’s the same sort of thing......”(CR, CBI 2, student, 2015)

Both initiatives commented on the fact that they were to an extent dependant on volunteers. In CBI 1 the lack of a hierarchy was seen as something that had to be managed in a different way from a commercial, hierarchical organisation – and this required building personal relationships with people and taking a different approach to the one that would be adopted in a workplace situation. Like with SHIFT, there were both benefits and drawbacks to this:

“It’s very different though, managing a group of volunteers... If you’re a manager, firstly you’ve got a hierarchy – I mean I used to have eighteen hundred staff and I was the top dog, so if I barked [laughs] they had to jump... Not that I barked very much I hope, but... There is a kind of...an immediate respect given when you’re in a management hierarchy. Also, people are subject to the disciplines of employment, that, you know, they have to do as they’re told ultimately, or you can get rid of them, ultimately... If you upset a volunteer at a meeting, they can just get up and walk away with no penalty – they have no reason other than any respect [laughing] they might have for you to do as you say or to take you seriously. So, it’s much more about building your personal credibility, because you don’t have a hierarchical structure that automatically accords you respect –.” (RH, CBI 1, trustee, 2015)

The internal organisation also led to reflections on how to manage people/volunteers, and leadership qualities, techniques and strategies to be employed in such organisations:

“...you have to make a lot more compromises, because you can’t say ‘OK I’ve listened to you all but you’re all wrong, we’re gonna do it this way’ – that’s dangerous anyway, but... I’m talking about degrees of emphasis – much more emphasis on consensus, much less emphasis on giving instructions. The word ‘nudge’ comes to mind, you’re more nudging people than pushing people... And I...I think a sensitivity to the fact that people are volunteers, they have other things to do, they’re not being paid – “ (RH, CBI 1, trustee, 2015)

In CBI 2.2 there was sometimes perceived to be a conflict, or a tension, between the more obviously political activity and the roles of the people involved, especially the sabbatical officer. While on a personal level the sab officer wanted to be politically active in campaigning against injustice, this conflicted with the role within the university as President of the E&P committee.
“that’s a thing ‘E’ and I really want to change next year, is that right now the Fossil Free campaign is both like an Environment and Politics thing but also cafe thing, so it’s really blurry and we don’t really know who should organise it – should ‘D’ be there, shouldn’t he be there, what’s his role in the whole thing, what’s CBI 2.1’s role? So next year we’re going to have a campaign person on the CBI 2.1 Committee to make sure that we are in all the campaigns, and they’re also next year going to be under the banner of CBI 2.1 and kind of have Environment and Politics as something separate... ‘D’ for example...we handed in a Fossil Free petition six weeks ago, and the same day ‘D’ got like a really furious phone call and emails from the University, because he sits on the Investment Board, and it’s really hard for him to be both an activist on the streets and also one of the people the University talks to in their huge fancy finance...like...investment courts... So, for next year we hope...we really want to have this line that Environment and Politics more lobbying and everything, and also has campaigns but that CBI 2.1 takes more a lead on the campaigns” (LN, CBI 2, student, 2015)

4. Challenging external power

Of the 2/3 initiatives that provided our case studies the most politically active is CBI 2.1. Alongside running a café, a veg bag scheme and a wholefood ‘shop’, the initiative provides a space (the café) where students gather and discuss/organise political activities. This activity takes the form of campaigns, protests, petitions, supporting other groups, providing funding to campaigns and raising awareness of issues on campus. The campaigns that CBI 2.1 support and contribute to are generally social issues although they have recently supported a Fossil Free campaign, in which they tried to persuade the university to divest finances away from fossil fuels. Other campaigns include tackling housing issues for students, removing VAT/tax on sanitary products, supporting the cooperative movement, and many more. The students see the café as a political space, designed to encourage activity and education that challenges current political orthodoxy.

In contrast, CBI 2.2 is not political. Their aim is to train students in energy auditing, and then to link them to charities to help them reduce their energy usage. The volunteers in the café saw CBI 2.2 as accommodating rather than challenging existing social systems – working within dominant structures if you like, rather than working to change them, which was what the café volunteers saw themselves doing.

In CBI 1 the focus was on achieving greater local autonomy, mainly from the local authority rather than from any other political authority. However, the Trust continues to be largely dependent on public funding and on grants from the council. Another interesting aspect emerges from the interviews with regard to the relationship with landowners, energy companies and energy distributors. These highly centralised systems made it difficult for the Trust to secure access to a site for a wind turbine, to get planning permission and to get hooked up to the grid. These difficulties proved so insurmountable that the Trust were considering whether or not they should set up a local distribution network. If they did go down this route it would be a highly political act, with the potential to change further peoples’ attitudes and relationships with dominant political structures and regimes. However, at the time of this research it was uncertain as to whether they would go down this route as it brings its own risks in maintaining the infrastructure.
The volunteers in CBI 2.1 said that it was a challenge to keep the café as a politically active space, because you had little control over who used it or how politically active any new people in the students association would be:

“So, that’ll be the big...the big challenge, is making sure that there’s...you know loads of new people, but they’re not just wanting to make soup and have a sort of fun café – we want to make sure that there’ll still be a political space....” (D, CBI 2, student, 2015)

In CBI 1 the relationship with external organisations is less clear and more muddy, especially when it comes to the local council. One example is the farmers market, which the Trust helped to set up. In this extract you can see the overlaps between the local council and the Trust that makes it difficult for the Trust to maintain any kind of independence from the Council:

“helped set-up X Farmer’s Market – we didn’t set it up, but we helped the farmer’s market group who had been trying for ages to get it set-up... Because I work for...I was employed by the Council but...not working for the Council, it just made it that...so much easier – that’s what I was talking about, about that link with...[? I could say ‘Look...kinda 0:31:32 – 0:31:34] we’re all in this together folks, give it a chance, put it on the town square, test it out, it’s not forever’... And so you could convince the road guys that it was worth closing the square for one morning a month to put the farmer’s market on, and you know, five, six, seven years on...eight years on we’re still doing that, so...” (DB, CBI 1, employee, 2015)

The mix up with the local council is further complicated by the fact that the Trust offices are located in a council building, although the Trust pay no rent. But an outsider would not know this – they would just see the office in a council building and assume that they are part of the council. The Trust manager spoke about managing the relationship with the council & the community to be on good working terms with both but not to be too closely associated with either:

“and the advice I got when I started was...I went to see other town coordinators who were operating, and...a couple of pieces of advice really stuck and one was, ehm... ‘Try and keep yourself in the middle so you’re not working for...you are employed by the Council, you’re...you’re paid by the Council, but your...your remit is to be the...a sort of almost an interface between Council and community, and...try not to get identified too closely with the Council’, and I think on the other side, not too closely with the community so that you’re...you can play that sort of...broker role... So I didn’t take out a council email address, you know, I just kept my...I just started 1name.2name@x.net and...that made it much easier for...for me not to be perceived as a...as a council officer” (DB, CBI 1, employee, 2015)

The Trust is part of a wider national network of development trusts, with whom the X Trust has good connections, and which is active in sharing information (through newsletters and an annual conference), giving advice and training, and putting members in touch with each other. CBI 1 also works with other local organisations (e.g. the Z housing association) that would at one time have been public bodies but have in recent times become semi-private social enterprises and even commercial companies. CBI 1 have also been active in trying to secure community benefit from developers who have successfully installed wind farms in the local area – again this is something that is enshrined in law, but community groups have to be active in seeking it out and showing that they are able to use it for community benefit.

In trying to become financially independent, and to move away from grant funding, CBI 1 have been trying to put up their own wind turbine. However, they have come up against many blocks in trying to do this, so that the Trust manager thinks the easy route is to apply for community benefit. The barriers to community ownership of renewables are at least three-fold – getting access to land (buying land or renting from a landowner), getting planning...
mindful of the perceived interests of the local population: one reason why they became a development trust and not a transition group, was to be also spoke about how they want to change, and the second from case of, but could not support. In the case of CBI this happened with the university, and in the case of CBI 1 the council would use the Trust to do things that it could not do. This example from CBI illustrates how the university lets the students tackle the more controversial areas of change, and the second from CBI 1 how the council is looking to community groups to fill some of the functions that the council used to provide:

“It provokes thoughts about ‘Do we bring energy users to our site?’... In other words, do we develop the site as like an industrial park, but provide lower cost electricity? Do we ourselves setup businesses which use electricity because we’ve got, you know, capacity, but we can’t put it into the grid? That’s not a good idea, ‘cause you’re going into areas you know nothing about, and you’re not really organised to deal with... Things like grain drying, you know... Nah! That’s not our business... Or, you’ve got to try and use it locally, you know... But, when you’ve got to transport your electricity from a remote site to say an industrial park – which you almost invariably have ‘cause the closer you get to the industrial park the closer you are to people, and the more difficult it is to get planning permission to put up your turbine... You’ve then got to pay for [in effect 0:48:36] a private cable – probably part underground, part overhead – and it’s incredibly expensive per kilometre to put up one of these, even if you can get permission from the landowners, ‘cause you’ve got to cross other people’s land...’” (RH, CBI 1, trustee, 2015)

“believe it’s done in Germany, and Denmark... We’re studying that at the moment, because we may need to try to persuade them to change their policy... But that’s gonna be hard, ‘cause they’re a kind of nationalised industry really, and [laughs] it will takes ages, if they ever do..”(RH, CBI 1, trustee, 2015)

Strategy – in some cases there was data that pointed to our initiatives being used by other organisations to put forward ideas or to promote changes that they themselves were in favour of, but could not support. In the case of CBI 2this happened with the university, and in the case of CBI 1 the council would use the Trust to do things that it could not do. This example from CBI 2 illustrates how the university lets the students tackle the more controversial areas of change, and the second from CBI 1 how the council is looking to community groups to fill some of the functions that the council used to provide:

“So yeah, like I say, we weren’t averse to giving the students the more controversial ideas to put forward at meetings because...sometimes you gotta do it.” (JK, CBI 2, university staff, 2015)

“I think...yeah I think all councils are coming under...increasing budgetary constraints, so I think there is...hope that these kinds of community groups will take over some of that...some of that role...”(EW, CBI 1, council, 2015)

However, it is not just big organisations that CBI 1 has to deal with. One of the board members also spoke about how they want to respond to what the local people of X want, and that is one reason why they became a development trust and not a transition group, was to be mindful of the perceived interests of the local population:

“So I think most...most of them are in favour of...of sustainability, but, ehm, the reason that X Development Trust, or X and District Development Trust, why it’s never called itself as...you know, ‘Transition Town’ or...there’s no emphasis on making X a Transition Town or whatever, is I think we don’t want to scare people off... And I think [manager]’s of the view that we don’t want to scare off the more traditional people, because there are a lot of people with very traditional attitudes who will probably
come round if something’s explained to them, but if we called ourselves a...you know, environmental group or something, they would just have a fit...”(MS, CBI 1, trustee, 2015)

This ‘getting local support’ and ‘making sure that we all buy into this’ was a recurring theme throughout the CBI 1 data.

Finances and income are an important part of CBI 1, as has been mentioned and illustrated in this report several times. Income was also mentioned in CBI 2, with the organisation of CBI 2.1’s 3 parts being quite unusual in political organising in that it has a fairly constant and reliable source of income, which can be used to support political issues (although volunteer burnout was also mentioned, as was the difficulty sometimes of getting enough volunteers to keep the café running 5 days a week):

“Like they would be an environmental sort of impact society or that, ehm... ... ... Eh... Yeah, it could, like there’s no thing...to stop it. But, it definitely helps having the food because...again, like part of that surplus we’ve got can go into...it’s a fundraising for like if we need to make a banner or we can use that so subsidise transport to go to a protest or something. Like...I think ‘D’ said, it’s the first sort of activist organisation he’s worked with that’s actually like constantly fund raising and that’s got a budget – like we’re quite lucky with that. So, it would work without the food – whether it would be as...productive, ehm... ... I think one of the issues with the kitchen is that people can spend a lot of time working there, and they don’t end up focussing as much on the political part... But when we do focus on the political part like a lot gets done – we got...I think for the Fossil Free we got a thousand student signatures...”(CR, CBI 2, student, 2015)

One of the CBI 2 interviewees had some interesting things to say about funding, and how often it was too target driven and did not allow the flexibility with structure that they thought was necessary for a successful initiative:

“I think...I think the...I think there always needs to be a kind of... a focal point, but it needs to be kind bottom down, but like, there needs to be something in the centre, ehm, and it... It’s like what I was saying before, like individual then affecting society, and I don’t think a lot of the...a lot of the public funded things for sustainability are very target driven, but targeted at the wrong things... So... Yeah, and it’s...it’s very much top-down... And they all talk about doing bottom-up – every single one of them talks about doing bottom-up – but it never actually happens. So it’s actually, the...the way it should be kind of done is like, you should create a...like a...a space or a centre, whether it’s an allotment or whether it’s a...something, and then you let people do it... And you give them a bit of a...structure to it – just creating the structure for them to then do things... And...with total free reign...”(DO’H, CBI 2, sabbatical officer/student, 2015)

So this vision is for a sort of space, or centre, something to hold people or get them involved initially but then to allow or enable people to do things for themselves within this space. In both our initiatives the participants spoke about the difficulties of getting people engaged – only a fraction of students at university are involved with CBI 2/CBI 2.1, and only a small % of the population in X are involved in the Trust. One interviewee said that people only got involved with community things when there was a problem – either people get given something they don’t like, or something is removed that they do like, this could apply equally to a building, facility or service:

“Grassroots... The grassroots...genuine grassroots, right? Comes from one of two things... The first is that you give them something that they don’t want, and the second is that you take something away that they like... That’s when you get
grassroots reaction. Everything else...if there’s no crisis, trying to get grassroots involvement is phenomenally difficult...” (BC, CBI 1, council, 2015)

5. Implications of external and internal power dynamics on CBIs’ impact on society

In summary, the CBIs in this case study show the precarious environment that groups without a reliable source of income operate under. Only 1 of the 3 CBIs had any regular income from its activities, and this was CBI 2.1, from its three food-related activities. This had enabled it to exist for over 15 years, to create a space that was now becoming politicised to challenge wider structural problems. However, it was the basic activity of selling healthy, locally produced, organic and vegan food that a) drew people in, and b) allowed the group to tackle other issues around local organising, campaigning and ethical investment. In contrast, CBI 2.2 and CBI 1 were largely dependent on grant funding and a lot of their energy went in to trying to keep going.

CBI 2.1 was not immune from problems though. They were well aware of the exploitation of volunteer labour to turn even a modest profit, and although they supported the cooperative model, they did not think it would change the world. So for these initiatives I would say that funding is a visible pattern that can constrain CBIs ability to engage a diverse range of people. Then chasing funding to keep existing can almost become an aim in its own right; in other words, the goal becomes to continue existing rather than looking at what the aims of the CBI are or could be.

In the case of CBI 1 there were external power struggles that made it difficult to secure a long-term future and be truly transformational. These were not personal conflicts but between infrastructures that are not set up to deal with community groups in the area of renewable energy, and which proved to have serious delaying consequences for the Trust in trying to get a wind turbine. The most serious of these is the connection to the grid, showing that electricity/power/energy distributors have a huge say in which communities are able to derive an income from their wind turbines. This shows that external power structures are not necessarily set up to encourage or facilitate community-led transition, despite policy rhetoric which often puts this discourse forward.

Third, both of our case studies were small in comparison to the population they claimed to represent (students and the population of CBI 1). Interviewees in both initiatives expressed that they had difficulty attracting interest from a wider group of people, and that they would like to attract more people. Both groups constantly had events, &publicised their activities but only a few people ever attended. They say its because most people do not have the time, or perceive groups as cliquey, or elitist. I don’t think this data really gets at why more people don’t get involved – for that I think we would need to ask people who don’t engage what prevents them from getting involved. But from this data we can say that there are other institutional patterns that either encourage and/or inhibit community groups to have wider societal impact.

6. Any other observations

One of the themes that came through in the student initiative was the difference between individual behaviour change, and tackling structural and systemic inequality and injustice. One initiative was firmly tackling individual behaviour change, while the other was aiming for much more political kind of action. The other initiative was somewhere in the middle with projects that do both.
One insight from one interviewee in the university was that such initiatives might provide a safe space to raise issues about the emotional effects that potential and actual climate change might bring. He felt that addressing the emotional aspect of what climate change might mean was something that was missing, and needed:

“You know, but like you’re saying, you know the conversation has highlighted the fact that there is no easy place for people to have a conversation about it... What I feel is, people should be allowed a conversation about how they feel about climate change, because I think it’s actually sort of a bit emotionally...challenging... – psychologically challenging...And...and it gets to me, and I suspect it gets to other people....and I think we ought to be able to talk about it...”(AP, CBI 2, university staff, 2015)

I also thought that there was a lot of interest, goodwill, ideas, enthusiasm in the interviews but that people weren’t really doing anything fundamentally different in their lifestyles. So they might buy local or organic food – but they still buy. I got the impression that people are a) unsure of what to do, and b) find it really difficult to change. hence, policy needs to give more power to community groups not only to create opportunities to lower carbon, but also to create new norms and practices & infrastructures that make it easier, more desirable and more ‘normal’ to adopt low carbon behaviours across many areas of life. Much of this is out of the individual’s or even the household’s reach but could be made available/adapted at a community scale – e.g. not only local food, but the knowledge and sharing that enables us to waste less, or consume less. But of course against this are the pressures to consume coming from industry, & business-backed government.

7. Success factors

Leadership – CBI 1&CBI 2.1 both had charismatic and respected leaders, who also put in a lot of work and were instrumental in getting things done. Interviewees praised the leadership and character of these individuals, who also know how to work the system to their advantage, when to step in and when to let others take over. They also did a lot of work in the background.

Funding/organisation – a reliable source of income (it doesn’t have to be big) and something to do – gives initiatives purpose and meaning, and a sense of achievement when a goal is achieved. It also enables initiatives to choose what they want to do, how they want to support other projects or campaigns, a sense of independence.

Networks – both CBI 2.1&CBI 1 were part of wider networks (the cooperative movt. & development trusts). This provided not only practical things like help and support, training and sharing of information, but also an organisational model that our CBIs could aspire to.

Note – I don’t think these are necessarily important for the development, up-scaling, replication and or diffusion of CBIs – I think these factors are important just for their survival from one year to the next. None of the groups in our sample were really thinking of expanding, they were just thinking and planning about surviving.

8. Summary

One of the key findings for me is the two divergent way in which CBIs can tackle external power structures. In CBI 2.1 this was through political action to point out injustice, and campaign to change this by targeting what they saw as structural inequalities around different issues – including housing costs, feminism and unethical investment. In contrast, CBI 1 almost accidentally found itself coming up against
external power structures in its ambition to put up its own wind turbine. These power structures were in the form of land ownership, planning and then securing a connection to the grid. These are systemic and embedded problems which may yet force CBI 1 to set up its own mini-supply network, which in turn could lead to further autonomy and social changes in the way they use this electricity for the local population/businesses.

I was surprised at how complicated the organisation of each of these initiatives was, even though they are quite small. CBI 2 in particular was quite difficult to get a handle on, and in fact we should probably think of it as two initiatives, although they share links. CBI 1 also has a sub-structure (of employees, Board & members) and has links with different external partners in different projects. In the case of CBI 1 it is also difficult to fully understand what their aims are, beyond the very vague idea of improving the local town. They don’t talk explicitly about localism, or local democracy, but that is what they are trying to put into practice.

I think also we have to take the context of Y into consideration. Its economic ‘energy’ basis means it is an affluent area- hence the focus of these initiatives is not to reclaim land, or to take people out of poverty, but to improve quality of life, and in the case of the student initiative, to point out & campaign for political change. Both initiatives did very little on environmental sustainability beyond education and maybe a bit of local food growing/distribution – it’s difficult to see how such groups could potentially contribute to large-scale carbon savings, although they are making the first stirrings in getting people to think about (& accept) that life as we know it will have to change, and that it is at least possible to make small-scale changes without too much disruption in living standards or quality of life. Perhaps the most successful achievement of CBIs is that they empower local people/individuals and communities/collectives by encouraging them to think about the issues that affect them, or are important to them, and to make decisions collectively concerning what to do about them. They encourage people to voice their opinions, and to create a space for ideas and alternatives to emerge. So perhaps the politics of possibilities is the most important contribution that CBIs make to politics and participation.
Memo from OUAS
Memo for key initiative 1

1. Introduction

In this memo, one Finnish energy co-operative utilizing wood for district heat production will be analyzed in terms of power and politics. The data used in the preliminary analysis includes five interviews with the members of the co-operative between 29.10.2014 and 14.11.2014 (the chairman of the co-operative, the person responsible for administration, the person responsible for wood procurement, an ordinary executive committee member, an ordinary member) and three interviews with its stakeholders between 19.1.2015 and 17.2.2015 (the former mayor of the municipality, a bioenergy expert in a forest advisory organization, a lecturer from a higher education institute) that they have had active collaboration with over their evolution and could be described to have had decisive roles in the evolution process of the co-operative. Power and politics emerged as a very subtle topic in the interviews. In general the interviewees were very reluctant to talk about any conflicts, tensions, ambiguities or politics and power in general when directly being asked about which may be a reflection of the sensitivity of the topic in the cultural context. However, the interviewees' perceptions about these issues were partly revealed through their other speech on other topics. Once an interviewee started to talk about a completely different topic he may have revealed at the end something related to power and politics theme too.

What comes to politics and political action, none of the interviewed co-operative members considered it to be a direct part of the co-operative activities. However, as individual persons some of them are active in influencing policy making processes and the whole co-operative could be described to be a result of a political action taken in the municipality and also in the forestry advisory organization which are important allies or co-operation partners for the co-operative. Power and politics theme then unfolds as a very indirect topic in the interviews, and it is striking how much the interviewees actually revealed their ideas related to this topic. What is striking is that the interviewees did not want to tell their views on power and politics very directly. Instead they were telling bits and pieces here and there. It seemed that they wanted to give a very successful picture of the co-operative also in terms of power and politics, i.e. not to highlight too much any tensions, conflicts or ambiguities. This kind of avoidance of the topic may be related just to the idea of what is culturally appropriate to say and reveal.

The interpretations in the memo need to be read in the context of the co-operative being in an evolved stage. The co-operative has currently tens of members as compared to just a small group at the beginning. It is organized in a hierarchical manner with the annual general meeting being the uppermost decision-making body and the executive committee running the daily administration. The co-operative is located in a rather small rural community in Finland. Although the co-operative was established at the end of 1990s, even two decades before this there had been aspirations for utilizing wood for districts heating in the area. This means that already after the oil crisis in 1970s there
were aspirations for changing heating systems from oil to wood. However, it was only
in 1990s when these aspirations were realized. Many of the current active core
members were in their very late 20s or middle of 30s when the first actual steps for the
coop-eration establishment were made in 1990s, i.e. they were relatively young, maybe
with families already (with small children but still with time for other activities) and
possible commitment to live in the area for the rest of their lives. In this sense the co-
operative could be also interpreted as a manifestation of younger generation for change
in the area. The people became change agents, i.e. a change in relation how forests are
used, a change in relation what is sustainable, a change in relation to how to benefit the
local area the best, a change in relation to future aspirations they themselves had, and a
change in relation to prevailing power structures. At the beginning volunteer work was
needed from the members but as they reported in the interviews, they quickly aimed to
move from volunteer work to everyone getting a compensation for their efforts.

2. Transition imaginary

The co-operative has been running already for significant amount of years which means
that they have lived through the transition that they have made, they and the co-
operative seems to have been the transition itself. This could be a reason why they
don’t talk so much about transition related future aspirations. Their discourse
emphasizes the benefits created to the local economy and also environmental benefits
to some extent. Their operations are very evolved in way that they have been running
like this already for years, with some operational expansions every now and then. As
the person responsible for the forest procurement (14.11.2014) tells when being asked
about the approach and strategy of the energy co-operative "--But in my opinion it
seems now that little by little the good feeling will sneak to us and we will start
discussing even more about how much we have assets. I think that in this sense we will
get a regression. The risk taking ability will decrease year by year. And I could say that.
And it is natural. And when the same names are long time in the administration, we get
older, a human being starts naturally get more cautious and closer to home when they
get older."., the co-operative seems to see a transition to a future more as an internal
transition than an external one at the moment. The imagined transition could have been
very different at the early stages of the co-operative than it is now after years of
collaboration with each other on the same topic.

The co-operative has been a transition itself but the interviewees do not explicitly
express it in their speech. It has realized the environmental, social, economic and
political transition(s) (such as utilizing unused wood and improving forest condition,
creating jobs, making money circle locally and changing who can be responsible for
proving services for the local community) in the local area in its rather small niche that
the co-operative represents. This could be one reason that they don't talk so much about
future transition: they have already made the transition part of everyday life in the local
area and they are already living in it. However, although they do not talk about
changing the economic paradigm, they talk about the local economy benefits which
seem to be an important values for the co-operative. The environmental transition that
the co-operative has realized includes replacing oil with locally sourced wood in heat
production, improving local air quality, improving forest condition with tending them
early enough and utilizing earlier unutilized small-diameter wood from early thinning
and logging residues as a raw material instead of letting them compost in the forest. The socio-economic transition that the co-operative has realized has taken place through their emphasis on local approach including using locally sources wood, increasing local employment, utilizing local resources and in general having local benefits on mind in their activities. Cultural transition seems to have taken place too with the people being empowered to take an action instead of just following what has been done before and what especially external companies (both oil and forest related) think about how things should be done. The local approach was mentioned by all the interviewees which seems to reflect their idea of it being a core value for the co-operative: their contribution to wider social change seems to be envisioned as a local change. In general the transition that they have imagined is very practical and concrete as well as their perception of their contribution to change in the local area.

Interviewer: You may have heard the term sustainable change. What comes to your mid when you hear this term?

Interviewee (the chairman, 29.10.2015): Well it is particularly what I said that this..benefiting from local forestry and in general local economy. And then carbon dioxide emissions have been reduced because of fossil fuels not coming here. So from these factors it can be understood that it has quite an influence, a positive influence.

However, it seems that the transition(s) have been envisioned both by the municipality and the local forestry advisory organization too. When thinking about the era during which the co-operative was formed and the decades before it, it could be even claimed that the co-operative is just one realization of global transition visions. These visions have been emphasized in the aftermath of the oil crisis and during the growing global climate change awareness in 1990s. The global discourse seems to have become national, regional and local discourse, and finally a part of the co-operative’s current discourse.

“Interviewer: Were there any external events or factors on the background which started activity?

Interviewee (the person responsible for administration, 29.10.2014): Well, yes I would believe that during this time it was started to this.. Climate change issues were the first time in some way, maybe not so strongly. But yes we [interviewer’s note: people in general] were probably concerned about carbon dioxide emissions already—“

For this co-operative member the environmental discourse seemed to be more than an external discourse of transition( i.e. how they talk to others about their effects), it seemed to be more an internal value guiding partly the transition he imagines and wants to realize. Whereas his reason to join the co-operative was partly motivated by the environmental values, all the other interviewed co-operative members and also him emphasized the local forest owners’ possibility to sell wood for the co-operative, i.e. in general reasons to join seemed to be very practical and even self-centered in a way of advancing own issue, joined as a common activity in the co-operative. For the current chairman and the person responsible for wood procurement motivation was also reflected through being able to create something new to the area. The person
responsible for the administration also highlights that not everything can be changed with their action but a small part with their own contribution.

“Interviewer: How this [what motivated to participate in the first place] has changed over time?

Interviewee (the person responsible for administration, 29.10.2014): --At least I was motivated also by these environmental factors. I find it nice to try to fight against this climate change too with my own small part although I understand that the world won’t be changed with this energy co-operative. But it is at least an action of the right direction if we now reduce use of fossil oil from our own part.—“

The co-operative could be described to be inclusive as its activities are open to anyone, for instance anyone can sell wood to the co-operative yet only members receive higher compensation. However, the inclusion seems to also have meant that you need to be a forest owner, i.e. you need physical forest resources in order to join the co-operative. Also you need to pay quite high participation share to the co-operative which, however, will be given back if you leave the co-operative. So in this light, the co-operative could be described to be somewhat exclusive too, yet everyone would have a chance to join. The involved people are local men which is not surprising as forestry has been rather male dominated field in Finland. They are also native to the local area which is not very surprising either due to the community structure which has rather few immigrants. Women are involved as members when their husbands have passed away and they have inherited the share in the co-operative. However, they don't seem to be active members which could be a reflection of women being in general less active in forestry related issues in Finland than men. As there were no female interviewees, the underlying reasons for their inactivity can also be speculated.

The co-operative seems to be a proponent of inclusive transition, i.e. none of the interviewees talked only about benefits for themselves but they view benefits of the co-operative in wider scale influencing the local area and taking action there. Some of the interviewed co-operative members emphasized more of the personal benefits and benefits for the forest owners such as income from wood but they also had the more general local approach vision present in their speech. Many interviewees mentioned the importance of local people as the beneficiaries of the activities of the co-operative, for instance in terms of receiving inexpensive heat. They seem to be inclusive in what comes to their beneficiaries (i.e. heat customers) as anyone can join the heat distribution network in theory. In practice there is exclusive pattern also here as not everyone can join in practice due to the co-operative calculating it to be too expensive, i.e. not the mere extension of the heat distribution network to a more distant location inside the community would cost a lot in comparison to added income. So at the end, both inclusive and exclusive practices can be detected.

There are unrecognized privileges in the co-operative, yet these were just briefly mentioned. It seems that the ordinary members who are not involved daily management or administration of the co-operative, or who have been involved in it only a short time, don’t have a full idea of why something is suggested to be done in a certain way and what is going on in the co-operative in its full picture.
“Interviewer: Do you have plans to get more staff employed?
Interviewee (the ordinary member, 6.11.2014): I cannot answer this as I don’t know it.

Being actively involved could also be described to be an unrecognized privilege as it creates a chance to be even more involved, i.e. the social ties may become stronger between the most active people and, thus, they may have a better access to other people’s social and other resources and a better chance to mobilize these resources than those who are not active (such as non-members or inactive members in the co-operative) and who cannot, thus, expand their social network as much as the active ones. This unrecognized privilege could be described to be accumulative in a way that those who have get even more and those who don’t get even less (Matthew effect) or those who participate will participate even more and those who don’t participate will participate even less. It even seems that the active core members are basically running the co-operative and its decision-making even in the highest decision-making body of the co-operative, the annual general meeting, due to lack of participation. The reasons for lack of participation may relate to a general observation in society of some people being more active than others for various motivations. The motivations of the non-active members were not studied so it cannot be said if they feel excluded or just do not want to participate actively beyond being a member.

“Interviewer: Who are the least active?
Interviewee (the ordinary executive committee member, 6.11.2014): --For instance last spring, now I don’t remember, but there [interviewer’s note: in the annual general meeting] weren’t more than the members of the executive committee and then there was just one ordinary member.—“

Tensions on the level of payment for members selling wood annually (=extra payment based on the surplus), or on the wood pricing in general maybe then partly related to members in general not being very active in the co-operative. In this case, those who are active make the decisions and understand the basis for them and those who are not active have to just follow the decisions made by others. Especially the ordinary executive committee member was referring to implicitly to justice when talking about equal payments for wood. Broader justice in the society was implicitly present in the interviewees’ speech that focused on local approach and benefit, i.e. justice was addressed through local level actions.

“Interviewer: How these conflicts, tensions were then dealt with?
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Interviewee (the ordinary executive committee member, 6.11.2014): --The issue has to be so that each person is tried to be paid the same than starting to favor one actor—“
For the co-operative justice seems to be more than just justice on payments. When local approach was emphasized so much throughout the interviews, it seems that they operationalize justice by being inclusive in their discourse about the local area. Yet, the motivations to join the co-operative seem to have been very personal and practical and even self-interested (such as being able to sell own wood), the co-operative seems to build justification for their existence through talking about local approach. At the end, the co-operative could be described to have assets (the heat plants, the heat distribution network) which may have some financial value too. This income has come from the local area. Yet customers get benefit from less expensive heat and forest owners benefit from the wood sold to the co-operative, the co-operative members could be described to have assets that have value if sold in future: in essence the socio-environmental transition has been realized through capitalist logics and practices, such as capital accumulation, private ownership and paid labour in the market economy. However, these logics seem not to have been present so strongly at the establishment phase of the co-operative as the municipality was a major actor then. It seems that the municipality even wanted to get rid of dependence on oil companies as enemies or parties that they didn’t want to co-operate with, when being strongly involved in the establishment phase of the co-operative. However, escaping the market economy hasn’t been possible as the evolution of the co-operative shows: they seem to have become even more dependent on the market economy the more assets the co-operative has. However, what they have become dependent on is the local market economy and not so much the global one anymore, yet global oil prices could be described to affect their work too at practical level.

Interviewer: Yes. What do you think, what kind of consequences or effects the energy co-operative has had for instance on other individuals, local community, other similar energy co-operatives or other initiatives, stakeholder groups and society on more general level?

Interviewee (the former mayor of the municipality): -- And they you don’t have to all the time think the oil price if it goes up or down, what it is next year and what it will be now and then. And yes it has brought stability to this side, also for the municipality. We didn’t have to think much anymore what the oil bill will be. --

3. Internal power dynamics

The co-operative is composed of local men. The main part of the active core group is in their 50s or early 60s. These people have been involved in the co-operative already from its establishment or before during its development phase. Only one younger person in his 30s is involved in the executive committee and some others in the daily management of the association such as wood procurement and heat plant supervision. It is agreed that when someone retires from their daily work, they will also need to retire from the administration and management of the co-operative. The co-operative seemed implicitly to be not so very willing to take new members anymore. This could be a reflection of the co-operative being rather wealthy already with all the heat plants and the heat distribution network that they own. Also a low share of the wood raw material comes from its members anymore so the benefits of having more members may seem marginal for the co-operative. However, the rest of the wood comes from local area
which means that other forest owners also benefit from the co-operative’s activities, yet they would not be members themselves.

In terms of power structures, the co-operative is organized hierarchically so that the annual general meeting is the uppermost decision-making body, the executive committee manages the co-operative and “the core group” takes care of the practical daily management. In practice it seems that the decisions are made by the active people, i.e. those who are involved in the management of the co-operative. In theory everyone has a chance to a full and equal participation in this structured hierarchy but in practice it is only few who participate. Depending on their own position in the co-operative the interviewed co-operative members describe their role differently. Whereas the long term active members seem to be very certain about their own role, the newer active member seems to be somewhat uncertain about his own role especially in relation to tensions.

“Interviewer: How these conflicts, conflicts of interest were treated then?

Interviewee (the ordinary executive committee member, 6.11.2014): --As I said it is difficult for an ordinary member of the executive committee to start giving any allocation to the [wood] prices and start saying that you will be given this much more than the other.—“

The core group of active members which includes both the executive committee and the people responsible for daily management are reported to have significant decision-making power by many interviewed co-operative members. Those who have been involved actively in the co-operative for the longest time seem to have most power in relation to decision-making, i.e. there are inequities related to decision-making. It seems that ordinary members do not necessarily know what is going on, maybe due to internal communication issues, yet communication was reported to have been done.

“Interviewer: How made decisions, who makes decisions?
Interviewee (the ordinary member, 6.11.2014): It is the executive committee who makes the decisions to large extent. It is.. Yes you can to it.. In my opinion it is who make the decisions.”

“Interviewer: Who then made the decisions?
Interviewee (the person responsible for wood procurement, 14.11.2014): Well, in fact it is the same team who still makes the decisions. -- Although there are more members in the executive committee, there are three four names of us who decide the issues to large extent.”

The co-operative members were very reluctant to talk about conflicts when directly being asked about which may reflect that conflicts have been resolved and they don’t want to talk about them anymore or the conflictual elements are still there as a sensitive
issue or they are just culturally sensitive issues to talk about. Two co-operative members mentioned that some conflicts were related to intrapersonal issues.

“Interviewer: Have you met conflicts or conflicts of interest in your activity?
Interviewee (the person responsible for wood procurement, 14.11.2014): Well, not bigger ones. We haven’t been, it could be said that there hasn’t been bigger conflicts. Normal tension sometimes but nothing bigger.
Interviewer: Could you then tell an example?
Interviewee: Well we have actually had little personal chemistry issues during our journey. We had a couple of members which didn’t namely sync together. So we had little contradiction with them. And it was a bit bad situation as they could’t talk the issue as an issue between each other but it happened normally so that it always was sieved through a third person these stories.—“

“Interviewer: Could you tell one example of these conflicts or conflicts of interest?
Interviewee (the ordinary executive committee member, 6.11.2014): Well I don’t want to get involved in them. The actors have had their own opinions so, but in my opinion we have got things running well. But I know there has been some.. Someone may have felt bad about some things but I am not going to separate them anymore.
Interviewer: How these conflicts, conflicts of interest were then dealt with?
Interviewee: So it was mainly about prices in which the issues have been hanging—“

However, even though the co-operative members were not so willing to talk about conflicts when being directly asked about them, different conflictual elements or tensions emerged in other parts of the interviews. A major element that seems to create some kind of tensions within the active group is the future of the co-operative management. It seems that there has been discussion on the theme but nothing has been decided yet. Many interviewees mentioned that something needs to be changed in the management in future.

“Interviewer: What about changes in the organization, should anything change in your opinion for the success to be possible?
Interviewee (the person responsible for wood procurement, 14.11.2014): Yes I think so that yes we.. In a couple of years we have to change this system so that we would not.. I have said this to be a bit kolkhoz-led, we have too many fellows running this. So I would see that there would be one person who would do it as a daily job. I don’t believe that there will be followers for us which would like to do this with the same concept.”

It was also reported by a few interviewed co-operative members that there are different interest groups in the co-operative that seem to cause tensions. Important dividing factors seem to be the importance of financial matters for the members, and the forest owners’ views and other views -division.
“Interviewer: Namely related to the activity, are there different views..?
Interviewer (the ordinary executive committee member, 6.11.2014): Well, a part of the group thinks only from the perspective of forest owners and a part of the group thinks more broadly—“

“Interviewer: Are there different interest groups in your activity and how would you describe them?
Interviewee (the person responsible for wood procurement, 14.11.2014): Well, we of course.. Well, we of course have each of us an own background due to which for some it has been financially a big significance to be involved in the co-operative. For others then not. So this is seen in what kind of decisions are made.—“

The co-operative has only a few female members trough inheritance from their husbands. All the active members are men. However, gender doesn’t seem to be an issue for the co-operative, i.e. the co-operative does not emphasize that it is for men only, it just seems to be a way how things are at the moment. In general the co-operative has been open to anyone and it could be that the male-dominance in the forestry sector has affected how this co-operative is formed too. The interviewees did not seem to have anything against women to be involved.

“The interviewed co-operative members didn’t explicitly talk about communication within the co-operative or any constrains related to language, it was just mentioned that communication is done. However, it seems that ordinary members may not know exactly what is going on either due to lack of communication or their own low interest level in what is going on in the co-operative. In general the language that the co-
operative members use seems to be very down-to-earth, for instance in emphasizing the local approach which may be rather easy for the members and external actors to understand.

4. Challenging external power

The members of the co-operative are mainly men and only a few women are members when they have inherited the membership from the deceased husbands. The members are forest owners and the active members could be currently called experts in their own field such as heat plant management, wood procurement and administration. At the establishment phase all of them were novices in relation to producing heat with wood (excluding one member who ad wood chips heating in his own farm). The co-operative has been open to everyone but now it seems that it is not so willing to take new members, maybe due to its evolved stage with significant assets and anyway only a small of wood coming from its members anymore. The participation share of the co-operative is also rather high nowadays which maybe a barrier for joining the co-operative. It seems that there haven’t been aspirations for changing the CBI composition. The homogeneity of the members can be partly explained by the structure of forestry activities in general in which men have been typically involved more than women. The area has little immigrants in the rural area where the co-operative operates which also explain the homogeneity. Other participants than members include anyone from the local community who are connected in the district heat distribution network or sell wood to the co-operative. There is not distinction on who can benefit from their heat, excluding people living too far away from their network (profitability issues). The heat beneficiaries could be described to be in general anyone from the community but even more so the people who may be more vulnerable, i.e. old people in old people’s home, children at schools and people living in housing rented from the municipality in which there may be more people on social basis. The heated houses belong to municipality or individual actors. In terms of the municipality, anyone using their communal spaces heated with the heat supplied by the co-operative such as schools, health care centre or old people’s home, or living in housing owned by the municipality benefits from the heat. What comes to other actors, they may have joined the heat distribution network as well.

The co-operative seems to not have been a place of political training, yet the individual co-operative members may be active in different kinds of political lobbying as individuals. Thus, the co-operative members may be as individuals, but not as co-operative representatives facilitating wider social and political change. The co-operative members made a clear distinction between political action and their own co-operative activities: political action was not seen as a part of the co-operative. However, individuals may be considered to be involved in different political actions at the moment, for instance some of the interviewees are active in different working groups at national level or interest and lobbying groups dealing with issues related to their own interest fields such as entrepreneurship and wood energy. One member reported his wife having been active in the local level politics so there may have been some indirect linkages to politics than are unspoken.
The active long-term members seem to pay attention to internal power relations, for instance in pondering their own long-term role in the co-operative and how the future management should look like, and how to get people more actively involved. However, at the same time it seems that they are quite content with the current situation of how things are organized. The interviewed ordinary member (6.11.2014) didn’t seem to have anything against the current power relations and he didn’t have a clear idea of the current situation of the co-operative. However, he had been active in the co-operative in the past and was also one of the founding members, i.e. he has seen both sides of the power and seems to be content with the current situation. The ordinary executive committee member seemed to be a bit more concerned about the power relations, maybe due to his own new role, being rather young and rather new in the executive committee and representing maybe more the side of the forest owners than many other executive committee members.

The co-operative could be described to have politicized environmental issues, namely replacing oil with wood in resisting climate change. The politicization has taken place at the discourse level of how the co-operative speaks about the benefits of forest energy. However, it has not brought this issue in a radical way to the public arena but more as an issue of the local approach at discourse level. The co-operative could be described to be the most important actor in the local area what comes to district heat production as they are the only provider for it in the communities in which they operate.

The co-operative has partnerships with different external actors and their most important partners could be described to be the municipality, the local forestry advisory organization and the local higher education institute, and other similar energy co-operatives. Relationships with external powers seem to have been established based on the needs of the co-operative and also based on personal interests, for instance the municipality has been an important heat customer and funding partner, the local higher education institute has been an important project partner and a mutual partner in educational activities (and the lecturer there seems to be a long-term contact for some co-operative members through their daily work), the local forestry advisory organization has been a development partner who has been giving “consulting” support and the other initiatives are either collaboration partners in business or general information network for the co-operative. One interviewee expressed the collaboration having been based on needs.

The co-operative is not active in supporting political campaigns or activism and the main reason for this seemed to be the organization being non-political. The interviewees did not mention any linkages to confrontational groups or initiatives. The co-operative did not explicitly mention to be connected to other movements. However, it seems to be very interested in spreading the positive message of using wood as energy instead of oil. This movement they seem to support through active collaboration with educational institutes and acting as a field visit and student research project partner and a partner in other research and development projects. They seem to have a strong educative role in terms of wood energy, and yet they consider themselves not to be involved in politics, they could be described to be involved in it through being involved in educational activities and, thus, influencing the attitudes, perceptions and values of
the emerging generations on using wood as energy. In general the co-operative seems to believe in influence and change through peaceful small actions such as participating in research and educational activities instead of confrontation.

There are no other similar initiatives mentioned by the interviewees to be formed by marginalized groups. However, we could consider even this initiative to be formed of marginalized people, for instance in relation to general idea of wood use and production being industry-oriented and forests typically being a source of raw material for industry. At the early development phase of the co-operative it was considered to be in a way insane that residues and other unused wood is used for energy, i.e. the energy co-operatives seemed to be marginalized group at least in the eyes of traditional sawmilling and pulp and paper companies, and maybe also in the eyes of the government. The forest owners in general could be called to have been a marginalized, somewhat powerless group in relation to how they can benefit from their own wood and forests differently than selling it to sawmilling or pulp and paper industry at the time when the co-operative was established in 1990s. The co-operative seems to have empowered the forest owners to become more active participants in what comes to their own forest resources and their utilization in the society, i.e. the co-operative has created a new imaginary of what is possible for forest owners in the area in terms of benefiting from their own resources. The external impacts of the larger energy co-operative “movement” seem to include the traditional forest companies awakening to the changed reality that the smaller individual actors can make a change and change the business landscape, for instance energy wood as a concept didn’t exist earlier and now it has become a product of its own. As the co-operative is rather open to visitors and collaboration, it can be anticipated that it has inspired others to do the same but the co-operative members did not know for instance how many new energy co-operatives could have been formed with their inspiration. The internal impacts for each individual forest owner of this empowering maybe related to more long-term changes in attitudes, perceptions, behavior and values. Overall, impacts of this new imaginary, or the new imaginary itself, were not explicitly mentioned in the interviews.

The measurable and visible impacts that the co-operative has include replacing a measureable amount of oil annually with locally source wood, air quality improvement, forest condition improvement, amount of buildings and people connected to their heat distribution network, amount of co-operative members, amount of people getting income from the co-operative, and the research reports in which they have been mentioned as a case study or have been involved as a partners. There are many measurable impacts but for some there is no exact number available, for instance the co-operative does not know exact number of the heat beneficiaries as they know only the amount and types of buildings connected to their heat distribution network.

Heat production with wood was mentioned as one main aim by all the interviewed co-operative members. The co-operative seems to contribute to fulfilling its objectives also by having a open strategy in relation to external actors. This strategy seems to have been operationalized through an active collaboration with external actors, participation in projects and openness to visitors. In relation to heat production the person responsible for wood procurement (14.11.2014) reports that they have been growing when it has been possible. In general, they seem to have a very entrepreneurial strategy.
in relation to everything, even from visitors they take small payment to compensate the
used time and they participate in projects if they can see some benefit for the co-
operative. The interviewed external stakeholders reported the strategy of the co-
operative strategy to have been open, based on local culture, honest, entrepreneurial and
socially skilled.

Linkage between the external and internal power dynamics seemed to be rather strong
sometimes, for instance the people who have been active in the co-operative or its
development may have many stakes in the society. This means that they may be for
instance in their daily jobs working in a municipality or a forestry advisory organization
but in their free time be involved in the co-operative which has active linkages to these
organizations. In a small community there may be many overlapping roles. It seems
that the cooperative has not been interested in challenging external power but during its
establishment phase it could be described to have been involved in challenging external
power of oil companies by its own little action, not in a confrontational way but more in
a practice-oriented way through collaboration with the municipality which seemed to
want to challenge the power of oil companies. Later on the co-operative has become
independent also of the municipality (except the municipality being its customer) which
could be interpreted as an act of challenging external power, meaning who can take
care of local heat production – can it be a private local entity instead of the
municipality. In general, the co-operative model already implies hierarchical power
structures in the organization, i.e. the internal power dynamics are a partial reflection of
external structures. Whether they are inherited could be questioned, yet at the moment
the older active members are in charge of decision-making. Laws and regulations
affecting co-operative model of activities and heat production from wood may affect
strongly how the general power structures and dynamics turn out to be. However, the
interviewees did not explicitly talk about these effects.

5. Implications of external and internal power dynamics on CBIs’ impact on
   society

It seems that the exclusionary patterns didn’t have such as strong influence on the co-
operative’s ability to engage and benefit a diverse range of people. The local approach
was emphasized throughout the interviews which seems to mean that the co-operative
wants to have local influence and wants to affect the local people and their life, i.e. they
seem to want to be transformational in their local societal impact and this is what they
have been too. As an outsider it is difficult to evaluate if they have reached the truly
transformational level that they have wished. However, they have realized different
transformational elements in the local community such as replacing oil with wood,
creating income to the local people and changing the idea of who can be responsible for
providing heat in the local area. The co-operative works strongly with entrepreneurial
logics, yet they emphasize the local approach and local benefits. This is why money
could be described to be one factor that keeps up the exclusionary patterns and restricts
their transformational effect. However, when the entrepreneurial logics are there, one
cannot even expect that volunteer work or other unpaid activities could take the
transformation to its fullest potential. There seem to be always some who are excluded.
However, as a communal local level transformation the co-operative seems to have
been a success by replacing oil dependency with dependency on local resources.
6. Any other observations

The co-operative model seems to have had a major influence in the success of the co-operative creating new organized power in relation to external actors such as the municipality and empowering local forest owners as a group.

7. Success factors

The most important success factors in terms of power and politics theme seem to include having both inclusive and exclusive practices, i.e. by being inclusive enough they can get people involved and by being exclusive enough they can address the specific group that should be involved in the specific activity in order to be able to run certain activities. In the case of this energy co-operative this meant addressing forest owners who have forest resources, i.e. addressing people with no forest resources wouldn’t seemingly have benefited the aims of the co-operative in the local area at its beginning.

The importance of partnerships and “alliances” strongly emerges in the evolution of the co-operative. The openness and co-operation with different actors seems to have affected positively the evolution of the co-operative, for instance students do frequently study related research projects on them which can benefit the co-operative also directly. In 2014 they had hundreds of visitors from both Finland and abroad. Yet the co-operative does not know how much they have influenced replication process, it can be anticipated that it has had some worldwide effects that may realize through many channels even after years. The whole development process of the co-operative could be said not to have been able to start without partnerships, in this case the partnership between the local municipality, the local forestry advisory organization (the forestry developers) and local forest owners. What is interesting is that the partnerships seem to have been realized through individual people and their contacts, for instance the lecturer of the local higher education institute that the co-operative has a lot of co-operation with was a partner already at the development phase of the co-operative but through another organizations, the forestry advisory organization.

Homogeneity and heterogeneity emerged both as important success topics. Homogeneity is terms of people being rather homogeneous in terms of resources that they have (forest resources), being in similar age group, having similar motivations, being from the local area and maybe even being male seem to have been the backbone for the co-operative. At the same time the involved people have heterogeneous skills that have allowed each of them to develop their own specific expertise in relation to the needs of the co-operative, i.e. the use of human resources is maximized, some are focused on administration and others on wood procurement or heat plant management. The long-term active members who are active still now were rather young men when they got actively involved in the co-operative and its establishment: the passion of the young people (yet this was not explicitly mentioned in the interviews) could be one
factor that lead to the co-operative being successful and having been run for years already.

8. Summary

As the co-operative is in a very evolved stage with activities being well-established and having been run like they do already for years, the co-operative didn’t talk much about future transition. It would have been very interesting to interview the same people 20 years ago when there were strong aspirations for providing heat for the local community with wood instead of oil. How would they have talked about the change that they envisioned at that time? Would they have talked about social, environmental, economic, political and cultural transition? What were their thoughts as relatively young men at that time? How their thoughts have changed, or have their changed? Did they have a visionary passion? Did they want to make change? How they saw the surrounding society and their own role in it? Did they question existing power relations?

It is striking that the mere establishment of the co-operative needed many different actors to come together. At the end the issues seem to come to a personal and intrapersonal level: the individual opinion, attitudes, perceptions, values and possible changes in them; communication, and trust and building trust seem to all have been as important factors.

Memo for key initiative 2

1. Introduction

Below the sample and the CBI are briefly introduced. The CBI in question has operated in Finland quite long, and it has been an example to other similar CBIs that have emerged since in Finland. On a large scale things are running well in the CBI. Power or politics did not occur in the interviews promptly, but were reflected upon when enquired. Please see my findings in the following chapters.

1.1 The sample

5 interviews (total duration 5:46:29)

1) Informant Jaana² (female) – Employee.
2) Informant Pekka (male) – Founding member.
3) Informant Risto (male) – Member, also a participant of the board.
4) Informant Lauri (male) – Former employee.
5) Informant Matti (male) – Stakeholder (and a member).

1.2 The CBI (referred later in quotes as OUASID00002)

² All the names are pseudonyms.
The CBI has started off as a food circuit in a district of Helsinki. It has since expanded to community-supported agriculture (CSA), relocated to another area and is now a co-operative. In fact, the CBI in question introduced the CSA model to the Finnish context, and is a pioneer in this respect. Other similar kinds of CBIs have emerged since, but not as successful or big as this one. The CBI was first interested to co-operate with farmers, but since none was found the initiators decided to establish a co-op, employ a farmer and rent a field to the CBI's purposes. Today, to become a member of the CBI one has to pay a one-off joining fee (170€) and a crop fee (450€/season).

In the beginning the CBI faced difficulties to find a field suitable to organic farming and to get it productive, but “after many problems and quite unreasonable years (OUASID00002, Pekka, founding member, 2014)”, with learning by doing -approach and by employing vital personnel the CBI has gradually become bigger and more successful: It has increased the number of members, modest investments to machinery have been made and the co-op has also expanded. The CBI manages now also a small recreational ‘Our own greenhouse’ next to which they have a small herb field, both located near the main field. Currently the field is located in southern Finland and it is accessible by public transportation e.g. from the city of Helsinki (takes an hour).

Today, the CBI is owned by some 200 households (or groups), which altogether involve some 300 people. From the very beginning the CBI has actively sought (and found) partners. The field is farmed by using biodynamic principles, which a shared crop rotation is carried out. Around 40 plants are annually grown, and the harvest is delivered in five separate distribution points in the Helsinki metropolitan area and is run by volunteers. Two employees (6 and 8 months) take the main responsibility of the field. 10-20 interns are employed as additional work force annually. Also the CBI arranges international work camps (2 weeks, 4th time in 2015) in July (organised by Finnish Branch of Service Civil International) and plans to hire young citizens of Vantaa (max 4 persons/2 weeks) by utilising so called ‘summer note’ -system. The responsibility of the various working groups of the CBI is shared among (almost all) board members.

The CBI counts very much on the voluntary work, Most active ones are women (btw. 30-40yrs), who have young families, and in general the members represent (upper) middle class. No immigrants (or other cultural minorities) are represented among the members. Active pensioners are appreciated for their contribution. Most mentioned reason for a regular turnover of the members was too little amount of crop received in return for crop fee.

The CBI has been awarded several prices: 2013 Sustainable economy idea contest (1000€), 2014 Future makers of countryside -award (2000€), 2015 Grass root award (5000€). It is allowed to use Demeter brand (biodynamic farming) and Organic brand

3 The ‘summer note’ –system is meant e.g. for companies and associations, who hire young citizens in summertime for minimum 10 days (max 50 working hours), pay minimum 350€’s wage, and for that are subsidized by the city for 300€/an employee.
4 E.g. in the end of 2014 20% of the members informed to be uncertain about their continuation.
for its products. Due to its organic production the CBI is regularly controlled by the Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira and audited by the Biodynamic Association (once/year).

2 Transition imaginary

2.1 Enhancing change little by little

Transition was a familiar topic to all the interviewees, but it seemed that it was not jointly or extensively elaborated within the CBI. The views scattered and it appeared that this discussion was still to come (e.g. where the CBI wants to be in five years’ time). The transition was very much perceived in a local context and in small-scale. The ‘outside world’ was not a primary concern than how to keep the co-op alive and vital. Nobody particularly discussed the CBI as a means to tackle bigger global issues (such as the food crisis) or other food-related struggles. Rather, the pursued and imagined transition was found incremental and gradual within the CBI. It is nothing huge or dramatic, and takes mainly place via members and partnerships. Little by little small steps towards sustainable development are taken. This came out clearly in the interviews.

Interviewer: “What has been your greatest achievement so far?“

Respondent (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014)5 “I still think that our greatest achievement is that year by year, to some extent it is a small achievement, but anyhow as a business of some 300 people, year by year we have been able to continue, in the end with relatively good results, we have been able to expand little and also to improve year by year, we have sort of been able to improve social, ecological and economic sides. Year by year this is more ecological, our operations and farming, with small deeds like that biogas transportation, this year solar panels were acquired and exactly this that we get more organic material to the soil, crop rotation functions better and better. In the social side it is that, well first of all our obligation to voluntary work –thing that we have tried to get the work distributed better between the members. We have been able to maintain the community spirit, those bees and events we have been able to organize. Such a community to which we have sort of spread out has grown year by year. And then this economic side, well we have sort of realized also the frames that where we are going and in some way also more realistically that what is possible and what isn’t. I.e. with small steps we can do some investments, not all happens right away. And also the fact that how much one has to pay for organic food to make this somehow possible and also every year our crop fee has been raised a little. “

It is noteworthy that even though the perspective of the interviewee could be stated somewhat CBI-based it nicely shows how year-by-year, person-by-person the co-op has gained more recognition. These steps have been taken with the help of members, but also via media and with a co-operation with other farmers. The acknowledgment was primarily to do with bringing forward an alternative to (organic) farming, which as an option is very much related to transition. Transition imagined was also discussed a lot as something that fosters behavioural change amid members, who, by participating in the

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5 The quotes are not literal translations of the original data, but more like recaps underlining the meanings of what the interviewee has said.
co-op start appreciating more local, organic food and begin to rethink their consumption habits and also the importance of the welfare of the (local) environment from the ecological point-of-view. Additionally, by working together as a group of some 300 individuals\(^6\), co-operating with local schools and kindergarten, and by inviting foreigners and young unemployed to the field the members of the CBI encounter all kinds of individuals. This increases their understanding of, and respect for diversity and as such undertakes and enhances social sustainability. This could be seen as an inclusive approach of the CBI.

Interviewer: “What do you think are the main goals of the food co-op?“

Respondent (OUASID00002, Matti, stakeholder, 2014): “as I see it, it [the goal] is the community spirit and doing things together, which results just these pure raw materials. Or the biodiversity of nature, biodiversity comes there like into sight. Like we have various communities, different kind of people but at the same time this biodiversity is brought forward so that (...) In principle it is said that with eating you can also then protect these threatened plant species\(^7\), which otherwise might be forgotten, that no-one would every know about these particular species. But through co-operation it can be shown that it is possible to have an effect to the environment in a positive way.“

Interviewer: “What do you see that food co-op does, what do you produce and with which resources?“

The respondent (OUASID00002, Pekka, founding member, 2014): “Well we want this to be an example of sustainable development that here we would have everything in order, but obviously we are not there yet. This [aim] is not achieved rapidly. But, the fundamental goal is that by investing the money of the members a kind of versatile and biodynamic farming is enabled, and then we cannot do anything if we also introduce new ways of consumption, new taste experiences to people.“

Interviewer: “What motivated you in the beginning and what keeps you continuing?“

Respondent (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014): “I’m inspired by how organic smallholding can be made profitable still in Finland and in what ways it can be possible (...) CSA can be one model (...) also to bring the children to the field like to bring back that ‘working with one’s own food’ culture and appreciation of it, i.e. [to introduce] this kind of new food culture and to townies a new roots’ culture, so they are proud of their own food and at the same time the appreciation for food grows. It will become more down to earth thing like what the food is, how it affects one’s own environment. Because if the food comes from some development country or from China cheaply, then we actually don’t know and in the end we are not interested about in which way, what kind of environmental impacts the food has, but when it is produced locally, we usually are more interested in it, like we keep our nearby nature as pure as possible.“

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\(^6\) The total number of people that are involved in the co-op is some 300, who all are allowed to take part in the decision-making and planning (e.g. in the annual meetings, in the feedback questionnaire).

\(^7\) The respondent is not so much concerned about the threatened plant species per se, but rather that less farmed, and therefore less used, but tasty root vegetables might be entirely forgotten someday.
On the basis of the interviewees one structural constraint hindering the CBI to achieve wider transition could be linked with their temporary planning. The interviewees did take a stand on how to run things better (e.g. what ought to be done differently), but these comments were mostly associated with the next season’s harvest. This appeared well in the results of the feedback questionnaire(s) that are sent for all members yearly. The results focus on what went well and what are the wishes (related to crop) for the next season. One of the interviewees questioned the short-term strategy of the board and was concerned that the contract with the field will be cancelled in three years’ time due to the pressure the city has for new housing production. He underlined that nobody in the board had thought this through, even though it would had severe consequences on the co-op.

2.2 About justice and its embodiments in the CBI

The interviewees approached the issues of equity and inclusion from various angles. These were not raised as such directly, but rather came up when talking about various processes within the CBI (e.g. planning, decision-making, volunteering), and, in particular, when reflecting one’s position in these processes and in relation to other members. As stated earlier, the interviewees did not found their CBI as a particular societal benefactor, but rather reviewed things from a fairly local and practice-oriented perspective. The ways of managing equity within the CBI were a much bigger concern than how the initiative could participate or tackle to bigger societal problems.

All wished that in the future the processes would be run more smoothly and nobody, the employed or the volunteers would feel exhausted from the work. An unjust distribution of work and unequal commitment and participation (e.g. volunteering; active vs. passive members, number of employees) were widely discussed topics. From the very beginning the co-op has had a loyal group of active members, without whom it would not cope. Still today the unresolved challenge for the co-op is: how to reach those who (almost) never come to the field or contribute to the bees (e.g. planting, weed picking and prevention, harvesting). Today, an ‘obligation to voluntary work’ – decision (10 hrs/a season) is used to activate participation among “busy townies” (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014).

The fact that the “co-op is like a non-profit community and no profit is pursued but the yield is distributed among members” (OUASID00002, Matti, stakeholder, 2014)” was presented as an example of fairness in the co-op. The overall starting point was that in the food co-op everyone wins. The founders of the CBI anticipated that when investing personally to the CBI (i.e. paying the joining and crop fees) the commitment would be firmer than it actually is today. A one-off joining fee gives a membership, and with another 450 euros’ (paid every season) one secures her share of the harvest. Especially the crop fee was criticised being too expensive, due to which it was also acknowledged as a privilege. Not everyone can afford to join the CBI even though there might occur a lot of interest for organic farming and for the co-op model. The fees could be seen as exclusive factor of the co-op.
Interviewer: “What about then the membership, what kind of changes ought to take place to make the CBI more successful? Are there such that advance transition or slow things down?”

Respondent (OUASID00002, Lauri, former employee, 2014): “I think that there are people who would like to participate, but they cannot afford to pay the crop fee. It is pretty high. I wonder if it would be possible to decrease it. By doing so we would get such people who really are active and would want to act (...) would it be then possible (...) now it feels that it is only like pondered, for a couple of years it [the crop fee] has been considered to be increased in order to cover this system (...) but if it would be decreased and then to get such people who really would dig to act (...) it would help a lot this field like working here, yeah, very much.”

Motives to join raised talk. Straightforwardly put (by some of the interviewees), those members with more wealth were considered as somewhat ‘free-riders’ in the CBI. They take the benefit from the membership without being too much otherwise actively involved. For instance, if so wished, a member is allowed to settle the obligated 10 hours’ of volunteering per season by paying extra 100 euros. Then the total amount one can pay for the membership per year is 550 euros. Usually such settlement takes place during harvest time, to which these 'free-riders' are not willing to participate, but do wish to come and collect their share of the harvest when permitted. It was raised whether the membership was only a matter of status for many.

Interviewer: “Have one informed the members how important it is to be active? Apart from that obligation thing?

Respondent (OUASID00002, Lauri, former employee, 2014): “a stupid thing from my point of view is that when there is the obligation to work, but if you pay like 100 euros then you don’t have to come to the field to do the work. That one kind of gets rid of the obligation with money. I think it is a silly thing. And I don’t know how it is monitored that do people pay. “

Interviewer: “With what resources do you operate?“

Respondent (OUASID00002, Risto, member, 2014): “The resources are very limited and weak in relation to what amounts and kilos one should get from the field (...)I see that we are facing the fact that for many members, who come from the metropolitan area, this membership is more like a kind of a question of status. It is nice to write to these facebookes and what other twitters there are in today’s public media where one can tell ‘what I have done today’. It is like beneficial for me that ‘I’m ecological, I’m green, I think like this and this and therefore I’m like a communal person and know my responsibility’. I see it very much so that for many people it is more about a question of status than about being able to come there [to

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8urban townies, who live in the centre of Helsinki, in a big expensive flat, and have a big Audi in the garage (OUASID00002, Risto, member, 2014)“
the field] to do physical, concrete, dirty work that possible takes place under heavy rainfall, in cold or in godless heat.“

To cover the loss of resources due to the passive members the CBI has actively sought various substitutive forms of co-operation. For instance they welcome some 10-20 trainees from gardening schools to the field annually. The trainees take part in all kinds of work, but according to Jaana (employee) are easier find for the summer season. During autumns it appears to be more difficult, which increases the workload of the employees. In addition to trainees’ employment the co-op has had consistent co-operation with projects that provide support to people who have isolated themselves from the society. These individuals call on the field for occupational therapy -type of work. Also with a couple of schools and with a kindergarten the co-op co-operates regularly. The children visit the field for environmental education purposes i.e. to learn about farming and to see how vegetables, potatoes grow. Students from gastronomy schools are appreciated for their participation in the bees. It is hoped that by taking part they also start valuing Finnish food. In the field there are also ‘those to whom we speak English’ (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014)”

All the above examples show how the co-op has an open approach for partnerships, which today are created mainly with regional operators. Partners bring desired labour to the field, and at the same time are being introduced to the CSA and to the co-op model. Partners could someday be the new members of the co-op. It is fair to claim that the co-op has a genuine orientation for advancing the community’s wellbeing. Although collecting fairly high fees for membership, the CBI's current attitude for regional co-operation is very much inclusive, which is not necessarily always that simple and straightforward. Especially the founding member discussed how challenging it is to be more socially sustainability co-op.

Interviewer: “If we think about the members, who are they? And what about the most active ones, who are they and what do they do?”

Respondent, who after describing the most active members quite suddenly contemplates other possibilities (OUASID00002, Pekka, founding member, 2014): “my dream is to bring here (...) to have like such a model for social sustainability (...) from the very beginning we have thought of how to do it (...) like 'I don't have the 450 euros but I have time’ and we could welcome him here and give him a share of the crop. Only that he would not pay, but he would sort of have a certain- We have discussed this already with tax authorities, we would make a contract for 450 euros’ wage and pay then the social expenses (...) it [the wage] would be so small that it wouldn’t probably affect any unemployment things (...) But who are we to evaluate who (...) like how do we [decide that] 'you are entitled' (...) This is perhaps such a five year’s [aim].”

2.3 Enhancing with kindness
It was interesting that according to each interviewee no radicalism and political activism was found sensible when advancing the co-op's aims or, for that matter, a wider transition. When asking about the radical approach the interviewees had a unanimous response. Nobody supported it or found it as a sensible option, but rather emphasised co-operation and acting with benevolence. Justifications were based on one's own previous learning experiences (e.g. on disadvantages on cliquishness), on views on the Finnish cultural conduct, but also on the fact that radicalism or activism is not showing a good example to the community. Instead, with one’s own deeds, by presenting a successful alternative and by communicating about it actively, the transition is slowly brought about.

Interviewer: “What does sustainable transition evoke?”

Respondent (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014): “Well this is somewhat related to the previous question when you asked whether radicals are needed. If I think about like my own development (...) it has been really hard for me to see the economic side (...) But now I see that this is the time when one can really co-operate, which I find very important [goes on elaborating examples of co-operation] (...) I find, and especially with this radicalism, that on the contrary what is not needed is quarrelling but more like co-operation with all kinds of parties like towards sustainability.”

Interviewer: “Now that we have mapped these various initiatives we have noticed that in Finland the initiatives are not particularly activists or radicals. Do you think that there is need for such?”

Respondent (OUASID00002, Risto, member, 2014): “I think that the Finnish temperament, a person, is not spiritually radical. If one thinks, in the end with such going to barricades [attitude], with such terrible activism and fuss one does not achieve or perhaps reach those wanted goals. And that like if one thinks then about the big issues like thinks societally and on Finland’s scale it is pretty small and little and local to what with these kind of things one can affect and do. You do understand that in Helsinki metropolitan area there about one million people (...) If we provide organic products and do it with such an ideology that we have [in the CBI], so you understand that it is absolutely impossible.”

Interviewer: “It has been stated that these community-based initiatives ought to be radical and range against the system in order to achieve the transition. What do you think about this?”

Respondent (OUASID00002, Matti, stakeholder, 2014): “I think there is no point to go against something, but to forget these others who provide unsustainable alternatives and to put that energy to positive, sustainable ideology and to start for instance a food co-op and to build a community (...) in order to find a farmer, and then grow together and farm these raw materials and put that energy there, because that is where the change is about to be made. When you start acting sustainably, in a good way, in a respectful way against the others, then the others start wondering and look 'that is how we should act' (...) It is no point to range against, but to go with kindness.”

3. Internal power dynamics
The power dynamics within the co-op invoked discussion. In general, the decision-making process was questioned and the role of the board caused debate. The competence of the board members in regards to farming was challenged, especially by those who themselves were qualified or had been otherwise instructed by well-experienced farmers outside the co-op. It was pondered why the most of the issues of the CBI are dealt with through the board (instead of handling them more as ad hoc type), which makes the whole decision-making process time-consuming.

Interviewer: "I could imagine that people do not necessarily know how to the amount of yield is affected. If most of them are townies, who have not so much been taken up with farming."

Respondent (OUASID00002, Lauri, former employee, 2014): "Yeah well (...) There in the web pages there is not in fact so much information about the basics of [organic] farming. Maybe it would be good to tell people, who would start then to think about their own input [from a new perspective]. It is true that most of them [members] are townies. And as to that decision-making still, well in the board there is no such member who like could or knows about farming (...) nothing (...) There could be one who would have knowledge, 'cause sometimes the decisions they make are a bit odd [a laugh] or like sort of (...) they have nothing to do with farming"

Interviewer: "I slightly pick up with what you talked about earlier, you are still a member of the board and you have presented there some development ideas, how are they dealt with?"

Respondent (OUASID00002, Risto, member, 2014) "(...) If the meetings last for five hours, and no decisions are made because there exist dissenting views, dissenting views like on can we do the irrigation with a tractor-operated water pump or should it be produced with solar panels, electrically, or with man power, as voluntary work, with such old-time fire pump so that people are ordered to go there and pump. (...) These people do not understand that a tractor needs to be maintained annually, oils have to be changed (...) And then they wonder that none [such] has been budgeted (...) and then when it is broken one wonders that 'heavens why do we have to invest money to this' (...) There are these things nobody understands anything about."

One of the most widely discussed topics by two of the interviewees was the prominent role of the family farmer and chairman. Their input of labour and time were highly valued, but then again it was also suggested that they had used their pivotal role in an incorrect manner in order to get their way. It was raised that in the end they have the last word on everything. To some extent these rank-and-file-members experienced that the ideology (theoretical and analytical approach) walks over still everything, and ideas not supporting that are not taken into account.
Interviewer: "About the decision-making in the co-op, who do you think makes the decisions and as regards to leadership has there been any changes during the time you have been involved?"

Respondent (OUASID00002, Lauri member, 2014): Well the board of the co-op discusses and makes the decisions. As far as I know there in the board the chairman has the last word to say, so have I understood. And then, it is actually the family farmer and the chairman who, from my point of view, for the most parts make these decisions, eventually. I think it has not changed at all, at least during the time I have been involved."

Interviewer: "I slightly pick up what you talked about earlier, you are still a member of the board and you have presented there some development ideas, how are they dealt with?"

Respondent (OUASID00002, Risto, member, 2014): “there in the co-op we have precisely the problem that people who come and give new fruitful, like such fresh breaths of air, that ‘we would have alternatives of another kind, we have other ways of doing things’. Then some are perhaps too strongly tied to the ideology or you know tied so firmly to some cause that one is not prepared to bend the rules and adapt and adjust.”

However those, representing the inner circle of the co-op, stated otherwise and saw the overall decision-making and one's possibilities to be able to influence on the co-op's issues quite otherwise. According to them there has not been that many contradictions, which would have produced tensions in the co-op. Everyone can have a say if so wished. It might be that those having less responsibility are eager to give negative feedback compared to the members involved more in the management.

Interviewer: "Has there been any conflicts of interests, and if yes, how they have been dealt with?"

Respondent (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014): “Very little. Our members have been very content. Of course there are always those who disagree, but no fuss has been made ever. We have understood that people are different and they have their own wishes, but then we have reminded that we are a pretty big co-op and not everyone’s wishes can be fulfilled. We have also reminded that hey, we are a co-op, if we want something more everything is possible. But it also means that if someone groans (s)he can himself have an effect on the matter with which (s)he is unhappy. But there are very little, there has been nothing [big that has been complained about].“

Interviewer: "How would you describe the history of your co-op?"
Respondent (OUASID00002, Pekka, founding member, 2014): “Actually what has been interesting all the time here is that the own lot has been given the inspirations and sort of ideas to the operations. They have not been presented directly like 'hey, shouldn't we do like this', but rather more like thrown as ideas.”

All five interviewees recognised that particularly the chairman of the co-op was burdened with all kinds of duties that he runs gratuitously. Some claim that it was due to the fact that he himself is not willing to delegate tasks. All admitted that changes as regards to managing the co-op has to take place and various tasks and responsibilities have to be divided between the members of the board.

Interviewer: "How has the decision-making changed over the years, and what about the leadership, how has it changed, if we can talk about leadership in a food co-op?"

Respondent (OUASID00002, Risto, member, 2014):"Well let's say there is this problem that the chairman is one of the founders of the food co-op and he works fulltime elsewhere. In the co-op there are a vast amount of all kinds of administrative, advertisement work. He must use virtually 3-4 hours [daily?] to run the errands of the food co-op. It is obvious that he becomes tired, frustrated and bored with the fact that he needs to do all the tremendous amount of work by himself, yet in the last meeting he was not able to name any tasks that he could share. The co-op is his baby, he has created this, and now he wants to be the one making the decisions."

To have a change in the internal power dynamics was also related to internal communications. This was approached from two different angles. Firstly, it was questioned whether the members fully grasp the meaning of a co-op and the issues that makes it successful. It was raised whether the lack of understanding could partly explain non-participation and passiveness of some members. With a better understanding of the operations of a co-op, the members would see their own role more essential, which again would hopefully increase e.g. the participation rate i) during the busy summer season in the field and ii) in the annual general meetings (could be that only 10% of the members attend). Co-op-aware members could also have a positive impact on the response rate of the annual feedback questionnaires, which is about 50% each year.

Interviewer: “About the resources in the co-op, the current labour is manifold. Could you please elaboratethat a bit?”

Respondent (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014): “It is manifold. [goes on elaborating the current model and then comments hours involved in the obligation to work]. Ten hours is the minimum amount, and in the very first year there wasn’t even such. We have sought what is appropriate and also 'cause in the co-op everyone is sort of a shareholder, how to make them realize it in the first place, that I am like hired by them and whatever happens they are, to some extent, responsible
for their co-op. It is not like an easy model like for people to grasp, and neither I or we have assumed that people would get it right away."

Another view related more to communications in general. It was discussed whether the members are overburdened with all kinds of mails and posts (facebook, email) that are sent to them regularly, several times a week, and mainly to keep the members informed about what goes on in the field, when to enrol (e.g. to bees), what takes place in the forthcoming weeks etc. For those being in charge of the communications it is difficult to reach 300 people. Communications clearly forms a challenge to the co-op and could even prevent people from participating and becoming more involved.

Interviewer: “Can you somehow define a typical member, an active shareholder? Then again, who are the passive ones and why are they passive?”

Respondent (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014): “[first elaborates who are active and passive, and why] It is exactly so that some can experience the web pages, facebook and weekly sent emails very stressful. There can be nearly five emails sent per week (...) It is a challenge to get the passive ones along. And like to make them understand that, really, each member is equally important and the community spirit, like do participate, it is what keeps us alive, it is very important and it is actually a nice thing. It has been the reason why people keep on participating in the bees that it has been fun, and the co-operation is nice and when there has been a feast it has been neat.”

4. Challenging external power

Issues related to challenging external power emerged few in number. What stood out in the interviews was the belief of the CBI’s ability to open new imaginaries via dissemination and through active co-operation, which they already carry out. Nobody believed in ranting or making politics. By opening the field to various partners like other (non-organic) farmers and people in general, ‘countryside’ and ‘consumption’ are introduced (and become more) closer to one another, and people would find community-supported agriculture potential and as a sensible alternative. For instance, by working in the field the pupils and students from the schools learn to respect the food and learn also other issues about farming. Furthermore, the co-operation with kindergarten not only bring the staff and children to the field, but also the parents of the children are involved.

Interviewer: “Are these the aims; which from your point of view are valid or should there be other aims also?”

Respondent (OUASID00002, Matti, stakeholder, 2014): “To my point of view, well the starting point here is that it can be shown that it is possible to make changes when a group of people, the group has some joint aim. And here it is just the clean
food. And acting for sustainable development. That through that the community can also do all kinds of other things“

Interviewer: “It is said that community-based initiatives can contribute to a bigger, more extensive social and political change. What do you think about this?”

Respondent (OUASID00002, Pekka, founding member, 2014): “Yes, for sure. That someone does things rather than says them it has a bigger meaning. That is for instance why we have not needed to market, we have members, who tell about this. And thinking about the impact matter, if this was my company, this would interest no-one. But now that we have more people involved, the impact is greater. They tell forward and that is why it has more value. (...) We have such operations, which are all the time concrete and active.”

5. Implications of external and internal power dynamics on CBIs’ impact on society

Despite the most recent quote, in general it appeared that the co-op was not extensively and explicitly considering its impact on the society. At least for the moment they did not see their role as particularly meaningful in having a large-scale influence. The trajectory of the fairly big food co-op shows that it is very much goal-oriented, but the first priority is very plain: to produce good harvest to its members and to keep the co-op vital. Other objectives are secondary.

The membership and crop fee together form a visible, intentional and external exclusionary pattern for the co-op. These are criticised, but at the same time new members come along to replace those calling off their membership, which can be also co-owned by a group – another example of an informed decision towards inclusion.

Once the most important factors (a good productive field, reliable employees, established membership and active members) are in order and the economic balance somewhat under control, it appears that the CBI is then open to other development ideas. The fact that the co-op relies heavily on voluntary work compels them to be creative. There are a lot of members who never visit the field or participate to the field work that, in any case, needs to be done. Various co-operative openings (mostly initiated by the founding member) could be seen as two-level efforts. Firstly they try to put right the work force problem, but when realised, they also enhance ecological and social sustainability by e.g. bringing non-members to the field (workcamps, co-operation with schools, elaborate more in chapter 2.1). The trend for these kind of initiations appears obvious, and ‘bears fruits’. It also seems that the issues found problematic within the CBI (e.g. internal power structures, hierarchies) do not represent so called threshold questions for the members, since those being very critical are still active in the CBI.

6. Any other observations
None for the moment.

7. Success factors

On the basis of coding process the following factors seem to be linked with a success of a CBI. The list is presented in a random order, and the factors are of a different level and partly overlap. First there is an issue of commitment which was raised by every interviewee. Absence of commitment means that there occurs a constant participation pressure for the more active ones, and this is bound to cause dissatisfaction and tension in the long run and could even result as resignations.

Interviewer: “Is it so that the development you have now made, it is sort of a rising trend, has the operations now become more professionalized?”

Respondent (OUASID00002, Pekka, founding member, 2014): “What relieves and creates faith most is that there are the same people working here and we have the same members in the food co-op. These are actually the two indicators what sort of measures the success.”

Closely linked to the pervious one and as stated in the data, if understanding the meaning of a co-operative (and implications it has on its members) is lacking/insufficient, it will have an effect on managing the operations. A co-operative is meant to be a joint endeavour, where participation of all members is counted on. The division of (mostly voluntary) labour ought to be just and equal, and no free-riders appear. Having an ‘obligation to voluntary work’ – decision is one way of sorting the problem, but if a member can compensate it with money (which the non-profit CBI is expected to welcome), it cannot be regarded as a fair way to deal with the problem: Not all can afford to pay, which could enhance inequality in between the members. None of the interviewees mentioned any instructional efforts (e.g. an short introduction to co-op model) that could be held for newcomers by experienced members or board members and where the very idea of the CBI and co-op could be introduced. Instead today all those interested and willing to pay the participation and crop fee are greeted to the CBI.

Interviewer: “[so that people would not consider this to be] about dabbling?”

Respondent (OUASID00002, Pekka, founding member, 2014): “I wouldn’t say the community agriculture is dabbling but that community spirit would not raise negative images to some people. ‘Cause the [organic] farming is already a bit such biodynamic and there are a lot such hippie things, which are alright and good to have, but to some they are kind of ‘nounou’ and then one cannot trust [to the co-op] and there we would have issues that might harm the action.”

Connectedness with the place was raised by one of the interviewees as a way to enhance commitment and participation. It is not a new insight, but once a member somehow relates to the area and cares for it (e.g. lives nearby, has previous history with
the place), it could enhance commitment and participation. The food CBI has started off as a food circuit in a particular neighbourhood. Today, the field is relocated to a totally different area, in a different city (which is not perhaps that popular or reputable) that definitely has an effect to participation and commitment of some ‘busy townies’.

The way decision-making and planning processes are run in the CBI is very important as regards success. Openness and participatory approaches strengthen togetherness. In a fairly big CBI decision-making has to be organised in an efficient way, but everyone should feel that (s)he is able to have a say. Instead of concentrating on short-sighted planning it seems that a long-term plan (~vision, at least parallel to yearly made strategies) is needed. Members and those in charge/having a more responsible role would know and agree upon where the CBI is heading at; where it wants to go/be e.g. in five years’ time for instance in relation to growth, co-operation, influence.

It seems apparent that for a CBI it is beneficial to have members from various age and occupational groups, educational backgrounds and experiences. Above all, it enhances social sustainability (understanding and accepting dissimilarity; tolerance), but it is also favourable for learning and innovation. Additionally, if a fee grants a membership, a delicate balance between amateurism (e.g. fostering ‘trial and error’ –culture) and professional manner needs to be recognised and carefully managed. In the end, all members wish to get their money’s worth.
Memo from PIK

Description of the case studies

Foodsharing:

The initiative was founded in December 2012 and intends to save food from being wasted by distributing it between private households but also to save it from supermarkets which would otherwise just throw it away. Therefore, it aims at fighting against the daily wasting of food and tries to raise awareness for that problem through its actions. Five interviews were conducted with members of the initiative and a further four interviews were conducted with outside stakeholders. The initiative is further referred to as “PIK 1”.

BürgerEnergie Berlin:

This is not an initiative per se but rather a cooperative focusing on an economical output. It was officially founded in 2012. Their incentive is to buy 25% of the Berlin energy grid which was officially led by Vattenfall until December 31st 2014. They want to invest the money that they might earn one day in renewable energy systems. Thus, they also focus on ecological consequences of their action. Their approach is very much influenced by its democratic structure. Therefore, it has a social component. One can therefore say that at least their incentive is a very sustainable one (Sustainability in this sense is seen as a balance of economical, social and ecological interests/factors). If they reach their goal or not is not to be foreseen yet because the senat still has to decide who will win the bid.

Five interviews were conducted with members of the initiative and an additional four interviews were conducted with stakeholders. The initiative is further referred to as “PIK 2”.

1. Transition imaginary
   1. a. Transition imagined

   Both initiatives have a clear vision of what their transition should look like and what they would like to accomplish.

   PIK 2’s goal was always to get a 25% share of the energy grid. During the process the idea further developed. Now they are focusing on cooperating with the state of Berlin. They would also like to change the structure of the grid in a way that decentralized renewable approaches to energy are promoted. Thus, they are promoting the ecological and social benefits in addition to being an economically working company.

   "The main goal is of course to purchase a share of the Berlin energy grid. At least 25%. With the realization of civic involvement and rights to a say. The specific configuration of how it is going to work out is still to be discussed. There are ideas out there. But basically it is about the cooperative as a participating company in the Berlin energy grid with the possibility of having a say. “ (Translator, PIK 2, 2015, Interview 5)
PIK 1’s vision of a transitioned society involves a redistribution of goods in order to reduce poverty worldwide, a new appreciation of the availability of food, less food waste, and the consumption of locally produced goods/food. The way to a transitioned society, in their opinion, is through a bottom-up process, in which the movement continually grows until policy makers cannot ignore it anymore and enact laws that make the initiative itself needless.

“I think that in the remote future also politicians will not be able to hide any longer from this. Because the more media exposure the project gets, the more attention it will receive from top-ranking politicians.” (Member, PIK 1, 2014, Interview 2)

To the people involved, the independency of the initiative from money and any money-related activities appears to play a crucial role, also for the future transition process. Economic growth is rather seen as an enemy of the intended transition.

That is very different for the PIK 2 initiative. They are very much dependent on the capitalist system as they need a lot of money to pursue their vision. It is and will be a challenge for them to get all the money they need. Not only in that sense the transition is imagined not being very easy. They also do not know yet if they will win the bid and if they will actually be able to invest the money. If they do win the bid, they are bound by their own constitution to build up legal reserves from their profits in order to invest this money into the energy transition towards more efficient renewable energy systems. So far they have agreed on not using any of the cooperatives money to invest in other projects, however it could be a possibility in the future. The members believe that once they win the bid it will not be a problem to get the rest of the money in order to be able to buy the grid. In the long run, they want to collect 100 million Euros. In case they do not win the bid, the have the option to give back the money to all members or to reinvest the collected money into other projects and start something else.

1. b. Perception of the contribution to social change

Both initiatives see a big potential for social change through their actions. PIK 2’s social change is more political whereas PIK 1 sees the social and the political sphere as clearly separated spaces. The interviewees see a strong ability of the PIK 1 initiative to induce social change, whereas political change comes after social change and is a lot more difficult to reach.

For PIK 1, social change is particularly reached by awareness-raising and a changing consumer-behavior as a mass phenomenon.

“I think that because there are so incredibly many people working in the initiative, this awareness will be transmitted into so many minds. So that everyone works as a person who spreads the idea within his or her social circle. And this living of an alternative model has, as I believe, often a greater influence than a political announcement from the top. Because it affects us more ... ” (Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 10)

In a sense PIK 2 sees itself as a possible role model for other people, initiatives, and cooperatives. They show that a social change could be possible if you just try something that has not been done before. They are also aware of the danger that if they do not succeed that it could actually lead to the opposite effect. They basically want to reach out to the people and inform them at least. They focus on the people that still believe in democratic structures and who want to take part in those movements. They also think that the energy sector is one of the last ones that can actually be influenced by democratic and social movements. Thus, it is an opportunity for a progressive climate policy. They no longer want to see the grid owned by a foreign capitalistic
company that is not reinvesting the money into the local economy and energy transition. However, they also do not trust the Berlin senate to do that. They believe that it is important to strengthen actors who are focusing on a social added value rather than just the monetary output.

“, I am convinced that the possible success of the energy transition is dependent on the actors. Also from the chances and possibilities of taking influence that those actors have. My conviction is that the bigger the scope of influence and the bigger the space for the civic part of the actors is who pursue a certain goal and who have a stronger focus on the social added value and who have the will to build a wind turbine for example and don’t focus primarily on the monetary output [...] the better the chances are of actually getting to that point [...]” (Chairwoman, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)

The PIK 1 initiative can reach people not only because their idea is good, but also because they transport a strong corporate feeling and the feeling of really inducing social change, not in an abstract, but in a very direct way.

“, With money you could maybe reach more things faster, but this clear definition ‘but this is the way we are’ is in my opinion also very important to, I don’t know, to reach people or just to create a corporate feeling.” (Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 10)

1. c. Alternative building vs. confrontation

The two initiatives do not want to confront the current global system directly, but rather build an alternative and thereby showing a “better" solution.

Members of the PIK 2 cooperative mention that they would like to see more of a social change rather than supporting companies with a primarily economic interest. This could be seen as a confrontation against the current global system. But as they do not really mention an active confrontation, it can rather be seen as building an alternative parallel to the current system. On the other hand it is said that the current centralized energy system that is focusing on a ‘demand-driven supply’ should be changed into a decentralized one that focuses on a ‘supply-driven demand’ which can be seen as confrontational again.

The interviewees of the PIK 1 initiative are strongly convinced that radical actions could discourage large parts of the society and therefore be a disadvantage for the initiative, which has the aim to address as many people as possible.

Confronting the system would mean to them breaking the rules, even laws. This approach is completely rejected by the interviewees. The important thing is to build alternatives with the aim to reconfigure dominant global trends as for example inequality. So the will to change the political and economic system is there, but it is not considered as a radical aim.

“, That there should be a change that makes the throwing away of eatable food forbidden, yes, because it is nonsense, I mean, I can’t throw things away knowing that in our world one billion people suffer from starvation and I have bread from the previous day and I throw them away, that is so absurd.” (Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 3)

Therefore both initiatives differ between “confronting the system” and “changing the system”

1. d. Discourses of justice

Democracy is a big issue for the PIK 2 cooperative. Therefore it is also mentioned that the grid should no longer be owned by a big company like Vattenfall, but by the people
of Berlin. There is just no trust in big companies. The cooperatives' members do not find it worthy of supporting an energy grid that is run by a economy driven enterprise. But it should also not be run by the senate either because there is somewhat of a distrust in the political institutions. It is believed that if the energy grid is run by the cooperative (even if it is just 25%) will have a positive impact, at least for the members who will hopefully earn money with it. Thus, the profits are distributed among many people rather than just one big company.

For PIK 1 the aim to fight inequalities is not as important as the ecological aspects, but it comes in the second place. The interviewees agree that especially people with a migration background should be better integrated, as well as people with financial struggles, although people of both groups are already part of the initiative. The better integration should be reached through a proper membership of these people, so that they not only receive „donations“, but instead become equal members of the initiative.

„Yes, these groups, that are on one hand those with a migration background and on the other hand people who really have big financial problems [...]. And that they don’t... well, that they can get out of this status of being needy, meaning they can get food here, they can turn to the Older food collecting initiative. That’s great, but if they really worked with us, and therefore they get this feeling... Or maybe just I need this feeling, but that they are not seen as needy people, but rather as members of the initiative. I would really wish for this” (Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 10)

1 e. Operationalization/ practice of justice

Concerning the topic of the operationalization of justice the two initiatives differ very much.

As for PIK 2, in all of the interviews no one ever mentioned anything about how they could be more inclusive or tackle inequality. In general it can be said that the cooperative is open to anyone who is willing to pay the money so far. They also never spoke about how they would redistribute the benefits of their work to residents from marginalized groups. This is due to the fact that they are actually just in the process of getting a share of the grid. Once they get the share it might be an option but has never been mentioned during the interviews.

Inequality is tackled by the PIK 1 initiative with the redistribution of food to all people who ask for it, no matter how rich or poor they are. Especially mentioned are students, refugees, people with migration backgrounds, elderly people.

„Well, people always say, yes, there are no needy people in your initiative and all that, but we have for sure very many needy people, this is my feeling.”(Member, organization team, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 9)

For the future, a cooperation with another initiative, the older food collecting initiative, which is dedicated to distributing donated food to poor people, is planned, in order to reach more needy people. They have also compiled a survey for the members of the initiative in order to find out how many of them really are indigent.

1 f. Unrecognized or invisible privileges

Both initiatives are only working in German so far which definitely privileges German speakers. It is actually almost impossible to participate without German in the PIK 2 cooperative. They also do not plan to change that in the near future. That looks different for PIK 1. They recognized the problem and want to do something about it. They are trying to include non-German speakers in their initiative already.
As for PIK 1 the western perspective of most of the members of the initiative is in many cases unrecognized: "That there should be a change that makes the throwing away of eatable food forbidden, yes, because it is nonsense, I mean, I can’t throw things away knowing that in our world one billion people suffer from starvation and I have bread from the previous day and I throw them away, that is so absurd, you cannot imagine it, yes and this idea in Africa they have nothing to eat at all, so how should this go together, I don’t understand it” (Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 3)

Another unrecognized privilege is that the people picking up the food from the shops and supermarkets have to be trusted by the shop owners or staff.

1. **g. Exclusionary discourses/practices**

Both initiatives are working in German and therefore exclude every person that does not understand this language. Therefore, both initiatives have only a few members with a migration background.

Another major exclusionary practice of the PIK 2 cooperative is the requirement for a new member to pay at least 100€ to join. This can be too much for a lot of people. They try to work on it and changed some structures but it can still be an obstacle for some people to join the cooperative.

„And then there is a second obstacle. You can only participate if you buy a stake. We have tried to create structures that keep down the obstacle [to join]. But even 100€ is something that doesn’t work out for a lot of people.“ (Chairwoman, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)

In order to join the PIK 1 initiative one needs to prove a certain kind of knowledge if you want to become a member. A quiz is a new instrument of the initiative to make sure that people who want to become members are informed about the motivations und backgrounds of the initiative. But the quiz is also designed to make sure that members know about and even share the values of the initiative, no matter which background they have.

“That are some difficult questions and you really have to be informed and also about the ideology, if you can say so, well it’s not like a doctrine or something, but really this comfortable and nice and sensible way of interacting” (Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 3)

There aren’t many elderly people in the initiative due to not being used to working with computers/the Internet. You need to have some computer skills because the whole organizational part (who can pick up things from where?) is done via the Internet.

Only people having an ID/passport can become members of the initiative.

1. **h. Others – Transition imagined**

There were no further comments and has all been covered by the above codes already.

2. **Internal power dynamics**

2a. Politics within CBIs

2a1. Organization, power structures, hierarchies, decisions

Even though both initiatives are mainly working with the help of volunteers and try not to be too hierarchical they established a certain power structure in order to be able to get the work done.

Before the PIK 2 cooperative was officially founded the organizers made decisions based on broad agreements. Now they have a very formal hierarchical power structure.
The members elect the supervisory committee (six persons) which then elects two persons for the board. One board member says that she has a lot of control of what is happening in the cooperative. Nevertheless the supervisory committee plays a central role in the cooperative as he has control over the board. The supervisory committee has the role of the strategic planner and is in charge of a lot of things.

There is also a clearly structured hierarchy in the PIK 1 initiative, which is not very strict, but you have to prove yourself reliable and capable of doing your tasks if you want to get a special position. Positions and their tasks: A normal member is a person who is registered in the Internet platform and can receive and give away food, but is not allowed to pick up food from the stores. A higher-ranking member then is allowed to pick up food from the stores. To become a higher-ranking member you have to be enrolled with a photo and your ID and you have to answer the quiz. The next hierarchy level consists of those who are responsible for one store, they have to be in contact with the store and organize the collecting of the food. And then there are the so called ambassadors who are responsible for the town, or, like in Berlin, the district. Every two or three months there is a meeting of the ambassadors where important questions are discussed and decisions are made.

The feelings about the strictness of the hierarchy are diverse. Some say it is necessary and useful and democratic, others find it too limiting. “And I think that decisions very often come from the top. So there are these ambassador-meetings where they speak about a lot of things and I always have the feeling that no decisions have been made after the meeting, but they only spoke about many problems but couldn’t agree on a solution and someday an e-mail comes with a solution, where I think who did in the end make this decision.” (Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 10)

2. a2. Dilemmas, conflicts

Both initiatives face certain conflicts. The PIK 2 cooperative has to work out rather structural and organizational problems whereas PIK 1 has more internal, personal problems among the participants to solve.

Internal dilemmas on the side of PIK 2 result mainly from the fact that they are mainly working on a voluntary basis (except for the two board members who do get some money). In some ways they can not be as professional as they would like to be because of a constant changing of volunteers. It just takes them more time to solve problems because of a lack of resources, knowledge and time. But so far they have managed to deal with all the problems by dividing the work and discussing the major problems during the general assembly.

„There are and there were internal differences of opinion and problems. Especially concerning limited resources and temporary capacity. But so far we were able to handle it quite good and always found ways out of it.“ (Chairwoman, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)

That is quite different in the PIK 1 initiative. It is perceived as a problem that, since the initiative has so many members, it is not so easy to discuss and define common interests and goals.

“Yes, what is a problem, is, that because so much is only operated via the Internet and everyone keeps muddling along… so many people who have different aims with the foodsaving that it is difficult to find a consensus. They have tried to change it somehow with this quiz, that you end up on the same level, but at the same time this discourages also many people and scares them off, I see this quiz, well I see a necessity, but I don’t
see only positive sides. I think it is a problem that so many people with different interests come together in this initiative." (Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 10)

2. a3. Gender relations and hierarchies

Gender is not a big issue for both of the initiatives. Anyone can join and there are no restrictions. For PIK 1 everything works without a special focus on gender. The PIK 2 board is made up of two women actually. It just worked out like that. There was no special intention behind it. But actually there are slightly more men than women involved.

"As was said, there are slightly more men than women, but not as extreme as in other fields. In other fields of the energy sector I believe it is a ratio of 60/40." (Chairwoman, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)

2. a4. Others – Politics within CBIs

There were no further comments and has all been covered by the above codes already.

2. b. Discourses, communication and language within CBIs

For both initiatives communication is quite essential to stay on top of the ongoing changes.

The PIK 2 cooperative splits their work among different teams. Those teams as well as the supervisory committee each meet every four weeks to discuss about the current situation. In between they are usually communicating via E-Mail or phone. Sometimes they do write protocols but they also have the feeling that it is not always necessary. The people who are really interested and want to get the information will get them. With or without a protocol. As most of the people only work a limited time for the cooperative most of the information would also be too much. Therefore, they do not inform every single member about every little change. The most important information are communicated via a newsletter though. The whole process of informing members like that has evolved over time. In the beginning it was not necessary to write a newsletter because there were not as many people involved yet and everybody got informed eventually. Now that the cooperative got bigger some members complained about not getting sufficient amounts of information. Therefore the newsletter was introduced. A lot of decisions are made by the board and the supervisory committee. Nevertheless, the important steps are always discussed during the general assembly where every member can attend and voice his/her opinion and also vote for or against certain agreements.

Communication is very important for the PIK 1 initiative as the picking up of food has to be coordinated constantly. Most of the communication among the participants is done via different forums on their website, including a newsletter that is distributed among all the members. Especially for newbies some introducing events are organized by the ambassadors to inform them about the most important aspects and to integrate them into the group. If someone did not follow the rules and made a mistake it is communicated very offensively and reported on the website. If they cannot clear the situation they also have a mediation team to deal with it.

2. c. Impacts of the power structures on CBIs

There are some impacts of the power structures that affect the evolution of the initiatives.

In the PIK 2 cooperative the power structures and especially the splitting of the work into teams leads to groups within the cooperative that have a good knowledge about a certain aspect but do not know too much about the other ones.
In the PIK 1 initiative there are some tensions concerning the organizational structure of the initiative and the dealing with violations. Some think that there are too many rules and that it should focus more on saving food rather than discussing too much about problems and the organization. Others think that a certain organizational structure is needed in order to have a working initiative.

„You yourself have to pay attention that you don’t dive into administration too much and that you get comments from some higher-ranking member like, Well actually we would like to save food here and not overorganizing it. That you also find a good way. That it is professional and well organized and satisfying for everyone, but also not too burdening for others. But the demand is also very different.“ (Ambassador, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 13)

One member mentions that ambassadors have more chances of engaging themselves than „normal“ members. The networks and possibilities of an ambassador should be shared with all members who would like to engage themselves more.

There have been rare cases of people being excluded from the initiative. This only happened if a dispute could not be solved. They would also exclude members who are openly right and discriminating other participants. But to make sure that the people have the same knowledge and share at least similar values they introduced a quiz that everyone has to pass before he/she can take on a responsible position in the initiative. But the quiz is also seen quite sceptical or even negative by some members.

„Yeah, so the quiz, I can’t really valuate it yet, if it backfires and we alienate more people than having a benefit out of it.“ (Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 10)

2  d. Others – Internal power dynamics

There were no further comments and has all been covered by the above codes already.

3  Challenging external power
3  a. Participants, composition

Both initiatives have a slightly similar composition when it comes to age and migration background even though PIK 1 struggles a little more with getting older people involved on a bigger scale.

As for PIK 2, many participants are rather young. Most of them are students or graduates from the field of renewable energies. But there are also retired people who want to use their new free time to help the cooperative. There are quite few active members between the age of 30 to 50. They assume that this is the age when people have children, no time and no money. But nevertheless there are a lot of members out of that age category. There are slightly more men than women involved.

„So far we are focused on a rather alternative milieu because there are the low hanging fruits. It is easier to talk to those people. With the resources we have we can not build width and try to talk to everyone. That is not possible. Therefore, we concentrate on those areas where we have the feeling that it will be easier for us to succeed because the people are closer to the topic already and open to it. Perspective it will be important for us to get out of this milieu and also represent others. I personally think it is extremely important to reach people who are generally open to the topic but are not from the energy sector. Because of resource constraints it is hard for us to approach those people and convince them to become a member. That will be the next step. And another aspect that will be important, especially for the legitimation of the whole thing, to also represent people who financially belong to a weaker group […].“ (Chairwoman, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)
PIK 1’s participants are quite heterogeneous when it comes to age and social class. Nevertheless, as everything is organized via the website younger people are drawn towards the initiative and participate in it than older people who might not be as familiar with the Internet and using a computer in general. Foreigners or people with a migration background are not really included yet as the website and the quiz which has to be passed when taking on responsible positions in the initiative are in German so far. It is still important for them that theoretically everybody could join because it affects every person as everyone has to eat. No matter the culture, religion, skin colour or origin. Therefore, they are also very cautious about people who could be racist. They do not deny the access to people with a right attitude as long as those do not offend any other members.

„Ok, well I think on the ambassador level there are well educated, left, alternative people, also a lot among the members. That is what I would see as the typical scene. These people whose appearance give it away already somehow, what they are doing and what interests them, where I often think that I differentiate from. I would say there are also a lot of students who really need. Who do something useful and on the other hand don’t have much money and now use those saved foods. Yes, that is what I would call the typical active member or ambassador. And then, among the member squad, there are a lot of people who have a real low social background, class wise. And I find that very pleasant that they come together. You meet when you pick up the food, you talk for a short amount of time and the segregation in our society, that I believe didn’t exist like that in earlier days, is a little reversed and I find that wonderful. That people with totally different backgrounds come together. I would say those are the two typical groups of people that participate.“ (Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 10)

3 b. Politics played by CBIs

The organization of the PIK 2 cooperative is quite strict and they have to follow certain rules. Concerning elections and regular meetings for example. Every member is also asked to join the general assembly at least and voice their opinion about the ongoing changes. It is seen as a very democratic structure. Therefore, it can be said that the cooperative is a space for political training. They are also quite well connected to political parties in order to get sufficient information about new legislations and votes concerning their topic. Some parties also support them by trying to convince other parties to also support them.

PIK 1 on the other hand is not actively promoting the issue of food waste in a political way but would like to see politics in general to be more aware and active about the topic.

„Yes, we would like to see, as so many of us are experts when it comes to the topic of food waste, we have so much knowledge, see what is thrown out on a daily basis, that we are inquired, what has happened already with the „Genießt-uns-campaign“ (Enjoy-us-campaign). That something is happening there. That they also approach us and talk to us, what we actually want. The green party has done that already, really. And we would like to see that from others as well.“ (Member, organization team, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 9)

3. b1. Alliances with other groups

Both initiatives are connected to a lot of other groups and initiatives. That network helps both of them to pursue their goals.

PIK 1 is very well connected to different institutes, shops, law firms and more which support them with money, goods, services or a space for their „Fairteiler“ (fridges that
can be filled and emptied by everyone). Furthermore, they engage themselves in political actions like the „Wir-haben-es-satt“ – demonstration where they also connect to other social groups and movements from the field of food and agriculture e.g. But they not only get support from others. They also support other groups by donating and preparing food for them like an association dealing with street children, a language school for refugees or Berlin homeless charity and alike. They also engage themselves in schools and try to offer workshops concerning the topic of food waste.

PIK 2 tries to connect with other cooperatives to share experience and give each other tips for the upcoming process. They only got the problem that there is a constant change of people inside the cooperatives which makes it hard to stay in touch and organize regular meetings.

Some PIK 1 members see a big potential for the alliance with the „Older food collecting initiative“, an organization that also collects food but in big amounts. They then distribute it among people receiving social welfare only. Sometimes they already work together but there has been some dispute in the past which still keeps them from working together on a big scale. They also work together with „Velogistics“, a company renting out cargo bicycles. They transport food with those bikes once in a while. Moreover they worked together with an urban garden initiative to distribute a farmers' products once. Another one was „Apfelschätze“, an initiative that is solemnly focusing on saving apples in Berlin and Brandenburg (two German states) and informing people about it.

The cooperation with the „Energietisch“ was very fruitful for PIK 2 because they could connect to very different partners that all share the same goal of changing the energy system in Berlin towards a more green and renewable one. Other partners include naturstrom, a company distributing green energy, and GLS Bank, a bank that focuses on investing its money in social and ecological companies and projects. Furthermore, EWS Schönau, the first German cooperative to ever buy back a part of the German energy grid, and StadtwerkeSchwäbisch-Hall supported them throughout the process with their experience and expertise of handling the difficult application procedure. They also got in touch with the networks of project developers and BündnisBürgerenergie, an alliance of groups that support energy projects in the hands of the people.

PIK 1’s biggest alliance is the one with „BioCompany“, a supermarket chain that only sells organic products. PIK 1 is picking up a lot of food from them every week.

„And that was when he [founder of PIK 1] got in contact and from this contacting arose the idea that it [PIK 1] can be done differently. Not only the one side of PIK 1 where you have food hampers that you put online and say ’I have three breads left and five liters of milk and go on vacation tomorrow’. That is[…] what we do, saving this food, that is when [founder of PIK 1] founded that and found a good partner in [chief executive BioCompany] who is in charge of all the branches.“ (Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 3)

3. b2. Strategies

PIK 2 and PIK 1 both have certain strategies to pursue their individual goals but PIK 1 is more free to do that than PIK 2 because the latter is bound to political decisions.

PIK 2 just cannot influence the decision much whether they will win the bid or not. All they can do is trying to get as many members as possible because that also means that they will collect more money and speak with a bigger voice. They do that by organizing
information stands on the streets, conferences and network summits. They also try to stay in close contact with political parties and the media to stay on top of things and have a clear idea of the ongoing processes and to voice their vision and promote it.

PIK 1 on the other hand tries to reach out to more people by their actions, interviews on TV or in the radio, presentations and word-of-mouth advertising. Some actions involve the distribution of food on the streets or workshops in schools. That way they get to talk to people and can hand out their flyers with further information. They also talk actively to supermarkets and food stores to get them involved. It is very important to them that once they work together with a food donor that they keep in close, personal contact to build up a good and lasting relationship.

3. **b3. Others – Politics played by CBIs**

There were no further comments and has all been covered by the above codes already.

3. **c. Politics of possibilities**

The potential impacts of both initiatives can be quite influential on a societal level if they continue to grow and PIK 2 actually wins the bid.

The PIK 2 cooperative tries to show that the energy sector can also be influenced by the people and not only by big companies. A lot of members believe that the energy transition can only be successful if the people have more influence and take an active part in it. They can be and wish to be a role model and a motivation for other initiatives or cooperatives even if they do not succeed. They can show that it is possible to change something in a field that had been almost neglected by the public interest. They now show that people can take part in that field. If they do succeed in Germany’s biggest city it will be a sign that what they have done can also be achieved in other smaller cities in Germany.

PIK 1 has already shown that million kilograms of food can be saved if there is a will for change. They also show that money does not always have to be the driving factor for change but rather the commitment to the cause. Of course they rely on donations and voluntary work but nevertheless they prove that it can be done.

“*I think the biggest accomplishment are the million kilograms of food that have been saved already, that’s for sure. And the next most important thing is the public relations work. That it gives food for thought through setting an example of another model.*”

(Member, PIK 1, 2015, Interview 10)

They also show that people from different origins and backgrounds can work together for one common goal because food is important to every individual. In the long run it could change the way our society values food because the initiative shows through their actions and campaigns (also on TV and radio) how much food is wasted every day and therefore makes it visible to a wider public. It can also change the production system of the involved supermarkets as they might consider ordering less food in the first place eventually.

3. **d. Visible or measurable impacts**

Both initiatives were already able to gather a lot of people for their cause and brought attention to their individual topic. PIK 2 also raised a lot of money which is a big achievement already.

The amounts of food that PIK 1 has saved and the number of shops and supermarkets that are participating are definitely a measurable impact. A measurable impact are also the amounts of indications in several TV or radio broadcasts or journals. Some
members also see the „Fairteiler“ (fridges that can be filled and emptied with food by everyone) as an achievement. Their numbers are also growing in Berlin. A measurable impact can also be seen when shops and supermarkets react to the constant pick up by the members and order or produce less food next time.

3. e. Relationship with external power

Politics are issues for both initiatives, only in very different ways. PIK 2 keeps in close contact to different political parties in order to be informed about ongoing changes but are also cautious of not getting coopted and used by them and keep their independence. As they are in the application process they have to engage with different (political) stakeholders and have to adhere to certain standards. The relationship with politicians changed over time. In the beginning they were not really recognized but over time they gained importance and now the politicians have to and want to engage with them.

PIK 1 is using the media to promote their cause and reach out to a lot of people. At different events like demonstrations or fairs they try to get in contact with politicians to draw attention to their cause. Other than that they try to avoid a close relationship to the politics.

„I think that in a distant future the politics can not hide from it anymore. Because the more media presence the project gets the more attention it will also get from higher-ranking politicians. But if politics should have an influence on the project or so, I am against it. No interference from politics.“ (Member, PIK 1, 2014, Interview 2)

3. f. Linkage internal–external power dynamics

Legal requirements affect both initiatives and constrain or influence their internal organization.

As PIK 2 cannot receive official funding as a cooperative because of some legal restrictions they are dependent on donations and people who engage themselves voluntarily in the cooperative. This affects the professionality of the cooperative as they need more time to solve problems and finish certain tasks. If they would get funding they could also hire some experts for those things.

Throughout their history there have been some legislation amendments that they had to adjust to. This required a lot of time and energy that could have been used elsewhere.

„[…] there were legislation amendments in the field of private and small investor protection that possibly also affect cooperatives and are a very concrete obstacle. This doesn’t only affect us but all other energy cooperatives alike. It is a special case but it costs a lot of nerves and binds a lot of resources. There are x examples that are more or less, but the administration stuff, which means the administration effort which binds resources which are then missing in other places.“ (Chairwoman, PIK 2, 2014, Interview 1)

The cooperative is very much dependent on political decisions. As those tend to take a long time it is demotivating for some members and also influences their work. They have to keep motivating each other or the professionality of their work drops.

Legislations also affected the PIK 1 initiative. There were some concerning the transfer of food from a food supplier to a person forced the initiative to come up with a legal solution. Now they have a contract that both parties sign. But that excludes children from becoming a registered member as they cannot take over that responsibility. In the future they could have problems with the local health authorities concerning the „Fairteiler“ (fridges that can be filled and emptied with food by everyone) because of
the accessibility. It can not be retraced who actually put food in there and whether or not it is bad or even poisoned. PIK 1 is planning to expand to other countries. But as the legal requirements concerning the handling of food differ they might have to adjust their legal contracts and organizational structure.

3. g. Others – challenging external power

There were no further comments and has all been covered by the above codes already.

**Reflection**

Below is a brief reflection on important factors for development, up-scaling, replication, and/or diffusion within the Growth and Trajectories theme based on interviews from “BürgerEnergie Berlin” and “PIK 1.” We focus on factors for the development and diffusion of the initiatives as there is evidence for these in the memo above.

Both initiatives have a clear vision of what their development and role in the transition should look like and what they would like to accomplish and see a big potential for social change through their actions. PIK 2’s social change is more political whereas PIK 1 sees the social and the political sphere as clearly separated spaces. They do not want to confront the current global system directly but rather build an alternative and thereby show a „better“ solution. They are very well connected to other groups and initiatives. That network helps both of them to pursue their goals.

Politics also play a role in the development of each initiative. PIK 2 is very dependent on political decisions and engages itself in a lot of political ways whereas PIK 1 is trying not to get a political notion even though they participate in demonstrations once in a while. PIK 2 and PIK 1 both have certain strategies to pursue their individual goals but PIK 1 is more free to do that than PIK 2 because the latter is bound to political decisions.
Memo from UAB

1. ........................................................................................................................................ Intro

This memo summarizes the most striking aspects from the semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted to members of community-based initiatives in Barcelona from Nov 2014 to May 2015 in relation to the issue of power and politics, considering both internal and external dimensions. The main question that motivates this research was: To what extent do intended/unintended or invisible/visible exclusionary patterns (power structures, hierarchies, discourses, dilemmas and imaginaries, etc.) constrain CBIs’ ability to engage/benefit a diverse range of people and be truly transformational in their societal impact? With this purpose, we structured the research in three different subtopics: i) The transition imaginary; ii) Internal power dynamics and iii) Challenging external power, which aim to answer the following questions respectively: i) What type of transition is imagined by members of CBIs and how, under this imaginary, do they see their contribution to a wider social change?; ii) Which power visible/invisible power dynamics remain in CBIs that constrain/advance their ability to engage/benefit more people?; and iii) What is the potential of such spaces of deliberation and of the alternative imaginary they are constructing to prompt wider social and political changes?

The Barcelona sample for this theme consists mainly of two community-initiatives, two from the food domain and one from the energy domain. The food initiative is a pair of food producer + food cooperative. The food producer (CBI1) is a peri-urban small business producing organic veggies and selling them to a number of cooperatives in Barcelona (up to 200 baskets per week). It was started 5 years ago. CBI1 is part of a group of 12 producers in the area where it is located (Maresme region, 20 km. distance from Barcelona). The food cooperative (CBI2) is located in the central and multicultural Casc Antic neighborhood of Barcelona. It was founded 15 years go. It is formed by 20-25 families organized to buy their food collectively. The initiative is run with volunteer work. It is known as one of the most politicized food cooperatives in Barcelona. CBI2 was originally linked to another productive project, but relationships deteriorated over time and broke off, which is when CBI2 started to buy produce from CBI1.

The energy initiative (CBI3) is an energy consumers’ cooperative with more than 20,000 members across Spain. It was initiated in Girona in 2010. The initiative is managed by three groups with different functions: the professional technical team (about 15 people based in Girona), a board (5 people, elected every 4 years, non-paid) and a number of local groups distributed in the Spanish territory (more than 30, with different levels of engagement). These volunteer groups are generally in charge of the diffusion of the initiative, the communication with local actors, and some of them carry some technical tasks too. We have conducted interviews mainly with members linked to Barcelona’s local group. We interviewed also two members of the board. Therefore, our sample can be considered to be composed of two pairs of entrepreneurial-like and professionalized organizations + volunteer-based initiatives (CBI1 + CBI2 and CBI3 + Barcelona local group).

In addition to members of these four communities, we interviewed five stakeholders. Related to the food initiative: the co-manager of a farm (CBI4) from CBI1’s producers’ network, the head of the agriculture office in Maresme region who was in contact with CBI1 from its beginning, the co-founder of another farm that used to be linked to CBI2
years ago (CBI5). Related to CBI3: a member of the Xarxa de SoberaníaEnergética (political actor linked to CBI3), and the head of SantCeloni sustainability office (SantCeloni was the first town to contract the energy to CBI3). We include the reflections that the two stakeholders who are part of community-based initiatives (CBI4 and CBI5) make about their own initiatives in this analysis.

The two initiatives are well-known cases of community-based initiatives in Barcelona. They are composed by the “usual suspects” (white, educated, middle class people). With the exception of two interviewees, internal power dynamics are generally unrecognized (maybe mentioned but briefly). It is remarkable that CBI1 is formed by two partners with three immigrant workers. Therefore the internal organization and power structures are to be treated differently than the other two cooperatives (which are run horizontally). The three of them are declared counter-hegemonic and the three were initiated with an intentional confrontational character (with more or less visibility): CBI1 against agriculture regulations and the agri-food industry, CBI2 with the idea of politicize and re-localize consumption, CBI3 against the energy lobby and the macro corporations controlling the energy sector in Spain. However, they all find difficulties for carrying out more external politicization and protest.

2. ................................................................. Transition imaginary

The type of transition that is imagined by participants of the alter-economies is definitely impacting the type of actions developed by communities in order to achieve socio-political and environmental changes. In other words, the (in)ability of participants to imagine radical changes (directed towards a more equitable society or social relations beyond capitalism logics) will influence the (in)capacity of the movements to prompt such changes. This imaginary is obviously constrained by external factors such as the policy environment and the socio-political and economic context where the initiatives navigate.

Due in parts by such external context, participants are very pragmatic when they talk about transition. They have a very realistic and down-to-earth vision. They talk about very “achievable” and “material” objectives. The food producers, for example, emphasizes the importance of building a solid, loyal and growing consumer base that can secure their livelihoods and maintain the financial viability of the farm. They envision and hope for the creation of a higher number of farms that can feed urban customers on a large scale. Something similar is regarded for CBI3, whose focus is on increasing the number of members (clients). The idea and imaginary of being part of an integrated transition movement does not appear much in discourses and the different domains around which transition is being built (food, energy, waste, housing, etc.) do not seem to be fully connected (beyond individual level).

“Under my view the objective of this movement if you would call it such, is that I made my numbers. I like numbers. I say, here at CBI1 we feed 200 families approximately. How many projects like ours should be in Barcelona metropolitan area to feed the city? How many families are there? 500.000 families? 2.500 projects like ours. And I don’t see it so difficult.” G, co-founder, co-owner and worker of CBI1 (Nov 2014)

Members of initiatives imagine a transition very linked to consumer’s choice, calling for “responsible citizens” and “consumers’ consciousness”. Transition seems to be related to ethical consumption (to know what we eat, to buy renewable energies, etc.) or responsible production (to produce ecological food, to promote renewable energies) with a strong environmental focus, with social justice/equity/privilege issues rendered to a second priority. When members talk about democratization, co-ownership,
cooperatives, they are mainly talking about the people who have the abilities to access the initiatives and do not include all members of society. It can be seen as a “gated community”.

“A different way of satisfying the needs, which is linked to certain justice values, redistribution… I don’t know about other initiatives, but that’s the case of CBI3. Wealth redistribution, a property regime shift, where cooperative’s members are co-owners of the cooperative, with equal rights and responsibilities, taking part of a collective project. Have an impact on the responsible citizen.” S, member of CBI3 and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015)

In general, communities don’t impose a very strong political vision or political commitment. Though they value political action, it’s kind of disconnected from their daily activities. The daily activities needed for running the initiatives seem not to leave room for more direct political action, which is left to other actors. This is clear in the case of CBI1, whose founders are too busy with farming and have little time for activism or direct political action. For the two initiatives, the main politicization they promote is the one implicit on their activities rather than a strong external politicization (participation in demonstrations, campaigns, lobbying, etc.), which is made by other groups they might support. Dedication to external politicization seems not possible for initiatives fully dedicated to be economically sustainable, with limited time and/or resources left for extra activities. However, other members think that more explicit politicization and struggle are needed for the initiatives to be meaningful, and they see a failure in the fact that this dimension has not being fully achieved. This generates frustration and tensions among members with different perspectives: those who only use the cooperative as a market place, and those who want the initiative to be politically active.

“We are not very active politically, no. I mean, if someone asks me to talk somewhere, I will, I have no problem. So far we haven’t had time to be politically active. Our strategy is that one more or less. To grow this way is a political action. I have no doubt. I am not worried that we are not there in the demonstrations.” G, co-founder, co-owner and worker of CBI1 (Nov 2014)

“There is lack of people willing to do stuff, understanding that the cooperative is not an aim, but a place from which you can move, and don’t stay there but do other things. To be more engaged with the political movement politicized, of Barcelona. And the truth is that we are at the minimum. We do not have enough people like that, motivated.” R, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

It seems to be two visions/arguments. First, those who aim to include a wider range of people, regardless their political commitment, because their goals are more economical or environmental (more “pragmatics”). Second, those who see the political dimension as crucial for achieving the goals of the initiative, and therefore they want to impose a political commitment to members/newcomers (more “purists”). This two visions are probably equally needed in the transition process, but we see that the two groups not always engage strongly and strategically, which ultimately would limits initiative’s impacts.

“If we want to be an alternative company, we cannot be composed only by activists. We should be composed by activists and more people. And by people who don’t care about the bill, but they have decided that they change to be part of a cooperative, and that they don’t want to be reading emails to understand what is the KWh, etc. Therefore, the doubt between being pure and marginal or being broad but not impure, is
constant. It’s a dilemma. If we are totally critical with the system, but we are four… the system does not even feel us. The system should feel us, and for that we need to be many, if we want to be many, not all of them will be activists.” D, member of CBI3, former CBI3 board member, and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015).

For the productive projects (either food producers or the energy coop) economic sustainability is at least as important as environmental and social sustainability for achieving wider societal changes. Economic stability is needed in order to show that these alternatives are feasible. On other hand, volunteers’ groups (CBI2 and CBI3-Barcelona local group) complaint about precariousness and some argue that professionalization could be positive for the group, since the current model is not as efficient as it should be (high rotation of members, low commitment, etc.)

“I think that my motivation now is to say “Ok, I want to keep being ecologically coherent, socially coherent, coherent with myself, but also to show that the project is economically sustainable, and to show that you can sustain a family doing this, without inheritances, without volunteers. The current motivation is that.” G, co-founder, co-owner and worker of CBI1 (Nov 2014)

For the food initiatives, it’s remarkable the very strong link between food coops and food producers. The three food producers we interviewed started they project after getting support from consumer coops. If 15 years ago, this model seemed a successful one, nowadays it is starting to be questioned, partly due to the decrease in number of members in the cooperatives, which makes the functioning harder. The appearance of organic shops in the neighborhoods where the cooperatives are located offer a new possibility for purchasing organic food which requires no commitment. While both producers and consumers reckon that it’s probably time to review the model or to take action to strengthen, the actors are paralyzed and the model locked. Moving from private storehouses to open (or semi-open) stores or professionalizing consumer cooperatives are some solutions that have being pointed. These solutions will open this alternative food provision model to more people, but even that, some members are reluctant to move forward.

“About the debate on the existence of ways of consuming ecologically and meeting social justice criteria different than the cooperatives, I think it should be explored. Three or four years ago we talked about it, and it’s an interesting question, whether it is needed this way of organizing ourselves, with volunteer work, precarious.” V, member of CBI2 (April 2015)

The role of institutions is generally seen as fundamental for achieving a real change, but at the same time it is not needed for the every-day activities of the initiatives, which are right now operating completely autonomous from external governance bodies (although producers have got some funding). The energy cooperative is highly impacted (negatively) by a recent regulation change that hinders renewable production. Collaborations with governments at local scale are desired.

“It is a movement that is growing but it is still a long way to go, it needs support from the public administration. It shouldn’t be that easy to cultivate in a toxic way. It should be a pollution penalty. That way the organic production will be encouraged.” G, co-founder, co-owner and worker of CBI1 (Nov 2014)

“I think it could be interesting if there were these synergies between the public power [institutions] and CBI3, in order to develop different projects, either to increase awareness, generation projects, energy efficiency projects, or several. Many things could be done, and it not only depends on CBI3 approaching institutions, there should
be reciprocity.” S, member of CBI3 and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015)

Perception of the contribution to social change
The two main perceived contributions of the communities are: firstly, boosting the politicization of certain topics and secondly, raise awareness and bringing new imaginaries of what’s possible. The success of the initiatives is measured by participants in terms of economic sustainability (being able to survive fulfilling their main function: providing food or producing energy), opening new possibilities and imaginaries, sustaining a collective activity, stimulating behavioral change and consciousness of people. According to this view, most participants perceive initiatives are successful already.

“The consciousness change. I think that’s very important, the people’s consciousness change about the need to stop depending on oil, we need to search for other alternatives to consumption. And I think that is fundamentally what CBI3 is achieving.” I, head of the sustainability agency of SantCeloni, collaborator municipality of CBI3 (June 2015)

The role that initiatives have in stimulating the democratic and deliberation learning, and how these abilities are needed for moving beyond individualism and dependency towards collectivity and self-organization, is remarked by interviewees. These abilities, members say, are acquired in the collective spaces that the communities create.

“We have been educated in a very individualist culture, dependent on markets, very little self-sufficient, with complex personalities. And the common work and self-management in a cooperative is an amazing life experience.” V, member of CBI2 (April 2015)

Alternatives building VS confrontation
The initiatives do not participate actively in confronting actions, but they consider their existence as a counter-hegemonic act itself. These communities support (in different degrees) initiatives that are more active opposing and resisting. The general view is that CBIs fulfill another function: to provide alternatives which more politicized actors can use to show the other “possibles”. This does not mean that they don’t confront directly. For example CBI3 has participated in some collective plaintiffs and actions (against nuclear plants, etc.) at European level (as members of RESCoop), but the most confrontational group in the energy sector in Catalunya/Spain are the Xarxa por la SoberaníaEnergética or la Plataformapor un Nuevo ModeloEnergético, which are more political and more confrontational, and which CBI3 support and work close to. The two strategies are seen as part of a symbiotic relation, in which the first element uses the second to exemplify the change they want to prompt and “materialize” the change, and the second benefits from the first for the lobby, networking and political action carried out.

“It’s the same strategy with different faces. CBI3, regarding its main function as business, is that the business is sustainable and that it works. Its main function is not go to talk with the ministry of energy and tell them that a law must me changed. No.
Because CBI3 is nothing in the sector.” S, member of CBI3 and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015)

“I think that in order to create something you have to refuse. There is not an affirmation with a negation. This position is required, to affirm only in the construction is not useful.” V, member of CBI2 (April 2015)

“It’s true that at the end you need some confrontation beyond the alternatives, I think the contradictions and barriers that the system poses should be remarked constantly.” Pablo Cotarelo

Discourses of justice

The issue of justice and equity within CBIs remains absent in the discourses. I perceive these issues to be a secondary priority. In general it is a tough topic and interviewees get very defensive when asked about this aspect. Another conclusion that can be extracted is that the alter-economy movement is a Global North struggle, very westernized, with no or little connection with other socio-environmental struggles in the Global South (for example, CBI3 are fighting against the same companies than many Latin-American anti-dams movements, but no connection has been made).

The exclusivity character of the alter-economy is reckoned by members, which assumed that communities are naturally formed by a group of similar people. This perspective seems to omit the reflection around why such groups seems not be attracted by community’s values and praxis and to recognize that the claims of more marginalized and less privileged populations are not considered. Since cultural capital as well as social class determine the ability and willingness to access the initiatives, initiatives result hermetic not only to certain social classes, but also to certain social groups that do not share cultural codes or habits.

“I think this type of initiative should have… but it’s a different logic than ours, that’s clear. Ours is exclusionary. Anything of this kind that emerges from a specific social class, I don’t know if social class… from a specific ideological environment, it’s not elitist, but it has a very specific conditions that do not apply to all the population, obviously.” A, member of CBI3, CBI3 board president, and participant of Zaragoza local group (April 2015)

When asked, members do acknowledge the relevance of this issue, but they do not find easy solutions to change this pattern. It remains as an open question. For example, CBI3 has discuss how to affront energy poverty issues with its members, but the conclusion is that there is not much they can do (“energy poverty is a poverty issue”). Once more, the need to focus on concrete results and on the survival of the project alienates the group from broader social struggles.

“It has always been a debate, that there are people who cannot afford the basket’s price. It has always been an issue to reflect on, who this type of consumption is directed for. Do we want to be elitists? How to reach to the people who cannot afford it and have little resources? In this model of consumers’ cooperative there are people excluded, right? People with little money.” R, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

The reason for the low inclusion in the CBIs is, according to members, due to structural problems, which seems to justify the inability to cope with those issues (“someone else’s problem”). For example, interviewees argue that organic food is more expensive than non-organic due to the unregulated pollution made by industrial agriculture. The price makes the baskets inaccessible for many. CBI3’s 100€ membership fee is also perceived as a barrier. But again, the 100€ are needed to maintain the cooperative. But
these discourses can easily lead to more pejorative opinions, which can be recognized in some of the interviews.

“How to generate a more just system? It not only depends on people’s self-organization, because it’s impossible. This is used in the neoliberal discourses saying “well, people could self-organize and do things”, but this is not enough, we need a legislation that makes people to have a civic behavior, to be responsible, to know certain issues, to be critical. But the power does not want this, the power does not want people to be able to be critical with the decisions, to be conscious that they live in a very vulnerable, poverty, exclusionary context because the system is not just.” S, member of CBI3 and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015)

“At the moment CBI3 cannot become a charity. It should focus on its objective, and when it’s well established we will address other problems. The problems that the system has created, the energy poverty and all that, is responsibility of those who created them. CBI3 cannot act as it were Caritas.” P, member of CBI3, CBI3 board vice-president, and participant of Barcelona local group

On other hand, members recognize the organizational capacity of working class, which could be somehow better than those from middle-upper class. The barriers for them to access are therefore a matter of cultural codes and priorities, not of organizational skills. However, for the coops to achieve broader types of people extra work (extra time and resources, or grow) is needed. Social sustainability is therefore rendered as a second priority, after economic and environmental sustainability.

From the previous extracts it can be argued that, although initiatives acknowledge the privilege, changing the situation is not a priority. They justify their exclusiveness by claiming structural and legislation reasons, but they don’t think in very creative ways about manners to be more inclusive, for example different membership fees depending on members’ income, etc.

The dilemma around inclusion within initiatives has focused (strategically) on including less activists but more wealthy/less engaged people (people with environmental values but not worried about the bills/who do not want to volunteer in the coop), rather than including a wider variety of social classes and races.

“CBI3 was born as a relevant space for the activism, with people deciding to dedicate part of their time to prompt the model change. This is very good in the first stage. But if we want to become an alternative company we cannot be composed only by activists. We have composed by activists and more people. And people who do not care about the bill, but they have decided to change to a cooperative, and they don’t want to be reading the email to understand what’s the KWh.” D, member of CBI3, former CBI3 board member, and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015)

Operationalization of justice

For making the initiatives more accessible, the initiatives imagine the focus could be on lowering the prices of the services/products. Informational aspects (who knows about the cooperative), or the possibility of alliances with/supporting groups with different (but aligned) claims seem not to be on people’s minds, but these actions would also increase the number of (types of) people that can reach the initiative are left aside. However, some measures or solutions are given on the ground to tackle inequality. These have an assistance perspective: activities in the neighborhood (such as the organization of football tournaments or documentaries screenings), insertion of youth or immigrants as workers, support to third sector organizations, giving the extra food
produced to marginalized communities, or exemption of the membership fee (which in CBI3 has been discussed widely).

While initiatives claim they are unable to cope with equity or inclusion issues, they believe that their power as social movement, their irruption as new political actors in the socio-environmental arena, will help changing the power structures, which will ultimately benefit the whole society. It’s unclear how this will happen and which spectrum of society will really benefit from the expansion of the alter-economy paradigm. This imaginary is very far from recognizing that the food system is inequitable and therefore we fight to address environmental inequities. What it’s clear it’s that for having a wider impact, initiatives should be more visible, more open and more engaged in lobbying, advocacy and more political actions (which again brings us to inability due to the lack of time and resources).

(Un)recognized privileges

In general, interviewees accept the fact that initiatives are in general formed primarily by white educated middle class people when I brought up the issue, except for one participant of CBI3 who was reluctant to accept this fact. As it has been said above, this is seen as something hard to change and overcoming them is definitely not a priority: initiatives are aware that they mostly reach people with environmental citizenship (they care of what they eat, they support renewable energies) but this is seen as a structural problem. Environmental citizenship is reckoned as a privilege, but what is not considered is that more disadvantaged populations might have different types of environmentalism. The problem of accessing the initiative is more one of cultural codes, language and visions, than one of lack of environmental citizenship.

On other hand, a number of factors are pointed as needed for the starting and development of these types of communities. Indeed, it is clear that people involved in the initiatives (specially the professionalized) are very skilled. Abilities such as negotiation and communication skills, emotional intelligence, and also technical knowledge about food/energy are pointed as relevant for the initiatives management, as well as trust. The money and time needed for participating is also a privilege that difficulties many to access this type of initiatives. Also, the vocational character of many activities that has been pointed by many interviewees – the “do what you want” mantra – is not possible to realize for many others. Networks and connections result also fundamental for the initiatives. For example, initiatives are connected through social networks formed by similar people which makes the “exchanges” and collaboration easier. The three food producers (CBI1, CBI5 and CBI4) started the projects having already support from consumer groups that were part of their social networks. Interviewees state that they receive a lot of support from their contacts and friends. In general, it can be argued that participants know that these are privileges although they don’t point them as such straight forward (only when directly asked).

Exclusionary discourses and practices

The more exclusionary dynamic is probably the fact that initiatives are closed and homogeneity communities with certain cultural codes and discourses, which makes them accessible for only a few. In CBI3 and CBI2, there are membership fees (60€ and 100€) which are obviously a barrier for certain groups, but the main barrier for reaching more marginalized groups is probably the homogeneity of ideas, priorities, aesthetics, habits, etc. within groups. The homogenization of CBIs puts them in risk of becoming friends’ clubs, as it is the movement as a whole: the social networks that are created within CBIs expand beyond the initiatives’ borders through personal or initiative’s connections.
The exclusivity is almost considered as a fact, a dynamic which is not meant to be changed: “it’s not a place for people who do not have money” or “to reach everyone is not realistic” ideas are extended believes. This imaginary hinders the possibilities of making the initiatives more accessible for others.

“This who do not benefit are who do not consume. But, I would like to reach everyone, but maybe it’s not realistic, right?” G, co-founder, co-owner and worker of CBI1 (Nov 2014)

Some decisions would hinder (even more) the access to different sectors of population: in CBI3, a measure to be “greener” would increase the price of energy provided by the cooperative a bit more. A interviewee does reckon that she would prefer to be greener without considering the impact on accessibility that this would have.

3. ......................................................................................................................... Internal Power Dynamics

The analysis of internal power dynamics help to elucidate if some exclusionary practices are being reproduced and affecting the development of the initiative (its capacity to survive, become more stable and institutionalize, or replicate itself). The interviewees have reported, explicitly or implicitly, exclusionary patterns and logics (such as patriarchal behaviors, invisible hierarchies, communication problems) that have led to internal conflicts and participation problems.

There are two different situations regarding internal organization. CBI1 is a small business composed by two founders and owners and three migrant workers (whose situation is being regularized or is about to). CBI3, Barcelona local group, CBI2, but also CBI5 and CBI4 (stakeholders) are cooperatives and they all have horizontal structures (in different degrees). It’s on these five on which we focus this section. Horizontality might not always be positive for inclusion purposes, since participation tools used by communities (debates, assemblies, etc.) might refrain people with less communication abilities from participation.

Politics within CBIs

The initiatives are clearly political and collective spaces where the “democratic exercise” is practiced: there are spaces for dialogue, deliberation, collective decisions, etc. This is an important aspect of the political dimension of initiatives at internal level, and it’s highly valued by members. The common tool for decision-making is the assembly, but some differences can be regarded in terms of organization between CBI3 and CBI2.

“These spaces... I am very interested on this issue. I have a past, with a profession, even politician, and I have realized that it’s tremendously important to learn the “democratic exercise”, and the peace that to do the exercise and accept the consequences gives you, and the extreme anxiety generated when you or someone wants to impose their reasons no matter what, without having learned this democratic exercise. This issue is one of coolest that, with the excuse of CBI3, it’s brought.” D, member of CBI3, former CBI3 board member, and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015)

CBI3 has around 20,000 members and it has four bodies of governance: the technical office (directed by a cooperative’s manager and founder), the board, the local groups where decisions at local level are taken, and the yearly general assembly where all members can participate. The local groups are formed by 20-30 people who participate with volunteer work to the dissemination of CBI3. Dialogue and deliberation occur mainly within local groups (who hold meetings monthly or every few months), in the online platform (permanently) and in the meetings where local groups, board members
and the representatives from professional team (assemblies or others, few per year). The decisions in the assembly are taken following the majority rule. Not all members participate in the local groups or in the assemblies, and it’s about the 10% of the members who participate actively in the decision making. The other 90% are only “clients”, who buy electricity from CBI3.

On other hand, CBI2 is formed by 25 family units (could be 1 or 2 adults per family unit) and they are organized in different commissions which are in charge of certain tasks and meet regularly (once a month). All the members meet every week at the store to organize and pick up their baskets. A general assembly is organized every two months. Decisions are taken in consensus, and only in few cases they have been taken using the majority rule.

Full participation among members has not been achieved in CBI3 nor in CBI2. In CBI3, for operational reasons, full participation is not an objective. It is assumed that the members who want to get involved in the decisions can do it and accept those who do not want to participate. Members have in mind that horizontality should be combined with efficiency. They are willing to renounce to part of their power in order to facilitate the technical team decisions, which in reality are those which directs the initiative. On the contrary, in CBI2, with a much smaller number of members there is commission who is in charge of making everyone to participate. Still two groups are differentiated: the people who just want to buy the basket without getting involved in the activities and those who “make something else”.

“The biggest problem is participation. But in my view, this exists because of a power structure. And if you look at how power structure and the group works, although we work as a collective, we are all the same, it is true, if you look at how informal power structure works, it is very masculine, in my opinion. And to change that it is something very subtle” T, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

Regardless their efforts to keep the horizontality, both in CBI3 and in CBI2 power unbalances are observed. In the case of CBI3, many every-day decisions are taken by the technical office in Girona (which is managed as a business) and only major decisions are brought to the assembly. Members point out that the technical office and the board seems to direct CBI3’s course, rather than the assembly. In CBI2 some of the oldest members used to have more prominence than the newly joined, and this was hindering the newcomers’ participation and tensions with the members who felt that the veterans were taking some power. These hierarchies arise generally in every community, what it’s crucial is firstly, try to avoid them and second, having internal mechanism to monitor and tackle such power imbalances. In horizontally-managed initiatives, hierarchies tend to remain more invisible.

Conflicts

Due, in part, to these power imbalances and the decision making structures described above, a number of conflicts have arisen. In CBI3, the biggest conflict happened when the criteria for selecting the generation projects that the cooperative could invest into. In the initial criteria, the setting of solar panels on agricultural land (solar farm) was not accepted. Many members consider that occupying agricultural land to set solar panels goes against food sovereignty. More recently, the criteria were voted again after important regulation changes. The possibility of investing in solar farms was then set as “possible in exceptional cases” after the interest of the technical office and some board members. Months later, the technical office wanted to buy an abandoned solar farm in Seville province, and it was communicate to local groups, with almost no time to
respond. The decision depended on Seville local group that finally approved the operation (initially were not in favor, but they changed their mind after a meeting with the technical office from Girona). The decision was taken regardless the claims of other local groups and without consulting local farmers associations or NGOs working on the area where the solar farm is located. The whole operation was very opaque and it made some members really upset. This issue has been brought in all the interviews. Board members try to lessen the importance.

“We prefer debates than decisions. The decisions are elevated to Girona. However, even if there is a local group, in Seville in this case, which takes a decision, to what extent would be acceptable that Barcelona group would say “no, no way””. D, member of CBI3, former CBI3 board member, and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015)

“No… at the end it didn’t lead to a discussion, in the way that they [professional team, board] didn’t want to discuss. I am moving away from CBI3 probably, first because of this issues that I considered a bit rotten, the work… for me, they should defend themselves better. They sneaked the project for doing the solar farm in. It was not on Barcelona proposals when we debated last year.” I, member of CBI3 and participant of Barcelona local group (June 2015)

In CBI2, similar dynamics were found. The debate around participation generated a conflict few years ago, because the unwelcoming attitude of veteran members was restraining newcomers to engage in the daily activities. On one hand, few (males and veterans) members had too much prominence on the assemblies and discourses, and were not giving space to new ideas or new people. They were invisibly directing the community and imposing some views. Moreover, some of them also complained that new members did not commit enough to the functioning of the initiatives. They couldn’t accept that some people joined the initiative “only” to get the baskets. A neutral person reacted to this negative dynamic and addressed the problem by talking to the veterans and creating a new commission who takes care of welcoming newcomers.

“Participation is fundamental. But on other hand, in my opinion, the people that were here for long time, they had a negative attitude. In my opinion the newcomers could see this attitude a bit aggressive, so they wouldn’t want to participate.” T, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

Gender

CBI3 is composed mostly by men, due in part that the energy sector is male-dominated. But the gender issue seems to be looked after, and there are many women in management and board positions. But inevitably, are men who predominately participate in the assembly (that’s what I observed in the one I attended).

CBI2 participation conflict had also a gender dimension, because were men who dominated the assemblies, specifically one of the most veteran members. According to an interviewee, assemblies resemble a boys’ club, where men discuss and women listen. This attitude deteriorates the spaces of deliberation and the hinder participation from others.

“Also in terms of gender. WOW. I was observing in the last assembly the “boys’ club” dynamic that I really reallyreallydon’t like. And I am very critical of that as well. And I am very vocal about it and would not shut-up and don’t care what anyone thinks. Because this is really like, it is 2014 people! we do not live in the dark ages any more. We do not need to see and watch men shake each other’s hands, talk to each other and
not make eye contact with other people. Facilitators half asleep. Yeah, I have a huge problem with the asamblea. It is driving me crazy” T, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

Communication

CBI3 seems to be not fully transparent in the internal communication and an interviewee declared that, as responsible of a local group, she was not sure which information should be shared with all members. A “communication dilemma” was pointed out by other interviewee, who questions if full transparency could be negative for the initiative. After these comments I would argue that there is an internal communication strategy from the technical office, to decide which information is shared with members and which is not.

Another communication problem was reported in CBI3, related to the technical language that is generally used within the cooperative. There are many engineers and professionals of the renewable energies sector who speak very different languages from those who don’t. The information gap difficulties the debates and also hinders the participation in the deliberation spaces of those who are not familiar with the energy issue. A member reported informally that she has felt disrespect from the people with more technical knowledge towards the rest of the group, and the former even questioned the right to participate in decision making of those who lack the technical understanding of the energy sector.

“Maybe the problema is also the information scale, there is people working on renewables and others don’t know how to read the electricity bill, and this sometimes produces a kind of gap, a difficulty to the dialogue, but I think it is solved pretty well.” E, member of CBI3 and former participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015)

Impacts of the power structures on CBIs

The existing invisible hierarchies hinder participation that is unavoidably translated in a more rigid and less inclusive structure, where conflicts as the ones explained above arise easier. In the case of CBI3, the fact that the initiative relies on volunteer-based groups makes the people involved to be highly fluctuant, and therefore the functioning is not always optimal. The “abuse” of the volunteer work makes people feeling their work not recognized, which ultimately causes anger and lack of motivation. This problem is recognized and one of the arguments of those who want initiatives to get professionalized.

Another hidden power structure is the one of those who buys over those who sells. The high dependency of food producers on the food cooperatives makes them vulnerable to the consumers’ decisions. In general, consumers support producers, but can also generate tensions and conflicts. This is the case of CBI2, who broke up with the producer they were originally linked to due to a proposal from the producer’s side of increasing the price of the basket (the relation was already deteriorated due to repeated complaints of CBI2 about the basket’s price and quality and CBI5’s accusation that CBI2 did not empathize with their difficulties).

It seems that for the model producer – cooperative to be fair, it requires higher implication of consumers with the productive project. However, some producers have tried to set a consumers-producers cooperative but in general people do not want so much level of commitment. What this example shows is that if the relations are built around consumption, the power of those who buy will always influence those who sell.

It is interesting that CBI5 tried to achieve fully horizontality since its beginnings and the process turned to be really inefficient and lead (together with the lack of a good
financial planning) to a very critical economic situation. The initiative ended up creating a bit more hierarchal structure in order to survive.

“CBI5 has always paid similar salaries and give voice to the newcomers, we never differentiate. But this was a problem, even it’s hard for me to accept it. Because it is not efficient. We dedicated many working hours to the assemblies, in order to include more the newcomers. One afternoon every week. This is counter-productive for the work efficiency (…) In that way, I, as someone who was here from the beginning, was wrong because I didn’t differentiate between working in a respectful and horizontal way and accepting the different roles of every person within the project, and that the people who are here since long time, we have the right to take more decisions.” M, co-founder and member of CBI5, former food provider of CBI2 (Feb 2015)

Challenging external power

Through having a limited scope and “monoculture” vision (that from white educated middle class), the initiatives analyzed do aim challenging external power, not necessarily by direct political action, but rather by opening new imaginaries and creating alternatives. The question is whether such a narrow discourse based on ethical consumerism the alter-economy might, at the end, be proposing a very limited politics of possibilities. These initiatives, in fact, respond to the call of an ideological movement, boosted by 15M, of people with some ecological sensitivity and malcontent with the economic and political system. They practice mainly an “implicit politicization” of certain socio-environmental issues, although CBI3 is also a bit explicit. Interviewees recognized generally the limits of having strong political impacts but they rely, for this purpose, on more politicized groups.

Composition of CBIs

The people engaged in the initiatives are highly skilled (from researchers to engineers, teachers, biologists, lawyers, etc.), they shared values and habits, and they generally share social networks (they know each other, they are part of several initiatives). This is seen as a fact and something hard to change: People do acknowledge that this type of initiative is not accessible for everyone. The reasons can be summarized as follows: 1. Communities (which per definition have something in common) are homogeneous and therefore seem hermetic for outsiders (outside of that particular cultural and economic status). 2. Less educated people have less environmental citizenship (or at least different types of environmentalism, not necessarily the one practiced by CBIs) and less inter-personal abilities therefore less willing to participate in such activities. 3. People with limited leisure time less able to dedicate time to the project. 4. The professionalized initiatives (CBI3 and CBI1) are business-oriented, and CBI2’s discourse is around consumption, therefore might not appear as something radical, confronting, attractive enough to certain groups. 5. The location of the initiative matters. While CBI2 is located in a multicultural and socially mixed neighborhood, food producers and CBI3 remain invisible for those outside certain social circles (their lack of “spatial capital” influences of course their ability to be maybe more politically-engaged).

Politics played by CBIs

Politics of possibilities

The initiatives aim to fight against hegemonic economic practices and actors but it is not clear if their strategies are in accordance to such purpose. The food initiatives are framing the political discourses mainly around the idea of ethical or “conscious”
consumption, which have limited political implications. CBI3’s political discourses include also the democratization/socialization of energy, but in reality the initiative’s actions are not primarily directed towards such objective. However, the three initiatives have opened new imaginaries of possible economies (in more or less degree), they have brought to the table new forms of organization, logics and self-governance and they have become new actors in the institutional and extra-institutional governance of relevant topics: consumption, food production, energy. They are players of the politics of possibilities, and probably the main contribution to society has to do with this regard, as it is recognized by interviewees.

“Our model is a mixed cooperative with associated work, and thinking on degrowth that we were talking before… We want to live, of course we want to make a living from our jobs, but in fact you don’t need that much. I think one could reach that point with different formats. And the impact really is, and I can me proud about it, I am gonna say about the other worlds that are possible.” D, co-founder and member of CBI4, part of CBI1 producers’ network (May 2015)

“The symbolic power that CBI3 has is very big. The symbolism of things could be done in a different way, that there are alternatives, that the alternative can be specific, material and that it can transform the reality of some people, and even the people themselves (…) I think that the most experiences and initiatives could show this reality and make it visible the most tools we would have to mobilize society and on other hand to know and to elaborate much more resilient alternatives, and not marginal, not nuclear.” P, member of CBI3 and head of the Xarxa por la Soberanía Energètica (May 2015)

Replication is one of the main consequences of these politics. The new imaginary would change the consciousness of society, and would therefore prompt the creation more initiatives. Most of the interviewees value very much the fact that others have replicated their initiatives.

“We can use it as an example to inspire people to do the same thing. But it is not that we have to use it to create one Great Transition.” T, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

Satisfying individuals’ collective and political needs (with an “easy and fun” activism)

At individual level, the initiatives are said to fulfill a void for those malcontent and to satisfy individuals’ political needs. Under this perspective, the initiatives fulfill a void, a need, for those critical with the current socio-economic and political system.

On other hand, members of initiatives remark that participation in CBIs (especially CBI3) is easy, fun, pleasant what makes me think on an intermediate and conformable activism, which requires moderate commitment beyond consumption within the networks. This type of activism is reinforced by the homogeneity of groups and the fact that many members become friends and use the spaces that the initiatives create also for personal purposes. The question is whether this kind of “positive” activism can lead to broader social changes or on the contrary, can easily be accommodated and/or co-opted by external forces. On the other hand, the discourses of “good vibes” and “positive energy” shows a specific imaginary on which there seems to be little room with more disadvantaged populations.

“I think that CBI3 has done it really well. They have promoted the appropriation very well, people get engaged, because I see it [the engagement] as a way of participating in a very exciting project, very easy, very transparent. And I find it very well how they did it. To be basically it seems kind of funny to do things like these. Only for having fun,
people should try.” E, member of CBI3 and former participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015)

Direct political action

Direct political action is rarely carried out. CBI3 have participated in collective plaintiffs, but direct political action is a secondary strategy that is better carried out by others. The relevant role that CBI3 play (and other initiatives in more or less degree) is the articulation with other political actors such as the Plataformaporun Nuevo ModeloEnergético or the Xarxa por la SoberaniaEnergética. It’s a common idea that the strategies for influencing the institutional sphere in a more direct way need to be constructed with other actors.

“CBI3 is one actor inside this broader movement to change the energy sector. And it is the actor which allows that the discourse gets legitimated, because it materializes the discourse.” S, member of CBI3 and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015)

Compared to CBI3, CBI1 and CBI2 can be considered less connected with other initiatives, at least formally. CBI1’s main alliance is operational, not political: the group of 12 organic producers is a very useful network which is key for sustaining CBI1’s business. However, the network cannot be considered a strong political actor, since it remains mostly invisible. CBI2’s network comes mainly from the neighborhood: cultural associations, anti-capitalism groups, the Forat de la Vergonya (a former squatted urban garden). What is not achieved by initiatives is to engage with other struggles beyond those under initiative’s scope. This is only done at individual level.

“We should do more things than those on Thursdays, more than focusing on those two hours when we pick up the basket and then my consciousness gets calmed. We should engage in other struggles not necessarily directly linked to consumption, but maybe indirectly.” R, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

Moreover, the informal alliances, at individual rather than at initiatives level, also strengthen the social networks across initiatives. Many interviewees state that the initiatives are interconnected, and that once you engage with one, it’s easy to access many others.

Relationship with external power

While CBI2 can be considered to be independent from institutions or other power holders, CBI1 and CBI3 have collaborated with the local/regional institutions in different forms. For example, CBI1 got funding for the initial investment (money from EU but managed by the Catalan Agriculture Bureau). They have participated in institutional programs such as technology transfer workshops (they organized one workshop years ago together with the regional agriculture office of Maresme region), courses, or more recently an initiative to connect schools with organic producers.

CBI3 aims to engage local institutions and it is open to collaborate in municipal projects. They have attracted the attention from different cities and towns, but in many cases CBI3’s members perceived these contacts as selfish, even as attempts of co-optation. In other cases, it was CBI3 who contacted the public agencies for collaboration. It is the case in SantCeloni, which was the first municipality in signing a collaboration agreement with CBI3, contracting part of their energy to CBI3 and facilitating the work of the initiative in the municipality. After SantCeloni, other collaboration agreements have been signed. In addition, CBI3’s local groups are sometimes invited to debates or workshops in their respective municipalities.
It can be argued that CBI1 and CBI3 are open to collaborations, but it’s not their priority. They are now positioned as new actors in their respective fields and the relation with institutions would depend on the ability and willingness of public agencies to understand, to collaborate, to help this kind of initiatives. On other hand, CBI2 members think that initiatives such CBI2 should be “kept outside” the system.

**Linkage internal-external power dynamics**

**Impact of the economic and political constrains on internal organization**

The initiatives are autonomous in terms of funding but they are constrained by the current socio-economic system where they operate. The initiatives can be considered to be at a disadvantage when playing with conventional economies, because there are certain rules CBIs have to meet (such as getting the organic certification, or meeting the energy market regulations) with little or no support from institutions. There are a number of structural lock-ins that benefit the players of the hegemonic economy and hinder the success of CBIs. For example, due to the subsidies to industrial agriculture, non-organic food is cheaper than organic, which ultimately impacts the ability of people for buying from alternative food provision systems (and therefore support initiatives such as CBI1 or CBI2). Another example affecting CBI3 relates to the fact that for being able to sign contracts with the administration a number of criteria should be met. This criterion is designed for big electrical companies, but not for small cooperatives. This might change if institutions are willing to (it is the case of SantCeloni). For being able to compete in the market and reaching institutions, initiatives feel the need of formalizing their structure.

It can be considered that the precariousness of the hegemonic economic system and the current crisis encourage people to engage in this type of communities, because it increases the “anger” against the hegemonic system. At the same time, the precariousness also hinders participation: the initiatives run with volunteer work remain in a precarious situation due the low availability of time and/or money and the high fluctuation of members due to the volatile personal situations of members.

“Those who continue in the cooperative, we realized long time ago that there is a lot of young people in a particularly complex neighborhood, socially complex, precarious people, very liquid society, coming and leaving, and this affects a lot the maintenance processes, and these get precarious. Indeed, from the initial mission of the project (political intervention, the politicization of its structure) finally became a consumers’ group with much modest aspirations” V, member of CBI2 (April 2015)

**Inherited dynamics from external structures**

Since initiatives (at least the productive ones, CBI1 and CBI3) should be able to compete with conventional economies, they are designed as business oriented. Those who are not (CBI4, CBI5) are not economic sustainable. This need (the economic sustainability) makes the initiatives be less able to deal with social and political issues.

A relevant inherited dynamic is related to the low societal participation that initiatives complaint about. Members remarked that society is not used to participate in collective actions, nor have the capacities to deliberate. This fact hardens the engagement in such initiatives as well as the real horizontal participation among those who do engage but do not participate actively. Initiatives are therefore in a position where they have to choose between two unideal situations: few very committed people or more people with less commitment. In terms of inclusion, a broader target group will open the initiatives
to a wider range of people. But this opening is hindered by the precariousness of some initiatives or by the pragmatism of others.

As it has been said, the initiatives analyzed are too constrained by the logic of buying and selling (consumption) and this logic influences the potential change that the initiatives could prompt. To this respect it could be argued that the neoliberal governmentality, together with material constrains, makes the initiatives’ members unable to envision or to develop more radical changes (as those for example envision by certain social movements) rendering this initiatives as mere market places.

5. Implications of external and internal power dynamics on CBIs’ impact on society

As a summary of what has been stated above: it’s clear that the external power dynamics play a crucial role on the ability of CBIs to impact on society. First of all, due to the fact that community economies offering products or services compete in disadvantage due to unwelcoming regulations, which favors business-as-usual capitalist companies. Since initiatives need to struggle for their survival carrying on daily tasks, the socio-political aspects remain as secondary objectives. Individualism, precariousness, lack of environmental consciousness, as other factors inherited from the external structures, constrain CBIs’ possibilities of change.

About the equity/Environmental Justice aspects, basically the fact that there is not broader national or transnational EU (urban) movement around EJ constrains the imaginary of initiatives. The imaginary remains very pragmatic and not necessarily oriented towards addressing environmental inequities from the consumer side (maybe a bit more from the producer’s side). Basically there is no EJ movement based on CBIs in Europe, local initiatives do not feel inserted in a broader vision around EJ.

In addition, co-optation by the system is a risk (in the case of food initiatives it’s clear, after the increase of eco-boutiques and purchase options of organic food) which the communities can barely fight (due partly to the low political commitment).

Internal power dynamics seem to be ultimately related to or influenced by the external constrains (debates around strategies, radicalism, participation or commitment).

6. Summary

The initiatives focus the transition in changing around ethical consumption. While they are critical to the current system and do have political aims, their activism is very mild and more direct political action is left to social movements (which they share with members and objectives). While it’s true they do not have a very wide political impact, they should be “evaluated” considering their goals and aims (which do not include political impact as a priority) and their ability for carrying out those tasks being highly constrained by time and resources. The main contribution of such initiatives is probably related to the possibilities and imaginaries they open in terms of values, ways of organizing, etc.

Internal power dynamics exists and are barely monitored or problematized. Initiatives are not completely horizontal and reproduce some patterns of the hegemonic model (this is clear in CBI3 whose main bodies are a company, a board and a huge number of clients). These dynamics have provoked unresolved conflicts and tensions and discourage some members to participate.

Their imaginary of social change (around consumption) and their pragmatic goals (replication, economic stability) prevents in a way higher social considerations, such as
the need of a environmental justice/privileges perspective. Inclusion and equity aspects within initiatives are missing in the discourse. The transition portrayed sounds very exclusive. It’s carried out but people with similar worries and priorities who organized themselves to avoid the conventional markets. Exclusionary practices are acknowledged, but the problem is seen as structural (someone else’s problem). The fact that communities are too homogeneous (and no actions are taken to change this) and they with a “monoculture discourse” is probably the biggest internal barrier for initiatives to attract a wider variety of people. While members reckoned that the initiatives are exclusive, the barriers are seen as difficult to floor and mainly dictated from economic and consciousness issues. The fact that engagement is also determined by common concerns/priorities and common cultural codings and languages is omitted in the discourses, which makes the inclusion aspect difficult to tackle. On other hand, the participation tools used by communities (debates, assemblies, etc.) may refrain people with less communication abilities to participate. Marginalized communities might feel more comfortable with other formulas of engagement, for example through payed jobs (such as CBI1, which employs 3 migrant workers permanently).

To summarize, inclusion of wider ranges of populations seems difficult due to a number of reasons that have been stated throughout this document (basically that different imaginaries attract different people). In addition, this model, based on volunteerism, seems hard to replicate and sustain in a lower-income neighborhood. In such places, alternative economies do exist but are less formalized and have different nuances. However, other types of environmentalism, one which includes Environmental Justice or right-to-the-city claims and it is based on community reconstruction and place-making, can be found.
Memo from USV

1. .................................................................................................................. INTRODUCTION

The USV sample for this theme includes of two community initiatives, one from the transport domain (CBI03) and the other one from the waste domain (CBI017). In this memo we analyzed 12 interviews conducted during January - May 2015. We have included five interviews with members and one interview with a stakeholder for each of the two initiatives.

The transport initiative (CBI03) has activities in the field of civic education and involvement. The main services that individuals receive from the initiative are: organizing events for cycling (both urban areas and mountain areas); watchdog, lobby, protest and advocacy activities; educational events. Being an activist organization they identify what is not done as it should be, and they intend to correct them. A lot of people benefit indirectly from our actions. An important aspect for their initiative is the social interaction; they even have some recreational activities. Referring to aesthetic value they have a beneficial effect, by promoting bicycle usage they offer a more sustainable urban landscape. The decisions are taken by vote in the General Assembly. There is transparency in decision making processes which increases the confidence of members in the organization.

The transition is thought out in a peaceful way without radical changes. Dealing directly with local or national authorities is an option only in rare cases. This initiative claims to have a real contribution to social change but could do more if they receive support from authorities. In this initiative there is a formal organizational structure with clear criteria fairly in the process of selection of new members. The older members in the initiative tend to have certain privileges to access the management structure.

Within the organization there is a greater number of men than women but cannot say that there are privileges for them. Women have access to positions in the leadership. The communication is done only in Romanian via email or social networks. The initiative members are generally students or university graduates. It can be said that it is about young people with higher education, not involved in political activities. They must be from Cluj to represent the interests of this initiative operating in this area. In this initiative are not included persons belonging to minorities or disadvantaged groups. However it cannot be said that this initiative reject persons belonging to particular minority or marginalized groups. So far this initiative has not thought about aspects of its inclusion issues.

The waste initiative (CBI017) has started with volunteering and managing small projects in partnership. The initiative is active in Suceava County area but the association's main objectives were formulated on a national scale. The Suceava area is rich in biodiversity and it's a must to protect it and to increase its "aesthetic value". The main objective of this initiative is to implement public policies regarding the environmental protection. The most important services that individuals receive from this initiative are: campaigns to collect plastic waste in various mountain tourist areas and campaigns' for decorative objects from waste recycled. One of the main goals of the association is to increase the public participation for reducing environmental impact. The decision-making process and overall operations of the association are coordinated by the association's board, which consists of president, vice-president, administrator, student department representative, financial manager. The association
has also a secretary. The association gets in contact with local community needs and its desires directly at each of the events made and indirectly through local media or even on the Facebook page of the association.

The external factors that may help in the development of the initiative are the local authorities and the experts for young associations, in view of reaching the next level of the initiative. The factors that have impeded the development of the initiative are represented by the legal framework, the generalized corruption and the community itself. The decisions are taken by the board of directors, which consists of five persons guided by a president. The association tries to involve and attract people with expertise in a certain field. Periodical recruitments are being made. Besides the active members, the association aims to get involved in the new generation, some ambitious and determined members, but not politically involved. The initiative does not believe in radical changes to trigger sustainability. Sustainability is a good idea, but it depends on how it is put into practice. Sustainability must be gained in time as there is a whole process that results in sustainability.

This memo summarizes the responses of members of the two initiatives (CBI03 and CBI017) look on: imaginary of justice; internal power dynamics and challenging external power.

2. ................................................................................................................ Transition imaginary
a. ............................................................................................................. Transition imagined

Some respondents from CBI03 suggested that they do not recommend direct confrontation with the authorities because they will lose certain privileges to be invited to various campaigns and debates on topics of general interest.

“If once you were on a theme in tension with one authority, usually on any topic in the future, unlimited, you are in those blacklisted that were not invited to the debate, that were not announced,” “...that other organizations, which, exactly the successful projects have annihilated them. I think that POSDRU is one of the biggest killers of NGOs in Romania's history. For example, I know a lot who arrived in dissolution after a successful POSDRU project, which took years to give back the returns.” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015).

Many respondents expressed the view that there are very few people who push for change in society. The population is caught in its own problem to survive. Work, family and everyday life long handle so no time left available to determine social change. In addition, many believe there is no chance to succeed in achieving social change. Most people consider it a waste of time to try to change mentalities

“Only few people are their way activists, who want to change the society, the world and so on and those who are get tired along the way or simply the situation no longer allows them because they have a job, family and so on or they are unmotivated because they cannot see the horizon” (Member, CBI017, May 2015).

One respondent stated that there are a number of local initiatives that have an opportunist attitude to achieve goals that are tangible and easily measured to obtain funds.

“Many organizations said that either they were just opportunist, whether I don’t have what to doing these days, if I want to develop myself, if I want to get funding, I must
able to demonstrate the successes. Then, I will make stuff that have no strategic pact, but are tangible, measurable,” (Member, CBI017, May 2015).

These initiatives quickly became known in the local community through the activities undertaken to produce social change. This was possible given that there was not some real civic community.

“Yes, I said that on the civic part, that originally did not exist and after that we saw ourselves somehow forced to do it, because there was nobody else to do it and you have to prepare the legislative ground and the general frame and the perception of the society about the NGO sector so on, that afterwards you can fight for specific objectives. And then, from a relationship that did not have the objective to develop the civil society, we come to have an important share and to be among the most visible, although by us never was and it is not a priority or a majority share.” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015)

Transition envisioned by the two initiatives should not take place dramatically, but must be done in stages. Dealing directly with the political and administrative system is not a viable solution for most respondents. To produce the desired change needed to be undertaken a series of actions in the long term. Then the effects will be profound and lasting. Sporadic and small-scale actions may cause some temporary improvements only.

“That happened and that has been since 2000, when we moved on to the strategy of confrontation, but we always went not only on strategies of confrontation and I have always come up with proposals and solutions and analyses, though this is not always the role of a NGO” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015 )

Both initiatives disagree with radical changes to obtain sustainability. Most people surveyed said they want the change to occur slowly, with predictable results, so that the community to get used easy to the changes occurred.

Sustainable transition is seen as a vision and it should be used with responsibility. They are now in a transition stage towards sustainability, towards responsibility. Some have suggested that there are personal interests that often lie behind social responsibility campaigns. The population is sometimes suspicious when exhibiting social responsibility. They sometimes associate these actions with the interests of a particular party that wants to attract people by creating a favorable image. Sometimes these campaigns are used when desired distraction from other issues of public interest.

Most respondents imagine the transition to a sustainable economy as a slow process into several steps, without radical changes that are often seen as extremist measures. The population is willing to use direct confrontation with the system only after having exhausted all the solutions easy to implement. Such radical measures are seen only as a last resort to determine the desired change.

“When sustainability is a good idea, but it depends on how we practice, could get out of the program if we make some radical changes. I think that it would be more efficient to make a pass, through a more detailed process, on the other hand, it depends on the radical solutions because of the corruption widespread and how it affects the environment.” (Member/CBI017, February 2015)

Most respondents consider that the local initiatives cannot reach their goal in obtaining sustainability through radical action. Getting results is seen only as a flexible attitude about the changes needed to ensure sustainability. Most respondents agreed that social change must be done in small steps, slowly, with minor adjustments in the environment.
in which it operates. Direct confrontation with the administrative system to generate change is an option only for some respondents.

“But that kind of stuff are, unfortunately, not tangible and the most successes are obtained by fighting, for the purposes of further delay, to block the bad stuff and not necessarily make good things. That's the sad part that most of the militant NGOs are rather in a defensive struggle, to delay and diminish evil, not to succeed actively in rendering it better. And that, in fact, and repels, for this and that so bad stay the human resources in NGOs and the voluntary, because you demoralize yourself. Very little, and after five years of being only in defensive, only in defensive, we have managed to have tonus.” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015)

The approach can generate radical changes only in certain cases. Protests must be done peacefully and change should come from each individual behavior change. One respondent estimated that a radical change in Romania is impossible. This would mean changing the entire management system which is not exactly easy. Mentalities are the most difficult to change in the Romanian society.

Thus, those who advocate for environmental protection lose their enthusiasm slowly because of bureaucracy and finally give up more fighting system. Environmental activists, who prefer to start direct confrontation with the system quickly depletes its resources to fight.

“We found out that 90% of the militant organizations that I knew in the environment, tourism and others have died out. I am not talking about the missing or hibernated ones, but those which are still active, but they only write and implement projects and do not have time to communicate, to talk, to go out in the public, to deal with other subject as the 1-2-3-5 subjects on which they have an approved project and are buried in paperwork and in the bureaucracy day and night. Practically, they died out because of being associative and militant.” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015).

Environmental conservation attitude is reflected in the attitude towards the way of producing social change which might intervene to a sustainable society. Implementation of a policy for a sustainable society should be made gradually taking into consideration all the effects which might occur.

“Yes, I said that on the civic part, that originally did not exist and after that we saw ourselves somehow forced to do it, because there was nobody else to do it and you have to prepare the legislative ground and the general frame and the perception of the society about the NGO sector so on, that afterwards you can militate for specific objectives. And then, from a relationship that did not have the objective to develop the civil society, we come to have an important share and to be among the most visible, although by us never was and it is not a priority or a majority share.” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015).

Most respondents from both initiatives believe that the external factors which could have positive effects on the development of the initiative are local authorities. Some people consider that the existence of programs for young associates would raise initiative to another level.

“…in our case, they could use a program for young associates, people to guide us, support us, train us how to make a proper project, how to … even for those with no experience…” (Member/CBI017, February 2015)

There were encountered some external factors that have stopped the development of this initiative (for instance, there was no infrastructure for cycling; in train no bicycles
are allowed). Aspects like these ones hereby mentioned can lead to a slow development of some initiative, or even to its end. The authorities now must step in; because the community has already did its part. (Member/CBI003, April 2015)

One of the respondents from CBI017 initiative suggested that one of the factors hampering the progress of the initiative is corruption widespread throughout the whole society.

“… Corruption is already widespread and it affects the environment.” (Member/CBI017, February 2015)

Some respondents felt that the development initiative is hindered by the community itself. People in local communities have different views on the concept of greening. Many are reluctant to actions aimed at environmental protection. People are skeptical about the success of actions to protect the environment.

The CBI03 initiative consider that the law 544/2001 referring to access to the information of public interest, and the law 52/2003 referring to the transparency of public decision were badly written and they permitted the authorities to abuse their power. This initiative had to address the courts in order to obtain information of public interest from the local authorities, or to take part in consultations.

CBI03 initiative development was hindered by the lack of adequate infrastructure cycling. Members lacked proper owned cars for bicycle. It was a period in which no bikes allowed in train. Very few roads had bicycle lanes. Under these conditions, rider’s circulation was threatened.

“Because it depends very much or almost exclusively by our desire, maybe in the beginning was a bit difficult, that if we wanted to go in shifts longer somewhere, no means of transport with which to take our bikes and we do not I had cars back then. The train was not allowed to take your bike ...” (Member/CBI03, April 2015)

Almost all respondents in both initiatives said that if the authorities had acted properly, they would have an important contribution to growth initiatives.

“…Although Initiative members have been documented to achieve tracks attractive for cyclists, the authorities have done so badly, they made too narrow, it was exactly the width of the handlebars of the bicycle, and one that comes from the opposite direction had no way to pass. How to think that someone could exceed without being crashed by a car?” (Member/CBI03, April 2015)

Most respondents from CBI017 believe that the lack of ecological culture among local communities is the main impediment in development initiatives. Environmental education is considered insignificant. People are very suspicious when it comes to achieving environmental shares. The feedback from the community is often negative. The actions of the initiative are not a priority interest to the community.

“Today is much discouragement or cynicism, new generations say that there's no point, you get no change or the report is disastrously between the effort invested and so. It doesn’t worth, simply not worth to put my shoulder; I do not think anything is going to change soon or so” (Stakeholder, CBI017, May 2015).

In the case of CBI017 initiative, the lack of regulation of volunteering activity was an obstacle because the volunteers and their commitment weren't publicly recognized.

b. .................................................................................................. Perception of the contribution to social change
Most respondents believe that their initiatives contribute to the improvement of public policy in relation to environmental protection, environmental awareness among people. By launching these initiatives, members hoped that the main contribution they might bring in would be public awareness about environmental issues.

“…Improving public policies related to environmental protection and the improvement of our environmental awareness, confidence... if people knew what the real problems are they might militate for their rights ... could take initiatives, and we might be able to get better organized, we could create a network of volunteers” (Member/CBI017, February 2015)

“So, somehow, I have noticed the changes in the civil society. I was also a co-organizer at all the editions of the NGO Country Forum in Cluj, at national forums, at all sorts of studies and somehow, I am in the position of having opinions and more general in the NGO sector” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015).

All respondents want the actions be undertaken within the organization in order to determine social and economic changes in society. First is the need of making people aware of environmental issues to intervene behavior change. Contribution to social change initiative is limited by insufficient knowledge of the general public on the concepts of ecology or sustainable development.

“The club has raised awareness and visibility to use the bicycle, and for children, we have organized for 11 years now the Mountain Bike Napoca Cup. At that time, in the area of Cluj, that was the only club with such initiatives, such as organizing cups, sport contests. The moment when other groups have started with the same initiatives, the club ceased doing this, and rethought of other directions: the objective is to make transport durable, not only contests, but developing a larger topic. Thus, the club has developed, and now the members have a performing team of mountain bike”. (Member/CBI03, February 2015)

The actions produce changes in other areas such as wood or furniture industry. Therefore people in the community can have negative attitudes on the actions. The effects of these actions can reduce the workload in the case of companies from different fields which do not respect the environment. This can lead to job losses by some of the local population thus causing dissatisfaction against the initiative among people from the community.

“So, we worked a lot on this part of strategy, of mentality, of culture, of customs, of visions and it is very difficult to quantify. I'll try to name a few that are tangible, measurable, only that they are not necessarily the most relevant. For example, we can be proud of the establishment of 13 new protected natural areas in the mountainous area of Cluj County. In 1994, the Decision 147/94 of the County Council of Cluj, stipulated that surrounding areas would have become quarries. But they did not...because local authorities had no idea of them, they did not know where they were located, and we went there and made documentaries and a half of year of lobbying to be able to enter the list of protection. (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015)

There are other initiatives, similar with CBI03 but they do not necessary promote cycling, promote environmental protection and other related themes. But there are a few at national level and at international level with which collaborate.

The initiative CBI017 has also worked with other initiatives. In the case of CBI017, the most important aspect is the networking aspect, and the exchange of information. It is
very important to have other organizations with which you can collaborate. If for example you what to organize an event you can rely on your collaborators for support (logistic and financial). The most important outcome of this collaboration was the exchange of information and know-how. Also, it was very important for us to have a reliable partner at our events.

In the case of CBI03, of a crucial interest are the collaborations with the national organizations, as a national organization you are taken more seriously by authorities, so it is important to have them on board.

c. ........................................................................................................................................Discourses of justice

Respondents talk openly about the changes they hope to produce their actions in society. They want the effects to propagate throughout society, so changing mentalities will support the creation of a sustainable economy.

The results of the efforts made by initiative CBI03 are building bicycle lanes. The effects occur which can enjoy a whole society. A small group of the population, cyclists can use travel lanes without them being life threatening. At the same time no more cars are uncomfortable by the presence of cyclists on the streets. The use of bicycles as a means of transport is generally performed by a category of the population who cannot afford buying a car. The bicycle is regarded as the cheapest means of transport and people with money do not use it that way than leisure.

“We were a group of friends who wanted to get out in nature. Initially we started doing mountain trip and ... eventually we realized that we want to get involved a little in what is around us...that let the world more or less in a certain way for generations to come. Cycling as a means of transport is a pleasure and is also the cheapest way to get active and go in kind.” (Member/CBI03, April 2015)

Transmitting the feeling of closeness to nature is one of the priorities stated by members. The confidence that generations to come will enjoy nature and will have no place to raise children, motivates some respondents to continue to engage in such activities.

“I am a mother , I am glad that I can pass on that pleasure to walk on the mountain , ride a bicycle and walking with a backpack and on skis and to make children to like this thing to be closer to nature because we are too tuck in the box, in another box in another box , and boxes and little contact with nature and then interests me very much the educational aspect linked to active tourism .” (Member/CBI03, April 2015)

One of the effects which are intended to produce CBI017 initiative members through their actions should be seen by stopping deforestation that led to the triggering of landslides in some areas. These landslides occurred mainly where the population not affords to carry out tests on the land where their homes raised, or where the population could not take measures to ensure against landslides. Stop cutting trees for the construction of buildings in parks is another effect that should help improve the lives of the local population. There are certain categories of people who cannot move from the village to enjoy nature than in local parks. Widening roads or highway construction can produce negative effects. Knowing and anticipating these effects may lead to their removal. People should be informed to take appropriate decisions overall interest of
society. Members of this initiative must consider the population educated to know their rights and be able to defend.

“Where should I call if I see someone cut two trees here and do not know or ... And in the urban planning requires an organization to act. And there was another strategic direction for them, which has to do with forestry but it has more ... 'We got to make streets, to broaden not know what ... that the environmental organization must take into account only ...” (Stakeholder, CBI017, May 2015).

d. ........................................................................................................ Unrecognized or invisible or exclusionary privileges

In both initiatives, respondents said that those who are part of initiatives meet certain criteria related to age, professional training in the field. So those who are part of the initiative are young, educated and experienced in the initiative. They must know the European legislation, or measures taken in other developed countries in the world.

“requires a deep knowledge of what exists , I do not know ... you must understand technical because somehow Radu studied everything related to infrastructure, and so in Europe, in many countries , from America, from Canada, knows legislation, all on the basis of everything he saw”.(Member/CBI03, April 2015).

Recruiting new members for initiative CBI017 is done routinely among students studying at the Faculty of Forestry. They are seeking enthusiastic young people who know the environmental issues, be willing to work in this field.

“- Most are students from Ecology and Environmental Protection and Forestry and master, even , are teachers, professors at the Faculty of Forestry which involves about it , do not know , we would like to have the people more important than students .. at least that would give us another credibility.” .(Member/CBI017, May 2015)

Some respondents described the ideal person’s profile involved in and motivated by a certain initiative as being an ambitious young person between 30 and 40 years, man, with specialist knowledge, but not involved in politics.

“…30-40 years , training in the field, including PhD” .(Member/CBI017, May 2015)

Some respondents stated that the membership initiative offers opportunities for personal and professional development through participation in various public campaigns.

“- It is what we breathe, where we live, where I do not know where we socialize , and indeed association is a way to socialize, meet people , especially in the first year of college you're scared and being in a association get the opportunity to develop yourself in all respects …”(Member/CBI03, May 2015)

- ... Well, I always liked to stand out ... I was in the first week or two , do not know exactly when I enrolled in the first year in college, I was at ASUS association , University Students Association Suceava, I was a member there, I was vice president representation , after which I decided with my colleagues to establish an association on average , that it takes . …”(Member/CBI03, February 2015)

Most respondents admit that an active involvement in projects initiative offers the opportunity to gain experience, money and recognition. While, there are negative associations from communities on volunteer activities. Many people believe that the members of such organizations gain certain benefits. In many cases, local people
appreciate that these initiatives have as main priority members' personal interests and not the interests of the community.

e. .................................................................................................................. Compliance with justice

Regarding the achievements made, 15 protected areas have been saved. One member has helped around 100 organizations to comply with the legislative requirements in order to activate in this area. In Sibiu there have been developed some bike routes.

“We have achieved a lot, for example, managed to save 15 protected areas in the country were to be made quarry ... and repeated efforts to manage this thing ... I helped bicycle paths ... lot through various cities, to make the various recommendations how to work with the authorities, we having seniority we have, Radu helped, for example, over 100 organizations to make their status, be able to establish ... Look in Sibiu, appeared those bike lanes, better than us, like in Bucharest and Timisoara” (Member/CBI03, April 2015)

3. .................................................................................................................. Internal Power Dynamics

a. .................................................................................................................. Power structure, hierarchies

In the CBI017, management is ensured by a board of directors that consists of five persons, one of them being the president. Decisions are taken by vote at the association or the board. In the association a number of changes has intervened to the initial status of the association, aiming at improvement of the organization. As for the level of decision making, some respondents consider that the association functions both formally and informally, every member coming up with important ideas is highly appreciated by other members of the association.

The association has gone through two stages of development:

1. Student’s level, acting at the level of the university, and

2. The legal status of the association at this moment, managing more important projects.

The association tries to involve and attract people with expertise in a certain field. Regular recruitments are being made. Besides the active members, the association wants to attract the new generation, some ambitious members, but not politically involved.

The teacher who encouraged the idea of creating such an organization has 30 years expertise in the field, even certified through a doctorate. And he constantly supports the efforts of the association.

In terms of CBI03 decisions, they are taken by the General Assembly, and the club has a transparent policy for the decision process. Usually, all the members are asked for their opinion when a decision is about to be taken. All the members are volunteering. They do it in their free time, whenever possible. There are about 150 active members. The selection is natural, the members who felt that they were not fit, have given up it in time. So, there is an organic growth, only with real involvement.

“we see this issue, that the average age has risen and we attract less fresh blood, young people, students or young graduates who come now or come, but the involvement is smaller and on one hand we say that we didn’t gave them enough power to make decisions, autonomy, on the other hand they say they do not have the time we had in the
1990s. We have this problem, we see it and we actively strive to refresh the organization, but it is not working as we would like to” (Stakeholder, CBI03).

“I left the board and I assumed the executive job, but that greatly increased the efficiency, but it has reduced the involvement. And then the board was taking the more strategic decisions, being no longer so directly involved. And now, and in these days, I put in CC all important e-mails or decisions or so, I put them on the list of Board of Directors and when is a decision which seems to imply a strategic thing, where it's not clarified the position, first I pass it through the board, even with the price of delays and so on. But, as I said, it's rather a validation thing, rarely, they come with counter-proposals or oppose or so. It's true that I often try to take the pulse, but it is a kind of reactive, not of proactive, it is not coming from many directions with initiatives, with amendments and the one who have don’t go further. I had, for example, projects...” (Stakeholder, CBI03).

b. ...................................................................................................................................................... Dilemmas, Conflicts

In CBI017 there have been no divergences between the organizational structures, especially because the association has had no legal status until recently. Thus, there have been no grounds for internal magnifiers.

In CBI03 organization, there have been over time a series of complaints but there was an inner motivation to continue. Some respondents admit that there are situations when some people left the organization.

“But there is that internal motivation, that has ensured whether you are happy or disappointed of your colleagues or about how the institutional side is evolving, you can go forward” (Stakeholder, CBI03)

In CBI03 were several internal conflicts on age criteria. There were periods in which to be able to take action in public had to be aged at least 35 years. Ability expertise could not be associated with very young people.

“Here was the thing that in the early years didn’t exist and after that it has increased as weight and conversely, the youth part, that initially did not exist, after that in 1994-1995 was very involved. And this up until 2000 and a little bit, when we found that not much is needed, because in the meantime, the thing that mobilized us, somehow, in the 1990s has resolved, there was not existing that gerontocracy, there was not the situation that until the middle of the 1990, if you didn’t had 35 or 40 years there was no way to take a public stand, to be taken seriously, to be accepted as a specialist in any field and so on. That thing that after many years of fighting, somehow disappeared and from the economy and from politics and from administration and then was no motivation to us, so it's an area that somehow things have settled somewhat below the issue. And then that fell and now has an insignificant share, part on the youth side, and remained the tourist part, sporting, civic and ecologist” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015)

Internal conflicts sometimes arise from lack of internal motivation. Lack of time required for involvement in the initiative also lead to some frustration among members. Very few people will remain motivated to achieve the goals of the initiative given that the results are visible after a very long time. Some members lose interest in the goals of the organization due to the difficulties they experience.

“As I said, our situation is somehow hybrid, meaning that being also a militant and a leisure organization, the motivation is often combined. A very few people are their way
militants, who want to change the society, the world and so on and those who are get
tired along the way or simply the situation no longer allows them because they have a
job, family and so on or they unmotivated because they cannot see the horizon. Few are
able to pull for years and decades without seeing a tangible result” (Stakeholder,
CBI03, May 2015)

Factors that stimulated development initiative initially fell intensity. There are very few
people who have the enthusiasm and idealism of the 90s In addition to greatly reduced
leisure population is preoccupied with solving personal problems. Communication is
done often by email social networks.

“...with various things, because such a complex mix like this, I said it is more sustainable. Motivations varied over time, as I said, in the 1990s there was that enthusiasm, that idealism, that hope that things will move and by us, which disappeared in the meantime and then, newer generations do not have it and, on the other hand, there was the factor of available time in the 1990s, which no longer exists today” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015)

It is very difficult to find responsible for certain activities. There is a general attitude of
transfer of responsibility. Lack of reliable accountability can cause serious deficiencies
in the normal functioning of society.

“It's simply lack of time. How many changes in legislation, many proposals for cooperation, how many opportunities to get to I don’t know what and you already clench your teeth and run with a big...The biggest problem is that "let's do that, that" after that, "Good, who is in charge, who takes it?" "Oh...well, you know, I'm not sure, because I do not...". And then...that happens, so 90% of the stuff is not done because it doesn’t have who, in particular, because they are not human resources”. (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015)

Solving conflicts must be done peacefully. There is in society a negative attitude
towards the protests and implementation of radical solutions. The situation is especially
true among adults over 35 years.

“What we can see is that there is still a negative shadow over the idea of radicalism,
that the people are noisy, agitated, unrealistic, and so on, so, is not necessarily seen as a
social virtue this part, to be a little more radical and that shadow from 1990, was the
idea that those are agitated, those that are making manifestations, that come with stuff
like you must be quietly, you must say it beautiful.” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015)

The younger generations are willing to accept radical solutions to solve conflict
situations and to produce desired social change. Young people are attracted to
organizations that provide innovative solutions to society's problems.

“...seen so radical, others, conversely, if it is not radical enough, you do not attract them. There are now some new generation that do not have that fear or experience, that disappointment from 1990 and whom you mobilize or you mobilize them only at something more radical, more nonconformist.” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015)

c. ........................................................................................................................................ Gender relations:

Both men and women can accede to leadership. Although the members of the
organization say there is no discrimination, they still speak about the desired person's
profile within the organization as a young man with a higher level of education. Both
initiatives have some young men as leaders with appropriate training in the initiative. However, there was a period when the vice-president was owned by a woman.

d. ..............................................................External discourses, communication and language

They want to convey true and accurate messages to the public. The arguments used to support their ideas must be based on real knowledge of events, factors that stimulated or hindered the initiative development. It requires a certain consistency in messaging support. It is a priority for the management of the organization that all members to be objective when providing information.

The communication is done mostly in Romanian. The language used is specific to the activities of the initiative. For this reason they are preferred people with a certain education. For this reason they are preferred people with a certain education to transmit messages properly. Transmitting information is made via email or social networks.

e. .............................................................................. Impacts of the power structures on CBIs

Changes that have occurred in the internal structure of CBI03, led to changes in the general objectives. They want to become an organization well known nationwide.

In the CBI017, they aim to cover many fields, though the organization does not have enough experts. In these conditions it is preferred for the association to stick to its initial objective. Regarding its future activities, the desired impact of the association is to represent the local community through expertise. There are two directions for future initiatives: at a local level and to keep the directions on the forestry field. Moreover, a strategy following the WWF pattern should be adapted, to offer some expertise in the civil society, regarding forestry issues.

The effects of changes in the organizational structure are reflected in the change of the main objectives.

“The club has raised awareness and visibility to use the bicycle, and for children, we have organized for 11 years now the Mountain Bike Napoca Cup. At that time, in the area of Cluj, that was the only club with such initiatives, such as organizing cups, sport contests. The moment when other groups have started with the same initiatives, the club ceased doing this, and rethought of other directions: the objective is to make transport durable, not only contests, but developing a larger topic. Thus, the club has developed, and now the members have a performing team of mountain bike”. (Member/CBI03, May 2015)

4. ..................................................................................Challenging external power

a. .......................................................................................... Participants, Composition of CBIs

The CBI017 initiative started by volunteering, managing small projects in partnership. Now, since the association has got a legal status, the members are thinking of accessing some funding. They have started as a student association, a group of colleagues, and periodically members were recruited. The idea came up during a teaching course, at the Faculty of Forestry. A teacher asked the students if there was any association regarding the Environmental Protection and Ecology, and it was that teacher’s recommendation for students to fund such an organization. So, the students tried their chances and took initiative.
Regarding the structure of CB017, it started at the beginning with student volunteers mobilized by professors of the Faculty of Forestry. Some respondents admit that their primary motivation was the possibility of affirmation in the association or personal development activities.

“Well, I always liked to exploit the opportunities of affirmation ... As a freshman in college I enrolled in ASUS organization and became vice president ... after which I decided with my colleagues to establish a environmental Protection Association because it was necessary.” (Member/CBI017, May 2015)

Recruitment of new members in the association is among students who want to participate in volunteer activities. Although there are no visible barriers to access in the organization, however, the profile of people involved in development initiatives can be easily shaped: young people in the community with training in environmental protection. Access initiative sometimes involves payment of fees which are supported by projects of the association.

In CBI03 initiative, all the members are volunteering. They do volunteering activities in their free time, whenever possible. There are about 150 active members. The selection is natural, the members who felt that they were not fit, have given up in time.

We were and we are a small organization, we are 54 active members, but in fact, are two dozen more or less active, but the difference is pretty big from the ones that come every week and are involved, while others come for just a few times per year. There are many active from distance, in the sense that all are gone with the job for one-2-3 months and end up being more left than here, even if theoretically they are in the area (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015).

“Everyone is very busy, with two jobs, until late in the evening, with university, with two faculties, faculty plus job and so on. It is and the objective availability and the subjective one, if it makes sense, if we do not fight with the windmills. Then, there is a difference between motivating older generations in the organization, which are already from the 1990s or from the 2000s and some who are newer and it feels unfortunately this thing, a decrease in the level of involvement over the years and the older ones get less involved, even though many, in themselves, would want, but they say that "the time, the job situation, the family, that does not allow me what was once and that, I do not feel so much energy and motivation to pull, while things do not seem to move." At first, you keep a year, 3, 5, how to say, so as an aside, when I established the organization and I was saying at the palpable part, tangible, in how many years we will see positive results? And then I said if all goes well, in about 10 years” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015).

b. ......................................................................................................................Post-political

Most respondents appreciated that in society there are only very few people who push for social change in a radical way. The issues of general interest are presented to the public through the distribution of messages on social networks, conferences, or through the work of scientific researchers.

“... that very late and in our days a very few have and a militant component. It is, rather, that strictly scientific part, of information sharing, conferences and so on. This differs somehow from other areas.” (Stakeholder, CBI017, May 2015)
The CBI03 promotes the protection of the environment, organizing several events dedicated towards reducing the pollution in urban areas. The most important outcome is being taken more seriously at national level. Thru their collaborations both at local and at national level they have managed to build up a bargaining power that helps us in the relationship with the authorities. As well thru the collaboration with the national NGO network we are more informed and they are in sync with a lot of national events. They would like to collaborate more efficiently with governmental authorities, for example with the Parliament.

“It is very hard to collaborate with them, we are sending suggestions and amendments but they rarely respond to any. If you do not have the support of someone from within they do not take you seriously.” (Member, CBI03, April 2015)

The initiative organized several protests against the local authorities. These protests had as theme: the rights of cyclists and cycling infrastructure, access to public information (in this case the public authority has been challenged in court) and administrative abuses (taking decisions without prior public consultation).

“The local government takes ONG's more seriously now. They want to be neutral from a political point of view. If you associate with a political party you will lose in the long term.” (Member, CBI03, April 2015)

The initiative CBI03 had from the very beginning an apolitical activity. They have created the first Touristic guide for the region Munte Mare, the first ciclo-touristic map of Romania, the first ciclo-touristic map of the Cluj area, the first serious Guide for setting-up NGO's.

We try to innovate when we feel that there is a need. We do not necessarily look for radically different new products or services. Yes, a lot of NGO's were setup using our guide. (Member, CBI03, May 2015)

This initiative contributed to the elaboration of several draft laws (in the field of environment and cycling), which we consider to be a pretty relevant innovation. They believe that innovation is very important and each really valuable (relevant and useful) innovative effort should be funded and diffused.

In the CBI017, they had collaborated with the other initiatives on joint projects of public awareness, a forestation, ecological activities, and exchange of information, financial support and consultations.

c. ............................................................................................................CBIs as spaces of deliberation

One respondent said that the actions taken are presented to the debate on regional or national TV stations to get the attention of the public and cause social change. There are links with other movements in society, but partnerships with political parties are avoided due to their negative image.

“Think that in one year, a few dozen times, live on regional television stations, and I was often on national televisions, but stuff like so around a half an hour, an hour, half hour, on TVR, on Radio Romania News and so on. Or, as in the press, so, with constant stuff, but there you go to the general public…

“So, I know almost all the environmental NGOs in Romania, we have done over the years and all sorts of coalitions and in the value board and I know on the initial cores
and I know how they began. In that period, 1992-1993-1994-1995, the connections were much closer; you were meeting at various events and so on.” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015)

d. .........................................................................................................................Politics of possibilities

Both initiatives have a real contribution to social change. They managed to produce changes in the population’s attitude towards the environment. The activities undertaken have resulted in increasing the number of those who use bicycles. The people are starting to realize the importance of spending time in nature. Many families choose to go on trips or expeditions for knowledge.

“We have monthly marches of cyclists for Cluj, we do, let’s say, exhibitions, stands on various fairs and so on, do regular public screenings, with free access, video and photo images on themes of tourism, so, on environmental issues or conferences where I was, we present, somehow, to the others, we organize public debate on the environment, town planning, tourism, we do, let’s say, some mini-courses for the interested public, so that’s a kind of part to out-door and material and, in addition, to internal actions for our own members, apart from those trips, there are all sorts of, I do not know, camps, expeditions and so on, one week, somewhere in the mountains with families, with children, walking, cycling, colleagues who do international tours” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015).

e. .........................................................................................................................Alternatives building VS confrontation

It is supported by most respondents that sometimes they need to move from a peaceful approach to one of direct confrontation with the authorities. This shift is achieved when having exhausted all peaceful forms of determining the change. The lack of reaction by the authorities is the factor that triggers the need for direct confrontation.

“I have noticed on this thing, apparently, a greater openness, we become members in all sorts of interdisciplinary committees, in all sorts of working groups with the authorities because we just made some suggestions, they did not accept and that’s that. When I noticed that things go in very bad directions and that we almost become moral accomplices as long as we remain only at the pleading stage and no public attitude contrary, we have seen us forced to move at the strategy of confrontation” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015).

f. .........................................................................................................................Linkage internal-external power dynamics

The need for effectiveness and legal requirements to work are factors that constrain the ability to cause social change. Bureaucratic constraints lower the involvement of members of the initiative in military actions for a specific cause.

“We found that it has killed 90% of the militant organizations that I knew in the environment, tourism and so on. I am not talking about the missing or hibernated ones, but those who are still active, but they only write and implement projects and do not have time to communicate, to talk, to go out in the public, to deal with other subject as the 1-2-3-5 subjects on which they have an approved project and are buried in paperwork and in the bureaucratic side day and night. Practically, they died from the part of being associative and militant” (Stakeholder, CBI03, May 2015).
5. Implications of external and internal power dynamics on CBIs’ impact on society

As a final conclusion we can say the lack of environmental education in the community hinders the initiatives. Superficial involvement of the authorities in implementing the measures that need to be taken has resulted in a diminishing impact on society. The difficulty of initiatives to attract volunteers to be actively involved has reduced ability to cause the desired changes in society. The existence of unfavorable laws volunteering activity or lack of clear legislation in environmental protection represents other factors that have hindered development initiatives.

Disclaimer genuinely by authorities of responsibility for environmental protection had the effect of decreasing enthusiasm of volunteers involved in the initiatives. The feeling that they are fighting with windmills, caused the abandonment by some members of the shares of voluntarism. Lack of transparency of actions taken by authorities and bureaucracy hinder the activity of initiatives that could have a major impact in society. Change of mindset and attitude of the population cannot occur than in a long time.

6. Any other observations

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7. Success factors

One of the most important factors for the emergence and development of the association was the promulgation of the Law of Volunteering. The public recognition and regulation of this activity has attracted more volunteers.

There was a law that permitted the redirection of 2% from personal taxes to NGO, and we benefited a lot from that because it represented a relevant source of funding. In the period 2000-2006 the initiative was involved in writing and implementing several projects, but the projects demanded a lot of paperwork and money (co-financing) and the organization decided not to access any more funds since 2006.

CBI03 initiative is defining success mainly in terms of positive changes that they can do to society, in terms of involving yourself in a desired change. The situation of Romania, with a passive attitude of public institutions, is leaving a lot of moving space to initiatives and NGOs. In most areas of Romania, where a positive change in mentality regarding environment protection, sustainable development a.o. is visible, is mainly due the involvement of NGOs (for example the center of Romania, the area where CBI03 could be found).

CBI03 initiative is defining success in both qualitative and quantitative terms: the changes in mentality of the citizens, but as well the opposition to public institutions in some unhappy decisions, the sign posting done for bike trails, maps with bike trails. For example were undertaken field research for identification of a bike trail along the Danube, a map with 100 bike trails around Cluj was made, all these with the support of all initiative members. As well, success could be considered the rescue of 15 protected areas from political bad decisions (that could lead to stone exploitation directly in those areas), CBI03 has helped around 100 organizations (according form vice-president of CBI03) to develop good practices as NGOs, status and other documents for start up of initiatives all over the country.

CBI017 initiative are recognizing that they are successfully if they can oppose to some unhealthy initiatives, if they can generate a societal conscious on their specific field. For example, they declared that, compared with more passive existing NGOs in their
home town, they have succeeded in mobility a large number of citizens to a street campaign for protection of forests and for the change of Forestry Law in Romania. We have observed that for most members of, the "success" is related to quality descriptive indicators, that are related to life status of the society. As well where mentioned "the improvement of public policies concerning environment protection, improved life standards and the improvement of self-conscious...to open the eyes of the people that are not realizing the danger of a passive attitude", "the success implies understanding your objective, what are your weaknesses and your strengths, what your role is and how you fell more complete".

8. Summary

Transition envisioned by the two initiatives should not take place dramatically, but must be done in stages. Dealing directly with the political and administrative system is not a viable solution for most respondents. To produce the desired change needed to be undertaken a series of actions in the long term. Then the effects will be profound and lasting. Sporadic and small-scale actions may cause some temporary improvements only.

The transition is thought out in a peaceful way without radical changes. Dealing directly with local or national authorities is an option only in rare cases. CBI03 initiative claims to have a real contribution to social change but could do more if they receive support from authorities.

The initiative CBI017 has started with volunteering and managing small projects in partnership. The main objective of this initiative is to implement public policies regarding the environmental protection. The most important services that individuals receive from this initiative are: campaigns to collect plastic waste in various mountain tourist areas and campaigns’ for decorative objects from waste recycled. One of the main goals of the association is to increase the public participation for reducing environmental impact. The external factors that may help in the development of the initiative are the local authorities and the experts for young associations, in view of reaching the next level of the initiative. The factors that have impeded the development of the initiative are represented by the legal framework, the generalized corruption and the community itself.

Respondents talk openly about the changes they hope to produce their actions in society. They want the effects to propagate throughout society, so changing mentalities will support the creation of a sustainable economy.

Internal conflicts sometimes arise from lack of internal motivation. Lack of time required for involvement in the initiative also lead to some frustration among members. Very few people will remain motivated to achieve the goals of the initiative given that the results are visible after a very long time. Some members lose interest in the goals of the organization due to the difficulties they experience.

Most respondents appreciated that in society there are only very few people who push for social change in a radical way. The issues of general interest are presented to the public through the distribution of messages on social networks, conferences, or through the work of scientific researchers.
**Relationship with governance**

**Memo from CF**

**1. Introduction**

Climate Futures only has one key case study, Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust (Colglen). This is in a remote rural area with a small, sparse population and a fragile economy. It shares many of the characteristics of most of rural Scotland such as: declining and ageing population, shortage of jobs and training opportunities particularly for young people, poor public transport, many holiday homes and a lack of affordable housing, loss of local services – threat of school closure, closure of pub and shop and post-office, loss of doctor etc...as well as a highly skewed land ownership structure and very distant, so called, ‘local’ government. Colglen has recently succeeded in taking ownership of the 600ha Stronafian Forest, which is opening up new opportunities for economic regeneration. Between January and May 2015, we interviewed a range of staff, board and ordinary members as well as external stakeholders in local and national Government and intermediary network organisations.

This memo also draws on qualitative data from interviews with four other case studies, including the social enterprise ‘Remade in Edinburgh’ (RME), Transition Black Isle (TBI), Comrie Development Trust (CDT) and Highland Perthshire Cycling (HPC) as well as on background knowledge from personal involvement with a ‘Transition’ initiative as well as with the Scottish Communities Climate Action Network, Community Energy Scotland and Scottish Community Alliance.

All our case study groups have emerged to fulfill a role or meet a need that is not otherwise being delivered by ‘local’ government or other actors, driven by a vision of a different future economy, whether this is encouraging and providing reuse and repair services that are not provided by conventional enterprises, encouraging and enabling a shift from cars to bikes or is about creating the organizational and governance structures to enable a transition to a reimagined local economy that is much more resilient, able to meet more local needs from local resources and much less dependent on fossil fuels. For Colglen in particular, the emphasis is on using this transition to regenerate the currently fragile local economy, creating new local employment and training opportunities that enable young people to stay and encourage families to move to the area and reversing the long history of economic decline and depopulation: “... a few hundred years ago depopulation started with people drifting towards the cities with industrialisation and now we are at the stage where there is 250 folk in the glen and it is, you know, it is in the latter stages of its heyday” (Colglen1, staff member)

As a Development Trust, Colglen provides a governance structure and form of participatory democracy that occupies a vacant niche created by the large scale and remoteness of ‘local’, representative government in Scotland and which other, existing community organisations such as the Community Council or Village Hall committees are not able to fill. This role could
be summarized as one of ‘reconnection’: of the community with itself, with its local resources, with external government and with other communities. Colglen is thus what has come to be known in the UK as a Community Anchor Organisation. The importance of these community anchors is generally accepted across the community sector and increasingly the Scottish Government, which has supported their emergence and development through a number of funding streams as well as with legislation to encourage community ownership of local assets of land and buildings. The extent to which this Government ‘community empowerment’ agenda is successfully addressing either Scotland’s current local democratic deficit or highly skewed land ownership structure is however open to question. The agency to bring about change is often still severely limited and most people have become so disconnected from the democratic process and so accustomed to a lack of empowerment that new opportunities can be hard for them to grasp.

2. Ideas and Imaginaries

Environmental sustainability is an important motivator for Colglen and is implicit in its vision for revitalizing the local economy “why does the word economy have ‘eco’ in it, because for a true economy you don’t need to mention the word sustainable in the same sentence as economy” (Colglen1, staff member). But vulnerability to the effects of increasingly frequent extreme weather events appears to be more of a driver for most people along with the connected challenges of how to attract more people along with the connected challenges of how to attract more people, create jobs and overcome the shortage of affordable housing. “If we could create jobs here, then people would want to come and live here. And if they want to come and live here, we can find accommodation for them initially, then we’ll build accommodation for them, if we have to. So, to my mind, we’re talking about regeneration, and regeneration means jobs” (Colglen2, board member).

External grant funding has been critical to the emergence and development of Colglen but, in common with all our case studies, they are keen to wean themselves off outside funding both to give independence but also to release resources for other communities: “Success will be when the trust is financially self-sustaining and able to facilitate and enable initiatives and projects that regenerate the glen as a thriving and sustainable, green, community. And a model for others…. it is really important that once these projects get off the ground, that they are financially self-sufficient so that other people can tap into the funding -we can’t be a constant drain” (Colglen1, staff member).

Bringing land and buildings into community ownership is viewed as the main opportunity to generate income and become self-financing, as well as to opening up opportunities to create jobs, skills training, housing etc. and to start overcoming the current ‘disconnect’ between the community and local land and resources (which is so prevalent across Scotland) “the public had become alienated from them [forests] because they have been turned into mono-crop plantations with very little access to the public. They were reserved for the forestry operations with big trucks coming down. A complete disconnect really” (Colglen1, staff member).

Whilst the participatory democracy of Development Trusts is sometimes seen to be in conflict with representative local democracy, in Colglen’s case, it was the locally born and bred chair of the village hall committee and elected local councillor (for Argyll and Bute Council) who was the driving force behind the initial formation of the trust: “he's seen the decline, locally, and seen the need for some way to lever or attract funding for projects and... they'd seen it happen elsewhere - development trusts seemed to be a good idea” (Colglen4, staff member). Subsequently, it has largely been ‘incomers’, with a desire to get involved and ‘give something back to the community’ who have come forward to join the board and progress projects. “And since I came here, I've become very involved in the community, because I think, I think if you live in a place like this I think you've got to be. I think you've got to give yourself a wee kick up the backside and, and make it what, the best it can be” (Colglen5, member).

There is a general feeling that perhaps people in remote rural areas are more inclined to get involved in doing something for their community.
"I think you try harder because you're isolated. I think you, you don't sit back the same. I think you do try harder. And I think that's good" (Colglen3, member).

Colglen's aspiration is to create new, more participatory and inclusive planning and decision making structures that give local people a real feeling of control over the future of their community. This is both through extensive consultation on strategic priorities carried out originally when the trust was being formed as well as through transparent day to day decision making: "I think if you, if you devolve it down to people that are in communities, people that live in communities know what's best for the community" (Colglen3, member). This is often found to be a challenge to achieve in practice and they have experienced their share of misunderstandings and local conflict.

Many interviewees also aspired to a more participatory relationship with external funders: “Just think how much work could get saved along the way if people were just genuinely listening to each other - rather than coming up with grant criteria which you then have to try to slot into” (RME1, Director/founder). And there are some within the Scottish Government who aspire “to re-invent governance, broadly speaking, so practice and policy are totally connected, and it's generated by people for people, and there's a real shift in the roles of policy and, you know, public servants in general to become enablers and host conversations and developmental processes that actually work for people” (Scottish Gov. official).

Colglen’s aim is to be an enabling and facilitating body, encouraging projects that emerge, such as the growers group using the new community polytunnels, to spin-off and become independent and self-governing where possible. This ‘open-source’, enabling and sharing ethos extends across the Development Trust movement and the wider community sector in Scotland, which is unusually well networked through the Scottish Community Alliance. The social enterprise, Remade in Edinburgh, for example, is keen to expand its influence and impact, rather than its size, by encouraging spin-offs on some sort of ‘social franchising’ model.

Most interviewees see themselves as part of a bigger movement for change. The extent to which this movement is actually succeeding in creating transformational change however was questioned by one stakeholder in particular: “I guess it's self-evident there that they have managed to find a way to do things within the system. I think what, what's a slightly different question is to what extent that kind of scales up and means there's been, you know, significant change in the way things operate nationally. And I suspect that's not the case” (Colglen6, stakeholder). His feeling was that perhaps the current ‘system’ is prepared to allow or tolerate a certain level of (for example) community land ownership: “but not on a scale that challenges the whole” (Colglen6, stakeholder). That there remain structural factors, particularly around tax and EU subsidy regimes (SRDP) that support entrenched vested interests. Another stakeholder felt that the Development Trust model, and community ownership of assets in particular, has started to create a virtuous circle of supportive policy for community action and empowerment within Scotland so that at this stage “it would be quite difficult to put the genie back in the bottle, it would be quite difficult to contain it” (Colglen7, stakeholder). The bottom-up nature of this movement is essential to understand: “It is when they [local authorities] try to replicate it top-down that it all falls apart” (Colglen7, stakeholder). “it has to be back to the community, every community…..where all the good stuff is happening, it is all happening on that level, community level” (Colglen1, staff member).

One stakeholder (who is also a member and local resident) was very clear that with a more decentralized Local Authority structure, it could “have a big role to play in encouraging Development Trusts and Community Councils to be energisers of change. I do think that there is a sense in which people would like to go back to a much more local system of local decision-making….. you could do it simply by a decision of the council, you don't need legislation - saying each of those area committees will now run everything, and there will be a small, central, legal unit, and the council will meet once every three months to rubber stamp decisions made. And in terms of education, we'll share resources so that can be a joint board. You know, we could make it work” (Colglen8,
3. Everyday Governing Practices

3.1 Internal governance, legal and organisational structures

In common with other Development Trusts in Scotland, Colglen is a charity that uses the UK legal structure of a ‘company limited by guarantee’ [of the members] with membership open to all adults living locally. Around 30% (75) of these residents have joined and an impressive number (30–50) normally turn up to AGM’s. Because of the enterprising element to the Development Trust approach, they often attract more entrepreneurially minded board members than more traditional, paternalistic, grant-funded community bodies. Having a board with a diverse skill set, that is not afraid to take risks, and which can retain the confidence of the community seems crucial and Colglen is particularly fortunate to have a pool of retired professional people with the time, energy and motivation to be actively involved.

Colglen currently have funding to employ staff and they ensure that each staff member is line-managed by a board member. In practice the board are careful not to micro-manage and the staff have considerable autonomy.

The Board has had the same Chair since the start, seven years ago. He seems to have a particularly entrepreneurial approach which has had a strong influence on the direction taken by the trust and on its success to date. From the extensive public consultations that happened during the emergence of the trust and since, the board feel that they have a mandate to just get on with stuff most of the time whilst keeping local people informed and consulting where appropriate.

They have managed to leverage in over £2.2M in funding since 2008, an impressive amount for a very small community which has enabled them to progress a wide range of projects, some with potential to bring in an ongoing income stream for years to come and allowing the creation of a small unrestricted fund, which greatly helps with cashflow.

3.2 Building relationships/partnership-working

All our case studies recognised the value of building strong relationships, both within their community and externally, and have devoted some time to nurturing them –indeed mutual inspiration, skills and knowledge sharing has been crucial: “it all cross-fertilises and you don’t know what may emerge” (TBI1, board member) – “I think that is when you get somewhere, it is not when you keep yourself inward looking” (Colglen1, staff member), although finding time for this can be a challenge, especially when focussed on short-term project outcomes for funders.

Sometimes networking is informal as, in “a small place, it’s always the same people… same faces all the time” (Colglen2, board member) at meetings of different local groups and sometimes is a necessity to progress area-wide projects such as the Cowal Way footpath or Rhododendron Ponticum eradication or projects that depend on the cooperation of infrastructure providers such as Scottish Water or to come together to lobby Government: “not least it is just nice to feel that you are not all on your own when you are fighting the government really” (Colglen7, stakeholder).

Often, those involved in community projects are on a very steep learning curve and support from peers is crucial: “I have been on a huge learning curve…. so I rely on getting people who know more than me involved all the time” (RME1, Director/founder) and time spent nurturing relationships may “not have much impact at the time but what I have found, having done that… since I have these relationships that they have kind of stayed, kind of followed the journey and now they go ‘oh, great, you did it’ ” (RME1, Director/founder).

3.3 Influencing local attitudes and practices
One interviewee was clear that “you've got the third of the people who are with you, and a third of the people who are completely resistant, and the ones you need to target are actually the third in the middle who are sitting on the fence, because they're more likely to, to change” (Colglen4, staff member). A range of practical projects seems to be crucial: “You know, there, there maybe'll be one thing that'll interest them, but then they'll come along, they will meet other people - like-minded people - and it'll grow from there” (Colglen3, member).

Practical manifestations of something changing and an ongoing momentum are seen to be essential for new trusts to establish local credibility. But some sectors, such as farmers, who are the big local asset-holders, were reported as difficult to engage as they don’t necessarily see any need for, or prospect of, change.

Often the infrastructure (physical and policy) to enable changes in behaviour is lacking and it may be necessary to lobby and work with local Government or secure funding to try to put it in place: “So Highland Council now have the money to do it [a cycle path] and we just need to keep nagging them to overcome the remaining barriers which is mainly one landowner who is objecting to anything happening” (TBI1, board member). Or sometimes the enabling policies are poorly designed, such as the UK government’s ill-fated ‘Green Deal’ for housing refurbishment.

Whilst climate change and carbon reduction are not particularly emphasised in engaging the community, awareness is none-the-less being raised: “Carbon footprint - that didnae concern me one little bit, before. But that's just through, just speaking and just learning things, and, and all of a sudden you think, "Oh, aye, it does matter.” “(Colglen3, member).

### 3.4 Generating new forms of social, political and economic organisation

Across Scotland, communities are striving to find ways to realize a vision in which community ownership of land and other assets, including community owned renewable energy generation, provides a long term income stream for local investment in creating the infrastructure to support a sustainable local economy which meets more local needs from local resources, provides local livelihoods and opportunities for young people and encourages more active democratic participation. Colglen are closer than some to “pulling all those strands together and making it into, you know, this is what it's all about. …. It's within reach. It's a long reach to get there, but it's within reach” (Colglen2, board member).

Social and community enterprises, community gardens and markets and other projects are multiplying and giving a glimpse of a different way of doing business and of the purpose of work. Often these enterprises struggle financially, especially where they are trying to compete in a mainstream economy in which other businesses are happy to externalize many of their costs.

### 3.5 Developing expertise/professionalism/social capital (both ‘internally’ and ‘externally’)

The shared community experience of ‘emergencies’, particularly due to extreme weather causing powercuts and blocking roads is a great motivator for bringing the community together: “If there's an emergency in this area, it's gonnae affect absolutely everybody” (Colglen3, member). A workshop on how to be better prepared was very successful in using this shared experience to plan future actions and projects: “It was brilliant. I mean, we, I remember the very first meeting, and... it was just, people were so alive, and talking about what our community should be like, and what we should be doing” (Colglen4, staff member).

Improving community facilities is an excellent way of benefitting the whole community: “all of the community are benefitting from what's happened in the hall, because, you know, from better heating and insulation. So all of the community are benefitting, because everybody, at some point or other, will end up in one of the village halls - more or less, anyway, you know?” (Colglen1, staff member)
All our case studies are active in regional, and also Scottish, community and cross-sector networks. These provide a means of sharing expertise, whether on low-carbon eradication of Rhododendron Ponticum, insulating village halls, promoting cycling etc. and can also enable outside ‘experts’ to be brought in to provide local credibility to events: “we could have said all that but we don’t have the authority and because it is someone from outside I think it helps.” (TBI1, board member)

Colglen run certificated training courses to increase local employment opportunities – eg. first aid, chipper certificate etc… and have plans for much more skills training in the forest in due course. This also helps to build social capital by involving a wide demographic, as does use of local contractors wherever possible. Special interest groups, such as that “investigating the archaeology within the forest and in the Glen” (Colglen1, staff member), are a very good way of involving a wide range of people, including involving the school in deepening a connection to the local area whilst building social cohesion. Likewise, community gardens and growing groups involve a wide demographic and build new social bonds at the same time as people develop and share new skills.

3.6 Strategic decision-making and leadership

Most of the original priorities for the direction taken by Colglen came out of the extensive community consultation carried out in the early stages of the trust.

More recently they have produced a masterplan for the forest: “Essentially this map, which I showed you earlier, was developed as part of this community master plan and now forms part of the forest design plan. Whilst it’s not set in stone it does cover some of the aspirations - the key things that the community wanted to see happening in the forest.” (Colglen1, staff member). However, one interviewee felt that “the biggest impediment is there doesn’t seem to me, and I may not be close enough to realize it, a strategic view of what’s trying to be achieved. I think there are, you know, there are some interesting projects. ... But what’s the strategic view of what, you know - what is this place going to look like in 20 years, 25 years?” (Colglen8, stakeholder)

For Remade, the founder, current Director and holder of the vision, makes the strategic decisions, supported by her Board. She likens it to a ‘benign dictatorship’: “It is more like a dictatorship than a democracy. A very benign dictatorship but it is” (RME1, director/founder)

At Colglen, the Chair is reported as “quite the diplomat. He, he’s actually a very good chair and if conflict arises he’s very good at managing it....” (Colglen5, member)

Sometimes the most effective leadership is about quietly setting an example: “She’s been quite a driving force... and, and she does it in a really nice, quiet way. She's not forceful and in their face, you know and before you know it, she’s converted you. It's a nice way of, of being, but I think she's influenced a lot of people in this community, and I think the community have got a lot to be thankful for, for her being here and being, this very gentle way she does things. It's lovely. It's really nice. She's quite an influence, yes.” (Colglen3, member)

Sometimes, on the other hand, effective leadership might be about enabling everybody to contribute according to their different talents: “We didn’t always agree, but it, it was very lively sometimes. But they also had different talents, which I felt was, was quite good” (Colglen5, member). It may also be about respecting everyone’s contribution: “you might be the person who is really really good at admin, so actually you are leading because ...you are making sure everything is organized” (RME1 Director/founder).

4. ‘External’ Governing Practices

All our case study organisations have emerged to fill a void left by other actors. However, their agency to act and bring about change is critically influenced by the local physical infrastructure created and controlled by these external actors and by local, national and European policies.
The relationships that our CBIs can manage to build with these other actors, and the resources that these actors can provide access to, are therefore crucial. These external actors include local government, public sector agencies/regulators, funding bodies, private business, landowners and an increasing number of community-led networks that have emerged to provide mutual support and the expertise to navigate this complex governance landscape.

In theory, ‘Community Planning Partnerships’ in each Local Authority area are supposed to bring all local actors together but: “No. Well, community planning stuff doesn't work at all. I mean it is a fiction. It certainly is in Argyll.” (Colglen8, stakeholder).

‘Local’ government in Scotland is very remote and often seen as largely irrelevant, with very little day to day contact or interaction with community organisations, even where, as in Colglen, a local councillor is on the Board. However, all our case studies have developed a relationship with their Local Authority and do work together. Remade have a contract to provide services to Edinburgh City Council, Colglen have collaborated on Ponticum eradication and Transition Black Isle report being “held in high regard I would actually say by Highland Council. They see us as effective and energetic, which is great….I would say that having a good relationship with them, I feel, is one of the most important things in terms of us continuing to do stuff because it opens up doors for us. At least the avenues are not blocked” (TBI, board member).

The Scottish Government has been a key source of funds for all our case studies, particularly the Climate Challenge Fund, Scottish Land Fund and support for community renewables. Some of its policies, such as the ‘Right to Buy’ and the National Forest Land Scheme have also been crucial and it is perceived as recognizing that supporting ‘community anchor’ organisations to take on ownership of assets is a better long-term way of supporting them than ongoing project funding. “I believe that empowering communities to either purchase their assets or to run assets, or to have a vision of how that community development is ... the way forward for rural Scotland. And I want to see it right across Argyll and Bute. I'd love to see active communities doing these things” (Colglen8, stakeholder).

The support of intermediary community networks such as Development Trust Association Scotland, Community Energy Scotland and Community Woodlands Association has been essential in providing the specialist expertise to enable our case studies to navigate the complexities of purchasing land or attempting to set up renewable energy generation. These intermediary networks themselves are dependent on short-term Scottish Government or other project funding and struggle to resource the support services that communities really need.

Simple things like permission for installing micro-hydro on a small watercourse can take years of negotiation to obtain a license whilst obtaining planning permission, a grid connection and finance for a wind turbine is hugely complex and time consuming –all in the context of a rapidly changing subsidy regime that can suddenly undermine years of time and effort put in by CBI volunteers.

5. Governing experiences and effects
5.1 Board/Member relations

Recruiting new Board members can be challenging, particularly in a small place where it always tends to be the same people who get involved in all local groups. Colglen is fortunate in having a pool of retired professional people, keen to ‘give something back’ and as the trust becomes more successful and achieves a higher profile there is more ‘kudos’ to becoming involved. However, there is a tension between a desire to recruit “people who've had a professional background and had some experience of what they're doing” (Colglen2, board member) and the desire for it to be more inclusive of a broader demographic, so as to avoid an ‘us and them’ culture. Younger people with families are particularly hard to involve because “they've got children and teenagers and they're busy and so on” (Colglen2, board member).
Several interviewees felt that the board ought to be more inclusive, encouraging people to learn on the job: “It’s amazing what you can learn if you need to. I’ve done it over the years” (Colglen3, member). Most people are not familiar with and may be intimidated by the legal responsibilities attached to being on the Board of a charitable company: “I felt a lot of it, at the beginning... was like a way above my head, because it was very much the setting up of the Trust and all the legal jargon” (Colglen5, member). There is the additional challenge of finding someone prepared to be Chair and of ensuring succession planning. It can be difficult for a charismatic founder/leader to step back and let others move in. “I see it a bit like a baby growing up because it is more like a teenager now, so my idea is that once it gets to an adult then that is the point where I can step away” (RME, director/founder). Being on the board can require considerable commitment of time: “I don’t think too many people appreciate the level of work that the Board actually put in, the running around they do, the meetings they go to, the background development to set themselves up as a company, as a charity, it all takes people’s time, and they are not paid for that time” (Colglen1, staff member). It can also require a thick skin and personal resilience, able to cope with often mis-informed criticism and attacks from others in the community: “people who want to sit on the sidelines and just moan [laughs] about everything that doesnae happen” (Colglen3, member). And in any community, personality clashes can occur and “people will say, "Well, if he's on that committee, I'm not going to be on it." And I think all communities have this” (Colglen2, board member).

Apart from this, because they are passionate about what they are doing, there is a danger of both staff and volunteers exploiting themselves, working long hours and burning out: “There is something about recognising that they are going to have to invest in people...as well as investing in projects. If they actually want to see these projects succeed” (Colglen7, stakeholder) and also recognizing that they need to be careful not to “bite off more than we can chew. We can be very enthusiastic; we can be very professional. And we can be very successful, it could be said - as we have been. But, you know; three big projects all coming together in one: can we, can we manage it?” (Colglen2, board member)

**Communication**

Between the board and the wider membership and community and achieving a balance between openness and confidentiality can be challenging. Whilst public consultation and participation in planning activities is encouraged, there is a danger of then being unable to satisfy all their demands, of disagreement over priorities and of raising unrealistic expectations: “we do a lot of talking, but there isnae an awful lot of action” (Colglen3, member). Many in the wider community were felt by the Board not to understand the challenges involved in raising funds and implementing projects or that some Board discussions are necessarily confidential. Frustration with the slow progress with some projects can then arise, along with suspicions about the motives of those who put in so much volunteer time and effort – “sometimes, sometimes it kind of looks as though there are people involved in the Trust who are there for their own ends” (Colglen3, member).

One communication breakdown, for example where some people weren’t aware of a public meeting, can fuel suspicion and rumours for years afterwards: “you kinda think, well they dinnae really dinnae want anybody there [laughs] But why?” (Colglen3, member).

The length of time taken up by consultation and participation can be frustrating from a ‘leader’s’ point of view as well – “…at the time we were a group of volunteers and everybody wanted to have equal say in every decision. Things weren’t happening quickly enough”(RME1, director/founder).

Especially at the start, “any development trust needs to get a successful project under its belt. Until it has done that, it is no more than an idea” (Colglen7, stakeholder) and it can be difficult to keep people engaged. On the other hand, “there’s always resistance within the community to any kind of change. And that’s always a barrier, and I think it always will be, ..you can't rush these things... Or at least, it's like... resistance increases with acceleration, if you know what I mean. So if you just slow
down a bit, you, it all becomes much smoother” (Colglen4, staff member).

There is also a tension around how ‘representative’ a Development Trust should aim to be. “You want to be representative and you want to be accountable to your community if you are a development trust or a community enterprise but if you get to the point where every single member of a far-flung rural community is a member, every adult, you have to service that membership, so is there a point at which you can truthfully say we feel democratic and accountable” (Colglen7, stakeholder).

And some people will always prefer not to be involved: “it doesnae matter where you live - you’re gonnae get them. The, the people who, who are just there on the sidelines, but all they want to do is really moan. They don’t really want to be involved. And if you say to them, you know, ’Well, come along and be involved.’ ’Oh, no, no, no. They don’t want the likes of me.’ ’But, yes, they do.’ But ’No, oh, no, no, no.’ But you get that everywhere. You’re always going to get that, you know? ’No, I don’t want to be involved. I do my own thing and that’s it’” (Colglen3, member).

5.2. Ownership, subsidies and vested interests
Scotland’s highly skewed pattern of land ownership, and lack of transparency as to who owns what, contributes to a disconnect between local people and their local environment and resources. Forests, in particular, are bought and sold as investments rather than to be managed to enhance local biodiversity and for meeting local needs. There is even a suggestion that: “although it’s a very hard thing, it’s difficult, to prove that actually, some of it’s used deliberately for tax avoidance or even money laundering, because, because we haven’t got very much transparency about who owns land ....and in some cases, who’s buying it, and therefore, you know, whether they’re buying it with legal or dirty money” (Colglen6, stakeholder). Colglen makes every effort to engage with local farmers, those that are tenants and those that own their land, but there is a perception that they are “’alright, Jack’, and they don’t really need a micro-hydro scheme to benefit the community, because they’ve got a generator, and if, if the power goes off, they’re alright...” (Colglen4, staff member). Some are reported as not seeing any need for action to tackle local decline: ”'The community's dying. Let it die.'”(farmer reported by Colglen2, board member) and the powerful lobby of the National Farmers Union has an interest in maintaining the status quo in which the “massive truckloads of money [in EU subsidies] that heads off to NFU [National Farmers Union] and Scottish Land and Estates members every year, carves a great kind of channel through the middle of everything, and then everybody else kind of deals in the scraps around the back” (Colglen6, stakeholder).

This helps ensure that “in effect, you pay people to carry on farming and stop natural processes taking their, running their natural course” (Colglen6, stakeholder) and actively discourage a shift in land use to woodland creation and management—which he felt much better suits the local environment and climate. This same interviewee highlighted that “agriculture and forestry is completely exempt from business rates” (Colglen6, stakeholder) and how this tax and subsidy regime is really the elephant in the room that won’t be addressed by Scotland’s recently enacted Community Empowerment Act or by the new Land Reform Bill proposed for 2016. Both these should open up new possibilities for community groups to acquire assets currently in public sector ownership and to participate in decision-making but how co-operative and willing public sector bodies will be to support this remains uncertain. Whilst Colglen have been able to use the existing National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS) and Scottish Land Fund to acquire 600ha of former Forestry Commission forest, one stakeholder suggested that, in general, the NFLS has benefitted investors rather than improving management of forests or transferring assets to communities: “The problem is, the Commission has been selling off rather poorly-managed forests for, to people who want to invest because there's an investment advantage, rather than to grow trees” (Colglen6, stakeholder)). In Colglen’s case, funders’ interpretation of EU State Aid rules limited the size of grant available for the purchase which meant that they
had to sell most of the timber rights for the next 99 years: “Well, the forest, potentially, is going to be very good. But the amount of land that we actually have in that forest that is available for community use is very limited, as you probably know... which people are not happy about. But what people have to understand is that if we hadn't have done it that way, we wouldn't have had the forest in the first place” (Colglen5, member). However, ownership of the forest has opened up possibilities to generate an income through community owned renewables as well as multiple other opportunities, such as for woodland crofts, skills training, recreation etc...

The support of a former Scottish Government minister who lives locally has been particularly helpful. “He had a, an awful lot of things at his fingertips. Information, you know? He knew, he knew things. That has given us a level of key influence when we really needed it” (Colglen10, board member). He was able to alert them to the forthcoming sale of Stronafian Forest and when they hit State Aid issues “he was able to go to the civil servant who was devising the new advice and say 'this community...these things...this is why...' and that level of input was really key” (Colglen10, board member).

There is a question “about whether the tests for state aid are being appropriately applied because there is a tendency for funders to be extremely risk averse and to say that if it is public money, it is state aid. And if you say, no its not, they say, well, we are not giving it to you” (Colglen7, stakeholder). The State Aid 'de minimis' limit is very restrictive and has been a problem for many Scottish groups. Increasingly, Development Trusts, with support of their networks, are being robust in insisting to funders that grants should not be classed as State Aid.

5.3. Funding

A number of other frustrations with funding arrangements were expressed. In general, project funding was felt to be very onerous and time consuming to apply for; funding is often found to be difficult to obtain, inflexible, “overly bureaucratic and also overly financially onerous in terms of reporting” (Colglen10, board member). The lack of core funding for long-term staff causes inefficiency and loss of expertise when projects end and staff leave, putting extra pressure on hard-pressed volunteers –“you’ll get a project funded for a couple of years, and then it ends. And then what do you do then, because nobody will fund on-going projects. I mean, that's always been a problem” (Colglen3, member). Groups are often tempted to design projects to fit the funding and can become overly focused on short-term outcomes. Many funders are not accustomed to working with small voluntary groups or community enterprises and are not able to establish a creative relationship/dialogue: “they aren’t really set up to work with little organisations, they are more set up to give advice to conventional industry...[what was most frustrating] was the lack of ability to have a collaborative dialogue” (RME1, director/founder).

Community Development Trusts such as Colglen are generally felt to not understand, or give sufficient importance to “impact mapping and telling their story” (Colglen7, stakeholder) and that “there is a real issue about the lack of support for organisations to evidence their impact, that is the gap. There are no simple models for small organisations” (Colglen7, stakeholder) to be able to explain to funders, and others, what impact funding has actually had –beyond the funded project outcomes.

5.4. Government relations

Although in theory being representative, Community Councils in Scotland are not normally considered to be a tier of Government and their main role is to act as a channel of local opinions to the Local Authority and to respond to any planning applications. They are also sometimes involved in local projects mostly related to local infrastructure such as footpaths, parks, playgrounds etc., and local events. They usually only receive minimal funding for running costs.
One stakeholder highlighted the potential for conflict between community councils and Development Trusts: “I think there can be, there is often a significant tension between community councils and development trusts...because community councils feel quite threatened by a different democratic accountable body” (Colglen7, stakeholder) and one of the problems is that “Community councils can't raise funds, basically, you know - they get whatever it is, a thousand pounds a year from Argyll and Bute Council to spend on little bits and pieces, including, you know, expenses and so on...” (Colglen2, board member). However, as appears to be the case at Colglen: “good community councils will actually see that development trusts can do things that they can’t, there should be a synergy there, but not all community councils are ‘good’...not all are as constructive as they should be” (Colglen7, stakeholder). Another didn’t “think anybody really understands why you've got a Community Council and why you've got a Development Trust. And I think there needs to be a clarity about what's happening there” (Colglen8, stakeholder).

The most local tier of Government for Colglen is Argyll and Bute Council, which covers a huge area (with a coastline longer than that of France) even though the total population is only 91,000. “If you live in Campbeltown, you haven't got the slightest interest in Glendaruel, because you don't know where it is” (Colglen8, stakeholder). It is not generally seen as having much relevance to local people: “frankly, you know, the, our councillors go up there [to Lochgilphead] and they come back, and nobody has the faintest idea what they've done” (Colglen8, stakeholder). One interviewee in particular considered the biggest inhibitor of change to be the “extraordinarily lacklustre council that has no vision of what should happen at all. I think if you had an energetic local authority working with government, you could achieve a great deal more” (Colglen8, stakeholder). And the Local Authority could “have a big role to play in encouraging the Development Trust and the Community Councils to be energisers of change. I don't think they have any interest in doing so at all” (Colglen8, stakeholder).

All our case studies did, nonetheless, place considerable importance on developing a good relationship with their Local Authority, which is seen as a key partner in getting enabling infrastructure in place and leveraging funding. Lack of such infrastructure is often a crucial barrier to community action. Transition Black Isle in particular reported persisting through early days, when they felt that they were not taken seriously, being viewed as “a bunch of 'no-hopers' and amateurs, starry eyed and all the rest of that stuff” (TBI1, board member) to a situation where they have gained respect and are collaborating on a number of projects, such as improving cycling infrastructure: “the relationship opens up doors for us” (TBI1, board member).

Local Authorities themselves are under extreme pressure with few powers and Scottish Government further restricting their resources at the same time as their statutory obligations are increasing. In some parts of Scotland some local authorities are reportedly starting to see the possibilities arising from supporting their local development trusts: “there is one LA in particular who are talking about setting up, or possibly funding if we are lucky, a Development Trust support post because they are saying that actually they put money into other consultation and communication mechanisms that produce far less results than gathering their development trusts -they have six or seven- around a table. And others are without a doubt doing asset transfer at below market value in return for demonstrable social wellbeing” (Colglen7, stakeholder).

The Scottish Government itself is also limited in its powers under the current devolution settlement: “Well, I certainly think that, unless you have a tax system you can control, then you can't use the levers of a tax system to make a difference” (Colglen8, stakeholder). And recent changes to support for renewable energy by the UK Government look set to completely undermine future community energy projects, potential future income streams for community groups and Scottish Government renewables targets.

5.5. Mutual Support
The “whole ethos of the development trust (and wider community) movement is built around shared learning” (Colglen7, stakeholder) but it can be challenging for small groups to find the time for networking even when they are fully aware of the benefits: “inevitably there is this wonderful cross-fertilisation of ideas which I think is actually very rich…..and also their enthusiasm which is very important because it is so easy to get burnt out” (TBI1, board member). In Colglen’s case they have been inspired by the nearby Kilfinan Community Forest which gave “our community an idea of how a forest could positively impact a community” (Colglen10, board member) and staff have moved between the two.

6. Negotiation, response and agency

All our case studies represent community-led, creative responses; people coming together to set up organisations and governance structures that can start to give people the agency to create the future they want. That agency may still be limited but the very existence of those legal and associated social structures opens up new opportunities, as well as making it possible to actively take advantage of opportunities as and when they arise. Colglen in particular has succeeded in taking advantage of supportive Government policies and funding streams to leverage substantial funding into their community and to put in place some of the foundations for a regenerated and sustainable local economy. They have responded creatively to obstacles put in their way, for example over the purchase of Stronafian Forest, and taken a long-term view of the benefit of community ownership. “So what you have to do - you can't get 100% of the money, so the model we took was to immediately get a tenant - you know, a forest enterprise tenant... who basically gave, was it a hundred years, rent upfront. And that helped to cover the rest of the purchase cost.” (Colglen1, staff member).

With the permaculture view that ‘the problem is the solution’, they have also created innovative ways to turn the menace of invasive Ponticum into an opportunity to create a woodfuel enterprise, bringing together a new partnership of local and national agencies (Forestry Commission, Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage and Argyll and Bute Council): “so we are now looking at a management that is looking at trying to make the problem pay [using it as a biomass resource], so this is why Sara has gone to this meeting [in Inveraray today], it is a very important meeting...so a lot of people are starting to look at the bigger picture... and going ‘oh we aren’t just looking at one field or one farm or the community forest, we are looking the whole area’ ....and that in itself was quite a task but that is where the real merit and achievement of the project is ...you aren’t focussed on one single aspect you are looking holistically at the whole community” (Colglen1, staff member).

In Colglen, one individual had the vision to create a long-distance path: “you can walk from Portavadie on Loch Fyne to Inverglas on Loch Lomond on public rights of way or forest roads, or public roads - all the way. Just by joining them up. So we joined them up, and called it the Cowal Way.” (Colglen2, board member). The existence of the trust has enabled a successful funding bid to upgrade and promote the Way as a major tourist attraction and one of Scotland’s ‘great trails’.

Similarly, Comrie Development Trust spotted an opportunity to take early advantage of the Scottish Government’s ‘Right to Buy’ legislation to take community ownership of the former Cultybraggen army camp which is now being developed for a range of community uses including providing workspace for local business.

Remade has opened up new opportunities and overcome the issue of people on lower incomes not being able to afford its services: “so the way that we have tried to do that is to find a third party, so the Housing Associations are the really good example, so they pay us to provide services to their residents so that solves that issue really. So maybe half of our workshops are for people on lower incomes and half of them are for people on professional backgrounds” (RME1, Director/founder)
7. Summary and Conclusion

To a large extent, all our case studies view themselves as enablers/catalysts facilitating the transition to a sustainable future. In the long-term, they therefore view success as being when their work is no longer necessary and their organisation becomes redundant. In the short term, their success depends on finding ways to work within the current system, taking advantage of whatever opportunities are offered by Government policy, funding streams and local circumstances to start changing norms, achieve tangible outcomes that keep people engaged whilst creating a glimpse of an alternative future and finding ways to wean themselves off dependence on grant funding.

Through gaining ownership of local assets they are opening up new opportunities to generate income, in line with their principles, whilst enabling them to be financially self-supporting and able to employ long-term staff who can take forward projects in line with locally set priorities - rather than having to try to fit projects into boxes designed by funders and start funding meaning that staff have to be laid off and their expertise lost when funding finishes.

“Success will be when the trust is financially self-sustaining and able to facilitate and enable initiatives and projects that regenerate the glen as a thriving and sustainable, green, community. And a model for others.” (Colglen1, staff member)

Crucially, they are also reconnecting their communities to their local environment and resources and enabling reconnection to a local democratic process that can start to overturn a long history of disconnect and disempowerment. “Bringing this land back into community ownership is really only the very very first stage of it” (Colglen1, staff member).

The extent to which they are succeeding in transforming the current system is questionable, in fact it may be that such initiatives are tolerated by today’s vested interests precisely because their transformational impact to date is minimal. However, it can also be argued that, together with the re-engagement with the political process evidenced by the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, newly empowered communities with increasing agency to effect change are a genie that has been released, and won’t now be put back in the bottle, especially as many working within Government and the public sector also increasingly recognize that the current system is broken.

The success that Colglen have achieved to date and what has enabled it to “punch above its weight” (Colglen7, stakeholder) seems to be due to a number of factors including: “having this pool of [retired] motivated people, skilled people, and the entrepreneurial drive of people like Charles … it is invaluable” (Colglen1, staff member), passionate staff embedded in the community and able to quietly influence others as well as “paying themselves for two days per week and all working for seven days.” (Colglen7, stakeholder), very good political connections to local and Scottish Government plus the substantial ground work that was put into a community survey and engagement when the trust was first being established.

In the longer term, continued success will depend on “investing in people…as well as investing in projects” (Colglen7, stakeholder) maintaining the positive energy of the Board and enabling board members to step down when they need a break, as well as by being able to demonstrate some clearly tangible results to keep the local community on side.
Memo from JHI

1. Introduction

The organisation (which I shall henceforth call ‘Scottish Development Trust’ or ‘SDT’) addressed in this memo is a community-owned company with charitable status, based in a market town (which I shall call X) in north-east Scotland. SDT emerged from a partnership of three public sector bodies – Communities Scotland, Scottish Enterprise and the local authority for the region – which ran until 2008. Thereafter, SDT was established to continue and re-orientate the work begun through the partnership. The Trust’s remit is broad; amongst a whole host of activities, it promotes cycling in the X district, has established a car-sharing club, invested in walking paths for local people, and facilitated cultural exchanges, and suchlike. But over the past two years in particular, SDT’s efforts have been orientated predominantly towards renewable energy in a bid to generate a reliable source of income for the organisation year by year.

The Trust comprises just over 400 members, drawn from a district with a population of some 10,000 people. Only a small proportion of the membership actively participate in the quarterly members meetings, where organisational affairs are presented and discussed. A number also participate in the range of working groups established in the Trust to support particular organisational processes and projects. The key governing structure of the Trust is the Board, which oversees all strategic decisions concerning SDT and is currently composed of 12 ‘directors’. One of the directors has served as Chair of the Board for the past 4 years, though he will shortly be handing over the reins to a newly recruited Board member. SDT has four staff members – a Development Manager, the organisation’s principal executive role; an administrator; and two coordinators employed to take forward specific projects.

Interviews were conducted with 12 people who were in one way or another closely associated with the Trust. Our interviewees comprised three members of staff working at SDT (the manager, who appears here as ‘Peter’, and two project coordinators); three members of the Board of Directors (two appear here under the pseudonyms ‘Alex’ and ‘John’); an energy consultant that supports the Trust (‘Scott’); two staff members from the Local Authority, which I shall call YShire Council, both of whom work closely with SDT (one appears here as ‘Brian’); a Trust member who had been closely involved with the establishment of the Trust several years before (‘Rachel’); and two members of staff from X’s Community Council, another local, community-run organisation that has links with the Trust. This memo draws not only on interview recordings, but also on fieldnotes taken during interviews and on fieldwork conducted through attending meetings (board meetings and technical meetings with energy consultants) and assemblies hosted by the organisation.

The perspectives and issues that emerged around governing relations for SDT were orientated very much by the Trust’s current focus on becoming more ‘self-sustaining’ through investing in renewable energy. As for many other local organisations in Scotland, investment in renewable energy offers the prospect of generating a core income year by year, and decreasing dependency on external funding bodies. With that in mind, two years ago SDT bought a nearby farm with support from the Scottish Land Fund, with a view to building a community-owned wind turbine and solar panels on the site. It was hoped that planners would look favourably on the scheme, as the turbine would effectively ‘blend into’ the windfarm immediately next door.

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9 I shall henceforth refer to the partnership as ‘The YShire Partnership’ (YPS).
10 I shall henceforth refer to the region as YShire.
to the farm. The annual income earned through the electricity generated is likely to enable the Trust to maintain its core staff and push forward local projects. There are also a range of activities and social and enterprise projects planned for the farm, given that it is a large tract of land that can accommodate much more than a wind turbine. Thus far, SDT has been able to surmount two significant hurdles, gaining final planning permission for the turbine in September 2015, and securing a grid connection for the end of 2016. If they are able to successfully fund the infrastructure itself, with the support of energy shares bought by members of the local community and probably also a bank loan, they hope to have the turbine up and running by October 2016.

However, negotiating the complexities around planning regulations, grid connections, and funding arrangements – whilst maintaining existing projects and keeping local people in the loop – has been no easy task. How these negotiations happen, what they tell us about how governing relations could be reconfigured by local efforts to invest in energy infrastructures, and how local organisations are having to adapt their knowledge and capacities in response to the possibilities that these energy projects are opening up, are the key questions explored in this memo.

2. Ideas and Imaginaries

Fostering a business-orientated ‘mindset’

Amongst most of our interviewees, there was a fairly strong sense – which emerged both explicitly and implicitly – that a crucial part of SDT’s current purpose was to foster a path towards becoming self-sustaining as an organisation. What this meant in practice was that a large proportion of everyday organisational energies and resources were dedicated towards managing large-scale projects that promised to yield a reliable income in the future, without need to resort to grant money to cover core running costs. Thus, for the Chair of the Board of Trustees, John, the first goal of the Trust was to “continue to secure long-term income – that is, regular income – because then you’re not scrabbling around always trying to find new funding”. For him, this demanded a thoroughly business-orientated sensibility: “Although [SDT] is a…social enterprise type organisation, it needs to be run as a sort of business – you can’t do things that are going to lose you money, you’ve got to generate money, you’ve got to generate surpluses, you’ve got to maintain employment... So, you need a certain amount of hard-headed business sense...to run it successfully”. However, not everyone we spoke to agreed that adopting a “corporate” approach was necessarily the most appropriate way to proceed. Whilst Rachel, an ex-board member, acknowledged that becoming economically sustainable was paramount for SDT, she also felt that the Trust had over recent years taken a road that potentially put it rather at odds with what she saw as the main purpose of the organisation – “social inclusion and the social needs agenda...the idea of actually really building community”.

Clarifying the role and vision of SDT

Even as the SDT Board members we spoke to largely agreed that ensuring the Trust’s economic sustainability should be a priority, there was much more confusion around how best to define the vision, role and activities of the organisation. This confusion emerged in part precisely because most of the Trust’s energies were dedicated towards securing this viable source of future income – only once the SDT’s continuing existence was assured would there be the resources available to plan what to do with them. One Board member, Alex, was explicit that the current strategy of the Trust was “survival, which is...quite ironic...We’ve got to make the Trust sustainable in order to deliver the long-term benefits”.

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Rachel, reflecting on how SDT was operating when she had been on the Board several years previously, noted that working out what kind of organisation the Trust should be was “always a dilemma – you know, are we an umbrella organisation or are we a kind of…facilitator or are we the organisation that kind of does it all?...There was never really an answer to that because, well, I suppose it evolves”. Meanwhile, Alex suggested that this question of clarifying the Trust’s focus and priorities for X remained pressing. Referring to SDT’s expansive strapline, “Working with others to build a resilient, inclusive, enterprising community capable of dealing with ongoing change”, he complained, “It’s very wishy-washy in terms of a statement…it’s not punchy enough; it doesn’t engage with the community...It needs changing…to just have a very clear and simple message”.

The problematic strapline was, for him, a manifestation of a lack of clarity around the Trust’s strategy: “We have an [overall] strategy, but…we cover so many things – or we try to cover so many things – and what we need to do is pare that back and have…[a] clear strategy for delivering projects over the next two to three years”. He put the failure to establish this down to a lack of professional time and the need to “juggle around family life and…work commitments...We’re not…a bunch of paid directors”. However, he felt that as the prospect of reliable income streams from the various renewable energy projects was firmed up SDT was gradually moving out of “survival” mode, enabling the organisation to “breathe a little” and begin to clarify its goals.

3. Everyday Governing Practices

Internal governance, legal and organisational structures

The centrality of the Board

The collective character, style and orientation of the Board emerged as a decisive factor in the orientation of SDT. Whilst the effective leadership of the current Chair was celebrated by most, it was clear that over-reliance on this internal governance framework carried risks. One decision made by the Board (which was at the time composed largely of a different membership from that now in place) several years before was particularly remembered by current and ex-Directors, as well as by one staff member from YShire Council, as having had a detrimental effect on the organisation.

At the time, the Board had been offered a grant of about £100,000 from the Council to buy an asset in the centre of X. This was at a time when both the Council and DTAS, the Development Trust Association, were encouraging Trusts to obtain assets – perhaps land, a building, or a wind turbine – in order to secure a future income. SDT’s idea had been to buy one of the buildings in the central square and use it to create a ‘community hub’ – a place where local people could meet, have tea and coffee, buy and sell crafts, have an office space. However, the Board decided against accepting the grant, largely because of worries about finding the further funding needed to refurbish the building that was under consideration. The move was criticised by a number of our interviewees, and Rachel recalled that people had been “pretty pissed off” about this decision, but noted that without their “actually seeing what they were basing that judgement on, it [was] very difficult to challenge”.

For her, there had been more recent problems with the Board too. Two years ago, she told me, when the Trust experienced a financial crisis so great that it was almost forced to shut down, she felt that the Board wasn’t sufficiently forthcoming to the membership about what they were...
planning. In response, she led a group of members in pressing the Board “to tell us what was happening and what they were doing about it”, because “they were effectively…going to put an end to the Trust without even telling the community”. She said that she felt the group’s efforts to petition SDT to organise a meeting to inform the membership about the possible shut-down of the Trust was “pivotal in that they actually realised that they weren’t…working in a vacuum…they weren’t just there to make it happen. They were representing the community…if there’s [sic] problems the community want to know and want to help if they can”.

She said she thought that for the Board “it was a bit of a shock to the system, to suddenly be…challenged. And then…a sort of realisation that…it wasn’t just them in a boardroom deciding what happens”. She cited certain changes that had occurred since this time, such as the fact that any member of SDT could now join one of the Trust’s multiple working groups. Previously, forming part of one of these groups had been by invitation only; “so I think it’s quite interesting…that it’s actually kind of almost swung the other way – [Now] anyone can come in!”, an arrangement that had not been without difficulties in itself.

Both these examples suggest the potential dangers of a governance system that relies heavily on a highly autonomous Board, and the significance of an active relationship between Trust and Board members in order for change to be instigated in the organisation (even if the changes brought about may bring their own complexities).

Staffing arrangements and volunteers

The key importance of being able to rely on paid staff rather than volunteers was flagged by a number of interviewees. Effectively, the renewable energy projects the Trust is currently pursuing are designed to cover the ongoing salary costs of core staff. “If you have staff you can build expertise and fund applications, and build relationships with funders. And that is…the thing that makes a development trust successful. If it’s all run on a voluntary basis, you’re not going to have the time, the effort and the expertise to actually be successful in raising funds. And without funds you can’t do anything”, John told me.

On the other hand, bar the four members of staff employed by the Trust, most of those who actively supported the Trust were involved on a voluntary basis. Board and working group members were all volunteers. In this context, Rachel raised the problems that can accompany over-reliance on the Board to take responsibility for issues that they may not have the expertise to manage. She was concerned that a Board member should be made responsible for Human Resources (including drawing up contracts and “any legal stuff”), for example, rather than buying in the necessary professional expertise. “If you get an unfair dismissal claim and you lose it…that can put you out of business”.

She also considered that being on the Board should be a learning process – rather than simply a question of applying what one has learnt in a business context in a Trust – and members should receive training in aspects of Trust governance.

John, meanwhile, reflected that managing volunteers was substantively different to his corporate experience of managing staff, where “there is a kind of…immediate respect given that you’re in a management hierarchy”. You could also more readily dispatch people in a business setting because “people are subject to the disciplines of employment…They have to do as they’re told…or you can get rid of them”. On the other hand, “If you upset a volunteer at a meeting, they can just get up and walk away…They have no reason other than any respect they might have for you to do as you say or to take you seriously. So it’s much more about building your personal credibility, because you don’t have a hierarchical structure that

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11 Composed of active members, these groups work on developing specific projects or themes for the Trust.
automatically accords you respect and you don’t have a contractual arrangement with them”. This suggested that leadership and charisma were of particular importance for SDT.

Leadership, charisma, and management

Most of our interviewees were emphatic about the importance of the key leaders at the helm of SDT. Peter was seen as a crucial linchpin, without whom the organisation may well not have survived. Brian, from YShire Council, was explicit that of all the Trusts that had emerged from the YShire Partnership, SDT was that which enjoyed the strongest leadership. It’s important to note that the character of Peter’s current role as Development Manager in SDT was probably quite profoundly shaped by his prior experience as the coordinator of the Yshire Partnership, which demanded that he act as a “fulcrum” between a whole array of organisations, companies and individuals. His capacity to call on a range of different people and institutions in the course of his work remained central in his role at SDT.

Both Chair and Manager were considered to go far beyond the call of duty; there was a potent ethical dimension to their work. Meanwhile, the strong collaboration between Chair and Manager was often cited as an important aide to the Trust’s work. On the other hand, one interviewee suggested that Peter sometimes found it difficult to assert his “brilliant vision” because he was in the difficult position of being an employee of the Board. Whilst she felt that the current Board had some “strong characters” and was doing some “good things”, she trusted Peter’s orientation more than theirs, and would like to have seen him with the space to put more of his ideas into practice.

Anxieties were often expressed about the difficulty of recruiting another Chair with the capacity of the incumbent. SDT recently introduced a rule that Chairs had to pass up their chairmanship after a maximum of 5 years of service, in order to prevent the organisation from becoming overly dependent on one figure. John was nearing the 5 year limit point, and he himself was very aware of the danger of over-dependency; he reflected that he’d “mollycoddled” the Board over the course of his incumbency, and that they would need to “become more mature in their judgements, and better at leading themselves” in his absence. Yet, as Brian put it, “I just hope to hell they’ve got somebody of his calibre to replace him, because that’s been the problem... Peter can only do so much”. Brian felt that locating good leaders for local Trusts was the key obstacle to success after the issue of securing sufficient revenue.

Generating new forms of social, political and economic organisation

SDT’s efforts to render X more sustainable in terms of energy production (whilst also working to guarantee the organisation a dependable form of income) could be said to be aimed at reorientating social and economic practices in the town by effectively reducing dependency on external, fossil-fuel based sources of energy. The progressive tone of their actions, however, tended to be somewhat obscured by the pragmatic objectives of cutting costs – partly for political reasons. As one board member told us, SDT sought to “smuggle” transition-orientated schemes into the work of the Trust, to avoid the risk of alienating any portions of X’s population12.

Developing expertise/professionalism/social capital (both ‘internally’ and ‘externally’)

Expertise emerged as a critical issue for SDT. There were many declarations that the organisation was on a steep “learning curve”, particularly when it came to navigating the complexities of pushing through the Farm turbine. John listed a whole range of challenges, citing in particular the “technological and commercial issues that you will have to contend with”, He elaborated on the kinds of questions someone embarking on this kind of project would have to ask themselves: “What’s the commercial agreement with the landowner? What kind of turbine? How would you obtain it? How would you obtain financing? How would you

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pay it back? What kind of organisation would you have to form? What are the…commercial risks for the people who form that!…How do you go about getting planning permission? What about the ecological and environmental issues? How are you going to deal with potential objectors within your community… Are you prepared to lose friends over this?”

‘Scott’, a consultant from Local Energy Scotland, noted the difficulties in making a grid connection application, pointing out that it entailed filling in a “complicated form, which…an amateur wouldn’t be able to do”. It required an “electrical engineer”, an “expert”, to fill it in because of the “technical details” that needed to be completed. It appeared that SDT had bought in most of the technical expertise they required for the Farm project, hiring Atmos energy consultancy to support them. But mobilising expertise of this calibre was extremely costly, setting SDT back by about £80,000.

Whilst everyone we spoke to was clear that energy and willingness amongst HDDT staff and members were more important than specific forms of technical expertise, it nonetheless appeared that those taking up the reins of the organisation came with wide-ranging professional experience. Thus, commentators from outside SDT were emphatic that one of the obvious advantages for SDT was the presence of Peter and John, who were both extremely competent and highly experienced. Given John’s observation that “most communities don’t have an organisation capable or willing to take on the commercial and other issues to do with getting your own turbine”, SDT seemed an uncommon case. Brian, of YShire Council, also noted that it was often incomers, rather than locals, who proved the driving force behind local organisations, partly because of the breadth of experience they had gathered elsewhere.

Although SDT staff were capable of learning the skills necessary to push forward projects of the kind they were managing, the investment of time and energy to do so could be wearing. Thus, John, when faced with an application to participate in a Festival last year, “looked at it, and it…was so thick… And it’s daunting, you know, you look it and you think ‘Life’s too short – on the fire with it!’ development, had the backing – Scott told me – of a “big local businessman”. Such expertise appeared to be more necessary where there were less cohesive communities, Scott implied – suggesting that island localities on Scotland’s west coast seemed to do better than mainland communities.

SDT staff and board members often spoke of the difficulties of making strategic decisions on the direction of the Trust, because of the farmland should be developed drew “sometimes contradictory, conflicting, impractical, improbable ideas”. John said that in the face of the diversity of responses, “you have to make mentioned above – was considered by most in the organisation to be “too wide”. John noted wryly that at one point they stressed that the most important thing to know was what you were going to do over the next three years – “nobody can know”.

4. External Governing Practices

The Scottish Government appeared as a broadly enabling force in interviewees’ narratives. Most of the funding that SI funded their green transport project and supported the entry of a new member of staff into the Trust; and the Strengthening YShire Partnership, which ultimately spawned several Development Trusts, including SDT. Peter told me, “Scottish Government support the main role of the Scottish Government was to fund the project and support the entry of a new member of staff into the Trust.”

On the other hand, it was also – as you’d expect – due to changes in the “political framework” within the government Partnership) was instead diverted to local authorities. In this sense, governing institutions may open up avenues for new initiatives and connections with other organisations.

Whilst a number of interviewees acknowledged that the Scottish Government had made a significant contribution to [renewable] energy, [saying], ‘After the oil’s gone we’re going to have wind and we’re going to have waves and we’re view was expressed by Rachel, who said (echoing John’s comments about the CARES loan set-up) that “if you look at really…become empowered, and they’re kind of reining back”. The implication is that the Scottish Government has so

Central government or ‘Westminster’

Perhaps the most obvious way in which Central Government made an appearance in informants’ narratives was in the rel local and community-based investments in renewable energy had already started dropping off:
“The FIT [has] come down by…between thirty and fifty percent, over the last two years… 3 or 4 years ago it was just an absolute no-brainer whether to put a wind turbine in – any kind of decent site with wind, you put up a wind turbine you were going to get money – whereas now it’s much…more marginal, and…you have to do a lot of work in looking at the wind speed, and…variables like…turbulence and things onsite that are going to affect the output… If [the next government has] a Conservative majority…the general opinion is that it’s going to be cut right back…almost to nothing. [And] the closer you get to that…bottom line figure, the harder it’s going to be to get finance, and…the lower the return for the amount of investment and effort you’re putting in. [So it would get to the point] where [communities] wouldn’t [invest]”.

Whilst I was doing fieldwork, visiting a windfarm close to X, two men from the neighbouring council area even joked that ‘Westminster’ saw the elimination of the renewable energy subsidies as a way of countering the SNP government, which has set ambitious targets for renewable energy production in Scotland. In this kind of narrative, then, renewable energy is envisaged as a battleground for competing English and Scottish sovereignties.

**Relations with local government**

One of the central observations worth pointing up at the outset is the significance of SDT’s relationship with YShire Council. When the Yshire Partnership (see above) came to an end in 2008, the Trust was formed to take the work forward, though it continued to be largely reliant on Council funding for a further three years. Moreover, the coordinator of the Yshire Partnership in X was Peter, who then went on to become the Trust’s Development Manager. The strong relations Peter garnered with the council through his time with the Partnership likely helped the Trust maintain the council money that came through to support the fledgling Trust after the close of the Yshire Partnership; Peter told us that despite being told by the Local Authority that the money it gave to the Trust to facilitate its transition from the YShire Partnership was “one-off seed money”, they “still went back to them for a little bit more!” Even more critically, Peter told me, it was partly due to a windfall consultancy contract awarded by the Council on improving cycle lanes in the local area that the Trust was able to tide itself over during the financial crisis that threatened to bring about its demise two years ago.

For Peter, there was a fairly clear understanding that the rise of development trusts – such as SDT – across Scotland had a great deal to do with the changes in local government over the years. Till 1973, “we used to have our own town council, like all the places across Scotland. Most communities…were a bit like what France maybe is now, with…these small-scale things, with a bit of power to change things or to organise things yourself”. But with the reorganisation of local government, all that was “swept away”, he said, noting that YShire Council now oversaw an area the size of a “province in the Netherlands…or Italy”. So, he said, “in European terms, our lowest level of elected governance is…massive and quite remote from local people – that’s what the perception is”. He felt there was still a “hankering” for town councils that, whilst not operating with large budgets, were “more accountable” because “you knew who the Provost was… you could go and speak to [council representatives] about potholes in the road”. He felt that it was the lack of these more local layers of government that partly explained why development trusts were “springing up across Scotland”. Because of “this vacuum at local level…you’ve now got two hundred and fifty of them”. Furthermore, unlike local charities, which tend to “offer a single issue sort of thing”, development trusts had the capacity to support “broader town development”. The close links between SDT and the Council were aptly expressed by the fact that the Trust currently resides rent-free in Council-owned premises, and by the fact that local people still occasionally called up the Council to find out what SDT was doing, on the assumption that the organisation was an arm of government.

Yet, there were problems with SDT’s proximity to the Council. Reflecting on the first couple of years that followed the establishment of SDT after the culmination of the Yshire Partnership,
Rachel reflected, “Because Peter was so closely associated with the Partnership, it was sometimes difficult to make clear the distinction [between SDT and the Partnership]”. She noted that whilst Peter and “the community” sought to take SDT “away from the Yshire Partnership”, there was “so much of the Yshire Partnership stuff still in there, and...the Council’s agenda”. She also said that the Council saw the Trust as a way of “devolving responsibility and [as] a way of saving money in the long term”. Brian appeared to back this up when he suggested that YShire Council’s interest in supporting the establishment of Development Trusts was to outsource to local bodies the work the Council no longer had the capacity to support. Tongue-in-cheek, he told me, “We wanted organisations to carry on the same type of work that we were doing, but not have to pay for it – Score!” Interestingly, though, Rachel also observed that she had “very much a sense that [the Council] were on a learning curve as well...so this was all new to them and they were very much experimenting”.

John, meanwhile, welcomed the gradual movement away from the Council that SDT had undergone over the years. “I thought it was important that we got away from being, if you like, an arm of local government”. He felt that people (it wasn’t quite clear who he was referring to) had become quite comfortable with relying on the Council. Moreover, he had felt constrained when the Trust had still been receiving Council funding. His desire to be a “third sector” body was informed partly by his assessment that local government was “ponderous” and “very very slow in reacting”. He saw the gradual break with Council funding as a catalyst for change in SDT, ushering in a more action-orientated organisation: “The pursuit of income to sustain the Trust over the future became much more important, because the warm blanket of local authority funding had gone... So we were forced...into pursuing commercial agreements – for example, as we have with one wind farm developer. Now, he said, “we do work fairly closely with YShire Council...as deliverers of projects occasionally, but they pay us a commercial rate for it...”

On the other hand, Alex seemed more sceptical that this break with the Council had been achieved. He felt that development trusts were still being called upon to deliver on services that councils couldn’t fulfil due to budgetary constraints; he was clear that in the long term there would be “additional pressures...on Development Trusts through the withdrawal of key services to Councils”. He didn’t necessarily consider this a problem in itself; he noted that a similar process was underway in Finland, for example. The problem was that whereas in Finland he had the impression that local organisations were formally contracted to undertake specific services on behalf of councils, in Scotland, the relationship between Development Trusts and Councils, and Trusts’ capacity to deploy state funding was still a grey area. Securing funding was ad hoc and “completely informal”, dependent on the quality of the relationship a Trust had with its local Council. Under such conditions, there would be substantial risks for SDT if it went down the route of becoming a “subcontractor of the Council”. For example, he said, if they were to consider making the Farm a space that offered respite care facilities, they would have to make the relevant investments, yet without any guarantees of an ongoing revenue stream – should the Council decide to withdraw funding, or should other funding sources fail. In that case, SDT would become the bearer of such risks, rather than the State. A further risk of taking the path of becoming a Council subcontractor was that the Trust would end up losing its agency in shaping X according to local interests and demands. Instead, it would be in danger of bowing to a Council-led agenda.

Finally, and relating again to his comments that local government operated on a different time scale to private and third sector bodies, John mentioned that YShire Council lacked guidelines for local communities on “what they should expect from a [renewable energy] development in the area, or how to approach or negotiate with a developer”. His comments tallied broadly with other findings suggesting that local communities were frequently very much on their own, and lacking state support, when it came to navigating complex energy development possibilities.

**Other local bodies**

SDT had an array of strong and positive relationships with local organisations. A mental health organisation based in X, has been a particularly important partner, not least because they had
contributed around £20,000 to the purchase of the Farm. On the other hand, the Trust has had to navigate tricky relationships with other local bodies. Rachel mentioned that in X there were “territorial issues of mini-empires – treading on toes”. She said that the Trust’s relationship with the Community Council, a local statutory organisation “interested in…dogs littering the pavement [and] planning applications”, was particularly difficult, partly because the CC was “the…representative body of the community, and now it’s more or less been usurped in many ways – although it’s still democratically the most representative…they like to think they’re very important, [and] in theory they have got the real mandate…but they don’t have the budget to do anything with it, and therefore they don’t attract the people who are dynamic and would make things happen, because they haven’t got any means of making it happen… whereas the Trust has”. She felt there was some tension because, for example, community councils would normally be the organisations to manage a community fund arising from a commercial wind farm built in the local area, and “if there’s a prospect of the Trust taking on that role, the Community Council would look to block it”. This might then apply in relation to ‘Colly’ wind farm, for which the Trust was to manage the community benefit funds.

**Regulation, policy and law**

**Scottish regulatory bodies**

Regulation played a key role in SDT’s trials and tribulations, particularly in relation to their proposed renewable energy projects. The clearest example of this emerged in the context of their first scheme – a 50 kilowatt Archimedean screw that they planned for the local river, which runs through X. SEPA, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, had rejected the project, saying that “we could only have half of the water that we needed to make it viable”. John went on to note that had the proposed project been in England, it would have been approved, since the Scottish interpretation of the relevant European Directive was more rigid.

**EU regulation: State Aid**

Probably the greatest regulatory concern (though more present as an anxiety about the future than as an immediate obstacle) for SDT was around the EU’s State Aid restrictions, which posit a €200,000 de minimis allowance of government or public sector funding for organisations over a three year rolling period, in order to prevent distortions to market competition across the European Union. “State aid’s frightening”, said Peter, frankly. “You have to repay [grant] money…if you contravene state aid regulations”. Not only that, but “you have to go to court or be taken to court before you know whether you’re…contravening state aid”. SDT had received grant money through CARES and the Scottish Land Fund, which could potentially be counted under state aid regulations. Although a loan, CARES funds could nonetheless be considered state aid because “they’re favouring our project, if you like, above others”. He gave me the example of the Farm, for which they got “X percent on the value of the buildings…Y percent on the value of the farmland [and] Z percent on the value of something else”. He implied that the regulations had different implications for different sectors. However, there were ways of “getting round it”, particularly via the so-called General Block Exemption Ruling, which provides for certain exceptions to the State Aid restrictions where funding is not considered to unduly affect market competition. Nonetheless, the regulations were a “minefield”, he said, and difficult to “get your head round”. He told me, “we could quite easily contravene [the limit] with a single project…We’ve got to be very careful, and it might…trigger something in the future that might stop us doing something that we want to do”.

**Regulations on Supplying Energy**

Scott, of Local Energy Scotland, noted that regulatory issues often stood in the way of local aspirations to provide electricity for local consumption from renewable energy. In particular, he noted that the regulation act on electricity suppliers requires that “if you want to supply to households through the national grid…it’s very difficult for a small-scale supplier to do that because you have to guarantee that supply twenty-four hours a day…So, the only other option…for communities is to have their own grid network of their own…[a] private wire. And that’s expensive”.

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Planning

Planning was a hugely significant and complex issue for SDT’s renewable energy plans at the Farm, given that the process could simply make or break the project. However, even when SDT staff and board members picked up that planners were likely to view their project in a positive light (see below), the project could still be scotched if consent were not granted in time for SDT to secure its grid connection date (which would guarantee the organisation the ability to connect to the grid in 2016) and to qualify for the final round of feed in tariffs at the current rate, without which the project would fail to generate the promised income for the Trust. Unexpected issues were liable to come up over the course of the planning process – and indeed they did; during the process, SDT was told that a new wind development was being planned near to the proposed turbine, which would mean that the noise evaluation they had submitted would have to be revised to take into account the noise generated by this other plant. Producing this revised noise evaluation took an extra three months. A further blip was that having secured planning permission for the turbine, it turned out that the turbine model SDT had proposed was no longer being manufactured. This meant that SDT had to go through the planning process all over again for a different turbine model. They finally managed to secure planning permission for the new model just weeks before the deadlines for securing a grid connection the following year and the current feed-in tariff rate. Meanwhile, of course, “financiers won’t speak to you seriously until you’ve got planning permission and a grid connection”. Peter reflected on the “slight challenge” of managing the different scales of practice required to push through a renewable energy scheme: “The Council’s only interested in the process…that everything’s done right, whereas we’ve got a commercial imperative here”.

It’s also important to note here the informal links that SDT was able to marshal with planning officials through their sympathetic contacts in YShire Council. On various occasions during fieldwork, there were explicit declarations that these relationships and communications through existing networks had lubricated – at least to some extent – the process of gaining planning consent.

Funding

CARES (Community and Renewable Energy Scheme) loans and grants from the Scottish Government has been probably the most significant line of funding for SDT in recent years. The Fund offers loans to support local organisations and private landowners to undertake the preparation work to get a renewable energy project to planning or pre-construction phase. The loan is written off entirely if the energy project fails to win planning permission. SDT staff and board members were quite clear that without this kind of support it would have been impossible to get their renewables project at the Farm off the ground. If the project goes ahead, however, the interest rate payable is significant: 10%. In SDT’s case, the amount they now owe to CARES for supporting the wind turbine project preparation is £150,000, so quite a hefty proportion of their expected income from the turbine in the early years will be diverted to paying off CARES interest.

John (of the Board) and Scott, of Local Energy Scotland, the consortium that administers CARES funding on behalf of the Scottish Government, both mentioned that CARES loans had been overly tilted in the direction of local landowners, as opposed to community groups. John in particular noted the contradiction between Scottish Government rhetoric on promoting community-owned renewable energy and the reality on-the-ground. “I’ll tell you, the vast majority of CARES loans go to private landowners who are often working in conjunction with a developer”, he said. The result was that the “private landowner and the developer both completely de-risk their upfront investment to get planning permission by getting money from the Scottish Government”.
Funds from the Scottish Land Fund enabled SDT to buy the Farm in 2014. And further funding came for smaller projects from the Strengthening Communities funding stream, again from the Scottish Government. A further important source of funding, going towards supporting one staff member and the realisation of green travel projects (including a car club), came from the Scottish Government funded Climate Challenge Fund. This was complemented by funding from YShire Council to conduct the consultancy work on cycling. In fact, the only significant source of non-government funding that was mentioned in addition was that which a regional housing association directed to the Trust for 18 months to develop partnership working on a number of projects, most significantly the hydro project on the local river.

Consultants and Experts

The question of developing and buying in the kind of expertise needed to push forward the often highly technical process of planning a renewable energy project was raised several times by our interviewees. John told me, for example, that in negotiating with National Air Traffic Control (NATS) – which had raised an objection to the proposed turbine at the Farm during the planning process because it accentuated the false reading on their radar screens caused by the windfarm located alongside the proposed site – SDT hired a “consultant who could speak their language”. It was through this consultant that SDT was able to secure an agreement from NATS that the turbine could go ahead – on the condition that “we pay [them] a sum of money for them to alter their radar to take account of our turbine”. He laughed wryly, “Everybody is making money out of turbines, except the community!” There was at times a sense, particularly during our conversations with John, that a kind of racket of experts, consultants, landowners, developers, and others had sprung up around local renewable energy schemes to squeeze financial benefits from proposed projects. Consultants, in particular, were portrayed as having done very well out of energy schemes, since there were high financial rewards and low risk for them in offering their services, given that they were paid regardless of funding and planning outcomes for the applicant organisation. “So it’s in the interest of these consultancies and developers”, John said, “to go to a landowner and say ‘See that hill there, I reckon you could get...planning permission for that’, even though they may know there’s no chance”. The implication was that it was community-based organisations that frequently had the most to lose, dedicating precious months to push forward a high stakes scheme with potentially very uncertain prospects.

Private sector companies

Lack of trust and suspicion in relation to private sector bodies were recurring themes in some of our interviews. John, for example, spoke of SDT’s attempts, earlier on in their planning of the turbine at the Farm, to ascertain from the operators of the neighbouring windfarm whether or not it had “spare connection capacity”. If they had, they might have been able to make use of an existing grid connection, with more immediate effect, rather than having to negotiate a separate contract that might enable them to connect only several years down the line:

“We were advised there was spare connection capacity at [the neighbouring windfarm], so we spoke to the operators...and the owners – the owners are IKEA now. Yes, IKEA [laughs]. And they have an agent who manages it for them...I think they’re not telling the truth, but they say there’s no connection capacity there, so we can’t use their infrastructure. We did discuss siting the turbine there, and they never said we couldn’t if the landowner agreed, but this is where the landowner got dodgy, and I think he was being wound up by IKEA – I don’t think they wanted us on site, but they didn’t want to say so because we’re a public kind of sector or something body... So, we were stalled for a very long time. They also said that if there was any reduction in the efficiency of their turbines because of the proximity of ours, they would expect us to compensate them, which I thought was a bit rich
given that IKEA does not pay much tax in this country [laugh], because the domiciled headquarters is in Holland…[Meanwhile] the company that operates it is situated in South Wales…[They] have no interest in us”.

This sense of a distant, disparate company, lacking any link with the locality and any sense of responsibility towards it, and primarily interested in extracting maximum profits, was accentuated by John’s assertion that IKEA had, as yet, paid out only a quarter of the £12,000 a year (£1,000 per megawatt produced) the company had agreed (only after pressure from him and others) to contribute to the local area as community benefit.

5. Governing experiences and effects

Constraint, ambiguity and uncertainty

The principal sources of constraint and uncertainty mentioned by interviewees related to regulation, funding, planning procedures, and material/infrastructural hindrances – in particular, grid capacity. Some of these issues have already been addressed in the sections above. However, it’s worth highlighting a few further points.

Material/infrastructural issues: The grid

‘The grid’ emerged as a key actor in SDT’s energy projects. “Lack of availability of grid connection”, Scott said, was one of the key reasons he saw for why energy projects failed. With respect to the Farm turbine project, SDT was initially offered a grid connection for 2020, the earliest date that the grid would have spare capacity. This would have made it impossible for SDT to qualify for the current feed-in-tariff or bring in money from the scheme for several years, and without a “reliable, normal grid contract” it would have been very difficult to get lenders to fund the project. Fortunately, however, the grid connection date was later changed to October 2016, because a large project in line for a connection was dropped. Still, John later pointed out that these dates were only ever an estimate. “It might change in your favour [as it did]…or it might get worse” in the case of their “deciding to give priority to infrastructure investment elsewhere…[But] you can’t plan on an estimate”. This indicated just how crucial is the issue of grid capacity in the making or breaking of local renewable energy projects.

John told me that the grid had no spare capacity, because “their way of doing things is to follow demand”. The National Grid would explain, “Well, unless you put the turbine up, there’s no point in us putting in the connection because you might not do it’’. Furthermore, because “the grid is a nationalised industry, it can only borrow so much a year and it doesn’t have the capacity like a normal business to go and borrow more – you know, it has to borrow a certain percentage of its total asset value or something… So, [there’s] underinvestment in the grid”. Lack of investment and lack of capacity were the two paired issues he saw with the grid. John also pointed out the issue that SSE, the local distribution network, and the National Grid operated at different scales. “It’s like A-roads are the SSE and the motorways are the grid, and they’re interdependent, and they have different agendas. But neither of them feel there is a surplus of electricity production, so neither of them feel a terrible urgency to put in more capacity so more people can produce electricity”. He noted that this was “an example of non-joined up thinking by government. It’s all very well to encourage communities to, you know, go into renewables, but if they can’t connect them to the grid and make them economically viable, what’s the point?” Yet, there is another scalar contradiction at work here, since, of course, the “Scottish Government has no control over the National Grid”. The ‘National Grid’ was also a semi-faceless infrastructure-institution, since:

“You can’t talk to the National Grid because they only talk to SSE…So you have to talk to SSE [who] can give you information about when grid is likely to become available and how and what it involves. But…you can’t influence them because…you don’t have any clout. If
you were Peterhead for example, the power station, you would be able to influence them,
but a single turbine has no influence whatsoever... So they have their own engineering
priorities and timescales, and you don’t figure in them [laughs]”.

John’s comments here offer some intriguing hints into the ways in which energy
production is imbued with power and politics. They also point up how local organisations
are often attempting to interface between highly disparate and uncoordinated
bureaucratic and technical processes that each operate at different temporal and
procedural scales. Thus, the planning process works according to timescales and logics
that are distinct from those that govern the grid – achieving planning permission, for
example, by no means guarantees a grid connection. It seems that much organisational
energy is invested in attempting to mediate between these differentiated scales of
practice. Scott noted the uncertainty that ensued: “With something like a wind or hydro project,
there’s at least a year of…lag time between…the feasibility study and getting planning
permission and being able to register for FITs, so you don’t know what it’s going to be like in a
year’s time...So, you know, starting it up is...just quite...an unknown really”. It would be
highly instructive to learn more about the effects of such scalar disjunctions between layers of
energy governance.

However, these disjunctions weren’t simply grounded in institutional practices; they were also
based in the material and infrastructural intransigence of the grid framework. Whilst Scottish
Government policy is supposedly orientated towards supporting more locally-owned
energy, the grid continues to pose a material challenge to this possibility – local scales of
energy production literally do not fit with the rigid, national scale of the grid. Scott
described the scenario thus:

“The grid was built in the forties, fifties, sixties, and has been added to since then but not
substantially changed since then. And it was designed to distribute energy from the coal
fields effectively to...the domestic and industrial areas of the country. And so, we’ve got a
pattern...like spokes on a wheel...you’ve got a central point which is generating huge
amounts of electricity, and spokes...with fairly low capacity, taking it out to the wider
area...[to a] dispersed...population. And then suddenly...from ten years ago, you suddenly
have all this demand for generation on site in all these remote areas...which just have
electricity lines to connect up on a small [scale]...just a few houses up the glen or a small
village... and they’re not in any way designed to carry a huge capacity of output from wind
drums”.

Whilst they were starting to rebuild the grid, Scott said, “It’s just a very muddled infrastructure
now, which isn’t really particularly fit for purpose”. But, when people complained that SSE,
which manages the grid in Northern Scotland, should be upgrading it, he went on, they were
missing the point, telling us that it wasn’t up to SSE, a private company, to invest in the grid:
“[SSE] have to respond to the industry...and if you want to generate electricity and export it,
you have to pay for the cost of it exporting it”. However, he acknowledged that “one thing that
could be changed is the way...the fees are structured...If you’ve got a...big wind farm then
your costs per megawatt of upgrading the grid are going to be fairly low, but if you’ve just got
one single turbine like what X were going to do, you’re paying...proportionally a much higher
part of the cost of upgrading the infrastructure, and so it means...a lot of smaller-scale projects
are not viable as a result”.

One effect of the difficulties with the grid was that local organisations were being offered grid
connections for several years down the line. This was enormously problematic “given that to
preserve your planning permission you’ve got to have put up your turbine by a certain
time...And then...you don’t know when you’ll be able to connect anyway, and get any money
out of your project... So that’s a huge problem, for most parts of Scotland. So, what’s
happening is, the grid is the major...holder back of developing community or anybody else’s
renewables... It’s lagging demand by years”.

John also raised the issue of local organisations having to bear the costs of changes to the grid
incurred by their proposed renewable energy projects. The huge sums quoted at one point as the
The cost of connecting the Farm turbine to the grid led SDT to consider “running a private wire into X and supplying some of the industry and local government organisations there”. However, as John pointed out, that would mean “at least [another] half a million pounds on the project”, since “when you’ve got to transport your electricity from a remote site to say an industrial park… it’s incredibly expensive per kilometre to put [down cable – part overground, part underground], even if you can get permission from the landowners, because you’ve got to cross other people’s land”. Under such circumstances, they might just decide, “‘No, it’s not worth doing’...because of the grid issue, because we can’t get the money”. When SDT was offered a grid connection for 2016, the proposal of a private wire became less urgent – though the Trust continues to consider it, since if the solar arm of their project goes ahead they would be producing more than the 500 KW of electricity that the grid connection allows, perhaps necessitating a cable to channel surplus energy to nearby businesses. There is, of course, a further set of questions around whether or not there is actually sufficient sun and wind available at a given site. A whole gamut of measurements is needed to establish this.

Regulation and FITs

I have mentioned some of the regulatory constraints to which SDT was subject above. However, it’s worth noting again how key the feed-in tariff changes are to organisations like the Trust. The income SDT is now set to gain through its wind turbine was achievable only because they managed to squeeze planning permission through before the deadline for the most recent FIT rate. If they had missed it, the income promised from the turbine would have been significantly cut. Scott reflected on the implications of this for others: “The way the feed-in tariff’s going, the way that the grid’s going, it’s almost getting to the stage where it’s sort of too late for…many new community projects to come forward”.

Of course, the feed-in tariffs only apply to electricity that is channelled into the grid. Yet, as discussed above, the alternative of a community building a “grid network of their own”, enabling local organisations to set its own electricity prices for nearby customers, was out of reach for many due to the high costs involved. Moreover, if the organisation were to attempt to supply to households they would have to guarantee 24-hour electricity, in addition to the expense involved in laying down cables for individual houses.

Planning

John and Peter were both emphatic about the uncertainties surrounding planning permission. “Just because you’re a…local organisation, there’s no guarantee you’re going to get planning permission. You have no additional Brownie Points when it comes to planning, from either the councillors or the council officers just because you are a community organisation – it’s a non-material planning issue. So there’s a huge uncertainty there”.

Funding

But, the “really big one” (in terms of constraint) was financing. It was repeatedly noted that there would have been no way for SDT to embark on the renewable energy projects that were likely to make it a viable organisation in the future without the Scottish Government-funded CARES loan. In general, also, SDT’s experience had been that there was a great deal of uncertainty around funding - an issue, in turn, that almost became a matter of organisational life or death. Reflecting on the scenario SDT faced two years before, John said, “Yes, well we came within [sucks in breath] three or four months of running out of money.”

Leadership and expertise

Lack of leadership and expertise was highlighted by a number of interviewees as a crucial factor in ensuring that Development Trusts continue to survive and flourish. Brian pointed out that whilst these organisations were supposedly ‘ground-up’, and that the “ideology” of empowerment “looks fantastic”, “people need leadership – they don’t want blank sheets of
He saw that incomers from outside the local area were those best placed to offer new ideas and open up possibilities, because “if you’ve always lived your life in X…how are you to know what’s good or bad or what works or what doesn’t work outside?” Scott, meanwhile, reflected that the primary factor in enabling a renewable energy scheme to get off the ground was “the individuals within the group…their capability [and] just their general willing…to devote time and resources to…a project of that sort of scale”.

Scott also made the important point that the very structures and procedures through which renewable energy projects were usually mooted in a local area may not be the most appropriate for recruiting the kinds of local people most capable of leading such schemes. He pondered that the word “community” may put off the kinds of people that local energy projects demanded, wondering if it might evoke images of “endless committees” and “cleaning toilets in the village hall”. He felt that such associations were unlikely to appeal to the kinds of people who were in retirement and “just aren’t organised in those [kinds of] groups…and probably don’t know that the support like CARES is out there”.

Local organisations

Peter felt that there was a lack of integration between different local bodies in X, reflecting that they hadn’t got “the structure right”. He felt X needed a “town forum” or an “overarching thing [that] each of the groups feeds into and that...can deal with the major issues or whatever it is the people want to see done”. Such a structure, he thought, would remove “an element of suspicion or competition, or rivalry...because at the end of the day it doesn’t matter what individual groups are about; it matters...what we can all achieve, and we're being held back a wee bit by that”.

Existing configurations of power

Existing structures and configurations of power in Scotland hung in the backdrop of our conversations with SDT – in particular in relation to collaborations between landowners and private energy developers. For example, John told us that right at the outset of SDT’s renewable energy plans, they had identified about 12 possible sites for a turbine installation. “But when we looked into it”, John told us, “every single landowner had made an agreement with a developer that they would get first call [if the landowner chose to go ahead]...They’d actually pay for an option agreement. So, all of the land that could have had a turbine on was spoken for by private developers”. The rewards for landowners – which could amount to about “£25,000 a year in rental for [an] 80-metre turbine”, were so great that all the landowners nearby had “made agreements with commercial companies to develop [a] turbine on their land”. The upshot for SDT and other community-based organisations was that “there was nowhere [to] put a turbine”, since “they’d all been optioned”.

Time

As SDT staff and board members dedicated their energies to pushing forward the renewable energy projects that would make the organisation viable in the longer-term, it became difficult to develop smaller-scale projects that would have benefitted X in the short-term. “If we’re going to survive as a Trust, we have to be commercially viable”, reflected one Trust member, noting that this would make it difficult to push forward other, smaller prospects in the meantime.

Personal connections

Whilst personal connections were usually valued as a possible source of support, expertise, solidarity and even funding, they also carried risks. Prior to buying the Farm in order to install their own turbine, SDT tried persuading a local landowner – who already had a 6-turbine
windfarm on his land – to add a seventh on behalf of the Trust. SDT was trying to “cajole the landowner into it”, and he’d said, “Oh, I won’t do it with anyone else. I’ll just do it with the community; I had such a bad experience the first time round”. The negotiations also seemed promising because it turned out that Peter had been to school with him, “so there was all this sort of personal stuff going on, and [he] sort of trusted him”. As a result, Peter kept saying to Board, “Look, I know he’ll do it – we just need to give him some time and space”. But, “of course”, he went on, “at the end of the day he…said ‘I’m not doing it!’”. Furthermore, whilst the close-knit personal and professional connections that were available in a place like X was “a real strength”, often enabling SDT to “get opportunities that arise just out of nothing”, the other side of that was that “if you blot your copybook, that’s it, because…everyone knows who you are”. 

Community engagement

How best to draw in and engage local people? This was one of the ongoing concerns expressed by SDT staff and board members. Questions over how best to increase the membership of the organisation were raised (by staff) at every General Meeting. Lack of local interest in the Trust’s activities seemed to be the greatest source of anxiety – though John also noted that it was quite common in areas not dominated by the middle classes for only about 5% of the local population to be actively involved in community affairs. But one ex-board member was more explicit that the Farm project was also inviting some active criticism, backed by a sense of disenfranchisement. “There’s an undercurrent of, ‘We didn’t ask for [the Farm]… We asked for…town centre regeneration’. She said that “a lot of the people that would potentially benefit from [a town centre] hub…wouldn’t have the confidence to…have a say… There’s a whole sector of the community which…think, you know ‘Oh the Trust, well that’s other people…we’re not important enough to be part of that’”. Whilst she felt there were prospects for engaging residents and responding to local needs, she nonetheless felt that the project had to be “something really good to get people going there”. This issue seemed to articulate her larger point, that SDT wasn’t “perceived by people in the community as doing useful work”, though she also acknowledged that X was quite conservative when it came to trying out new things and there were those “who like to see things fail”, and would be cynical about the Trust’s activities, whatever they sought to do.

John also pointed up the confusion around the multiple local bodies operating in X – telling us that the Trust was simply not differentiated enough, often confused with an organisation that operated out of the same building (this also echoes comments about how the Trust was sometimes conflated with YShire Council). The ex-board member feared that given these issues, if the Farm project failed, it could terminally damage SDT’s local reputation. She felt that the way to address the lack of engagement was to draw people in “when the money comes in”, ensuring that local people are “involved in having a say on how it’s spent”. One opportunity to begin this process would be through the community shares opportunity that SDT will be opening to local investors keen to support the construction of the Farm turbine. Some voices were concerned that given the relative lack of engagement between SDT and the local population, the Trust may fail to attract the necessary share value. If it does, however, one or two speculated that this would be an opportunity to more closely involve local residents (see below).

Enabling opportunities and possibilities

The role of funds, leadership, and regulatory frameworks as crucial enabling factors for SDT has been discussed at length above. However, a few further points can be made here. Firstly, there seemed to be a strong sense that now was the right time to be a Development Trust in Scotland, as Peter put it above, due to the amount of government support currently available for such organisations. As Brian noted, whilst there were now fewer direct resources available from local government, it seems that Scottish Government policy is increasingly orientated towards supporting local organisations, both through policy shifts and funding schemes. This is premised on a movement away from “local government doing things”, towards enabling “communities to do things for themselves”, as evidenced
perhaps by the demise of the Yshire Partnership and YShire Council’s urgings of SDT to become more “entrepreneurial”.

It should be said, however, that this government approach facilitates certain forms of possibility over others – in pressing organisations in a more entrepreneurial direction, from a “partnership” to a “community empowerment” approach (in Brian’s terms), they are pushed to spend more of their resources in bidding for funding and resources. In SDT, this has manifested in a highly focused drive towards renewable energy, which has surely garnered useful skills for those in the organisation, but may have implied certain losses for X residents in that smaller projects more tailored to immediate local needs have tended to fall by the wayside. There also seemed to be a broad consensus that this emerging emphasis from government (surely sharpened by austerity pressures) has made it ever more crucial for organisations to secure an asset, on which basis they may be able to claim greater security for the future and therefore make a more robust case for receiving further funding. “There’s so much opportunity, but only once you have an asset”, Brian asserted. Certainly, Peter, SDT’s manager, narrates the turning point for the organisation as having occurred at the moment that it obtained funds from the Scottish Land Fund to buy the Farm. Not all assets are equal, of course. Whilst SDT bought the Farm in order to develop a wind turbine scheme, when they surveyed the property they’d bought, they realised they could do “an awful lot more” with their “63 acres, farmhouse, range of out-buildings,…[and] massive pond” than “just a turbine”. Land has been a critical enabling factor, since it has made it possible for SDT not only to push through a highly targeted income-generating project for the Trust, but also because it opened up a flexible space of possibility for the development of further schemes.

Finally, it’s worth noting that SDT nurtures no illusions of full autonomy. Peter insisted again and again that he’s a “great believer in working with others”, pointing out that “we are just small, you know, so we have to work with others”. The forms of partnership they have mobilised may have changed – YShire Council is less of a funder now than it is a source of “moral support” – but the relationships remain crucial. Finally, he pointed out that “if we don’t have backing from the community we’d be as well just packing up and…stopping”.

Political and social effects and changes

There was some discussion of how community-based ownership of energy might influence and shape local forms of social and political life. Brian, of YShire Council, was particularly explicit about the need for entrepreneurialism in local communities, telling me that “if people have…literally a stake in something that’s happening, then they literally have ownership – it’s not something you have to invent – they can actually see it and touch it. And the more tangible that can be made, then the stronger will be the bonds for the people that are doing it”. In short, he went on, “I believe…in wind energy…I believe that communities should control these kinds of things and get the benefit from them”.

John, meanwhile, noted that where a wind turbine was owned by a community, he had “detected a kind of softening of attitudes towards its visual impact”. At the point I was speaking to him, the more likely scenario would have been that the Greenmyres turbine, if it went ahead, would supply local businesses with electricity, in which case he felt that the impact on the community would be limited (by comparison with what it might have been had they been able to supply local homes). On the other hand, he reflected that had their (stalled) hydro-turbine project gone through, it would indeed have had an impact “socially and locally”, for it would have meant “our river producing our energy”, which would have gone to supply a block of flats

13 It’s important to note a further point here, that the ‘entrepreneurialism’ prescribed for local government remains substantially subsidised by government. In SDT’s case, all possibilities for obtaining assets were mediated by government funds; and thereafter, the possibility of gaining an income from such assets has been heavily dependent on favourable state policies – such as the Feed-in tariffs for renewable energy schemes.
with low-cost electricity. It is noteworthy that John’s understanding of social and political impact was understood very much in economic terms.

SDT’s decision to raise the money needed for the wind turbine through the formation of a community share cooperative may incur some interesting social and political effects, if it achieves the necessary local support. The problem with taking this route is that the cooperative would effectively be independent of the Trust, meaning that its membership could – in theory – decide that it wanted the money raised by the community shares to be destined for some purpose other than supporting the Trust’s activities. Yet, this slightly uncertain arrangement might be productive for the local area, Scott suggested. To evince this, he told me that a man working on a local hydro-electric project elsewhere had recently said to him that such relations between trust organisations and coops were good “because it keeps up the responsibility of the village trust to spend the money wisely…and if they were mismanaging the income, or…if they weren’t doing what they said they were going to do, then there’s always…the threat that…members of the cooperative could say, ‘Hold on, actually…we’re not going to give you that money anymore…we’re going to pass it on to someone else’”. Scott also noted that, in any case, the profits gathered through the community shares would have to be more widely spread in the local area, since the rules of such community benefit schemes (so-called Bencoms) provided that “all profits [go] to community benefit…it can’t be completely linked to one organisation”. His reflections are interesting given that one of the background problems for SDT is the lack of widespread engagement it has achieved with the local community; it may be that offering a tangible source of financial benefit to local residents forges new links between the Trust and X residents, rendering the organisation more locally visible and more subject to community scrutiny.

7. Negotiation, creativity, and experimentation

It may be possible to argue that the loss of more reliable, core forms of state-backed support (e.g. the Yshire Partnership funds) has prompted organisations to creatively seek monies by other means. The community benefit (bencom) model was often cited as a viable way for local organisations, like SDT, to get round the high interest rates for loans set by banks and the Scottish Government to build the infrastructure for the wind turbine project.

Whilst still negotiating the planning of their renewable energy schemes that SDT staff and Board members have had to call upon their creative capacities. When faced with the possibility of establishing a community benefit agreement with the developers of ‘Colly’ windfarm, for example, SDT opted to negotiate for an arrangement that was more promising than the £2,500 per megawatt that was on offer. Thus, John recounted that SDT instead proposed an agreement whereby the Trust would contribute 10% of the costs of setting up the windfarm, in return for 10% of the profits. At the time the Trust set up this agreement it was still rare in the UK – there were only a handful of other community organisations that had done something similar. This offers an interesting example of how local organisations may set new precedents in community benefit arrangements with energy developers.

Perhaps the most potent example of SDT’s attempts to respond creatively to the constraints and challenges they faced was in relation to the transmission of electricity generated by the Farm turbine. Upon discovering that the National Grid would only be able to offer a grid connection for the year 2020 (until the offer was upgraded to 2016), SDT began considering the possibility of installing its own powerlines and supplying local businesses with cheaper electricity. Peter sounded a little gleeful when he said that the grid connection problem was “actually a bonus, because it means that we’ve got to be a wee bit creative, and if we’re about creating added value for the local community, we certainly have an opportunity to create real added value here – whether it’s bringing demand to the site, bringing business or community uses…or something about creating hydrogen production…[we] could take the power and create green fuel for transport and then…use that to put into [a] fleet of local low-emission vehicles”. Because SDT
has now been granted a grid connection for 2016, these steps are currently not necessary, but Peter has said that if they were to install solar power in addition to the wind turbine, which would mean exceeding the 500kw limit on electricity they can produce for the grid, a private wire would be a consideration.

John, meanwhile, suggested that they might end up lobbying the government to establish more flexible ways of making use of current grid connections, since electricity generation was almost always below grid capacity. Citing the windfarm that neighbours the site that will host the Farm turbine, he said that “they’ve got a connection let’s say for 1 megavolt, but they never generate more than ninety [percent] because of the inherent inefficiencies in the system. Why couldn’t we tap into that ten percent?” This system was called a “managed network system” and had been set up in other countries – but “they just will not contemplate it [here]”, he said. “We’re studying [it] at the moment, because we may need to try to persuade them to change their policy”.

9. Summary and conclusion

Despite the termination of the Yshire Partnership, which formally ended Council (and other) ongoing support, what is striking about SDT’s trajectory is how dependent it has remained on government funding – though it seems that the nature of the funding has changed. Available funding seems orientated towards asset-purchase or towards the delivery of quite specific projects that fulfil the pre-set parameters of the governing bodies awarding them – Alex’s concerns that the Trust was in danger of becoming a sub-contractor of the Local Council are a case in point. In this sense, SDT, presumably like many other organisations, appears to be extremely closely bound with a governing agenda that has shifted considerably – perhaps with the introduction of austerity policies – towards “entrepreneurialism” and “self-sufficiency”, which (at least in the short term) may actually lead to greater dependency on project funds tied to outputs orientated towards delivering services previously provided by government. This set-up somewhat throws into question the celebration of Development Trust’s “ground-up” status – on the contrary, it seems that the need to dedicate resources and energies disproportionately to the ongoing struggle to secure funding in highly precarious circumstances partly contributes to SDTs’ difficulties in securing a strong and extensive local base.

Yet, this is not by any means the full story. Firstly, the dynamism, creativity and commitment of (some) actors involved in the Trust opens up spaces of local possibility and experimentation that are not wholly determined by other (mostly financial) constraints. Secondly, the changing dynamics of funding – the pressure on Development Trusts to become more self-sustaining – may push them into a scenario where their core funding draws on assets they control, enabling them to move towards realising projects that genuinely reflect local needs and concerns. The community share model – building on cooperative and peer-to-peer practices and networks that are emerging strongly across Europe – offers a potential route towards greater autonomy and self-management. However, it also has to be said that the feed-in tariff, which has offered a lifeline to SDT and others up to now, is nonetheless another benefit fed by state-led initiative (that has – for now – effectively been stripped by the current Westminster government) – again giving the lie to the notion that Trusts – in general – are somehow stepping outside of the government control in pushing through renewable energy projects. Whilst SDT is one of the lucky ones, and will be able to secure core funding for its staff through the Farm turbine and ‘Colly’ windfarm, it seems highly likely that they will continue to depend substantially on state-issued funding in order to develop further projects.

On the other hand, close partnership with the state has not been considered hugely problematic by most in the Trust, and it may be that as long as their funding becomes more varied and less dependent on a single governing source, it will be more possible to craft a new relation with
government, whilst working towards projects that are more substantively shaped by the local population.

Success, I would suggest at this stage in our analysis, is constituted primarily in terms of survival. Currently, the intentions of staff and board members is not so much to build a vision and a local base, but to garner the resources that will enable the organisation to be in a position to do these things within the next few years.
Memo from OUAS

1. Introduction

In this memo, one Finnish energy co-operative utilizing wood for district heat production will be analyzed in terms of governance and governing relations. This energy co-operative is a locally owned and run community-based initiative that produces heat energy to local community with locally sourced wood. The co-operative has currently tens of members as compared to just a small group at the beginning. It is organized in a hierarchical manner with the annual general meeting being the uppermost decision-making body and the executive committee running the daily administration. It is located in a small rural community in Finland. The data used in the analysis includes 5 qualitative interviews with the members of the co-operative between 29.10.2014 and 14.11.2014 (the chairman of the co-operative, the person responsible for administration, the person responsible for wood procurement, an ordinary executive committee member, and an ordinary member) and 3 qualitative interviews with some stakeholders of the co-operative between 19.1.2015 and 17.2.2015 (the former mayor of the municipality, a bioenergy expert in a forest advisory organization, a lecturer from a higher education institute) that they have had active collaboration with over their evolution, also as active participants in its establishment process.

This community-based initiative is organized as a co-operative which lays basis for its legal and regulatory framework. The co-operative was formed as a joint effort of local forest owners, local forestry advisory organization and the local municipality which all had an important role in its establishment. Although the co-operative can be described to have been strongly dependent on external funding during its early years, it can currently be described to be rather independent in what comes to a need of external funding. The co-operative has rather active and open role in what comes to co-operation and information-sharing with different actors and also similar community-based initiatives. The co-operative has been an active partner in many educational, research and development projects together with different institutes.

According to the former municipality mayor (19.1.2015), the co-operative was very effective in negotiating with the municipality before its establishment, i.e. communicating directly with the mayor and not through political parties and giving well-estimated information to support municipality to make investment decisions. In addition to this, the bioenergy expert (22.12.2015) who was involved in the establishment phase of the co-operative as the forest advisory organization expert told that he himself had internalized that when you want to get something forward you need to identify the influential people and influence them. Also one member of the co-operative reported that his wife was involved in municipality politics.

Complexities and ambiguities seem to be handled through having a diverse set of active members who have diverse skills and whose focus in the co-operative also responds to their skills and who through their daily works may already work with issues that have high relevance for the running the co-operative and understanding the current and future operating environment, open approach to communication and information-sharing with actor actors including also similar community-based initiatives, and active learning and participation in activities that benefit directly or indirectly the co-operative such as members as individuals (not as the co-operative representatives) participating in different external bodies and involving in research projects as partners. Active participation, openness and willingness to learn seem to be some core success factors for overcoming complexities and ambiguities. Also financial
independence which they seem to have reached has allowed them to be rather independent from
the external funding sources which has minimized complexities and ambiguities related to
them. There are two kinds of groups within the co-operative: those who have strong
entrepreneurial (and risk-taking) focus and those who are not so interested to take
entrepreneurial risks. This has caused some tensions and it seems that the entrepreneurial views
have been dominating as the co-operative has developed extensively over the years.

What is striking is that the co-operative has such a versatile knowledge, expertise and skills
base in its active members to benefit from and they have also done so. It is also interesting how
three different actors - municipality, local forestry advisory organization (developers) and forest
owners - all came together to co-operate. Each of them had different aims (municipality: such
as enhancing local employment and development, getting rid of dependence on oil companies;
forestry advisory organization: getting unused wood into use, improving forest condition,
enhancing local development; forest owners: maybe more individual aims, some may have had
more entrepreneurial aim than others, some may have had ideological aims too) but they all
were realized in the formation of the co-operative).

It was also interesting that all the members (except through inheritance) were males and
external stakeholders involved in the development process seemed to be males too. However,
when looking at the forest sector in Finland in general, males dominate in general too. All
active core members have been involved in the co-operative since the beginning and they have
been the ones who have taken responsibility to run the co-operative over the years too. There
has been just little generation shift in the co-operative and it seems that they are or will soon
enter into a generation shift stage.

There were some ambiguities what the future should look like what comes to staying as an
independent co-operative. However, it seemed that due to strong local approach and emphasis
on local values, there is no big interest changing this.

2. Ideas and Imaginaries

All the interviewed co-operative members talked quite a bit about governing practices.
However, often they talked about how the governing practices were in practice, for instance
how internal governing is organized and who are involved in it, and how external governing
practices have affected them. External stakeholders talked more about external governing
practices and how they have shaped the development of the co-operative.

The older active members who have been involved in the co-operative already from its early
stages aspired changes in the internal governing, for instance related to younger people getting
involved, a governing structure to be changed to having a CEO responsible for running the co-
operative, and in general more active people.

“-- And it may be, what I have thought myself, that there will be a day for us when we old
boars realize to leave these activities, there will probably be for instance an employed CEO for
us who will alone take care of our activities which have been now divided to three people. --
“(the person responsible for wood procurement, 14.11.2014).
“-- In five years, then I won’t most likely be involved in this anymore but we have already thought of followers and interested younger people exist. So that as a this kind of co-operative model actor one has to think about the side that are there continuers for the same idea? We have tried to make the people younger during the last years.” (the chairman, 29.10.2014).

In relation to external governing bodies, many co-operative members talked about the history and the change process of the co-operative. The current chairman talked quite a bit about his civil servant role during the early phases of co-operative development. The idea of the governing practice by him seems to be separating different governing agents from each other, yet one would be involved in many of them.

“--- And I wasn’t involved in this starting phase because as a civil servant I considered that when I got this issue agreed until the establishment meeting. Then I decided that I will not be in the beginning because there was big incompatibility close because the municipality was the biggest heat buyer and as a civil servant I considered that I will be on side at the beginning. Only then later I became as active person involved in this. First I was a member in the executive committee and then now during the last times I have been the chairman of the co-operative.” (the chairman, 29.10.2015).

Key ideas mentioned about governing practices link closely with attitudes, opinions and perceptions, for instance the person responsible for administration (29.10.2014) mentioned that the image of the co-operative was important in getting the municipality involved. On the other hand, the former municipality mayor (19.1.2015) reported his own opinion change due to negative experience with oil companies was an important factor in getting involved in the development process of the co-operative.

“Well, these were already described earlier that why. Maybe the question was I could say now that when municipal decision-makers and civil servant got accepted the ideas that we are replacing non-renewable oil, imported oil, with local renewable energy and the euros stay here in own municipality instead of going somewhere else and this gives employment and forest management and pressure for climate decreases and all these very positive issues also with regards to the image. When especially the mayor got this in his head that this is a good thing, then it started to happen.” (the person responsible for administration, 29.10.2014).

3. Everyday Governing Practices

The co-operative has been actively creating and investing in infrastructures with the first investment being made by the municipality which invested in building the first heat plant. After the first investment, the co-operative has been active in investing in own heat plants and heat distribution network. It has a couple of own heat plants and own heat distribution network. However, it seems that not all the co-operative members have been so interested in investing in infrastructures and there seem to have been tensions on how the co-operative finances should be used: for investment and saving, or for paying more for the wood sold by the co-operative members to the co-operative. The co-operative could be also described to have build "expertise infrastructure" meaning that they have been active in developing expertise and professionalism within the co-operative and for the co-operative as an active actor in the society. The active core members have been participating in different trainings related to activities that the co-operative is involved with, i.e. heat production from wood. The members may have not had very much knowledge and skills on heat production from wood earlier but they have been active in acquiring them while operating in the co-operative.
They have been also active in building relationships and working in partnership with different actors. However, a leading aim in these partnerships seems to have been benefit for the co-operative, for instance in research, educational and development projects in which they have sometimes put also own money to be able to participate as a partner. A stakeholder from the local forestry advisory organization (22.1.2015) reports their approach and strategy to be "Open, honest, natural, based on local culture way of acting. Very open. There are many visitors visiting them a lot and they help others. But then there is also own development work which is on the background so they well know how to keep it too which is good." The former mayor of the municipality tells their approach and strategy have been very personal and that it was right approach with him.

“Well, yes the approach was based on personal contacts. So they came to chat. And most of all they of course which affected, they came to talk to me about it. Another approach would of course have been to cut through the politicians and from them there would have been ready fixed issue. And I don't, no mayor would like this kind of thing. So they had, yes they kept contact with politicians but it happened very correctly so that I knew roughly the same things, I would almost say that I knew more than politicians. But it has nothing, the main issue is that neither, they knew how to act with both the political administration and civil servant administration.” (the former mayor of the municipality, 19.1.2014).

This community-based initiative is organized as a co-operative and, thus, official regulations related to co-operatives affect partly how they need to be governed. Yet, the annual general meeting is the uppermost strategic decision-making body in this co-operative, in practice it is the executive committee and the people active in daily management of the co-operative which make decisions on daily basis. The active people are reported by the interviewed co-operative members to have been mainly the same all the time. However, those who had been active a long time also reported that there is a need for a generation shift in the co-operative meaning that new younger people would be needed. Yet, at the same time there seemed to be little reluctance also in what comes to the new people being involved.

As an energy co-operative which didn't exist in the area before, the co-operative has generated new forms of social and economic organization in the local area. However, generating this new form of organization also included convincing and influencing the major partner, the municipality. At the end, the co-operative was successful in influencing through this co-operative action local attitudes and practices, and indirectly local policies, as the person responsible for administration of co-operative reports:

“It was formed from these.. Well, I have already told quite a lot about these different..what happened, so we needed negotiations in it with civil servants of the municipality and forest owners and overcoming these doubts.. As one issue I would bring forth this co-operative model which has quite well suited in our case as there were some doubts for instance about the sufficiency about wood and if we could be heaters and so forth. If one single entrepreneur was offering heat, then the customer would often ask as the first question what about something bad happens to you for instance you get ill or in the worst case you die, who then takes care of this heating. But we had a big group of people, there were also big forest owners involved. Raw material side seemed to be in good condition from the viewpoint of the customer that is the municipality, it was the municipality which was the first customer. On the other hand there were several men, well at least some of them would be working on it.” (the person responsible for administration, 29.10.2014).
4. External Governing Practices

When the co-operative members talk about relations to external people and organizations, they most often mention the municipality, the local forestry advisory organization and the local higher education institute. They do not directly talk about the European Union but it is indirectly mentioned as the source of funding support. Central government is mentioned in relation to for instance instable policies under which energy co-operatives needs to operate for instance related to energy wood support. The state and the co-operative meet at the policy level, i.e. the policies are made by the state and the energy co-operative is at the practical level experiencing their effect. The relationship with the state seems to be one-way, i.e. from state to the local level. However, it was also reported that at least two active co-operative members are involved as individuals (not as co-operative representatives) in different bodies that affect policy-making at national level. At the same time, all the interviewed co-operative members were very reluctant to talk about the political effects of the co-operative and did not see political influence as a task of the co-operative. In this light it seems that the official views are reported, i.e. co-operative is politically independent but at the same time individual members may have interest in affecting policy-making related to energy co-operative activities at larger scale.

In general the active members seem to be quite interested in different kinds of networking, some more on the local level and others more on the national level, depending on their personal interests. Yet, they do not participate in different bodies as the representatives of the co-operative but as individuals, the benefits of these social ties could be described to affect the co-operative too.

“-- So that I have got many positions of trust, at least wife thinks so. There are very little entrepreneurs.. Many entrepreners are wise and say that they have neither time or willingness to participate in these because they affect also financially.--- Well but, there should be more entrepreneur views. In fact decision-makers like that there is a real person telling that it is not some project person. So I have seen this clearly. And yes I have noticed too that in our case too, thinking indirectly our co-operative, that I start to have quite a good network --” (the person responsible for wood procurement, 14.11.2014).

The co-operative members mentioned other local energy co-operatives as important co-operation partners. At the early development phase of the co-operative another local energy co-operative was reported to have been an important initiative to be observed for its success and an example case to be visited. Later the energy co-operative has been collaborating with this co-operative and other cooperatives in the region.

None of the co-operative members reported any relationships with consultants. However, during the early development phase of the co-operative the kind of work that forestry advisory organization did for the co-operative could be also called a kind of consultancy work, for instance related to financial calculations and participating in negotiating with local actors.

Local individual actors are the basis for the co-operative as it is formed by local forest owners. However, the co-operative members do not talk about them as external actors but more as internal actors which are a part of the co-operative and activities. They are not referred to be external actors by any of the interviewees at the moment. Even at the early development phase of the co-operative they were referred more as internal than external partners by the current
chairman of the co-operative who was at the development phase of the co-operative responsible for organizing the group from the municipality side.

“-- And then well..we get these meetings on the municipality side and then also on the forest owner side, and I asked personally who would start procure wood from forests. -- And well, then I asked other people too so that we were able to gather little by little these actors in this. And it took a couple of years to convince the municipality that we know how to produce heat, yet only one involved person has experience on this at that time. But there was already information available in the surroundings. -- (the chairman, 29.10.2014).

Companies, corporations and private sector organizations are very briefly mentioned. All the co-operative members talk about local approach which seems to be strongly assumed to be different from the approach of big external companies.

“-- So I think that we have woken up now and political decision-makers and others, they know this but there are big boys commanding there on the background there on these state matters. So it is the oil boys who know how to talk a little bit better than this kind of small entrepreneurs on behalf of bioenergy. So this doesn't change so fast.-- (the person responsible for administration, 29.10.2014).

The co-operative is a kind of enterprise itself but it seems that they consider themselves to be more than an enterprise as they strongly emphasize the local approach and different socio-economic benefits to the local area.

” -- in an ideal case the co-operative would stay as an enterprise, in the hands of the local people. Raw material would come from near. It has been namely seen that if some big organizations take this kind of enterprise or buy or something else, then raw material can come from a neighboring country. So the local approach end there, ideologies end there. We have a local approach ideology. -- (the person responsible for administration, 29.10.2014).

5. Governing experiences and effects

All of the interviewees expressed either implicitly or explicitly that energy co-operative itself has been a change in the local area. As the co-operative started to operate, the municipality changed from using oil for heating in its buildings to using wood. All the interviewees mentioned the local approach for instance in terms of relying on local forests as raw material, benefiting the local forest owners and entrepreneurs when buying wood from them and replacing imported oil with local wood. The local approach was emphasized to have lead to benefits to local economy.

“--The local economy was in mind already at the beginning.--“ (the chairman, 29.10.2014)

“Well, beneficiaries.. Well, yes it is.. Well, yes, it is the local economy. I think it is the biggest beneficiaries. And then of course entrepreneurship and employment and then environment too. Well, and of course the buildings are the biggest continuous beneficiary as we can show with clear calculations that before joining our distribution network that their investments are
profitable and well...they can and receive energy cheaper in future than if it was made with oil.”
(the chairman, 29.10.2014)

From the development stories of both the energy co-operative members and the stakeholders it
seems that there were tensions, concerns and anxieties between different local actors at the
early development phase of the co-operative. It was reported by many interviewees that the
development process took years or even decades before the actual establishment of the co-
operative.

“But yes, a couple of years before the co-operative was established is started. What stayed in
my mind from the process was that there had been discussions on the topic in the municipality
already twenty years before our contact making. But it had not proceeded there because there
had been “yes-no, whose benefit, good-bad, old-new, what is the entity here” discussion going
on. This issue did not proceed. So it needed the outsider. And one influencing factor, which I
didn’t say here, yes it started from there. Afterwards we have got thanking that forestry
advisory organization was considered to be neutral actor to take things forward.--- We didn’t
have vested interest. We were not the business makers. We were not the king of beneficiaries
that benefit from the end result. Instead as a neutral proponent of the issue we created the vision
and the concept how this could proceed. (the bioenergy expert form the local forestry advisory
organization, 22.1.2014)

Different stakeholders emphasized their own role as the negotiators to solve concerns, tensions
and anxieties: forestry advisory organization expert as the neutral mediator and the former
municipality mayor as a person in the municipality with an opinion change. It was surprising
how the sudden opinion change of one person could lead to drastic changes in development
approach in the local area.

“Yes there were, yes there were (political tensions in the past). These issues what comes to
advancing these issues, these collapse on the politics of little politicians. And I could say that
when I found out that the influential people which are opinion influencers there, these have to
be involved first. What I talked at the beginning about an old study that the opinion influencers
need to be involved. So we started to work on this with them.--” (the bioenergy expert from the
local forestry advisory organization, 22.1.2015).

“--Why I got interested in this was really, yes of course I considered this clearly to be a
development project of business life and agriculture. And I had maybe, I didn’t talk much about
this to anyone, but I wanted to make the bill smaller. I didn’t like these oil companies at all.
Quietly in my mind I was content when, namely we had had some kind of troubles with one oil
company.” (the former mayor of the municipality, 19.1.2015)

There were some tensions reported on the governing practices inside the co-operative too. In
general the active members seemed to have very clear vision of how the co-operative should be
managed. Examples of these tensions include reported tensions on payments on wood to the
forest owners versus saving and investing in the co-operative. One member reported that there
had been voting on election of people but according to him this was a normal part of co-
operative. Some personal issues between some members were reported but they were told to
have been solved too. The current chairman (29.10.2014) was neutral and reported tensions
having been solved when such had emerged. In general interviewed co-operative members
were very reluctant to talk about conflicts or other tensions when being directly asked about
them.
Material infrastructures and the first investment made to them by the municipality could be described to have allowed the co-operative to start emerging. Some years after the establishment of the co-operative, the co-operative bought the heat plant from the municipality and became infrastructure-wise independent from it. However, it was reported that due to the structure of the population centre in which they operate, they have not been able to develop the heat distribution network to the extent that they wish due to extending network becoming expensive to individual buildings far away from the current network.

6. Negotiation, response and agency

The development of the energy co-operative seems to be a story of chance, planning and collaboration. Based on the interviews it seems that the municipality was an arena of somewhat contradictory political aims which affected the co-operative being realized only after decades since the first aspirations for it. Individual actors had a significant role in negotiating the development process: the bioenergy expert from the forestry advisory organization emphasized strongly his own interest to bioenergy and his role in affecting the opinion leaders, the former mayor of the municipality told about the opinion change that he experienced in relation to oil companies after having negative experience with them and the lecturer of the local higher education institute emphasized the facilitating role in his former job for instance in what comes to arranging meetings for different actors to come together to negotiate. The current chairman which was at the development phase a developer in the municipality side told also about his role as the person who collected people and talked with people in order to find a group of interested people to establish the co-operative. All in all, at the development phase it was the organizations and individual actors within them who seems to have had a decisive role in the development process.

Political aims of local policymakers seem to have had a significant role as it was reported by the former mayor of the municipality (19.1.2015). It is also surprising that the opinion change of the former mayor in relation to oil companies seems to have had a big impact on the development process. The forestry advisory organization was considered a neutral partner: the change process was realized from their side with a person who had realized that the opinion leaders should be affected in order to make a change. All this shows creativity of different actors: it was not only one actor who could realize the establishment and development of the energy co-operative but it was a combination of all the involved stakeholders’ creative efforts when seemingly the issue was important for all of them, for different reasons though.

Currently the co-operative could be described to be financially independent as it has its own heat plants and heat distribution network. By this independence the co-operative seems to have established its current negotiation position in relation to other actors in the society. It seems that it is financially not so dependent on external funding processes and can also make its own decisions without immediate dependence. The co-operative has been very professionally led meaning that different people are responsible for different tasks such as administration, forest procurement and heat plant management. It seems that this has allowed people to develop further their own expertise and the work seems to have become more efficient. The co-operative itself has been a change that has been brought to the local area by the co-operation of different actors and which was envisioned by all the actors at the beginning too, i.e. the visions of different actors met in the establishment of the co-operative.

7. Any other observations
In general, the energy co-operative is an example of successful co-operation between different actors and individuals, yet they had slightly different aims too. At the end all the aims were met in the co-operative.

8. Summary and conclusion

The key findings of this co-operative in relation to governance and governing relations include both internal and external governing actions being a precondition for success, governing aims of different actors varying across time and unexpected development windows opening when key persons’ opinions change, and successful change requiring co-operation. It was surprising how different actors were able to come together even with seemingly different aims in mind, and at the end the co-operative was established. It is striking how well-organized the co-operative is and how open it has been to different actors for instance related to sharing information or collaborating in different projects. It was also surprising that the co-operative has invested its own resources in order to be a partner in different projects.

Further exploration is needed especially on conflicts which the co-operative members were very reluctant to report. I feel that there must have been governance related conflicts but as they may be in the past already and they have been agreed, the co-operative members did not want to talk so much about them.

It seems that success is built through different governing relations, both internal and external. Actions of individual actors may be very important in what comes to the success being realized. An active attitude to continuous learning from others, openness to external actors and diverse social ties in the society seem to be part of the success factors for this co-operative when thinking about governing relations.
Memo from PIK

Description of the case studies

BürgerEnergie Berlin (PIK2)

The initiative “PIK2” aims to buy the license for the energy grid in Berlin. Unlike in other cities, Berlin has to open a selling process for the market every 20 years. Companies, cooperatives, and the city of Berlin itself can apply for the license. The bidder must fulfill certain requirements that prove their ability to run the energy grid. The last 20 year licensing period expired in 2014. The chance for a change in the energy system, from a company-driven grid to remunicipalization or even cooperative-owned, was seen by the founders of PIK2.

Foodsharing (PIK1)

“PIK1” was founded in 2012 to reduce food waste and according to their own description, to organize people who want to reduce food waste. This initiative operates mostly in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. As food waste is not only produced by the consumer, but in all parts of the food chain, “PIK1” not only approach the consumers but also the retailers.

This organization developed out of two initiatives. One part of the current initiative was developed from the “dumpster diving” scene and from people who wanted to legalize saving the food waste from supermarkets. The other initiative had the goal to reduce food waste by sharing food of private individuals which would not be eaten for different reasons (bought too much or the wrong food, XXL-packages, etc.) with people who want to eat it. The initiatives merged in 2014 in order to pursue their common objective more effectively. Currently PIK1 has more than 11,000 members (“foodsavers”) who are organized on the platform PIK1.de and more than 2000 cooperating retailers.

1. Ideas and imaginaries

(1.1) Concepts, imaginaries and logics includes the nature and functions of government and governance. Members of both initiatives see participation and a strong influence on the direction of their government as crucial. Also to be seen in the following node Aspiration and Hope, this logic does not work very well; otherwise they would not have set up the initiative in the first place.

“In question of influencing and creating the political landscape often small initiatives, that are relevant on a smaller scale, are not relevant at all at the national or EU-scale and I think this way of decision making should change to cooperate better.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

(1.1a) History includes the foregoing process of the CBIs development and that of its circumstances. The circumstance that led to the creation of PIK2 was the expiring license for the Berlin energy grid. At the same time the interviewees highlighted an increasing demand for taking part in important decisions. This situation favored the emergence of the PIK2 initiative.

“If there are so many that now participate in this process (the re-distribution of the expiring energy grid license) in Berlin, we should do it the same! This is how we came together.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

Some of the external stakeholders did not see the urgent need to regain the energy infrastructure and trust in the company (Vattenfall) or city government (government ownership).
“I don’t think it’s necessary to retrieve the plants. Regarding the grids – energy and gas – there is national control by the National Grid Agency. And thus, these are important plants, they have to work.” (PIK2, External: Political Party, 2015)

PIK1 started as a small initiative, but grew very fast. After teaming up with a large Bio-Company, more and more members joined and media attention grew. A quiz was implemented, to build up a barrier for people willing to participate. The online quiz tests the knowledge and the awareness about the work of PIK1, e.g. the main goal, when it was established etc. It is mandatory to register as a member and can only be passed with preparation and research on their online website. Thereby PIK1 tries to avoid the membership of people who do not participate ‘fulltime’ and influence the perception of PIK1 in a negative way (for example being late on saving food).

(1.1b) Transformation and change: Both initiatives have the feeling of contributing to the transformation of society. First of all, they encourage everyone to get involved more in the decision making process of politics (especially PIK2). In addition they change the daily behavior and widen the perception of what each of the participants can contribute.

“By raising awareness I really think it is possible – maybe not to change everything – but to have indeed an effect in this direction (more high quality food, less waste)”. (PIK1, External: Initiative, 2015)

For most of the interviewees, the intended transformation should be reached within the existing boundaries of the current system, not with a radical change of the system itself.

“I think that mostly these initiatives are more successful that take the existing situation for real and fight for change within it.” (PIK2, External: Political Party, 2015)

The node (1.2) aspiration and hope includes aspects on how the initiative hopes government or governance actors should act in the future. A strong focus in the PIK2 initiative seems to be the wish to strengthen democratic participation and fill the gap of a progressive climate policy, which the government and the companies were not willing to force.

“The chances for progressive climate policy increase by a higher acceptance in the society and initiatives like PIK2 contribute to this acceptance.” (PIK2, External: Political Party, 2015)

Member interviewees also state that they see their success as not only connected to the success of buying the energy grid, but also as having started an important discussion about participation on public infrastructure, which they hope will continue after the campaign.

“Well, it (the initiative) should do a favor for all the citizens of Berlin by participating in the energy grid and thus force an energy transition in the city of Berlin or contribute to it.” (PIK2, Founder Member, 2015)

Also members from PIK1 do not feel that their interests were well represented by the government. They ask why politicians do not act to prevent food waste and why it is still possible to throw away edible food. As a result of this impression, they feel that the government does not represent the public interests in general. Members demand more support, awareness and laws that either forbid food waste or make their work easier, e.g. regarding the regulations on re-traded food.

2. CBIs’ everyday governing practices

2.1 Internal governance, legal and organizational structures includes pragmatic descriptions of how an organization works and how this structure is valued and conceptualized. Both PIK2 and PIK1 have a managing-committee and thereby a hierarchical and vertical structure. This is caused by the legal form they chose (PIK2=cooperative, PIK1=registered association).
“Yes maybe it is not typical for a CBI – or maybe a societal active initiative – that we have a formal and hierarchically structured form. This is given by administrative law regarding cooperatives.” (PIK2, Managing Committee, 2015)

Main decisions, e.g. about the direction of development of the CBI or cooperation etc., are in both cases made by the managing-committee. At the same time the participants have many ways to bring their opinion into the CBI and thereby take part directly.

“Depends on the decision. But if a responsible person for a company e.g. sees they need 3 instead of 2 persons picking up the food everyday, then they can make this decision on their own.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

In both cases the reception of this structure varies. This variance could be caused by the degree of how involved a person is in the CBI. Some of the members participate a lot and thereby know more about the structure. They do not see the hierarchical structure as a barrier (quotes above). Others do not know the structure as well and therefore have the feeling of not being involved so much – and maybe they also don’t want to be involved in organizational work.

“Well I think this hierarchy a bit strange. I think many decisions are made from above.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

It is also said that a hierarchical structure could help the CBI to strengthen their position in the political landscape and give the CBI more power in general, since the CBI has a face that can be presented in the media then.

“I don’t know if politics can handle this chaotic and unorganized ‘Slimy’, with no structure to grab on, but therefore we do have the representing person, especially managing-committee member XY.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

Especially in the case of PIK1 the decentralized structure has to be mentioned, too. Although a team of main decision-makers exist, the work done is very decentralized and independent. Several layers of responsibilities cause a structure on the lowest level which is divided up into small sections. Teams of only a few people get in contact with each other, even though almost 10.000 people participate in PIK1 in Berlin. This leads to a higher degree of felt integration, because everyone ‘puts hands on’.

2.2 Building relationships/partnership-working (or lack of) is about discourses referring to relations with other actors. The PIK2 initiative worked with certain political parties (especially Greens, in general left-wing) together to profit from their expertise and their network. At the very beginning PIK2 teamed up with the “Energietisch”, another CBI focusing on green energy in Berlin more generally. In addition, two of the main leaders, now members of the managing-committee, had good contacts with politicians.

“Yes from the beginning we had a real strong relationship, first because we know (Managing-Committee Member) for quite a long time. Both projects (Energietisch and PIK2) came up at the same time for instance. We sat together at this time very early to find out where we have the same goals.” (PIK2, External: Energy Expert, 2015)

Although PIK2 is using political contacts and supporters for their campaign, they avoid getting involved too much in party politics. They try to act as independently as they can and use the contacts to profit and emerge as a cooperative. Also cooperation and contact with other cooperatives is important to build up knowledge and expertise.

“I think we cooperate with many, and especially the right initiatives, we cooperate with cooperatives and other companies of the renewable energy branch.” (PIK2, Accounting, 2015)

In general it seems that PIK2 is (especially due to their strong leaders that have been into different political campaigns already) highly connected and profits from the knowledge of other cooperatives. They seek political awareness and try to influence the public opinion by broad
campaigns. Strong charismatic leadership is highlighted (see also Node 2.9) and many of the cooperations seem to be established such strong charismatic leadership.

The PIK1 project avoids being involved in any party politics and does not try to change legal circumstances. The CBI also avoids being dependent on any funding body or institution.

“I like how independent Foodsaving works. How independent it is from money, advertisements...and thereby proves that it can by successful anyhow.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

At the same time the CBI is deeply connected with other CBIs and small non profit projects or initiatives. To pick up as much food as possible they also work together with the supermarkets and build up new cooperations, which also helps to build awareness and spread information about the CBI and how they work.

“And then there was the founder of PIK1 who avoids consuming in general and he did dumpster diving before and to make that more easy he tried to build up cooperation with different stores...and the most important that [deal that allowed for the founding of PIK1] was with the boss of BioCompany - a deal to save their food and not to throw it away anymore.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

2.3 Influencing local attitudes and practices contains effects of the CBIs’ work on societal transformation. The main effects of both case studies are (1) awareness building, (2) democratic participation, (3) transformation and (4) in general to change the situation to something better or to show alternatives.

1) “What we can observe is that the people react to it positively and I think that there is already a change in consciousness (...)(PIK1, External: Initiative, 2015)

2) “Yes well I really think that a few people can create something big, only if they team up and try to do it together.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

3) “It’s about the consequent dialogue, to use the saved food, invite friends for cooking and then you talk about the topic. I think this is very important and thereby you influence the people and they start to think about their own behavior.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

4) “At the moment I think the normal and the not-normal are twisted in a way. If we would listen to our inner voice we all would live with plenty of food and give it to others and share.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

Most of the members avoid talking about a radical transformation of society but try to raise awareness by constant changes in behavior on smaller scales. Most of them have the feeling of already having influenced some behavioral patterns and some of them hope to be noticed as a good example in other cities or even countries to spread the idea they have. Obviously the participants believe in a multiplicator-effect and try not to change the system as a main goal but spin it in a certain direction with their behavior.

2.4 Generating new forms of social, political and economic organization:PIK2 created an energy-cooperation (German=Genossenschaft) and thereby made it possible for members to directly take part in the license-selling process of the Berlin energy grid. It opens a very concrete way of participating in the energy transition and at the same time getting profit out of the investment.

“I like that young people engage?actively with the recreation of the former municipal energy and gas grids. That everything gets back in the hand of the citizens now.” (PIK2, Accounting, 2015)

An interesting aspect is that most of the members feel themselves being part and deeply involved into a democratic, low-barriers grassroots initiative and at the same time accepting strong hierarchic structures within the CBI for the purpose of efficient work. The reason could
be that most of the members were part of a development process and thus building the structure by themselves or at least were involved in the process (bottom-up process). Also the work is distributed to everyone even at the lowest level (especially in the decentralized structure of PIK1) and thereby gives everyone the feeling of being involved.

Both case studies chose legal forms that either exclude money at all (e.V.=association, in the case of PIK1) or the requirement for the business activity is to redistribute the money to all the members for social wealth (=cooperative, in the case of PIK2).

2.5 Influencing policy includes actions or behavior of the CBI that influences policy or political decision makers in general. A difference between the two case studies has to be highlighted here: PIK2 is actively trying to buy the energy grid and therefore tries to cooperate with the city’s government to gain influence. The whole campaign is meant to be a political one and is also dependent on the support of politics and media. Acceptance has to be created for the idea that a cooperative owns the energy grid.

“The chances for progressive climate policy increase by a higher acceptance in the society and initiatives like PIK2 contribute to this acceptance.” (PIK2, External: Political Party, 2015)

Members of the cooperative therefore use the cooperative as an instrument for a political goal; which is to support the Energiewende and renewable energies. To gain profit out of the investment seems to be a secondary goal.

The same prioritization of goals can be seen in the PIK1 initiative. The personal/individual savings is not the main driver for activity, but the moral question to save food in general and thereby raise awareness. But indeed this moral approach is translated into an individual challenge, almost a competition of how many kilos of food have been saved by a single person. By contrast to PIK2 the PIK1 project avoids actively influencing policy or politicians. To get in touch with politics is at the most an issue for the managing-committee: “The founder of PIK1 wanted to get through a law-novella to forbid the waste of food but I don’t know if it was successful.” (PIK1, Member, 2014)

Other PIK1 interviewees know about the situation, but distrust the policy to regulate anything for the better and therefore do as much as they can on their own:

“There is a change of awareness and this has consequences for politics. The voter gets sensibilized and sees certain things instead of not seeing them. And this changes something and the politicians, since they don’t change anything themselves. There are more or less a flag in the wind of society, but if they recognize that people are interested in this, the politics will pick it up and also the media. This is how it works.” (PIK1, External: Initiative, 2015)

2.6 Developing expertise/professionalism/social capital is meant to describe how knowledge has been gathered and applied. In the case of PIK2 two perspectives have to be highlighted. First the campaigning work the initiative does before and during the license selling process. And second the work of running the energy grid, if the cooperative would be successful in getting the energy grid-license. PIK2 is highly dependent on external sources of knowledge and expertise, especially when it comes to the question of running the energy grid (which is not the case yet). The idea of buying an energy grid is not new; therefore PIK2 could collect experiences for their campaigning work from similar projects (e.g. Schönau, where a cooperative has previously purchased the grid).

“We got more professional, e.g. we learned how the selling process works, what’s important, and we also included more experts who now work with us and help to get through the process. And on the other side we also learned more about the political process.” (PIK2, Managing Committee, 2013)

It seems like all the participants and also the members of the managing-committee went together through a learning process on self-organization, campaigning work, regulatory and
legal issues and documentation of work. Since everyone (the exception is one member of the managing committee) does the work besides the ‘regular’ job, the only contribution they can make is sharing the expertise they already have and slowly learning new things by doing.

To increase expertise and professionalism the PIK1 project set up a knowledge-quiz to be completed by new participants, which tests the knowledge and awareness about wasting food in general and the work and idea of PIK1. In addition only a small team of leaders is necessary to keep the online platform running – the knowledge for the daily foodsaving-work is shared and distributed within the small sub-groups by learning-by-doing and a buddy-system. Nevertheless the start of the initiative was accompanied by several learning processes.

“A lot of things already have been structured, organized and professionalized. The degree of professionalization is a very high degree.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

The higher the people get in the hierarchical system of PIK1, the more expertise they want to gather and include in their work: “Yes for example the TAZ-Foundation offers a PR-Training, like a presstraining and four of us applied to improve our work and involve the results in PIK1.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

2.7 Creating/investing in infrastructure: PIK2 moved into an office provided by a cooperation partner, the IT-system was maintained by one member, documentation of knowledge was improved and a proper accountancy was established (PIK2 Notes). To do their campaigning work information material was printed and stands were built to inform people in the streets. Most of the investments are covered by a small budget since the money of the cooperative-members has to be held back until the license process was successful. Therefore a lot of the investments are covered by people doing things for free or cooperation partners providing infrastructure (free office e.g.).

“And then they said the permission for the stand is 120€ and the share for the cooperative is 100€, we just can’t afford it.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

Since PIK1 avoids working with money in general, it is said that financial investments in infrastructure are not made by any of the members. Referring to the interviews all the costs are covered by the goodwill of members (e.g. printing the member cards, Website hosted for free etc.) or sponsors supporting with material aspects (Webspace e.g.). Although PIK1 is an association, they avoid taking funding by any agent.

“Someone responsible for BioCompany had some ExcelSheets at home and managed it a bit by telephone and now we have a Website including all the organization. A programmer set it up for free and it is hosted by a server that does not cost us anything and all the complexity of the groups and stores would not work without the website.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

Another part of the infrastructure, the fridges and shelves to put saved food in and redistribute it, is also provided by members of PIK1 (second hand fridges etc.). By contrast with PIK2 PIK1 does not need any investments to keep their work running. Once the basic infrastructure is set up (mainly the website and fridges) it works independently.

2.8 Strategic decision-making includes internal and external decisions with a strategic perspective to the future or the development of the CBI. Both initiatives try not to get involved in party politics and any dependence or external pressure. It seems like a cherry-picking strategy, since both initiatives try to build cooperation with supporting partners that do not demand anything while any cooperation with risk of dependence or conditions is avoided.

“We said from the beginning onwards: if we have a political color, we will get between the front and be smashed.” (PIK2, Managing Committee, 2015)

Another aspect coded under this node is internal decision-making. Already mentioned in the Internal governance node, is the fact that a high degree of hierarchy exists in both cases. This
hierarchy is accepted because it implies efficient workflows and because not everyone wants to participate in the organizational work at the higher levels. PIK2 dealt with one relevant internal decision, which is whether the CBI should also expand on other aspects of energy transition.

“And here the opinions differ. Some say it is better not to expand and to keep it simple, focused on the grid, others say it would be better to expand the topics and have some success in other fields.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

2.9 Leadership, charisma and management: PIK2 and PIK1 have charismatic leadership in common. Both of the initiatives have a ‘face’ to represent in the media and to communicate their goals. This makes the CBI more concrete for external agents.

“To create clear contact persons for externals we have [Managing-Committee Member 1 PIK2] as a contact and a face to the public and she is known by everyone and especially the politicians.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

A pyramid structure with only a few people on the top (mostly a core of founders and highly engaged people) and a broad basis that do the daily work is observable in both cases. It is stronger in the PIK2 case study, while PIK1 tries to stick to a very flat horizontal structure. But it also seems that the latter do not need a single person to represent them since they do not do campaign work.

“At the end of the day the real leadership of a single person never existed, but it was together, community-based and goal-orientated.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

Here the reception of who is involved in the leadership differs. Some obviously experience the structure as more hierarchical than others.

“Well, [Founder of PIK1] is the boss, if we can say this. He would throw this word around my head but well, he created and gave birth to the initiative.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

3. External Governing Practices

3.1 Local government: In general it is stated for PIK2 that changes in local government can influence the work of the CBI since it shapes the political landscape and thereby the acceptance of the CBIs’ activity. The special case of buying an energy grid is related to a strong connection to the local government. PIK2 is considering teaming up with the local government to cooperate in buying the energy grid. Therefore they are highly dependent on their relationship with decision makers on a local level.

“In my opinion the local policy and state policy has the biggest influence on our success. Although it is an official process and it is tried to keep it objective and neutral, de facto politics has a high influence since the finance senator supervises the process and he is connected to the mayor and so on...” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

For PIK1 almost no evidence for any influence or effect either by local government or on local government is mentioned. Since the participants avoid being involved in politics, the relationship is very weak. The only factor is awareness they shape and thereby make political changes possible – without relating these changes to a level of government.

“Because the more presence in the media the project gets, the more awareness it will gain by high politicians. But whether the politics should take influence the project or not; definitely no. No influence of politics.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

3.2 Regional government: PIK2 tries to push not only the city of Berlin but also the state of Berlin to a sustainable energy-future and notices a lack of efforts on this level. They see the circumstances for their campaign as highly dependent on changes on every political level:
“They (the circumstances for their work) change always. Also due to the change of parties in certain governments, regional government, local government, and therefore there is always a new influence and a new attitude to it.” (PIK2, Accounting, 2015)

As already mentioned, PIK1 has a little connection to politics and therefore neither internal nor external agents mention any external governing effects.

### 3.3 National government:
An external governing practice affecting the PIK2 initiative is a change in a law called “Kleinanlegerschutz”, protecting private investors and small scale-investors. This seems to affect PIK2, but obviously the effect is not clear and members could not tell exactly what it means.

“There have been changes in law, that, hm, well, for private- and small scale-investors, and this could affect cooperatives, too.” (PIK2, Managing Committee, 2015)

### 3.5 EU:
The European Union as an external governing agent is not mentioned often. The connection felt to local or state-government seems to be much stronger. In the two cases where the EU is mentioned it is noticed as a funding and regulatory body, more constraining the activity of the CBIs than supporting it (stop funding; too much regulation mentioned by an EXTERNAL AGENT).

“It [bill of delivery] was three pages long, so we said “our volunteers won’t do that. They won’t fill out three pages only because the EU wants it.” And then they really negotiated in Brussels. (...) And it was decided in Brussels that there is a simple version for organizations like “Tafele.V.” [Associations] and this is only one page.” (PIK1, External: Association, 2015)

None of the two case studies try to influence the EU policy. They seem to be more interested in supporting circumstances and they obviously connect these circumstances to local policy rather than EU policy.

### 3.6 Regulation and regulatory bodies

PIK2 complains about strict controls and restrictions that hinder the work of the CBL. Mentioned often is the limited influence they have on the process of buying the energy grid and the conditions of participating in the process at all, which are difficult to meet for initiatives without experience or a large financial backing.

“Because too much is already set: To have a fixed catalog, fixed criteria. This was mentioned too in the last process since it is very difficult to get it through and this also notices PIK2. The whole legal framework is extremely fixed, tight and not flexible. Plus single-sided verdicts, as we have seen them in the Berlin district court. Single verdicts by single judges.” (PIK2, External: Political Party, 2015)

Also mentioned are regulations for cooperatives with a high capital stock (to be registered at BAFIN) and regulations for cooperatives with private investors.

Obviously the external governing effects by regulatory bodies in the case of PIK2 are extremely high since they participate in a very formal process related to a great amount of money. The regulations in this procedure are strict and the members of PIK2 see themselves hindered by them since their expertise and knowledge is not sufficient to meet them all. They see themselves excluded by formal aspects that do not have a high relevance from their perspective.

For PIK1 the regulatory circumstances on dumpster diving (saving food directly out of the supermarkets’ trashcans) and regulations on trading with food (hygiene etc.) are relevant. Because of the prohibition of taking food directly out of the trashcans PIK1 was founded to find its own solution of coming to a legal agreement.
“That dumpster diving is prohibited is a relevant aspect, that it was not legal to get all of the food out of the containers and that it was to find a way to bypass this. This is an important thing. And what else is a big problem, or maybe not problem, but what influences are the prescriptions about storage, selling, distribution of food.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

The founders of PIK1 found a way to set up a legal agreement between them and the supermarkets.

3.7 External funding processes and bodies

Members of PIK2 mention external funding processes regarding sponsors that pay for the wages of the few fixed employees of PIK2. The money of all the members of PIK2 is only meant to pay directly for the energy-grid, not for the campaigning work. PIK1 avoids being funded at all. They see the danger of getting pressured or being pushed into a certain direction.

3.10 Companies, corporations, private sector

Vattenfall, which currently owns the energy grid and thus is relevant to PIK2, aims to regain the license for the Berlin energy grid in the current process. They are also in the position of setting the price for the grid and thereby have a strong influence on the selling process.

“At the other side the very strong decelerating interest of the big companies that are still very important actors and at the moment this grid here has an extremely high demand relating to the structures and the region.” (PIK2, Managing Committee, 2015)

In general almost all member interviewees from PIK2 notice a strong influence of private companies. They view privatization skeptically and demand for democratic participation and re-municipalization to limit the influence of big companies. Vattenfall in the process stands as a metaphor for these companies.

“One big goal and an external sign is if the energy grid is not owned by Vattenfall anymore. Such a economy-focused company, and even more a company having a conflict of interests and per definition is not renewable or Energiewende or sustainable.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

For PIK1 big companies can also be a helping driver since they have the potential to raise awareness and spread the idea of PIK1. The CBI is interested in cooperation with big supermarket chains to mention it for further cooperation and simply to save more food. In the beginning the active role of BioCompany was a driver for the development of PIK1.

“I think one important issue would be to include more big chains in our cooperation, like Bio Company, and I think this could be possible in five years.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

3.11 Local community-based organizations/groups

PIK2 benefits from the experiences made in similar CBIs, namely energy-cooperations that have been created within the last 5 to 10 years. Knowledge and expertise thus could be transferred and used in the Berlin campaign. Also important to mention are the efforts being done by other CBIs to raise awareness about transition in general and democratic participation. From the perspective of PIK2-participants those CBIs helped them to communicate their goal.

“We benefitted a lot that Schönau had similar experiences 20 years ago within smaller circumstances. They are big supporters of the idea and the topic in general.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

Also PIK1 sees other CBIs from the perspective of evolving awareness and thereby helping them to do their work. They are also cooperating with local CBIs to strengthen the network and connect different projects, but all focused around the issue of transition. Some initiatives also
use efforts made by PIK1 for their own purpose. Some restaurant-projects receive saved food from PIK1 to cook with.

3.13 Local individual actors

In both cases local individual actors have a relevant influence on the development or at least the circumstances for development of the CBI. Interviewees of PIK2 notice a strong influence of the mayor of Berlin, who is responsible for setting the agenda.

“the mayor has changed in the middle of the process and this had an influence because it caused by the change of the mayor; also the senator of finance changed, who is responsible for the procedure of awarding the license.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

They mention a significant insecurity for their campaign if a change in the mayor-position or the position of a certain local individual actor takes place. From the perspective of members the mayor has the possibility to influence the process and therefore also the campaign focuses on him.

4. Governing experiences and effects

4.1 Complaints, concerns, anxieties, tensions

PIK2 complains about the lack of progressive climate policy that should be addressed by the local government. They demand more effort in investing in renewable energy and that the responsible company, Vattenfall, shift in this direction. Since this shift does not take place, PIK2 tries to influence the transition on its own by buying the grid. This shows that PIK2’s participants do not see their demands fulfilled by the government.

Members are also concerned about the process of awarding the license grid. In their opinion the regulations can only be met by companies with a lot of capital, knowledge and experiences. The barrier for a community-based democratic movement is too high from their perspective, which makes it incomparably difficult to participate in the procedure and have chances to get the license.

Tensions arise because of a lack of regulatory flexibility. Since the cooperative is not allowed to use the members’ money for the campaigning work, they have to rely on sponsors to pay some permanent workers at least. The lack of support (both financial and knowledge) leads to tensions in the group, since all of them do it voluntarily in their spare time. This gives them the feeling of a fight David against Goliath, thus they focused on raising awareness and building cooperation with the city instead of buying the grid alone.

“I have the feeling that the process and the procedure is made for big companies, and what you read about it, only they have a real chance. And all the others don’t have a chance also because of the legal regulations of the procedure, unless they have good contacts like we likely do.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

PIK1 complains about strong regulative laws from two perspectives. First, laws make their work necessary in the first place since supermarkets are not allowed to sell expired food and thus throw it away as a result. In addition a high legal insecurity exists for supermarkets since also the transfer or ongoing trade with expired food to a third party (e.g. PIK1) is bound by strict regulations designed to ensure the health of those eating the food. This situation made PIK1 set up its own contract to bypass these legal barriers. They complain about this legal situation that hinders them from reaching their goal: saving food.

Second, after having saved the food with their own contract, members notice an ongoing legal insecurity. By law they function as food-traders after receiving the food on a legal way, so that they have to grant health security again to everyone they give the food to. Since the fridges are open to public in the streets, members complain about these strict regulations and say that it is up to every adult to decide whether the food is still edible or not.
“Yes we had the case that supermarkets were worried and we had to explain our contract and make sure that we don’t have the possibility to take them to court afterwards.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

4.1a Ambiguities, contradictions, and uncertainties

Especially the case of PIK2 shows a contradiction between two aspects of representation. Although the parliament/government is the legal form of representation for the citizens of Berlin, the members of PIK2 do not feel that they are represented and their demands heard. Due to this lack of participation, PIK2 functions as a bypass of democratic representation in PIK2-members’ eyes. It is interesting to notice that only sometimes they mention a lack of equality in “their” way of participation: since membership can be more influential with financial participation in the project, people without the minimum share (which costs 500€) are excluded from certain decisions. This is caused by requirements coming with the legal form they chose (cooperative). In Germany members of a cooperative are only persons who pay the minimum share of the cooperative. This legal rule excludes supporters or participants of the campaigning work, who are not paying members of PIK2, from decisions that are done in decision-organs of the cooperative. So PIK2 is democratic in a way since it is a bottom-up project, but at the same time it represents only a small portion of interested people. Members mention this issue sometimes and name it the “Zahnarztproblem” (“Dentist Problem”), since they see the danger of rich people from different parts of the country buying themselves into the cooperative and only for the profits and not for the local interests.

In addition several members of PIK2 mention the ambivalent behavior of politicians, regarding public support of the initiative:

“Politicians in private like the project and agree with it personally, but in the public they step back a bit, seem like a tactical behavior for votes.” (PIK2, Notes, 2015)

4.1b Limits, constraints, and failure

One limiting and constraining factor for the work of PIK2 is the lack of money. Members see much more potential to do campaigning work, but more people would need to be employed and paid. Since PIK2 has a very small budget, this potential cannot be exploited. (PIK2 Notes 5, 8 and 1)

Also the lack of knowledge about the legal circumstances and the administrative framework of the bidding procedure are mentioned as limiting factors. Neither is there any support from the government nor do they have the expertise to increase their chances in the procedure.

“Well I worried about how to deal with it. The requirements get stricter with every step in the procedure and the folders get thicker every time. And then the fear that we can not manage it anymore. At one point it gets so complex, that we delay a deadline and everything crashes.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

Thirdly, the insecurity over whether the cooperative will get the license or not is limiting them in their work and campaign. This insecurity is caused by external agents, since politics influences the procedure and therefore it is hard to predict the chances. For example a relevant part of the process is creating coalitions between the agents: a combination PIK2 and city of Berlin would be the best, since PIK2 is not likely to collect all the necessary money but then could work together with the city. A coalition between the city of Berlin and market companies like Vattenfall become more likely in the end of November, since politicians on the highest level announced their willingness to cooperate with them. In result the license-selling process is highly related to politics and thereby can change the odds for PIK2 to be involved at all in running the grid from month to month. This is also the reason why they discuss failure (=not getting the license for the energy grid) and how to go on after such a failure, for example using the ‘promised’ money of their members for other green energy-projects.
For PIK1 policy failed regarding the strict best before-date and the strict regulations on expired food. They see their work as a solution for government failure to address this problem. They mention “better practice”-examples like France, where it is no longer allowed to throw edible food in the trashcan.

“Yes I think politics is in charge here! This would not be the big deal to implement that wasting edible food is a crime. Period! Because for what it’s worth to do it?” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

4.2 Enabling opportunities

Supportive structures have to be mentioned for both of the case studies. External sponsors provided infrastructure (office, server etc.) and covered some of the costs (e.g. printing information material). These contributions helped PIK2 and PIK1 to evolve and communicate their intention more professionally (PIK2) or render their work more structured (PIK1).

Also important are changes in the political landscape that are influenced by actual events. Participants of both initiatives mention the media as a relevant driver for raising awareness about a topic and therefore paving the way for their message.

“It was the media! The positive publishing in the media and the mouth to mouth-propaganda by each of us.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

Berlin seems to provide a good environment for the development of both case studies since the members highlight a high awareness and open-minded atmosphere in the city of Berlin.

Also relevant enabling opportunities for both case studies are contact persons that helped the CBI to emerge. Especially for PIK2 contacts with high-level politicians helped to gather knowledge and support.

“For example (Person X) of our managing-committee had a meeting with the new mayor when it went public that he will be the new mayor. And yes there has already been a meeting between them which shows that we are kind of accepted.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

5. Negotiation, Response, and Agency

5.1 Creativity, agency, experimentation

Especially regarding their campaigning strategy both initiatives show some creativity to communicate their goal. Both of them use contacts for their own purposes and try to shift and spin the agenda to their advantage. They set up cooperation only if helpful and make strategic decisions, e.g. not to be bound tightly to political parties. This shows a high awareness of how the political system works (from their perspective) and how they think they can get the best out of informal and personal contacts.

“Sometimes some parties try to get closer and you have the feeling of maybe stepping back a bit and seek for distance to not to be overtaken by a party.” (PIK2, Managing Committee, 2015)

Reflection (for Isabelle and the deliverable)

Below is a brief reflection on important factors for development, up-scaling, replication, and/or diffusion within the Governance and Government theme based on interviews from “PIK2” and “PIK1.” We focus on factors for the development and diffusion of the initiatives as there is evidence for both in the Memo above.

Several success factors can be seen within the governance theme above which are important for the development of both initiatives: political frustration, sponsors, media attention, and a well-defined hierarchical structure. Political frustration was important to the development of both initiatives. From the viewpoint of the interviewees, the increased demand of the citizenry to be
able to take part in important decisions, such as who can purchase the energy grid, led to the rise of PIK2. For PIK1, it was the frustration that politicians were not doing anything about food waste and the feeling that the politicians were not representing the interests of the citizens. Both initiatives mention sponsors as important, as they provide things such as office space, and printing costs. Moreover, media attention has been beneficial to both initiatives’ campaigning efforts. Having a well-defined hierarchical structure was important to the development of both initiatives for dealing with politicians, the media, and for the sake of efficiency. In PIK2 the hierarchical structure made someone responsible for dealing with the politicians, which is important to their work of purchasing the energy grid. For PIK1 it was important for everyone feeling involved.

For the diffusion, not only of the initiative, but also of the idea interviewees felt it was important to initiatives to work within the system, to have political contacts, and to remain independent from a political party. Interviewees from both initiatives said that it was important to work within the system and not be radical. For PIK2, it was important to have political contacts and contacts to other organizations; however, on the flip side, for PIK1 having contact with politicians is generally avoided. Moreover, both emphasize not becoming too involved with one political party or another to remain independent.
**Memo from Sapienza**

*Note: After each quotation in brackets there is a code (from C1 to C7) that refers to the different interviewees. A list of interviewees is included at the bottom of the document.*

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Our case study is about Ciclofficina Centrale (CC sometimes in the text, while I will use the abbreviation CO to refer to general Ciclofficine). Ciclofficine (Bike Repair Shops) are places where users can go to repair their bikes (or even build bikes) or leave their bikes to be repaired (depending on the rules of each CO). Ciclofficine are not shops: they have flourished in many cities in the last two decades; in Rome they have been organized to spread urban cycling (which was totally absent) after the organization of a big Critical Mass event in the city in 2002. The first two Ciclofficine were created in 2003 in two occupied social centers in Rome; Ciclofficina Centrale was the third CO to be created in 2004 in the occupied social center Angelo Mai, in the center of the city (neighbourhood “Monti”, very close to the Colosseum), to meet the growing demand by the users. CC was since the very beginning particularly interesting for its location: differently from what happens with other CO, the CC not only has a strong relation with its territory, but it attracts students, foreigners and different kind of citizens that frequent the center of the city, even if they live far away. “We are strongly linked to the neighbourhood where we are located, for many different reasons. The central location is a key aspect for the functioning and the success of the initiative, because it is at the crossroads, and it is easily accessible for everyone” (C2). The diffusion of CO continued in the following years: currently there are around 16 CO in Rome.

In 2006 the Angelo Mai was dismantled by the Municipality; at this point the CC decided to establish a legal association (“Association Ciclonauti”) that could manage the Cicloffina in a “legal” setting. The Association is not to be confused with the Ciclofficina: it is a “bigger” organization, whose aim is basically the maintenance of the Ciclofficina. The Association reached an agreement with the Municipality of Rome to rent a space in the same (very central) neighbourhood where Angelo Mai was located (Monti). This was a big shift in terms of governing relations; although the CC still operates at the border of “formal rules” for several aspects, as I will discuss further in the memo. It should be noted also that part of the founding membership of the initiative did not agree with this shift, and decided to open another Ciclofficina (Ciclosoccorso – Bike aid) in an occupied space.

Ciclofficina Centrale is member of the network “Popular Ciclofficine” in Rome (a network that they promoted), that consists of those CO that do not have tariffs and do not ask for a specific amount of money for their services; but they accept free donations. The only fixed tariff is the annual card of the Association Ciclonauti - which according to the interviews is due basically to the need to have insurance for those that frequent the CC. The fee is very low: the tariff is fixed at 5 Euros per year. Furthermore, the CC organizes twice a year a big auction of bikes that they have collected and repaired, which is one of the main funding mechanisms of the initiative.

The aim of the CC is to guarantee the access to bikes to the largest number of people, within a higher aspiration of a more sustainable, livable and just city. This experience is particularly relevant in Rome, a city that has a lot of problems with mobility, with weak and poor public transportation, a lot of traffic created by private cars, and no formal cycling paths.

2. **IDEAS AND IMAGINARIES**

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14“Macchia Rossa” in the neighbourhood Magliana and “Donchisciotte” in the neighbourhood Prenestino/Pigneto.
Concepts, imaginaries and logic

The experience of the Ciclofficinacentrale is based on strong imaginaries in terms of governance. The participants in the CBI are very critical towards the current neoliberal system, and they consider the current environmental, social and economic system as unjust and unsustainable.

The aim to “put the bike under the butt of the largest number of people” (C5), quoted by many of the interviews, is instrumental to a wider imaginary of society and government, alternative to the current model. This imaginary can be summarized in:

- a more just society: is pursued basically through the refusal of money as a mean of transfer: “We are a popular ciclofficina, which means that we give things to everybody, with no distinction” (C5) “We have helped also people who used to sleep under the bridges: they wanted to use the bike but they didn’t have money to pay. We always gave the same answer: don’t worry, someone else for a small work will leave 20 euros, and with this money he/she will pay also for what we are now giving to you” (C1). This approach is not diffused in all the cicloffine in Rome: some CO ask for payment for their services; but this aspect is at the core of the experience of Ciclofficinacentrale and of all of those CO that qualify as “Popular ciclofficine”. The refusal of money, according to the interviews, also allows the participants to take decisions on projects and initiatives regardless their economic value, but only based on the appropriateness of these for the aims of the CC

- a more environmentally sustainable society: CC is very critical towards the excessive use of cars. By promoting the use of bikes, they propose a shift to a more environmentally sustainable society: “The discovery is that you can really, truly, give a way of transport which lets you be and feel good yourself, physically, it is good for society and to be good with others, it does good to the environment” (C3). According to the interviews, sustainability is supported by the initiative not only by increasing the number of bikes (and, hopefully, decreasing the number of cars: “I think that in terms of materials that are not wasted and that enter in a logic of circularity, we have a relevant ecological footprint. Because before all the bikes became waste, and this means that energy was needed to dispose of the metal for example” (C1)

- a more livable city: the excessive use of cars is seen also as limiting the quality of life in the cities; the transition to a city where bikes are the main mode of transport is seen also as a mean to ensure a better life quality to the citizens “This is an amazing and gorgeous city and it could be approached by foot or by bike and it’s a shame that when you cross the city you can’t even see the buildings that are there because they are blocked by all these cars, that park everywhere” (C4)

- a socially inclusive society: bike is seen also as an instrument of social inclusion, in a society that is everyday more difficult and based on consumption, especially for kids: “My time was spent going to the bar and chatting, we were going to the cinema, not going to the shopping mall. Nowadays most kids just want to go and find each other (...) but they could go and meet up and go around by bike” (C3). According to the interviews, Ciclofficina Centrale is open to everybody, regardless of their social or economic background, regardless of their previous experience in biking, regardless of their political beliefs. It is a place where people can talk, find help regarding their bike, socialize with people with similar interests (although some contradictions in such a view will be discussed in the memo).

These aims are particularly relevant in Rome: as already mentioned in the introduction, Rome is a city where biking is particularly dangerous, as no infrastructure is provided and there is a very disrespectful driving style. Public government of the city is heavily criticized by interviewees for staying still in front of the social, environmental and economic problems of the city, but in the frame of an ambiguous relation, as I will discuss further.
**History, Change and transformation**

As already mentioned in the introduction, the relation with the City council has not always been the same. Created in 2004 within an occupied social center (Angelo Mai), in 2006 the CC was evicted together with the social center by the City council. At this point the CC organized itself into an association, and agreed with the Municipality to occupy an abandoned space in the same Monti neighbourhood where Angelo Mai was located. This change is very important in the perception of the interviewees: “We were the first reality to collaborate with the institutions and access a space which was abandoned, but with contract, rent, with rules. The first reality structured in an association that had all the bureaucratic rules of a real association: a president, a secretary, a bank account...all a bunch of things that others didn’t have” (C1). The CC decided to negotiate with the public administration basically in order not to lose the central location, which since the very beginning was very important for the purposes and nature of the initiative. Being “legal” is recognized as something positive for the association, that do not suffer the risk of being evicted from time to time, as it used to happen when they were at Angelo Mai; with critical consequences for an initiative that has a lot of material assets (like any repair shop). Part of the founding membership of the initiative did not agree with this shift, and decided to open another Ciclofficina (Ciclosoccorso – Bike aid), keeping the distance from the Municipality.

Interviewees (both from the CBI and external stakeholders) agree that the aim of the initiative has always been the same (to diffuse the use of the bike by rendering it simple to have a bike for everybody), although the ways to obtain this result have changed and adapted to the evolution of the initiative. For example numerous evolutions took place with respect to the organization of the space within the ciclofficina: the internal organization was modified several times. According to the interviewees, this is a direct consequence of the success of CO in Rome and the growing demand from the users, that push CC to find ways to stay open everyday, and to regulate the access to the repair area. This growing demand depends on the one hand on the peculiarities of the city of Rome already recalled in the introduction; but also on the diffusion of Ciclofficine in Rome, that make them popular among a larger number of citizens.

Furthermore, CC diversified its activity, including for example courses for schools, which are considered by most of the interviewees as key in order to influence local attitudes toward the use of the bike; dinners or other social events; production of T-shirts of the CBI etc. According to the interviews sociality is a stronger element now that politics is less relevant; however, many stakeholders also reported that in the last years the social element is constrained by the necessity to regulate the access to the space, and it is thus now less developed than in previous years.

Another relevant change has occurred, according to interviews, to the internal decision making process: this is a direct consequence of the growth of the initiatives, with a bigger number of volunteers involved. To face this growth, the initiative has increasingly established more structured mechanisms of decision with respect to the previous phase, since it is easier to make decisions between 5 or 6 people . However the decision-making process is still largely informal, as I will discuss in the next sections.

Ciclofficinacentrale occupies a relevant role among bikers and CBIs in Rome, also thanks to the efforts to organize the Critical Mass in Rome in 2008, 2009 and 2010. After this period there was a big change of participants in the CC: in particular there was a big shift in 2010-2011, and only one person who lived the experience of the Angelo Mai is still in the association. The change was not due to any specific problem, but rather to a natural evolution. However, the change of participants has for sure helped the transition to a more inclusive, less political initiative, as described above.

In terms of effects of the initiative, the interviewees acknowledge a big change in the use of the bikes in Rome: ten years ago urban cycling was really infrequent. Now there has been a really strong increase - and this despite the lack of specific policies and infrastructures. According to
the interviews many factors are at the basis of this change, including economic crisis and the higher costs of other means of transport, but also the diffusion of a positive idea about urban cycling in the city, especially among certain group of people (left wing, socially and environmentally engaged). According to the interviewees, Ciclofficine have played an important role in the diffusion of cycling in the city of Rome, making it easier for everybody to have a bike, and offering the example that “it is possible to use the bike in Rome” (C2).

Aspirations and Hopes

The aim of the CBI, as already mentioned, is to spread the use of the bike as a mode of transport in the city of Rome. By increasing the number of bikes the CBI wishes to sustain the transition to a more just, equitable and sustainable society, having as a side effect also more health. “Let’s say that our ideal is to make and leave the world better than how we found it” (C3). In terms of government, a frequent hope is that the local institutions will take charge of building appropriate infrastructure, in order to make it easier and especially safer to use the bikes in Rome. “you need to redesign the streets, not just put up signs” (C1). Many interviewees pinned their hopes on future generations, and that is the reason why they consider very important the work that they do with schools. In terms of internal governance of the CBI, participants wish for a stronger participation of volunteers, that could allow them to be open for more time.

While these aspirations are basically common to all the interviews, other hopes are more contradictory and contested. For example, some of the members wish to enlarge the functionality of the CBI, basically adding professionalism to volunteers; but others are not so positive about this idea. Similarly, some of the members are more positive with respect to upscaling, cooperating with institutions, networking, while others are more skeptical. Again, contrasting opinions have been collected with respect to the idea of widening the participation through marketing strategies or maintaining the situation as it is: if on the one hand all the members would like to see an enlargement of users, this would mean the need to enlarge the space, change site etc, and not all the members have a positive opinion on this perspective. These topics will be described more in-depth in the section dedicated to contradictions and ambiguities.

3. EVERYDAY GOVERNING PRACTICES

Internal Governance, Legal and Organizational Structure

CC, as already mentioned, is one of the few examples of CO in Rome that has created a legal association to manage its activity. The association was created in 2006 to legally occupy a building - rented from the Municipality of Rome – in the same neighbourhood where the ciclofficina was previously squatting. The association is called Ciclonauti, and has all the formal rules required by the law for this kind of legal entity (a president, a treasurer, a secretary, a directory board etc.). It counts around 500 associates All of those that come through the CC have to become associates. The Association manages the Ciclofficina, but they are not the same thing, as already explained in the introduction.

In the last years, according to the interviewees, the CC itself has adopted more formal rules for the management (organized assemblies, pre-defined shifts for the volunteers, different roles for each, rules for cataloging the bikes that enter in the CC etc.). The need for a more formalized organization have emerged after the “success” of the initiative: with the increasing number of people that frequent the Ciclofficina, there was the need to regulate the flow of people and instruments. A reliable indicator of the success of the initiative is the budget, which from the origins of the association to now “has moved from 2000 Euros in and 1800 out to 14000 in and 15000 out” (C1). Financing comes from the already mentioned auctions (twice a year) and from the people who give voluntary and free subscriptions when they frequent the Ciclofficina.
Overall, the structure is still largely informal: considering for example the decision making process, there is no formal act, but decisions are taken during meetings. The participants at the meetings are around 20 people, half of the volunteers that are included in the internal mailing list. Meetings are also used as an opportunity for new volunteers to introduce themselves, in a quite flexible and changing structure.

Despite the change of basically all the members after 2011 the CC is still working very well: according to the interviewees this depends on the nature of the initiative, which is simple but useful and that it is not dependent on specific people.

Another distinctive element of CC with respect to other CO in Rome is that CC is committed to open its doors every day, even if only for a few hours (based on the availability of the volunteers). Key to the survival of the CC is the work of volunteers; not only to work in the CC, but also in collecting materials useful for the activities: “The CC is based above all on the responsibility and commitment of people that bring materials taken from friends, from things lying around (...) stuff that was considered garbage”(C3)

**Building relationships/partnerships (or lack of)**

CC can be considered at the same time as networked and isolated. In terms of institutions, CC has an agreement with the municipality of Rome and with the AMA (a semi-public body in charge of the collection of waste in the city) to collect bikes and other useful materials during the days of collection of “bulky waste”. Both agreements are considered vital for the life of CC. However according to the interviewees these relations are fragile, based on a word given years ago by someone who probably isn’t even anymore at the municipality: “Institutions have never said anything about our activity, we do not have any relation of any kind, the only exception is that we pay a rent, but we don’t even know who is the person in charge for this rent (...). Nobody from the institutions have ever participated in our decision making process, either formally or informally. They have never shown any interest in what we do here. And we have never done anything to meet the needs or interest of the municipality.” (C2)

In terms of networking, CC is part (and promoter) of the network of CiclofficinePopolari of Rome, and is connected with other movements of bikers (such as Salvaiciclisti or Critical Mass). However, in the opinion of the interviewees, these links are basically useless, as no initiatives are taken together. This is basically justified in terms of the nature of the Ciclofficina, where the main activity is to repair bikes.

**Influencing Local Attitudes and Practices**

As already mentioned, the main aim of the CBI is to spread the use of the bike as a privileged mode of transport in Rome. Influencing local attitudes and practices is thus at the core of the initiative: not only the CBI wants to make it easier for people who wants to have a bike, but, by cycling in the city, they want to act as an example, showing citizens that it is possible to use bikes in Rome. While the direct possibilities opened by the ciclofficina (to have a bike basically for free) are effective only towards those that have already decided to use bikes and decides to go to the CC, there is an indirect effect of having more bikes around the city.

This approach has been apparently very successful: a relevant increase in the use of bikes in Rome was reported in the last decade, and the CBI thinks that Ciclofficine had a significant role in supporting this diffusion. “I would like to think that our presence in the city, the role of the CO, the organization of critical mass, all the world of cyclists that we try to support, I think that it helps and does good to making change” (C4)

Indeed, according to the interviews, neighbourhoods in Rome where the use of bikes are more diffused are the same where ciclofficine are located.
Furthermore, Ciclofficina tries to influence local attitudes and practices by working with the kids: kids are considered as the key subject for imagining a more sustainable future, as “they are surely the people most adapt at receiving our message, our initiative” (C1).

Another key aspect of the CO – and more generally of the “popular” ciclofficine – is the refusal of money. Also in this frame, the CO tries to influences local attitudes and practices, although toward a more limited number of people (those who frequent the CO). “All that we do is finally aimed at modifying the idea that the life of the people should be aimed at gaining and obtaining some profit, not only in economic terms. We show that money is useful, but they are not enough. If people don’t collaborate or participate, even a well-financed project is destined to fail (...) we try to take back humanity in the cities and countries where we live, asking people not to be so focused on profit” (C1)

According to some participants, the CC influences local attitudes also with respect to more political issues: “Basically the idea is to use the bike to contrast the oil industry (...) and the use of fossil fuel resources. We entered in this context of people who maybe didn’t have that consciousness, but they got it participating in the CBI because we talk about it constantly. We constantly refer to the advantages of collectivity, of alternative mobility, the newness of what we do with respect to that we were used to. Even with those who come close to our reality without having had experience” (C1)

A key aspect in the CC in terms of influencing attitudes is that they try to be less radical and more inclusive by comparison with other Ciclofficine; consequently, they are potentially able to influence attitudes and practices of a wider community, and not only of people that come from the same background (left-wing radical groups) and that already share a similar ideology and perspectives (although this aspect is quite controversial, as I will discuss in the section dedicated to limits and contradictions).

Another important opportunity for the CO to spread their message of sustainability is in the frame of the agreement with AMA: they have to be there every Sunday when the collection of bulky waste is organized, and on these occasions they meet a lot of people who “are curious (...). We talk with them and it’s a chance to plant the seed about being curious and saying yeah, we can do it, we can go by bike” (C4)

Generating new forms of social, political and economic organization

The CC proposes a new form of economic organization insofar as it refuses the use of money to regulate exchanges. The refusal of money goes hand in hand with an attention to environmental and social practices: “we are very strict on that. I do not tell you that money is evil, but money must not circulate in the Ciclofficina (...) We used to have beers for a while; also in this case, we used to say: we pay xxx for the beer, give us what you want. During the events that we used to organize we often offered wine for free, the only important thing was not to use plastic glasses; you were rather encouraged to take you glass from home. If you come to the lunch that we organize you take from home your fork. You can came and eat for free (...). If you have problems in sharing things, than...bye bye”(C2)

The CC also promotes new forms of social organization, based on collaboration and exchange and on pursuing a more sustainable way of living. Attention is dedicated to a wider concept of sustainability and to finding new ways of recycling and self-producing: “one time we talked about how to make soap at home, they worked here and came in to explain to others and I learned how to do this here. (...) also the idea to seek out the most possibility to recuperate, not to buy, (...)The majority of our furniture were second hand gifts or recovered from the trash” (C1)

Finally, an interesting and innovative form of organization is related to the way in which the experience of ciclofficine was diffused all over the city. Indeed, the process is highly informal, with people that at some point just decide to open up a new Ciclofficina after getting in touch with a pre-existing one. This is perceived by stakeholder as a natural and positive process, that
allow to cover a wider public and diffuse better the use of the bike. The birth of new ciclofficine is always welcome, especially in those neighbourhoods that do not have one.

**Influencing policy**

Influencing policies is definitely among the aims of the initiative. By increasing the number of bikers in the city of Rome, the CBI wishes to diffuse a more sustainable way of living the city and to push institutions to adopt the necessary measures to make biking safer and easier. “The public administration or the mayor or a party can count on votes of 10,000 or 100,000 people, if they do things that are pro bike friendly then they can count on their votes, there are not as many bikers as there could be, tons of people that have bikes sitting in their houses, with sympathy or other things they could show that they are doing something…until we can’t show them we are here they won’t do anything (...) The politicians don’t give us a hand until there is a representative voter population which is there” (C3). Many of the members of ciclofficina participate to movements more directly aimed at opening a discussion with the institutions on the topic of Safe Biking (like association Salvaiciclisti); however this is not something that the CBI include in its main activities.

**Developing expertise, professionalism, social capital**

CO is definitely up to the construction of social capital. In the words of its members, social interaction is very important in the CO, and for many users it is the main reason why they attend the Ciclofficina. “The CO is also simply a place to meet and talk about bikes” (C6). All of the ciclofficine in Rome are recognized as having some peculiarities; sociality is considered as a key element in CC in particular. The CC also organizes many social events, like parties or dinners. According to the members, bikes are particularly adept and effective in stimulating social interaction.

The CC also is considered important in developing professionalism, in particular for mechanics that work on bikes “if you don’t know anything about bikes (...)you come and learn. I started in the CC a process of self-education not formalized and very practical, watching youtube videos and getting help from other users of the CO” (C2). This professionalism has had in some cases very practical effects, with the example of a former member of the CC (interviewed as a stakeholder) that has now opened his own bike shop.

**Strategic decision making**

As already mentioned, decisions are basically taken during meetings. Everyone who has an idea for a project or an initiative can present it in a meeting, and the initiative is pursued if the majority of the participants agree. The mechanism has never created particular problems, although there are underlying tensions among the members which will be discussed in the dedicated section.

**Leadership, charisma and management**

Charisma is recognized as an important element in attracting people: “I can say that CC has groups which are really diverse (...) In any case, there are some more charismatic people (...) who are really attractive for the CO” (C3)

**4. EXTERNAL GOVERNING PRACTICES**

**Local Government**
The relations with the municipality of Rome of the CC are peculiar, as recognized also by external stakeholders. Generally speaking, Ciclofficine do not seek a relation with the local government.

In this frame CC is on the one hand one of the few CO which, after an experience of squatting, has decided to formalize its status and legally rent a building from the Municipality of Rome. As already mentioned, in 2006, when the “Angelo Mai” (the social center where the CC was first located) was dismantled, member of the CC didn’t want to lose their privileged position (in the centre of Rome, easy reachable by everybody and frequented by numerous students and foreigners) and the relation with the territory. Consequently, they decided to create an association (AssocazioineCiclonaunti) and they negotiated the rent of a building from the municipality.

On the other hand, this doesn’t mean that Ciclonauti or CC has established a positive relation with the municipality. They pay the rent every month, but besides that, they basically don’t have any relation with the municipality. The only exceptions are represented by the episodic participation in bike-related meetings organized by the municipality (as individuals or as representatives of the association) or the participation to episodic events organized by the municipality (ecological Sundays, courses etc.) . On the contrary, CC is very critical toward the local government, and its lack of initiative in support of an easier and safer cycling. As stated by one member “They don’t give us reason or chance to be opposed! They just don’t listen and we don’t either – there’s not even a chance to be against one another” (C4).

**National Government**

The CC does not have and don’t look for any relation with the national government. However, in line with a diffused belief among the ciclofficine, they consider the national policy responsible for the lack of safety in cycling in the country and in Rome in particular: “the responsibility of the deaths in the street is first of all of those that manage the public goods. Because to continue investing in highways and in infrastructures that favor a deadly mobility is criminal. First of all because you are wasting public money, our money, the money that we pay with taxes to make the public administration work. (...) And because they contribute to a model of mobility that keeps people far from each other. Highways keep people separated. Trains and buses, cycle lanes, keep people together”(C1)

**European Union**

The EU is mentioned only in relation with the ambition of some of the participants to be involved in a European project on sustainable mobility.

**External funding**

The association is financially self-supporting. Some episodic external funding derives from the activities they have realized for the municipality or other local institutional bodies, such as the “Ecological Sunday” that the Municipality of Rome used to organize with a previous major. The association also had an experience in the past with the ASL (Azienda Sanitaria Locale – the local/territorial branch of the health system in Italy) for municipal projects that involve psychiatric patients; they did a lab for mechanics with various ASL centers and were reimbursed for this activity from ASL for the costs to set up the lab. In both cases the money was received only to cover the expenses.

**Semi-public bodies**

A similar contradiction as the one described with respect with the Municipality of Rome can be observed with respect to the agreement with AMA, the semi-public body in charge of the
collection of waste in the city of Rome, that the CC has established long ago. Once a month AMA collect “bulky waste” in many different squares of the city. On these occasions, members of the CC have the opportunity to take bikes or other materials that they consider interesting eventually taken by the citizens. This agreement is considered by the members as very important for the life of the association, as many bikes are collected on these occasions, including those that are sold during the auctions twice a year. CC is the only ciclofficina in Rome with such an agreement; they share this opportunity with other Ciclofficine, offering them the opportunity to participate in the “bulky waste” days (basically involving each association in a different square – collection point), but not all the CO want to. In particular some of them criticize this agreement because they are critical of any relation with public institutions and in particular because AMA under the guidance of the previous, right wing, Major of Rome (Gianni Alemanno) was considered a “den of neo-fascists” (C2). Furthermore the relation with AMA is sustained on a very informal and fragile basis: according to the interviews they don’t have any “institutional” reference: “the agreement with AMA is based on nothing. Maybe it is based only on the guy who answers the phone when we call AMA” (C5).

**CBIs**

CC shares relations with several other CBIs - first of all, with several other CiclofficinePopolari in Rome. In this relation CC has a prominent role, as it is one of the first experiences of ciclofficine in Rome, and also thanks to its relation with AMA, whose advantages are shared with the other Ciclofficine who want to participate, as described above. Furthermore the central location makes CC particularly important in the city. The relation among COs is also supported by the fact that there is some mobility across Ciclofficine, and usually new Ciclofficine are opened by someone who was attending another CO previously; institutional relations among CBIs are therefore also encouraged by personal relations. Moreover, CC has relations also with other CBIs that don’t deal with bikes as the main aim, but that share the attention to social and environmental sustainability.

**Networks and NGOs**

CC is part (and was promoter) of the “network of ciclofficinepopolari”, created in Rome in 2008 with the aim of coordinating the activities of the ciclofficinepopolari in the city. Furthermore several members of the CC are part of other important networks related to cycling, such as Critical Mass or the Committee Salvaiciclisti (Save the Cyclists), created in order to demand Italian institutions to intervene in order to increase the safety of bikers. CC has collaborated with several NGOs that deal with social issues, merging the interest in bikes with the aim of supporting people in need.

**Local individual actors**

Part of the relevance of the Rione Monti in the experience of the ciclofficinacentrale is connected to the networks of relation and friendship that the CC has established with the citizens of this neighbourhood: “To be located in this neighbourhood is an important opportunity for us. We are very fond of that territory because we have several links. For example the Bio shop in street xxx has now opened a bike shop with two people that used to frequent CC…furthermore it is a very fertile territory, because a lot of people use the bike as it is in the very centre of the city and we often host students, foreign students or other foreigners etc.” (C2). Furthermore, according to the interviewees, the city centre is predominantly inhabited by people with strong sensitivity on environmental and social issues.

**5. GOVERNING EXPERIENCES AND EFFECTS**
Complaints, concerns, anxieties, tensions

There are several ambiguities in the experience of Ciclofficina Centrale. Some of these are related to internal governance, while others to external governing relations. The ambiguities in internal governance model include:

- **Volunteers vs employed**: On the one hand, some of the members would like to have the opportunity to employ someone, in order to make the Ciclofficina Centrale bigger and more effective. The opportunity to employ someone could for example be offered by the participation in European projects. On the other hand, others are very critical towards this option, as they recognize the risks of such a change: many of the volunteers have precarious and under-paid jobs, and it could be very difficult to put their efforts (offered for free) in the same basket with someone fully and well-paid by the initiative.

- **Enlargement vs Restraint**: another ambiguous topic in terms of internal governance is related to the expansion of the initiative. Both in terms of opening hours, space etc. the initiative has grown a lot in the last decade. While some members would like to see a further growth of the initiative in quantitative and qualitative terms, others are afraid that the initiative could not become bigger without compromising its current nature and strengths, and would prefer consequently to keep things as they are.

- **Money vs refusal of money**: The CC is a “popular ciclofficina”, in the sense that they totally refuse money as a mode of exchange, and they do not apply any tariffs to their services. This is a distinctive element in the CC. The Ciclofficinepopolari refuse money in the sense that they don’t have tariffs, but they accept money as “donations” from the participants/members, and also they accept money from the institutions (for example for courses they organize or for the participation in the “ecological Sunday” of the Municipality of Rome in the past). Even if they specify that they don’t get any profit but only the reimbursement for the activities that they organize, this creates a clear ambiguity with the explicit refusal of money mentioned above.

The main ambiguities in external relations can be summarized as follows:

- **Relation with institutions**: Being “political for the bike” (C1), seeing themselves as actors that work for the diffusion of bikes, make many of the members not interested in confronting institutions. On the other hand, the aims of the initiative cannot be fully pursued without an agreement with public institutions, such as for example investments in infrastructures to make cycling easier and safer, which are needed in order to make it a real alternative for the mobility in the city. The lack of infrastructures for cycling make it very dangerous to cycle in the city. Consequently there is a limit to the aims that the association could pursue in terms of diffusion of the bikes without support from the public administration in terms of investing in safer cycling in the city. The choice not to relate to institutions is common to the majority of CO in Rome; but while the most politicized do that in an explicit opposition and critique to the system, CC has an agreement with the Municipality for the rent and with the AMA for the collection of bikes during the days of bulky waste, but they do not seek for any dialogue with the institution. This creates a very ambiguous situation.

- **Individuals VS Association**: connected to this topic, is the ambiguity between individuals and association. Indeed, the participation in the different forms of “dialogue” with institutions is made sometimes as individuals, some others as Association Ciclonauti, some others in representation of other associations that are connected to Ciclonauti such as Salvaiciclisti. “I think we should do everything, and that is what we do. (…) people that are part of Ciclonauti in the meanwhile participate in other projects (…) for example Salvaiciclisti that have an attitude of strong contrast with institutions” (C1). The border between individual
participation and participation as association is blurred, in a context where it is always the same people that participate. In this frame, there is an ambiguity between the role/responsibilities/purposes of the members and those of the Association/Ciclofficina Centrale. Ciclofficina is more like a technical office; however neither the association Ciclonauti is in the front line for battles that are on the other hand conducted by the single members or by other associative forms (like Salvaiciclisti). According to some interviews, there is a difficulty to “speak for the association” that derives from the fact that the most of the members are included in more than one initiative (for example a CO, Salvaiciclisti, Critical Mass) but those associations are afraid to lose their identity, and of being “eaten” by other associations. Consequently for a person who is member of many associations it is a very sensitive issue how to qualify himself for example in an institutional meeting; and people end up talking as individuals, thus weakening their position.

Finally, some ambiguities are related to the aspirations of the CC, or the ways in which it pursues the changes in government structures and how those strategies might affect this path. Those ambiguities include:

- **Inclusivity VS politicization:** CC offers a peculiar kind of political experience. According to the interviewees Ciclofficina has clearly emerged in a “left wing” environment and it is of course very far from the radical right movements; but they keep open doors to all that want to join them, also a-political, or sustaining moderate or popular parties…the interviewees stress this element as a distinctive one with respect to other CO in the city of Rome, where the political beliefs are at the core of the social interaction. Members of CC consider themselves as not strongly “political”: many of the members of the association come from the radical left area, and they have chosen the ciclofficina as a “less political” participative project. As mentioned by a member, “I am political for the bike” (C1). However, CC also comes from an experience of squatting, and from a very politicized past. Despite the choice not to allow political opinions to prevent the CC from attracting potential people interested in the bikes, and despite the fact that after 2010 there was an important turnover in the volunteers, by its very nature the initiative still carries political connotations, and this somehow limits the inclusivity that it is trying to pursue. Furthermore according so some members the “political background” of the initiative is evident in the very objectives and “way of doing things” of the Ciclofficina, and affect the possibility to attract more people. This is also because, despite their self-definition, external stakeholders see the experience of Ciclofficine as clearly political.

- **Cohabitation with cars VS refusal of cars:** Ciclofficina Centrale defines itself as inclusive also with respect to the “integralism” in the use of the bike. While many Ciclofficine refuse completely the use of the cars, and do not accept that their members use both cars and bikes, CC has apparently a softer approach, insofar as they understand that in some cases it is really difficult to use the bikes in Rome (for example when you have kids). On the one hand, this inclusivity is ambiguous as it is in contradiction with the aims of the initiative, and with the “ideal” of a city where the bikes became the unique mode of transport. On the other hand, the inclusivity is surely important in the “success” of the initiative (in terms of the number of people that frequent the ciclofficina). However, similarly to what happens for the political beliefs, the use of the cars is to some extent a “natural barrier” for people who could be attracted by the CC.

- **High aspirations vs money saving:** As already mentioned, the CC has very ambitious aspirations. The diffusion of bikes is intended as a means to work for a more sustainable and just society. However, these motivations are not necessarily common to all of those that frequent the Ciclofficina. For many of them, the choice of the bike is only motivated by the
lack of money, the need to find an economic means of transport in a city with serious limits in public transportations or to look for social interaction. Members of the CC try to diffuse concepts of sustainability and change, but this might not be at the core of the interests of many of the users.

**Enabling opportunities and possibilities**

The difficulties of biking in Rome are considered as a key element for the emergence of Ciclofficine, to respond to the needs of those that find it difficult to maintain their bikes (for example after the theft of some parts of the bike, which are very frequent) and to offer an example of an alternative mean of transport in a city where mobility is a key problem. Most of the limits to cycling that bikers experience in the city of Rome (lack of adequate infrastructure, frequent theft of bikes, pollution in the city, dangerousness) have acted as a stimulus for the creation of the CBI. After the experience of Critical Mass there was the will to diffuse urban cycling in Rome; and the government’s inertia (at different scales) has opened up opportunities and possibilities for the self-organization of citizens. Furthermore also wider problems of Rome (low incomes and growing poverty, weak public transportation) have encouraged urban cycling in the last years.

For the specific experience of the CC, the eviction of the occupied social center Angelo Mai offered a space of opportunity for developing a new form of organization. Indeed important opportunities derive to the CBI from its central location, inhabited by many citizens that care about environmental and social issues and easily reachable by everybody (especially students and foreigners). In order not to lose these opportunities, the CBI has created a new organizational structure.

An important opportunity is offered to the CBI by its agreement with AMA – the public body in charge for the waste collection. The participation in the bulky waste days and the collection of materials useful for the CBI (primarily bikes) is considered as a key element in the management of the CBI.

6. NEGOTIATION, RESPONSE, AGENCY

As already mentioned, CC is one of the few Ciclofficine that, after the eviction, found a way to transform into a legal organization, negotiating and mediating with government and laws in order to maintain their activity. Another important form of negotiation is the agreement with AMA. Despite the limits of AMA and its problems, the CBI has privileged the utility that might derive from this agreement to their activity.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Local government – and in particular its complete inertia in the field of cycling and bikes – has a double effect on the CBI:

- On the one hand, the lack of an adequate policy environment acted as a stimulus for the emergence, development, replication and diffusion of the CBI. After the Critical Mass of 2002, Ciclofficine in Rome took charge of the potentialities opened by the growing interests in bikes and cycling, offering services to encourage the diffusion of bikes and thus proposing a more environmentally and socially sustainable city. The inertia of the Municipality has pushed the diffusion of CO, to fill a vacuum in the management of the city.

- On the other hand, the inertia of the public administration is currently constraining and limiting the further development and wider impact of the initiative. It is definitely still very dangerous to use bikes in Rome. Without adequate investments in infrastructures it is difficult
to imagine that cycling will ever become a major mode of transportation in the city (despite its undeniable diffusion in the last years).

**List of Interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>General Info</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date of the interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Male, Italian</td>
<td>He is the oldest member of the CC, the only one who was already there when the CC was founded in another occupied social centre (before 2006). He is basically interested in the political aspects of the initiative.</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Male, Italian</td>
<td>Old member. He has volunteered in the Ciclofficina Centrale since 2008. He has a strong past in the activism of radical left wing, and started to frequent the ciclofficina for its political value as well as for his interest in bikes.</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Female, Italian</td>
<td>Joined the Ciclofficina in 2011. She works as a “jolly” or a substitute assistant and she is basically interested in its social and environmental aspects.</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Female, Italian</td>
<td>Joined in 2012. She is responsible for the orders of parts and other materials for the CC. She is interested in social and environmental aspects.</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Male, Italian</td>
<td>A very new member. He started volunteering in the CC a year and a half before the interview. He is a bike’s mechanic and he started to frequent the Ciclofficina for his personal needs to work on the bike. He is currently one of the leaders of the CC (either president when interviewed or previously held the position)</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Male, Italian</td>
<td>Stakeholder and former member of Ciclonauti. He currently manages a separate bike repair shop (for profit) and he still occasionally collaborates</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>with Ciclonauti.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C7</td>
<td>Male, Italian</td>
<td>Stakeholder. Member of a cycling association which is closely tied to the CC.</td>
<td>2015</td>
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Memo from UAB

1. Introduction

Barcelona sample for this theme consists mainly of two community-initiatives, one from the food domain and one from the energy domain. The food initiative consists of a pair of food producer + food cooperative. The food producer (CBI1) is a peri-urban small business producing organic veggies and distributing to a number of cooperatives in Barcelona (up to 200 baskets per week). It was started in 2010. It is formed by 2 business partners and 3 employees. CBI1 is part of a group of 12 producers in the area where it is located (Maresme region, 20 km. distance from Barcelona). The food cooperative (CBI2) is located in the central and multicultural BarriGotic of Barcelona. It was founded in 2000. It is formed by 20-25 families organized to buy their food collectively. The initiative is run with volunteer work. It is known as one of the most politicized food cooperatives in Barcelona. CBI2 was originally linked to another productive project, but relationships deteriorated over time and broke off, which is when CBI2 started to buy produce from CBI1.

The energy initiative (CBI3) is an energy consumers’ cooperative with more than 22,000 members and 28,000 clients across Spain. It was initiated in Girona in 2000. The initiative is managed by three groups with different functions: the professional technical team (about 15 employees, based in Girona), a board (5 people, elected every 4 years, non-paid) and a number of local groups distributed in the Spanish territory (more than 30, with different levels of engagement). These volunteers’ groups are generally in charge of the diffusion of the initiative, the communication with local actors, and some of them carry some technical tasks too. We have conducted interviews mainly with members linked to Barcelona’s local group. We interviewed also two members of the board. Therefore, our sample can be considered to be composed of two pairs of entrepreneurial-like and professionalized organizations + volunteer-based initiatives (CBI1 + CBI2 and CBI3 + Barcelona local group).

In addition to members of these four communities, we interviewed five stakeholders. Related to the food initiative: the co-manager of a farm (CBI4) from CBI1’s producers’ network, the head of the agriculture office in Maresme region who was in contact with CBI1 from its beginning, the co-founder of another farm that used to be linked to CBI2 years ago (CBI5). Related to CBI3: a member of the Xarxa de SoberaniaEnergètica (political actor linked to CBI3), and the head of SantCeloni sustainability office (SantCeloni was the first town to contract the energy to CBI3). We include the reflections that the two stakeholders who are part of community-based initiatives (CBI4 and CBI5) make about their own initiatives in this analysis.

Governance appears, as expected, as a crucial topic in the interviewees’ discourses, even the relevance of internal governance is not always made explicit. External governing is recognized as relevant, because regulations from institutions have the ability to impact initiatives' development (negatively or positively). Although this impact is minimized through cooperation among initiatives and keeping the autonomy from institutions, interviewees recognize the need of engagement with institutions to have a broader impact on society. The precarious economic context seems, on one hand, to affect positively the alter-economy, since more people are attracted by alternatives to the capitalist logics and practices, but on other hand, the precariousness of such system permeates to the initiatives as well, which have no time or resources to be able to become more solid and stable and to be politically more active. In addition, initiatives have to deal with the internal governance of communities and with their allies, using more horizontal and participatory dynamics. These innovative governing practices bring some problems/inefficiencies too, in part because they are too dependent on the participation of the members, especially in non-professionalized initiatives. Therefore the autonomy of the initiatives has both positive and negative impacts on communities’ development.

An important issue to be considered regarding the Spanish/Catalan context, which surely affects the vision about governance of interviewees, is the enormous change in the institutional
political arena in Spain throughout the economic crisis (2008 – ongoing), especially after the 15M where people went to the streets claiming real democracy. New parties, much more connected to society’s needs and claims, have emerged, both at national and local level. Many of those now govern in many municipalities across the country. It’s striking that in the May 2015 elections, 4 out of the 5 biggest cities in Spain (Barcelona, Madrid, Zaragoza and Valencia), a newborn leftist party obtained the majority of votes. This figure gives an idea of the changes that Spanish politics is experiencing and the radical shift that the imaginary of governance has met the last years. Local and regional governments have suddenly been rendered as accessible or potential allies. Even the interviews were conducted before the elections, the results are only the outcome of what was already known: the old parties are obsolete and there is a new generation of people willing to displace them. Most interviewees know someone who is now in the team governing the city of Barcelona or other municipalities.

2. Ideas and Imaginaries

External governance is seen as a constraining element rather than an enabling one, especially national and international scales, which dictate unbalanced regulations that favor the business-as-usual capitalist economy (i.e. industrialized agriculture, electrical corporations). Lower institutional levels (local and regional governments) can play an important role in an initiative’s development through regulation. These levels of governance bodies are seen as accessible and potential allies, but only after institutions will accept to negotiate the “rules”. Initiatives are open to, and already do, cooperate with local and regional institutions, but avoiding dependency from them. Even though communities choose to remain autonomous, participants see the engagement with institutions as needed for broaden their impact on society. This engagement will depend on the willingness and ability of public employees to understand the need of a paradigm shift. The idea that “we are not going to knock their (institutions) door, they will knock ours” is repeated several times.

“If the Generalitat (regional government) decides that Gallecs agricultural zone (publicly managed) with 700ha and already 100 ha of organic production... If the Generalitat decides that the zone should be fully organic... the public administration can always decide such things. When it is public land... when it’s private land there is capitalism in between” G, co-founder, co-owner and worker of CBI1 (Nov 2014)

Values and practices dictated from the globalized neoliberal system are seen as the major enemy to fight against. These capitalist logics provoke on one hand low participation on collective actions due to a generalized neoliberal governmentality, while on other hand endanger the alternatives with attempts of co-optation. It should be the role of public institutions (regional, local) to revert these dynamics with policies and regulations.

“What we really see is that the current free market and free capital system is not the one that can favours organic and local consumption, on top of cheap oil. It motivates to products come from outside, from far away, because oil is cheap, non-organic polluting products, produced with pesticides, herbicides, synthesized fungicides made of oil, to come. That’s what it’s happening.” G, co-founder, co-owner and worker of CBI1 (Nov 2014)

“Public policies should have being able to influence the process. It was unavoidable that big producers and capital entered because this sector was one of the few that are doing well despite of the crisis. Not only the capital, also the small pirates saying that they produce organic without really doing it” M, co-founder and member of CBI5, former food provider of CBI2 (Feb 2015)

Most of the interviewees agree that the initiatives should remain autonomous. Some of them are open to collaboration if these are balanced, while others think the engagement with institutions is not needed, nor desirable. This applies particularly to CBI2, which is a non-professionalized informal group, whose activities are currently not affected by any regulation. Under this
perspective, the absence of regulation is seen as positive and there is no need to cooperate with institutions.

“I don’t think it will be needed to have relations with institutions. I believe in the cooperativism because of the idea of organizing ourselves outside the institutions. No, we don’t need institutions for organizing ourselves. We can do that [organizing ourselves] perfectly” R, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

“There is a law which does not exist and it’s helping the initiative very much. The law for which we don’t need a licence to do this. This is fundamental. If such a law is passed in Barcelona, all the consumption groups movement will change dramatically” T, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

About the municipal arena in Barcelona, some people manifest optimism with the new political spectrum and the radical change of the institutional politics after 15M, while others complain that the focus on the institutional dimension is lowering the activity of social movements on the streets.

“On one hand there is nothing going on the streets now, and I feel a bit angry about the fact that all the unrest is directed towards Podemos and Guanyem, because I don’t think the solution is going to the parliament. Because the consequence is that nothing is going on on the streets. And I think we should be more powerful in the streets than in the parliament?” R, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

Internal governance is also crucial and also constraining, though the latter is not always recognized. The internal governance of initiatives is generally carried out with horizontal and participatory methods. The internal management is highly impacted by the external context. In such an unwelcoming environment, professionalized initiatives are focused on their economic survival. This situation expands a (very pragmatic) imaginary which renders other aspects (social sustainability, internal power dynamics, local impact, etc.) as secondary. It could be argued that economic sustainability is the key governing driver of such initiatives. Similarly, for volunteer based initiatives, participation and engagement is seen as key for the performance of the communities, but those are highly constrained by the precariousness inherited by external structures.

External governance also includes the relations and partnerships with other groups, which are seen as fundamental. Indeed, communities have managed to remain autonomous by strengthening their networks with other initiatives. For example, CBI1 has a strong network of producers that support each other, also one of consumers, as well as many other relations (other farmers, schools, restaurants, etc.) which support the development of CBI1. This large network (“CBI1 Universe”) is perceived to have much more influence on CBI1’s development than institutions (for institutions having more influence, regulations will change, but right now they don’t). CBI3 has expanded across territories, creating an extensive network of local groups and local stakeholders which support the initiative. CBI3 has also engaged with political organizations in the field of energy. Together with these partners initiatives manage to form autonomous economies which are able to deal with an unwelcoming institutional environment.

2.2. Aspirations and hopes

Interviewees aim to continue being autonomous from institutions. Direct economic help is not a claim because from members’ perspective, if the rules were well designed there will be no need of economic subsidies. Interviewees rather demand the restructuring and regulation of the system where the initiatives navigate, towards a “more balanced playground”. Participants are open to collaborate with municipalities and regional agencies (meaning they are open to participate in public programs, to apply to public bids, to attend to forums and events when they are invited, to assess institutions about the paths for a paradigm shift). For that to happen, they think that more interest, more receptivity and more knowledge is needed from the power holders.
“In politics these issues are not discussed due to ignorance, due to the lack of demand or auto-demand of being updated. This is the debate that it’s happening right now, you, politicians, must be informed. We cannot live external to this. And that’s it. Not more. I don’t want protection, nor... no, no. They must be informed, be receptive and have knowledge on what’s happening. With a much more open attitude. This is the way of changing their mindsets and be more integrated in society, don’t stand in the layer... ” D, member of CBI3, former CBI3 board member, and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015).

On other hand, other interviewees remark that initiatives, especially informal, are better kept outside the system, and that the help needed by communities might be very simple. This seems to apply to informal groups.

“We start talking about our big conclusions – we get stuck in this discourse which is totally unhelpful and techno-oriented. The right approach is how do we support small scale social movements. Sometimes they do not need money. Sometimes they need seeds. Sometimes they do not need a big documentary film; sometimes what they need is someone who helps them organize a meeting.” T, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

On other hand, the aspirations regarding external governance are also related to the importance of strengthening the networks and partnerships with other initiatives, such the producers’ networks. These groups make the communities politically more powerful, and in many cases help them to achieve economic sustainability.

“In an internal level, necessarily, we all have to be more engaged. For that each of us should be get our projects well-established and lay on the table common interests, which we have done already. Indeed we have a manifesto for the Xarxa. And probably we probably need to hire someone, one of us, some hours, I don’t know how many, but some time. One could think that of you get a stronger organization in this way, will help you to work together with the public administration” D, co-founder and member of CBI4, part of CBI1 producers’ network (May 2015)

The aspirations regarding internal governance are related to the members’ participation and initiative’s political engagement. While some people think initiatives should be more active in the political arena, others think that initiatives should be open to everyone: to those more politically engaged and critical, and to those who aim less commitment. This issue has to do with the imaginaries of transition that people have (which have been explored in the theme Power and Politics). The more pragmatic group will be in favour of including more people even they are less engaged, because their priority is the economic sustainability of initiatives. The “purist” imaginary recognizes the importance of politicization of initiatives and therefore aims the people who engage in the communities to be quite politically committed and conscious. This dilemma is expanded in section 5.

Societal empowerment and self-organization, which the initiatives increase, are needed for negotiating with institutions and ultimately provoke wider socio-political changes. It’s to this regard where initiatives play a crucial role, since communities strengthen social organization, increase people’s ability to deliberate, promote participation, etc.

“I link pretty much my perception about CBI3 with my experience as someone who was politician for some years. And my idea was and still is, and somehow it’s being reinforced, that beyond that the political situation of our country, which we are all very grumbling about with good reason, I think that there is citizenship construction and organization that was very weak in the past, which explains partially the political crisis. And without the strengthening of this space of social organization we will never get better institutional politics.” D, member of CBI3, former CBI3 board member, and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015).

3. CBIs’ everyday governing practices

3.1. Building relationships and partnerships (or the lack of)

Relationships and cooperation with other initiatives is crucial for initiatives such as CBI1 and CBI3, whose subsistence is indeed based on relationship with other groups. CBI1 sells its
products to a number of initiatives such as CBI2 and therefore their economic sustainability depends on those relations. The relationship is mostly constructed around buying-selling but goes a little bit beyond the mere products’ exchange. The producers’ network is also very relevant for CBI1. The network is some weeks the biggest customer of CBI1 (the 11 producers buying products from CBI1). This network has brought many opportunities to CBI1: access to land, access to institutional programs to bring food to schools, etc. The other farming project analyzed (CBI5) also belongs to a network of organic producers, la Xarxeta, which gathers 15 organic producers across Catalonia.

CBI3 has, likewise, established partnerships with strategic actors. Firstly, CBI3 has signed cooperation agreements with local governments in different towns across Spain, which are now buying electricity from CBI3 to supply (at least part of) the public facilities. On other hand, CBI3 collaborates closely with other organizations in the energy sector such as the Xarxa por la SoberaníaEnergética and the Plataformapor el Nuevo ModeloEnergético, which are more political and confrontational. The two strategies (alternative building VS confrontation) are seen as part of a symbiotic relation, where initiatives benefit from the lobby and activism carried out by political organizations and those use the example of the alternatives to visualize the other “possibles”. CBI3 had also established some relations at EU level, and they are founder members of RESCoop (a network of EU energy cooperatives doing lobby and political action).

CBI2 functions autonomously and the main relations are those with the food producers and those within the neighborhood. CBI2 is located in the Casc Antic of Barcelona, a vibrant multicultural neighborhood with strong gentrification processes, high rate of tourism and immigrants. CBI2 cooperates with other groups and collectives (from different domains rather than food, such as an immigrants association, a Zapatistas group, an emblematic squatted garden, etc.) and aims to become a relevant actor in the neighborhood. For example, they organize yearly a football tournament in the neighborhood together with other initiatives and association.

3.2. Influencing local attitudes and practices

Increasing people’s awareness is one of the main objectives of the initiatives and one of the main perceived impacts by members of initiatives. The imaginaries and practices they bring are very welcome by a society severely impacted by the economic crisis and malcontent with the global socio-economic systems and the national political context. Therefore initiatives have benefited from a very appropriate environment of people looking for more satisfactory ways of meeting their needs, and it is in this milieu where initiatives have more impact. Members recognized the fact that this type of communities reach mainly the “usual suspects” (those already conscious), but not people from other social and cultural classes.

The main mechanism by which initiatives impact on people imaginaries and practices is through increasing the visibilization and the politicisation of consumption, agriculture or energy issues. This politicization is most of the times more implicit than explicit, but effective anyway. The replication patterns that are reported can be considered as an indicator of the impacts.

Each initiative influences others differently. CBI1 is located in the outskirts of a nearby town (Masnou, 20 km from Barcelona), but CBI1’s impact on their location (beyond the environmental) is limited because they distribute products mainly to Barcelona and they are barely visible to Masnou inhabitants (even though the neighborhoods are glad to have them there and sometimes buy from them, they are not regular clients). CBI1 even has an impact beyond Barcelona: the project is very open to receive visits and they often host volunteers (friends of friends mostly) who come few weeks or months to work at the farm. The economic sustainability of the project makes CBI1 an example for others, who have come to volunteer/work/consult and take the example back home.

“They are always hosting people. A lot of people come here. Many. Same as me, that I came because I met Gilad, more people come. They are always open to people to come and see...
They organize many times visits for the clients. I think they influence people already pretty much with this kind of things” N, volunteer at CBI1 (Nov 2014)

CBI2 has influenced others’ attitudes by proposing a new model of consumption which was very innovative 15 years ago, when CBI2 was founded. After the experiences showed by CBI2 and other old pioneer cooperatives, more people have joined other cooperatives which were formed by replication of the oldest ones. At least one cooperative was directly influenced by CBI2: Las Horteras de la Ribera was formed from the waiting list of CBI2 with the help and support of the original initiative.

On other hand, CBI3 can be considered to have impacted widely in society. The initiative has politicized the energy issues and denounced the links between governments and the energy oligopoly. They have brought the topic to the media, public debates and institutional policy (at local/regional level) and increased society’s knowledge about such an opaque topic as it is energy. The local groups make a lot of dissemination of the cooperative and the system it opposes to. It can be affirmed that, regardless the regulation difficulties they have encountered, CBI3 has become a relevant political actor in the energy context in Spain.

“The promoters said “we aim that the model gets replicated, let’s see how we can do it”, but nor they nor us had any idea on how to do it. And then we started with the dissemination, random people joined, such a group in Pamplona, or here in Zaragoza, in Baleares, in Valencia and more places. Individuals who said “I am committed to disseminate this Project”. In my case, I wanted to contact people from the social economy here in Zaragoza, but the first thing I did was a meeting explaining the model, with a very simple PowerPoint that the people from Navarros sent me, in my neighbours’ association. In that meeting two persons already told me they would collaborate with the project... and that way we continued expanding the dissemination” A, member of CBI3, CBI3 board president, and participant of Zaragoza local group (April 2015).

Beyond the influence that each initiative could have individually, the impact of the movement as a whole is big, and the resonance of the alter-economy, social economy or local economy is huge, and it is permeating institutions slowly. Indeed, Barcelona’s new local government has created a sub-department of social economy. It’s not clear yet how this department will help initiatives without creating dependency but what’s clear is that there is an increasing interest from local institutions to integrate the new forms of economy better. Similar trend is observed in SantCeloni, the first municipality to sign a cooperation agreement with CBI3, whose head of the environment agency declared that there are many users of the alter-economy within the department.

3.3. Influencing policy

Influencing policy is obviously one of the ultimate targets of the communities, which claim more balanced regulations so alternatives don’t play in disadvantage in front of the mainstream organizations. The main strategy for achieving this goal is the politicization of certain issues that were traditionally fully controlled by power holders. The politicization process includes bringing new actors to the political arena where those issues are negotiated. This strategy has been helped by the recent political changes and social upheavals, and some results can be already be seen. For example, CBI3 has achieved to modify some regulations at local levels at least in one of the municipalities they have signed cooperation agreements with (SantCeloni): in order to contract their services, the municipality change some regulations as well as changing some specifications on the bids for the smaller companies to be able to participate. At EU scale, CBI3 lobby and participates in debates in order to change the legislation affecting renewable energies and self-provision. At national level they work together with more politicized groups. It’s at national scale where the situation is more dramatic for CBI3. In 2011, few months after CBI3’s beginning, the recently elected national government cut the subsidies to renewable energy projects, which had a tremendous impact on CBI3’s activities. ’

CBI1 is less politicized and it’s not engaged in any political campaigns, but CBI1’s influence also reaches the power holders. CBI1 have worked closely and maintain very good relations
with the regional agricultural bureau and several agricultural and environmental research centers.

The development and replication of CBIs might implicitly and slowly be pushing for regulation changes. In some cases, as is the case of the rise of organic agriculture the last decade, regulations have been adapted to this emergence (though not necessarily in favour of small scale projects).

3.4. Developing expertise, professionalism, and social capital

These initiatives’ experiences show that expertise is important, both for the internal management and for the negotiation with external governance actors. Required expertise includes not only strong technical knowledges about the specific topics but also skills related to community dynamics, facilitation and communication. On other hand, the precariousness of some groups, especially the volunteer-based but also the farming project CBI5 or CBI4, which have not assured the economic sustainability, is pointed out as a result of lack of professionalization or skills for business management.

“Those who continue in the cooperative, we realized long time ago that there is a lot of young people in a particularly complex neighborhood, socially complex, precarious people, very liquid society, coming and leaving, and this affects a lot the maintenance processes, and these get precarious. Indeed, from the initial mission of the project (political intervention, the politicization of its structure) finally became a consumers’ group with much modest aspirations” V, member of CBI2 (April 2015)

The productive” initiatives (CBI1, CBI3) are professionalized, and they rely on and develop expertise. First, they are currently employing people and their aim to increase the number of employees, though this might not be economically feasible at the moment. CBI3 has 17 workers and CB11 has 5. Second, they both create and disseminate knowledge. CBI3 organize debates and trainings around the energy issue, which has helped to distribute the knowledge on such an opaque and complex issue such energy. This knowledge generation is fundamental for CBI3 members, who emphasized the importance of increasing the knowledge about how the energy sector works. Local groups have focus mainly in the dissemination of this knowledge: by untangling the essence of the oligopoly, they are proposing CBI3 as the alternative to that system. Interestingly, there are many workers of the energy sector (especially renewable) in the local groups, which increase the expertise of the groups notably. This level of expertise has probably been one of the success factors of CBI3, in terms of the management of the initiatives but also to reach institutions. However, the high qualification of part of the members has brought some tensions too. A communication problem was reported in CBI3, related to the technical language that is generally used within the cooperative. There are many engineers and professionals of the renewable energies sector who speak very different languages from those who don’t. The information gap makes the debates difficult and also hinders participation in the deliberation spaces of those who are not familiar with the energy issue. A member reported in an informal conversation that she has felt disrespect from the people with more technical knowledge towards the rest of the group, and the former even questioned the right to participate in decision making of those who lack the technical understanding of the energy sector.

Similarly, CBI1’s co-owners have extensive knowledge on agriculture techniques, machinery, etc. gained in the last 5 years. When the project was started both co-owners had limited experience on agriculture, but right now they are leading small projects on green manure and no-till systems as well as organizing workshops about mechanical weeding together as part of institutional programs for technology transfer.

“Here in CBI1 we organized a workshop on mechanical weeding, to show the techniques, the machinery, the strategies for weeding in organic and non-organic crops (…) And it was a very successful workshop, with more than 100 farmers attending on April. It’s almost impossible to gather so many professionals in such a busy month for those who work in the fields. It was a success and something promoted by us, and then the agriculture department, the Maresme office, brought a professor who talked about the weeds cycles, another expert on something
else, and we were showing the machinery” G, co-founder, co-owner and worker of CBI1 (Nov 2014)

3.5. Creating, investing in infrastructure

The sustaining of the initiatives requires certain infrastructures, which are crucial for their existence. The communication infrastructure (i.e. software, online platforms) are used by CBI3, CBI1 and CBI2 in different degrees of complexity. CBI3 and CBI1 have developed themselves informatic tools that are used for the managing of the initiatives. In the case of CBI3 this programme consists of an online platform used for debating and sharing information and resources among members. CBI1 utilizes a software developed by themselves (one of the founders is computer engineer) that allows cooperatives and individuals to make the purchase online, in order to make easier the organization of the weekly orders.

Material infrastructure is needed as well. CBI3 has invested in different power plants (either constructing or buying underused installations): one biogas plant, one hydroelectric and several solar photovoltaic installations producing up to 5.1 GWh/year in total. In addition, CBI3 indirectly uses the infrastructure from others small-scale renewable producers which CBI3 buy green certificates from, as well as the distribution network. This network is privately owned (by the former state electrical company, today privatized) and CBI3 pays a fee for its utilization. A claim that CBI3 has is that the distribution network should be public.

CBI1 has invested in land (although they rent the land, didn’t purchase) and machinery, bought most of it second hand, worth thousand of euros. One of the machines they bought with the grant they obtained (66,000€ from EU budget) for the starting of the project is seen as really important for the (technical) success of the initiative.

“This grant basically helped us to modernize ourselves quite a lot, to buy a machine that resulted key for us, for saving time, which means also money, and labour. We bought this machine, we imported from Germany, it costed 6,000€, and it was very important, it changed completely our way of cultivating. We started planting thinking on the mechanization, started thinking on how to do things more efficiently, thinking on time. The machine marked a milestone. And the machine was thanks to the grant.” G, co-founder, co-owner and worker of CBI1 (Nov 2014)

3.6. Leadership, charisma and management

CBI1 and CBI3 have a strong entrepreneurial dimension and were started by individuals with entrepreneurial abilities and charisma. For the starting of the productive projects, entrepreneurial capacities are required. Charisma and leadership facilitate the governance and management at all levels. This includes informal groups as well. It can be observed that members with responsibilities are highly skilled.

It’s interesting the discourse of CBI3 around “shared leadership”. CBI3 relies on different actors’ work for its subsistence: the employees, the people engaged in local groups, the members of the board. In addition, they avoid visibilization of individuals and presentations to the public are held by many different members. Therefore they talk about a “shared leadership”. On other hand, the figure of a manager and a president exist, and it is recognized that even the project is sustained by collective action, the business was started as an individual project of an entrepreneur (who is the manager since then).

4. GOVERNING EXPERIENCES

4.1. Complaints, concerns, anxieties, tensions

a. Internal tensions

Tensions and conflicts arise during the internal governing processes of initiatives due mainly to the different understandings of the purpose of the communities as well as the existence of power unbalances and communication gaps. The issue about how much politicized the initiatives should be, and how much committed members should be, has been described above.
This is a fundamental issue in the development of initiatives and it has been studied more deeply in the Power and Politics theme. Tensions have derived from this vision’s discrepancy.

“If we want to be an alternative company, we cannot be composed only by activists. We should be composed by activists and more people. And by people who don’t care about the bill, but they have decided that they change to be part of a cooperative, and that they don’t want to be reading emails to understand what is the KWh, etc. Therefore, the doubt between being pure and marginal or being broad but not impure, is constant. It’s a dilemma. If we are totally critical with the system, but we are four... the system does not even feel us. The system should feel us, and for that we need to be many, if we want to be many, not all of them will be activists.” D, member of CBI3, former CBI3 board member, and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015).

“There is lack of people willing to do stuff, understanding that the cooperative is not an aim, but a place from which you can move, and don’t stay there but do other things. To be more engaged with the political movement politicized, of Barcelona. And the truth is that we are at the minimum. We do not have enough people like that, motivated.” R, member of CBI2 (Nov 2014)

Related conflicts have been reported such as the one in CBI2 caused by the power of veteran members that was hindering participation from newcomers. This dynamic was observed by some members, who problematized it. The problem also had a gender aspect.

Another conflict arose between CBI2 and its former supplier, CB15, which ended up in a violent rupture. The rupture was precipitated after a proposal from the producer’s side of increasing the basket’s price (the relation was already deteriorated due to repeated complaints of CBI2 about the basket’s price and quality and CB15’s accusation that CBI2 did not empathize with their difficulties). It seems that for the model producer – a cooperative to be fair requires higher involvement of consumers with the productive project. Some producers have tried to set a consumer-producer cooperative but in general people do not want so much level of commitment. What this example shows is that if the relations are built around consumption, the power of those who buy will always influence those who sell.

In CBI3, a conflict was repeatedly mentioned (with different visions) by all the interviewees. It is the conflict generated while deciding the acquisition of a solar farm in Sevilla. Previously, the criteria for selecting the generation projects that the cooperative could invest into were decided with controversy. In the initial criteria, the setting of solar panels on agricultural land (solar farm) was not accepted. Many members consider that occupying agricultural land to set solar panels goes against food sovereignty. More recently, the criteria were voted again after important regulation changes. The possibility of investing in solar farms was then set as “possible in exceptional cases” after the interest of the technical office and some board members. Months later, the technical office wanted to buy an abandoned solar farm in Seville province, and it was communicated to local groups, with almost no time to respond. The decision depended on Seville local group that finally approved the operation (initially were not in favor, but they changed their mind after a meeting with the technical office from Girona). The decision was taken regardless the claims of other local groups and without consulting local farmers associations or NGOs working on the area where the solar farm is located. The whole operation was very opaque and it made some members really upset. This issue has been brought in all the interviews. Board members try to lessen the importance.

Other internal conflicts caused by the power that the technical professionalized team based in Girona have in relation to the rest of the cooperative seem to be unresolved. This is the case of the decision of buying electricity in the pool, what CBI3 is currently doing, or directly to producers. The latter strategy would increase the final price but it’s more environmentally and politically coherent.

b. Complaints about regulation

Complaints about external governance are generally directed to normative and regulatory constraints. This applies especially to CBI3, which since its beginning has encountered
regulation barriers. The fact that they were the first electricity distributor constituted as a cooperative brought some problems. Later, after they were constituted, the national government changed and the legislation regulating renewable energies was modified, cutting the subsidies for renewables generation projects. This unexpected regulation change had a huge impact on CB13, mainly because the initiative couldn’t afford investing in generation projects and had thus to change the strategy. This strategy was focused on buying certificates from other producers. The interviewees feel that the initiative is paralyzed due to the regulatory environment, and the uncertainty about when and how the context will be changed again creates anxieties.

“At the beginning we had to discuss if a cooperative could be electricity distributor, they were talking only about commercial entities. There were normative problems, which are in general the problems that we always encounter. The normative is designed for us not to exist.” A, member of CB13, CB13 board president, and participant of Zaragoza local group (April 2015).

[When asked about the regulations affecting the energy sector] “Not only hostile but also uncertain. Because right now anyone who plan a renewable energies project, with such a hostile legal framework... if I am able to plan a project in this context, then come on. But the problem is that the next year, could be even more hostile. The problem with the legal framework is not that it is hostile, that certainly it is; the worst if that it is uncertain... for projects with very long lifespan, long-term yields (...) I think uncertainty kills this type of projects. I don’t know when the renewables regulation is supposed to change...” I, head of the sustainability agency of SantCeloni, collaborator municipality of CB13 (June 2015)

In the food sector, regulation is seen as a constraining factor to the success of small-scale organic farming projects. Regulation favours industrialized non-organic agriculture, and subsidies keep the food prices low. Farmers claim that institutions should take into account all the externalities that non-organic agriculture generates (health problems, environmental damage, rural displacement, etc.). In addition, interviewees differentiate from small scale and socially coherent projects from those organic farmers who work with intermediaries and/or whose workers are underpaid.

“We are organic producers and it’s good that you regulate this. But we also want to have a certification to show that our workers have a decent job, that they have a decent salary. Also to show that we produce local food, that we take care of the soil. A certification that tells which type of organic agriculture people do is needed.” R, co-founder, co-owner and worker of CB11 (Nov 2014)

4.1.a. Ambiguities, contradictions and uncertainty

a. Internal management contradictions

Some contradictions and doubts about the internal management of the initiatives have been reported. Horizontality is desired, but at the same time this is not always efficient. Communication gaps are reported and lack of definition of roles has caused some tensions.

CB13 seems to be not fully transparent in the internal communication and an interviewee declared that, as responsible of a local group, she was not sure which information should be shared with all members. A “communication dilemma” was pointed out by other interviewee, who questions if full transparency could be negative for the initiative. After these comments I would argue that there is an internal communication strategy from the technical office, to decide which information is shared with members and which is not.
“On one hand, CBI3 is formed by local groups, which really work, the numbers of members are growing. But on other hand, there is a technical team which makes the cooperative works and they get a salary. Somehow, the technical team, which are the founders, insist a lot on the appropriation: “the cooperative is yours, you have the right to get the information, to decide, to vote, etc. But obviously the roles are different. I needed that a more clear definition of all that was needed.” E, member of CBI3 and former participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015)

On other hand, it is interesting that CBI5 tried to achieve fully horizontality since its beginning and the process turned to be really inefficient and it led (together with the lack of a good financial planning) to a very critical economic situation. The initiative ended up creating a bit more hierarchal structure in order to survive.

“CBI5 has always payed similar salaries and give voice to the newcomers, we never differentiate. But this was a problem, even it’s hard for me to accept it. Because it is not efficient. We dedicated many working hours to the assemblies, in order to include more the newcomers. One afternoon every week. This is counter-productive for the work efficiency (...) In that way, I, as someone who was here from the beginning, was wrong because I didn’t differentiate between working in a respectful and horizontal way and accepting the different roles of every person within the project, and that the people who are here since long time, we have the right to take more decisions.” M, co-founder and member of CBI5, former food provider of CBI2

b. External ambiguities

The first contradiction has to do with autonomy from institutions. Independence is generally desired, but on other hand, the institutions are seen as needed for achieving a wider impact on society. There is also an embedded contradiction among scales of governance: while local and regional governments are seen as reachable and potential allies, dictations from higher political spheres and the globalized capitalism system seem irreducible.

Also some specific regulations are reported as contradictory or ambiguous. For example, the subsidies that are offered to agricultural projects can definitely help the emergence of such (it has been the case of CBI1), but actually the system is not fully adapted to small farmers reality: the money is given after few years, so in order to get the grant farmers need to have the money beforehand. Another requirement is that the money is spent in new material, not second hand. So, even these subsidies can be seen as a potential help for farming projects, they are only accessible to certain types of initiatives and they force receivers to ask for loans. CBI5 got one of this subsidies but they rejected because they didn’t want to ask for a loan.

European legislation about renewable energies is seen as misleading, not efficient for the development of the renewables sector as well as too dominated by energy companies’ interests.

The fact that normative issues are not designed for the initiatives brings some requirements to initiatives that approach them. The need of initiatives’ adaptation is also present in the discourses of the policy makers interviewed. I.B. sees the need of CBI3 to fulfill certain technical requirements.

“When they tell us that they are going to access to public administration bids, I must tell them “But now you can’t, you need to give me this”, which means professionalization. Because otherwise, even if I really want [to hire them], if you don’t offer me the minimum service that I need for the day-to-day activities. Because I don’t have one, I have 250, and I am one of the smallest. We already told them that if they really want to deal with all this, we will help them, we offer, as municipality, to work together on how to do it.” I, head of the sustainability agency of SantCeloni, collaborator municipality of CBI3 (June 2015)

Another contradiction linked to external factors is the risk of co-optation. The bigger the
initiatives get and the more people join them, the bigger the risk of getting co-opted by external power. This is clear in the case of organic food production. After years remaining as marginal and managed by (more or less) alternative actors, the last years organic food shops have proliferated in the areas where food cooperatives operate. This new purchase option competes with cooperatives, and even they generally don’t meet social standards (generally not local, with intermediaries, and managed by companies) these shops offer a much more easy way of consumption (no commitment, more convenient schedules, etc.). Even the increase of organic food demand was foreseeable, most of the cooperatives have not managed to absorb that expansion and are still functioning with small groups, partially due to lack of capacity, partially due to “attachment” to the model (25-30 family units). On other hand, CBI3 members reported that once they become popular, they were approached by many municipalities, but they perceived attempts of co-optation and manipulations by some those institutions.

“On one hand we are happy that the sector has grown and that the organic products become more accessible, but this has a high price because the increase tries to discredit or change the social model that we believe in (more stability and dignity for the producer). Nowadays the big organic food stores are proliferating, big supermarkets, many producers becoming organic, many small and big ones that make open baskets, some trustworthy, some not.” M, co-founder and member of CBI5, former food provider of CBI2 (Feb 2015)

4.1.b. Limits, constraints, failure

a. Internal constraints, failures

An inherited dynamic is related to the low societal participation which limits the possibilities of the initiatives. Members remarked that society is not used to participate in collective actions, nor have the capacities to deliberate. This fact hardens the engagement in such initiatives as well as the real horizontal participation among those who do engage but do not participate actively. Initiatives are therefore in a position where they have to choose between two unideal situations: few very committed people or more people with less commitment. In terms of inclusion, a broader target group will open the initiatives to a wider range of people. But this opening is hindered by the precariousness of some initiatives or by the pragmatism of others.

“It’s an assembly model, pretty imperfect. Imperfect because of... for example, the Family Units’ rotation. There is a very frequent rotation. That’s why it’s hard that such the practices or regulations coordinated among members get consolidated. The cooperative’s work gets constantly more and more precarious, since the new members need to be taught and sometimes they stay for 6 months and they are absolutely external to the horizontal culture or the assemblies. People who thinks that the decisions should be taken by certain people, or that the structure should be more efficient...” V, member of CBI2 (April 2015)

Another internal limit relates to the fact that initiatives have to focus on operational and economic aspects for survival, leaving little time for socio-political issues. This strategy dichotomy is seen as a barrier for those with strong socio-political aims.

For example, CBI15 started the project putting a lot of emphasis in the socio-political aspect but the initiative arrived to a very critical economic situation. Related to the same problem of having to choose between economic or political priorities, Maria also brings the experience/skills constrains for carrying out agricultural projects.

“We realized that we wanted to prioritize the direct relation consumer-producer, and we are afraid to realize that we are entrepreneurs, that we have to focus on selling and we haven’t
spent enough time to the sales. And then others eat us. So we have to be good producers, farmers, sellers, distributors, without training and resources. We end up doing everything wrong.” M, co-founder and member of CBI5, former food provider of CBI2 (Feb 2015)

b. External limits

The external limits to the initiatives’ development are the regulations, which have been already described above in this section (in forms of complaints, anxieties generated), and the conditions dictated by the capitalist context where initiatives navigate. Some limits are posed by the lock-ins in the institutions and the mentality of public workers. Comments from the head of the regional agricultural department who worked closely with CBI1 on its beginning, shows the disconnection of technical aspects from social issues (while she dominates the technical, she does not consider the social aspects of organic farming), in addition to the fact that she doesn’t think that ecological projects should be prioritized over conventional ones.

Precariousness, volunteerism and society’s liquidity are seen as limits to the well-functioning of volunteer-based groups, as it has been stated in previous sections.

The inequality embedded in such system is seen as a limit to the access of a wider spectrum of society. According to Sebastian, this should be tackled with regulation.

“If we want a more just society, environmentally and economically, it’s impossible to reach it only with these community projects. It should be a State, public administration, local, national… which really favours a more equal society, with more equal conditions. I think that’s one of the limits to these organizations.” S, member of CBI3 and participant of Barcelona local group

On other hand, a member of a lobbying organization from the energy sector sees that CBI3’s growth is limited by the power that big electrical companies hold in the political arena.

“The future, the utopic horizon of CBI3 growing over one million members that would transform totally the electrical market, it’s not a very realistic horizon, because at the end you depend on the legislation and regulation, and if you don’t have a political and social powers correlation, only as an economic actor you cannot reach it, because the current and traditional electrical market in Spain and in the rest of Europe, but specially in the Spanish State, it’s designed and work for the big actors to hold the powers they have, and in a tremendously clear way. There is almost no doubt, on every step, every measure, every comment, every focus, laws, from the mainstream culture, make this fact clearer.” P, member of CBI3 and head of the Xarxa por la SoberaniaEnergètica (May 2015)

4.2. ENABLING OPPORTUNITIES AND POSSIBILITIES

a. Internal

A number of enabling opportunities for initiatives’ emergence and development can be derived from interviews. Some of those are skills, knowledge and entrepreneurial vision. As it has been said above, CBI3 employees and volunteers, CBI1 owners and CBI2’s most active participants are highly skilled and educated. These abilities comprise technical knowledge, communication and negotiation skills, emotional intelligence and others. For CBI3, it was important to share the knowledge among members with the creation of certain tools as well as the dissemination of knowledge (about the energy sector) for getting more members. Entrepreneurial vision and economic and accounting knowledge are also pointed to as important enablers of professionalized initiatives.
“In every place, different heterogeneous groups were arranged by adapting themselves to their different contexts. If in Navarra there are engineers, they look for projects. If in Valencia there are great communicators, they organize amazing meetings and trainings. That’s how it happened. And for that it was crucial to have tools that could bring together all that, to exchange the knowledge that we were acquiring.” A, member of CBI3, CBI3 board president, and participant of Zaragoza local group (April 2015).

Motivation, dedication and energy (this applies specially to volunteers) complement the skills and knowledge needed for the management of the initiatives.

Networks and cooperation with other groups and alliances (autonomy at the end) are used to resist the unwelcoming environment. The initiatives have gained strength thanks to the support of the strong social networks of the members. In the case of the farming projects (Adc, CBI4, and CBI5) they all started having already support from consumers’ groups, which were part of their circles.

“People from the cooperative we participated in got involved. Friends, producers, relatives. Our circles above all. Also associations and cooperatives we had contact with. Producers.” R, co-founder, co-owner and worker of CBI1 (Nov 2014)

b. External

There are not many external enablers for CBIs’ development. The still timid support from certain regional agencies where people with knowledge and interest about the alternative practices has been supportive for CBI1 and CBI3 (the Maresme Regional Agricultural Department and the Energy and Sustainability Agency of SantCeloni). The willingness of helping the initiatives is clear from both interviewees, but with different hints: while the head of the agriculture department aims to help CBI1 because it’s seen as a potential successful business for the region, the head of the sustainability office of SantCeloni goes beyond that as she her objective is prompting a paradigm change. This technical and economic support is positively valued by members of initiatives. However, some drawbacks of these collaborations have been described in the sections above (limits, contradictions).

“…I think it is this issue what we all have to work on together. Municipalities too. The procedures. If we write bid specifications for the big companies, because they are in theory whose service is more guaranteed (but it’s not true), we will not be able to change the model. Because the model change comes with the small initiatives. So we have to work on the day-to-day tasks, and we should assume a bit more risk. In fact, the big companies also bail out on you, it’s true. It’s not guaranteed to work with one big company in relation with a small one, but due to dynamics we always set clauses that are copied and copied, making that the bids always go for the same. But we are not conscious until we are able to say “No. I want to change the model, what can I do to change it?” I, head of the sustainability agency of SantCeloni, collaborator municipality of CBI3 (June 2015)

The fact that CBI3 and CBI1 have formal and legitimated structures empowers them to dialogue and negotiate with institutions. The challenge brought by this negotiation, which is directed to change institutions or to survive regardless of their animosity towards new paradigms, seems to motivate and dynamize communities.

“Now it’s the opportunity to say “we are going to strengthen the social fabric”. Because if we don’t do it, we will keep having politicians that make us feel embarrassed. We have to be more powerful, if we are not it’s easy that such characters appear. If you are strong you need a strong interlocutor as well.” D, member of CBI3, former CBI3 board member, and participant of Barcelona local group (April 2015).

Regarding funding schemes, the 66,000€ grant received for the starting of the project was crucial for initiative economic sustainability. This grant comes from EU but it’s managed by the regional agricultural departments. They are directed to help young farmers to start a new agricultural project (not specifically organic)
The initiatives have also benefited from the current context of socio-economic crisis that affects Spain. The debacle of financial capitalism together has generalized the malcontent and anger over a political system unable to cope with the social consequences of the economic crisis, too close to business interests and too often linked to corrupt practices. This situation, with 15M as a tipping point, has led to radical changes in national politics and has opened the space for multiple voices of denunciation. It’s in this context where alternatives proliferate.

“Basically the energy context in Spain is chaotic, serving the big interests of old monopolies. So I think that when the initiative is created there was on the society the feeling of malcontent against the oligopolies. And this fact was crucial for many people to join, because they were annoyed at so many power abuses.” P, member of CBI3, CBI3 board vice-president and participant of Barcelona local group (May 2015)

5. Negotiation, response, agency

Agency when dealing with institutions together with autonomy are important factors for an initiative’s (economic) success, as can be seen in the cases of CBI1 or CBI3. Negotiation with local and regional institutions occurs as it has been described above. For example, one local group negotiated the conditions to supply energy to the municipality of SantCeloni. The head of the sustainability department described the negotiation this way:

“Since they are small, there are some things that a small consumer needs and they cannot offer or they don’t want to assume. But on other hand... that’s another element. Few days ago we talked about it with Girona [technical team and board], that there are bid specifications that require conditions that CBI3 cannot assume, not only legally. Some specifications are illegal; some others are unacceptable as a cooperative, as a small distributor. Therefore this is something we also need to work on. We have talked with them to start working on that.” I, head of the sustainability agency of SantCeloni, collaborator municipality of CBI3 (June 2015)

5.1. Creativity, agency, experimentation

To deal with an unfavourable institutional environment, initiatives develop new forms of economic and social relations. For example, CBI3 has designed a new type of investment in order to survive to the uncertain regulatory frameworks. With this mechanism, the benefit is returned in KWh instead of money. This is a very innovative way to adapt to the context of instability of renewable’s sector.

The research projects and technology dissemination programs that CBI1 has led are an example of agency and experimentation, which have brought them closer to institutions and research institutes. These projects emerge from an interest in researching certain topics (specifically green manure, no-till systems and weeding machinery) but are also a source of money.

The creation of the producers’ networks also derived from creativity and agency from their participants. The networks, which provide support to the farmers, have developed some mechanisms to maintain their autonomy from institutions. For example, BMA (CBI1’s network) created a “resistance fund” in order to support producers in difficult economic situations. La Xarxeta (CBI5’s network) have developed an internal certification system based on trust to avoid the costly legal certification.

6. Summary

Governance is conceptualized both externally and internally. External governance not only refers to relations with institutions but also to the partnerships and networks established with other initiatives, organizations, groups, etc. These networks, which support the initiatives economically or politically, are seen as fundamental and something to strengthen further. Some networks are formally constituted but others are formed by informal cooperation many among different types of actor: small business, family business, cooperatives, informal groups, lobbying groups, social organizations, NGOs and individuals.
While institutional governance is seen in most of the cases as constraining, in specific cases at lower scales, initiatives see the institutions as potential allies. The alliances with institutions are desired in order to achieve a wider impact on society, but for the day-to-day activities institutions are not needed, and indeed initiatives aim to remain autonomous from them.

Internal governance is also given importance, and the impact that external structures have on internal dynamics are recognized. This is the case of the precariousness of some groups, which are highly determined by the liquidity and the neoliberal governmentality of society. In the professionalized groups, internal governance seems to be perceived as less relevant than in informal ones.

We can start seeing how these initiatives permeate in the institutions, but the impacts of such incursions are still unknown and will depend on communities’ ability to negotiate and public workers’ willingness to do so. While some collaboration seems to be positive for the communities, many others are system’s concessions which bring some conditions too. On other hand, communities might be influencing the institutions through the strengthening of the social fabric, which is reinforced by, for example, the deliberation and the “democratic exercise” practices within communities. A stronger social fabric would require stronger interlocutors from the institutions.

Perception on governance is highly influenced by the enormous change in the institutional political arena in Spain throughout the economic crisis (2008 – ongoing), and this context should be considered in the comparative analysis.
Memo from CF

1. Introduction

Our data is based on two study cases, the X Development Trust (CBI1) and a cluster of largely student-led sustainability initiatives at the University of Y (UoY), here called CBI2 (although this is a label that the participants have never really adopted). We’re largely basing our analysis on the interviews we conducted (CBI1: 7 members +3 stakeholders; CBI2: 9 interviews +3 stakeholders), but also draw on our numerous fieldvisits in both sites (including participant observation). This memo is about the data we collected with CBI2; the data from the CBI1 is analysed separately. All names of individuals and organisations are pseudonyms (quotes have been edited accordingly, too).

CBI2’s structure is important to understand in order to understand their different rationalities and aspirations, so here is a brief description (which is not exhaustive). Student activities at UoY take place under the umbrella of the Y University Student Association (YUSA) which has a large building where most of the activities relevant in this context take place (this building is to be renovated in this academic year, so everyone had to move into a temporary base, which hugely disrupts activities).

Within YUSA, there are several committees headed up by democratically elected sabbatical officers (‘presidents’) – one of these is the Environment and Politics Committee (E&P). The sabbatical officer is elected for one year (and on leave from their university courses and paid by UoY) to coordinate student activities in this area and to liaise with the University as an institution. Students join the committee (12 members) by election, and take on specific roles within the committee (there is also an unpaid co-president). The committee decides on their own activities. Recently, it has probably concentrated on driving sustainability campaigns (such as ‘Fossil Free’ and free education campaigns) forward and organising student action in this field.

Apart from this, there are two sets of small initiatives. One of these is “CBI2.1”, which will be the focus of our analysis. CBI2.1 consists of three volunteer-based initiatives that follow the cooperative model: the café (vegan, open 5 days a week around lunchtime, usually offering a soup, a toastie and a main course; very low prices but still manages to generate money which crossfunds other activities both within this set of activities and elsewhere), the foodstore (called ‘the Corner’, non-surplus generating) and the vegbag scheme (with weekly deliveries from a local organic farm, supplemented by non-local produce, non-surplus generating).

CBI2.2, by contrast, is led by paid professional staff (all very young, so in terms of outer appearance there’s little difference between paid and volunteer participants) supplemented by student staff on small part-time contracts. A large part of the funding comes from the Scottish Climate Challenge Fund, but recent funding applications have not been successful, so the situation is precarious. It includes the CO2 Assessment School that trains students to assess the carbon footprint of charities and to give them advice on how to reduce their footprints, and ElectricSwitch, which aims to reduce energy use in student halls. A full-time member of staff (Andrej) on an 18 month contract coordinates both activities.

As stakeholders, we interviewed 2 university staff who are responsible for environmental issues at the university level (there are generally very few of them) and one professor who was very engaged in environmental issues through his involvement with the union.

Interestingly, there was only little overlap between the subgroups of our sample; only very few individuals were e.g., working for CBI2.2 but also (at least peripherally) active in CBI2.1 (e.g., Petra), except the E&P committee president (Simon) and the project leader of CBI2.2 (Andrej) who spent a lot of their time at the café (although they presumably didn’t volunteer).
Our interviews cover all of these different components of CBI2, and maybe partly due to this complex structure and our questions on the relationships between the different parts of the body, rationalities, aspirations and tensions between diverging perspectives were very often addressed (both implicitly and explicitly). For example, we’ve got 40 pages worth of text coded under aspirations, and 80 on communications/tensions for CBI2 alone. Some interviewees did not want to elaborate too much on the divergences when we probed more specifically, but generally, the interviews were very easy and relaxed, and it seems that we got quite good picture of the different approaches and how they were negotiated (as far as that is possible without more long-term participant observation). We have relatively little on change of rationalities and aspirations over time, possible because of the nature of the initiative: both volunteers and staff are involved only for relatively short periods of time – most of them less than a year.

2. Aspirations

As an overview, CBI2’s different components have quite different aspirations (objectives, visions, aims) for their work; each of which will be described in more detail below:

- Creating and providing a space where people can feel safe – from challenges and demands of others (CBI2.1)
  - Offering the better alternative for consumption: cooperative-based, vegan, organic (CBI2.1)
  - Providing a social space where (like-minded) people can meet, hang out and develop ideas together (CBI2.1)
  - Providing a space for (left-wing) political action and campaigning (CBI2.1, E&P)
- Café: Generating money for donations to other like-minded initiatives elsewhere – fundraising (CBI2.1)
  - More people making use of the café, vegbag and corner (CBI2.1)
  - Reducing energy use by students and charities (CBI2.2)
  - Educating others in terms of low-energy and other environmental behaviours (CBI2.2)
  - Giving students what they want, here: credits on their CV (CBI2.2)
  - Getting recognition for their work and publicity (CBI2.2)
  - Lobbying at university level for systemic change (E&P)

Creating and providing a space where people can feel safe – from challenges and demands of others (CBI2.1)

This was probably one of the aspects that came out in a very pronounced way in our (participant) observation, and tended to be less explicitly expressed in the interviews (eg by Fraser and Duncan), but in CBI2.1, people clearly wanted to create a relaxed, stress-free atmosphere (although this didn’t always work out during busy times in the kitchen when only few active volunteers were around) where people would not fee challenged – especially as it was recognised that many students (and many in CBI2.1) had mental health issues in some way or another. Students who had moved to Y with no pre-established networks of friends could find friendly faces here.

“Well I mean it...it’s a cliché isn’t it, but, you know, your friends are like your family that you can choose, so... I mean people do definitely use this place as somewhere that they know that they’re gonna feel safe... And, you know, they know that they can talk about thing that they want to talk about. So, in some ways it’s a support network... I mean...like I definitely use it as a place that I know that I’m not gonna get too annoyed by anyone... And...yeah, I think...it’s just because we’ve got a reputation for being...a sort of friendly welcoming place – that’s really important to people. And... Yeah, so everyone gets different things out of it, but, fundamentally,
it’s about friendship – you know, people know that they’ve got friends here... And it’s true.” (2-Fraser-2015)

More on this will be said in Section 3 (rationalities).

Offering the better alternative for consumption: cooperative-based, vegan, organic, healthy- but affordable (CBI2.1)

This was a very tangible aspiration which for some (Duncan, Francine) was absolutely paramount whereas for others, more politically minded participants, this was a big plus and a factor that drew others in:

“I think Veg Bag and the cafe have the same aims... And to an extent the Corner as well, in that it’s...people are involved in this environmental thing, and the organic element I think...organic food is expensive, and we’re able to...but it shouldn’t just be for those that have the means to get it – like, we can get it to people cheaper than the supermarkets, I think...and with more choice... And it means that if people don’t want those chemicals and stuff in their bodies, then they don’t have to fork out loads of money. And especially if people want to volunteer and do it, they can get it even cheaper ...” (2-Duncan-2015)

Volunteering might even give them the experience and motivation to carry on running similar activities once they’ve left university (Duncan). Cameron also emphasised that the low prices of the food really helped those students who could not afford to spend a lot on food (a situation he had been in the year before). Anna mentioned that the food offered in the café was a good opportunity for students to get healthy food.

Providing a social space where (like-minded) people can meet and hang out and develop ideas together (CBI2.1)

“So yeah, it’s a big social network for...finding people who are active. Things like the Fossil Free campaign as well – they’re all people from [CBI2.1]. Eh, yeah, I mean it’s basically just a place where we all keep in touch. And just ‘cause we share those interests – especially environmental interests – there’s never a day that goes past without something being brought up in conversation, so, we always know exactly what’s going on, what the next opportunity to do an action or something is...” (2-Fraser-2015)

This also had undertones of giving people the motivation and inspiration to continue working towards a more sustainable world in small ways:

“Eh I dunno, like...what’s happening right now on a global scale is not OK, and I...I don’t like this approach of like ‘It’s so big we can’t do anything’, so I think everything counts. And we probably won’t change the world here, but we do like really small things that help certain people and then maybe they get motivated too and achieve something in their town or something, so... Just the possibility of maybe achieving something...on a small scale...” (2-Anna-2015)

Providing a space for (left-wing) political action and campaigning (CBI2.1; E&P)

This was possibly the core aspiration of CBI2.1 as a café and a space (although individual volunteers maintained that they were only interested in the food, e.g., Francine):

“I think originally it was started just as a place for political discussion – ‘cause the [CBI2.1] Society isn’t just the cafe, it’s a political society for environmental and social justice needs, and things... So it kind of became a way that people could come and get their lunch and then discuss things together, so that’s what the soup part is...” (2-Duncan-2015)

Some of these campaigns were closely linked to the lobbying work by the E&P’s president (see point at end of this section), but obviously used very different approaches, for example in the Fossil Free campaign that aimed to change the university’s investment strategy to a divestment from fossil energies (and, not surprisingly, was met with a lot of criticism by the university’s official representation, see below).
For some, the political nature of CBI2.1 as a space was quite precarious given the inherent dependency of the ‘atmosphere’ of the place on single, charismatic and motivating individuals (such as the last two years’ sabbatical officers) – if they left and others were less political in their outlook on CBI2.1, the activist culture of the place might be substantially constrained (see also Section 4 on conflicts and tensions).

Generating money for donations to other like-minded initiatives elsewhere – fundraising (CBI2.1)

This was probably not an aspiration that the café was designed to work towards – however, the fact that while sticking to very low prices it could still support other causes that were seen as worthy was seen as very motivating and rewarding. At the same time, it was recognised that this was definitely not a core objective.

More people making use of the café, vegbag and corner (CBI2.1)

This was mentioned by a few members (Duncan, Francine, Anna). Duncan felt that all three components of CBI2.1 could possibly be used by more people, also from beyond the student body (e.g., University staff and local residents) – but the location of the AUSA building was not necessarily conducive to that. Anna wanted to see more people from other student societies (e.g., language-based ones) making use of the café as a meeting place, and also simply more diversity of people using CBI2.1 (beyond white, middle-class, from central Europe).

However, recruitment of more volunteers at the beginning of the next academic year was more widely seen as crucial given the high fluctuation of volunteers as students finish their studies (or get too busy to volunteer). It was also recognised that many volunteers were needed so that the work could be distributed more evenly and people would not self-exploit (Cameron).

Reducing energy use by students and charities (CBI2.2)

This was probably the most obvious aspiration for CBI2.2 (not least given that they were funded by the CCF which demands clear carbon impacts as an outcome) although it got sometimes lost in talk about building skills and bringing people together (see below). It was also recognised as an important aspiration and achievement by Alan, the professor with a strong interest in environmental issues.

Talk focused mainly on reduction in energy use (and environmentally relevant behaviour more generally) by students although this must have been a clear ambition in relation to charities too, given the setup of the CO2 Assessment School which sent students as advisors to charities.

Knowledge about energy use and carbon emissions was seen as the first and crucial step on that journey (Petra).

While this was hardly explicitly expressed, the perceived need to educate students about environmental issues such as electricity use, recycling etc might have been connected to the background of some of the key players at CBI2.2 as well as a large number of the students who participated in the CO2 Assessment School: Many of them came from eastern European countries, and Mara and Petra both told us how they had, as children or teenagers, first come into contact with ideas such as recycling, often inspired by exposure to practices in western countries (Germany, Austria, Scandinavia) and they felt that they and others could still learn a lot from that.

In CBI2.1, there was a feeling that one should learn from the ubiquitous exposure to environmental issues at the café (e.g., in discussions), and some individuals had certainly adopted practices from their peers, but this was probably not an explicit aspiration.

Educating others in terms of low-energy and other environmental behaviours (CBI2.2)
Petra suggested that beyond students, CBI2.2 should reach out to schools and educate children and teenagers (who might still be more malleable than student) about how to save energy. A part of this was probably also to get students into contact with other sustainability work at the university (e.g., the E&P committee) and raise their awareness of other activities in the field (Mara), or to organise fieldtrips to eco-communities (Petra).

Giving students what they want: credits on their CV (CBI2.2)

For CBI2.2, especially for the CO2 Assessment School which had been designed based on focus group discussions with students, an objective was to offer an activity that students really wanted and would benefit from, and training in Carbon footprint assessment (which resulted in a certificate) was seen to be something that at least some students would be keen to get on their CV. The CO2 Assessment School’s official motto was “teaching skills and building community” (2-Mara-2015). However, also beyond such certifiable skills, Mara gave several examples how the participating students really learned from their activities at the CO2 Assessment School, sometimes in surprising ways. She therefore summarised the CO2 Assessment School’s ambitions as

“...that’s what we do, and that’s the goal – to...to give the students the skills, not only to be able to, you know, volunteer and do the CO2 Assessment School role, but also sort of like, life skills...that I...I talked about, ehm – interpersonal skills, organisation skills, communication skills and all that...” (2-Mara-2015)

This skill-building and student-orientated ambition wasn’t really shared by interviewees from CBI2.1 although some (e.g., Duncan) mentioned that work experience was a benefit that arose from working in the kitchen or the Corner, although Cameron disliked if people just joined due to such extrinsic motivations (“retail experience”). Interestingly, Andrej (the overall project manager of CBI2.2) saw this probably more as a rationality than as an aspiration, as he portrayed the CO2 Assessment School and ElectricSwitch to some degree as tools “to engage the student community” in sustainability matters.

Getting recognition and publicity

Mara emphasised how important she found it that the student activities (such as the CO2 Assessment School) were externally and publically recognised. She had therefore applied for (and indeed won) a few awards, which also helped them to get charities on board for their work. This was not really mentioned as an aspiration by anyone else (and see Section 4 for tensions arising from this).

Lobbying at university level for systemic change (E&P)

This was mentioned only very briefly (it will be more pronounced in terms of the rationality this objective requires, see Section 3):

“Institutional change stuff... Ehm, stuff like getting Maggie Chapman elected rector, ehm, which was...like me and Lisa that did that... She’s co-convenor of the Scottish Green Party, so...she’ll put agenda...she’ll put sustainability on the agenda for three years, whereas this role’s only a year, and it’s in a higher up position, so... So like that was just an example I could think of...like systematic change I guess, more than anything...” (2-Simon-2015)

Again, this was recognised as an important role by Alan, the professor with a strong interest in environmental issues, who felt that the E&P president’s presence and engagement really helped to keep environmental issues at least to some degree on the university’s agenda.

Survival of the activities (all)

This was clearly an aspiration that was shared by many of the interviewees for their respective activities (but see Fraser’s quote above on running for the next 20 years) but not all of them
expressed this explicitly, and for some interviewees it was clear that their specific part of CBI2 would not exist in the coming academic year. Duncan (CBI2.1) hoped that CBI2.1 may just continue to exist, maybe expand a little, but retain the same qualities that it currently had. Fraser felt that it was important to maintain an activist base and space for students, as on their own, students would find it difficult to engage in political action. But generally, I did not have the impression that CBI2.1 members felt that this space could be threatened, although they were a little concerned about the move into temporary accommodation which meant that they would probably have to share the kitchen space with other, possibly more commercial activities. [However, at the beginning of the new academic year it turned out that University Management had decided that the café contravened University Policy, and closed it down! This had not been anticipated by the students when we interviewed them in early spring.] CBI2.2 staff, which depended on external funding, were obviously much more sceptical about the ‘survival’ of their projects as they knew that recent funding bids had failed, and their contracts were coming to an end. However, they did express the idea (and hope) that their projects would be continued in different guises and ways at some point in the future.

To sum up…

- Each of the parts of CBI2 had multiple aspirations (e.g., CBI2.1: providing food, a welcoming space and a forum for political action) on the degree to which the three parts want to or have to collaborate with each other (see Section 4).

- CBI2.2 had much more clearly defined aspirations in terms of outcomes; the aspirations of CBI2.1 were much more difficult to conclude anything in terms of the links between aspirations and their ideas on (the governance of) social change, but at least for CBI2.1, some of the aspirations (those related to political activism) directly mapped onto their representation of governance for change (see GLAMURS data).

- Possible clashes (see Section 4):

  o Within CBI2.1: between left-wing political and environmental aspirations

  o Between CBI2.1/E&P and Sustainable Future: between systemic and individual-level behaviour change; critique of

To provide some context for the aspirations of CBI2.1 – they problematize world trends as responsible for inequality, power laden politics, contaminative and exploitative food systems etc, and therefore drive for systematic change through taking on ‘big issues’ such as fossil free Y. They see their local action as a small drop in the ocean but none the less, a drop that can have ripples and make changes beyond individuals.

CBI2.2 was set up through a specific Scottish Government funding stream for grassroots change (Climate Challenge Fund) and therefore the context of their aspirations is more mainstream, institutionalised, and in a way providing tangible outcomes (through monthly reporting) and value for money. Whereas much of CBI2.1’s members take pride in being alternative, left wing, unconstrained and “hippy”, CBI2.2 contrast highly in that they are a professional body with paid employees who operate within the university bureaucracy and stipulations of the CCF.

3. Rationalities

Within CBI2, there were also a number of different rationalities, which could be skecthily described as:

- Creating a vibrant place (E&P, CBI2.1)
- Efficiency is unimportant, keeping volunteers engaged and happy is key (CBI2.1)
- Day-to-day management to fulfil project demands and meet the projects’ logic (including line management, reporting)
- Representing students and their interests in the context of the university (E&P)
- Living your values (CBI2.1)
It was not entirely easy to analytically distinguish these neatly from aspirations, not least because in each of the different components of CBI2, rationalities and aspirations tended to be aligned (which is not surprising, of course).

Creating a vibrant place (E&P, CBI2.1)

As can be seen from our summary of aspirations (Section 2), CBI2.1 appeared to be more process- and less outcome-oriented than CBI2.2, largely aiming to offer a place where like-minded people could develop their political ideas (and action) together. As described under ‘Aspirations’, the ‘place-making’ aspect of the work had various facets – from making a friendly, welcoming place to mobilising political thought and action. This creation of space was in a way also their rationality, and sharing the cooking and serving food was part of this – although there was also a recognition that sometimes food preparation could take over people’s time, “and they don’t end up focusing as much on the political part” (2-Duncan-2015).

But there were clear efforts to mobilise the political side, assemble a strong committee (Cameron) and a clear perception of how the E&P committee and CBI2.1 was positioned in relation to the rest of the student work (which was either apolitical or of the ‘wrong’ political orientation).

As part of this, the E&P president felt his personal mission was to re-politicise the students by “giving people a purpose” that they wanted to fight for and by picking a fight, thereby mobilising the energy that the students had hidden in them.

Efficiency is unimportant, keeping volunteers engaged and happy is key (CBI2.1)

Again, a lot of the insights on this topic emerged from participant observation, but some of this was also expressed in the interviews. For example, there was an awareness that the kitchen did not meet official health and safety standards (because, e.g., the doors were not locked, and soap and detergents had to be clearly labelled) so there if there were any inspections, the kitchen was at risk to be closed down, but this did not make the students change their practices.

Parts of the conversations also revolved around the decision to stick to volunteers rather than to pay people. Duncan mentioned how working with volunteers enormously lowered the pressure on the café to bring in enough money – if the café was closed for a day this did not have any financial consequences, whereas it would if they had standing expenses – and living wages were a matter of honour for them which means that expenditure on wages would have been quite high. However, working with volunteers also meant that a rota (which only existed in a rudimentary way) could not be enforced; there were no sanctions for people who didn’t show up or did not work as much as they should (being a volunteer meant a free lunch, but what amount of work exactly was seen as sufficient and deserving of free food was down everyone’s own interpretation). Sometimes there was only one person in the kitchen when the café opened – they would then try to handle this in a rather laid-back way that (as far as possible) didn’t impose stress on the volunteer.

However, it was clear that this was only possible because the café was volunteer-run and food was extremely cheap: customers would not sympathise with such lack of reliability in a commercial outfit.

At the same time, it seemed clear that this approach was not unintended or unreflected, but to some degree deliberate and functional for the needs of the volunteers.

Meetings were held in flexible intervals: “If there needs to be one, there’ll be one” (2-Duncan-2015) at changing times so that everyone had the opportunity to attend and wasn’t just excluded because they couldn’t make that particular day of the week. Decisions were supposed to be made on consensus but because this usually took a lot of time, votes were often used instead. At the same time, a lot of “executive decisions” were taken too:

“I think a lot of executive decisions are probably made – probably too many […] just people being like ‘Right we’re doing this’… … And I think, because everyone’s got that freedom in…the way that it all moves…that that’s quite an easy thing to do […] I think people use a lot
of common sense when they’re doing it and not like...no one’s ever done anything stupid under that, like it’s always been like ‘Right well...we need to do this, it’s too late to have a meeting, we’ll just do it’... And then there’s the Facebook group, so stuff’s put on that... Like, if anyone had a real objection, then it would be...like sorted out...” (2-Duncan-2015)

Day-to-day management to fulfil project demands and meet the projects’ logic (CBI2.2)

This was actually a rationality ascribed to CBI2.2 by others, not a self-reported one, and will become clearer in Section 4.

There was a strong perception from non-CBI2.2 members that these funded activities were just following a (mundane) project management rationality. However, for the staff on CBI2.2 this was very different. Mara, for example, described how for her, the rationality of the CO2 Assessment School was really to co-construct the project together with the students, and how she worked out how to best reach a great number of students.

Representing students and their interests in the context of the university (E&P)

The E&P president’s rationality was predominantly to represent the students’ view on environmental and ethics issues in the context of the university, lobbying for the maintenance and where possible improvement of environmental and ethical standards of the university’s activities at and in between the various committee meetings that he in his role had to attend. For example, the university was planning to drop BREEAM classification for building standards which Simon successfully managed to lobby against. This was a way of operating that most students were unfamiliar with and Simon felt lucky to have allies among the (non-CBI2) university staff (our ‘external’ interviewees, especially Nick) who helped him to find his way through the social structure of the relevant institutions.

He described this rationality as a choice of his (rather than a prescribed given). Andrej, the project manager of CBI2.2, felt to some degree constrained by the need to always go through the E&P president or someone else if he wanted to raise an issue at other institutional levels in university, or lobby for a specific aim.

Living your values (as an organisation) (CBI2.1)

CBI2.1’s ideal was radical change towards a less capitalist and more sustainable system, even though they recognised that this might be unrealistic. These doubts notwithstanding, and within the limits of their opportunities, they seemed to try to practice what they preached, not only as individuals (e.g., adopting a vegan diet) but also as a collective or organisation. This was not necessarily ‘advertised’ explicitly but emerged from the description of their own practices, as well as their critique of others’ practices (such as CBI2.2 handing out plastic freebies). For example, Duncan described how the café deliberately chooses to source their ingredients ethically (though I wonder where they get the toast and margarine (?) from. The three CBI2.1 activities are deliberately run as co-operatives.

To sum up...
-There was little data in terms of rationalities for CBI2.2, especially if we only take self-reported data into considerat
-....................................Especially for CBI2.1 and the E&P committee, aspirations and rationalities aligned.
-.................................... There were potential clashes between (to be expanded on in the following section)...
-o ............................................................ Playing the system (E&P) versus confronting the system (CBI2.1)
-o ........................................ Project management requirements (CBI2.2) versus speed and adaptability (E&P)

Different forms of representation: E&P as elected, CBI2.2 consultation of students, CBI2.1 as membership-based

4. Communication and tensions

In this section, we present the diversity of communication mechanisms used by CBI2 to negotiate their aspirations and rationalities, and the tensions that emerged from conflicting interpretations of these (and how these were then dealt with). Overall, there were potential
clashes of aspirations and rationalities both within each of the components of CBI2 (CBI2.1, CBI2.2 and the E&P committee) as well as between them. Open communication about aspirations, rationalities and potential conflicts seemed to be much more likely within each ‘subinitiative’ than between them, maybe because there was a shared general understanding of the subinitiative’s aims and approach, and because there were clear opportunities and fora through which issues (from the very concrete to the more abstract) could be discussed, whereas there was less of an opportunity to negotiate these at the overall CBI2 level.

Communication

In CBI2.1, discussions over aspirations and rationalities took place in various ways (see Section 3): in meetings (consensus vs majority vote), through Facebook, and in small groups of two or three (which then manifested themselves as ‘executive decisions’, see above). More generally, because people spent a lot of time together hanging out in the café, the decisions made at meetings were preceded by discussions that were had in informal settings.

In some instances, the discussions that people had “ended up coming home with us” (2-Cameron-2015) as many of the CBI2.1 lived in shared flats, which did not help to reduce tension.

Overall, although there was a clear structure with several defined committees, Fraser felt that decisions were made in a very flexible way:

…there’s always a space around here for things to get decided – it might be decided casually just in conversation… But eh... Yeah, so we kind of organise actions quite organically... Yeah, there’s never really a...there’s never really someone saying ‘Right, we need to sit down right now and talk about this’… (2-Fraser-2015)

In the E&P committee, since there were formal roles with a president (elected and paid) and a vice-president (elected), communication was often fraught with a little more tension than in the CBI2.1 community. Simon described how he, based on the understanding he acquired through his work at the university level, tried to convince the committee that a radical ‘fossil free’ divestment strategy was impossible given the university’s current approach to investments, and to campaign for ethical investments overall as a first step. However, his suggestion was overruled which he grudgingly accepted: “So I’ll… do whatever they want.”

Tensions

The following points emerged from the analysis of aspirations and rationalities above:

Clashes between aspirations:

- Within CBI2.1: between left-wing political and environmental aspirations
- Between CBI2.1/E&P and CBI2.2: between systemic and individual-level behaviour change; critique of SF’s award

Clashes between rationalities:

- Playing the system (E&P) versus confronting the system (CBI2.1)
- Project management requirements (CBI2.2) versus speed and adaptability (E&P)
- Different forms of representation: E&P as elected, CBI2.2 consultation of students, CBI2.1 as membership-based

Several of these overlapped and were interrelated, so we present here the resulting tensions in larger clusters:

Tensions between E&P/CBI2.1 and CBI2.2

Most of the tensions mentioned in our interviews were about the divergences between E&P and CBI2.1 on the one hand, and CBI2.2 on the other hand. This will probably be due to the fundamental differences in their set-up, principles, modi operandi etc as described in the summary of Section 2, but a further exploration of the factors underpinning these divergences
might be worthwhile (e.g., exploring what’s chicken and what’s egg - is it possible at all to distinguish between cause and consequence here?).

To overcome these divergences to some degree, there had been a move to create the joint umbrella CBI2. In the E&P president’s view, the relation between himself and CBI2.2 was similar to the one between an elected councilor and the local authorities or civil servants (“people who set policy” versus “budget holders and people that implement that policy for you”). But this did not work out in practice. In his view, the approaches that CBI2.2 and he followed were very different from each other, and not synergistic. The strict nature of CBI2.2’ organisational plans meant that their energy was absorbed in these activities, and additionally, he had to support them as well while not even having any formal line management rights and responsibilities, which took up a lot of his time. However, he also felt that a large part of this difference was also due to different perspectives on sustainability (the need for individual-based behavioural change versus the need for systemic change), and different priorities (e.g., CV building vs actual sustainability impact). He also juxtaposed CBI2.2’ budget needs (and relative to that, their – limited – impact) to those of CBI2.1, concluding that CBI2.1 was achieving a lot more change with a lot less money. He challenged to which degree CBI2.2 were really constrained by their funding agreements (although he appreciated that they could not engage in the ‘Fossil Free’ campaign because of their financial dependency on university), and wondered to which degree was just due to focus on activities such as recycling and ‘being outside’ which was just “lifestyle-esque” but didn’t really change anything: “Once you put it down to the individual then there’s not societal problem… […] it’s a cop-out.” Others, such as Cameron, saw the divergences between CBI2.1 and CBI2.2 in a milder light: “it was quite a good sort of working relationship with CBI2.2”, although he criticised that CBI2.2 were not critical enough in their stance towards social issues: “it felt that there was no kind of edge, there was no critical voice within it”. Duncan, in turn, described the relationship between CBI2.1 and CBI2.2 in a slightly defensive (“they don’t have any say over what we do”) and quite distanced way:

“But I think they kinda use us as...a platform to get their events and stuff out – like we’re quite useful to them because the people that would maybe go to their events are the people that would be coming to the cafe, ’cause it’s the same sort of thing… … … I imagine if they weren’t in this building and they were somewhere else on campus, the relationship might not be as...good... We’re quite useful for them and like...if they’ve got a meeting or something we can do soup for them and stuff…”

Interestingly, Simon offered an explanation for these divergences that seemed to nicely sum up the issues that he raised. His diagnosis is that the funding structures are too restrictive and don’t make use of people’s energy and creativity. By contrast, Mara’s interpretation suggests that she did not see herself as a mere subject to CCF funding stipulations, but as delivering a project that was co-designed by the students, through the consultations that Claire had held in her time.

Interestingly, all (CBI2.1 and CBI2.2) seemed to agree that it is not merely the environmental/political that attracts people to get engaged – it’s often non-topic related factors such as the social environment, the food or the prospect of credits for your CV that motivates people to join, and the environmental or political interest develops only on the back of that.

Tensions within CBI2.1/E&P

The main tensions within CBI2.1 and the E&P committee probably related to divergences between ‘realists’ and ‘idealists’ or lefties (interested in social aspects) and hippies (interested in environmental aspects), or politically engaged and less engaged participants (see above). Some people foresaw an increase in these tensions for the next academic year, as the new elected E&P president was seen as rather apolitical, purely environmentally interested, and too diplomatic and accommodating (Cameron). But there was also a recognition that different approaches were needed to create and implement change (here related to the interplay between ‘liberals’ and ‘lefties’ in CBI2.1 and E&P, although this potentially also holds for the interplay between CBI2.1 and other parts of CBI2 and AUSA).
Apart from this, like CBI1, CBI2.1 was grappling with financial sustainability. This did not feature as prominently in the interviews as in the CBI1, but was occasionally mentioned:

“There was a big uproar ‘cause like it used to be donation based – a recommended donation of one fifty – ehm, but can actually do good stuff with it rather than just kicking about...” (2-Simon-2015)

Related to this sort of reasoning, Cameron explored possibilities to pay people for their work in the kitchen, and thus potentially freeing up time for political work (and reducing exploitative volunteer work), but eventually discarded the idea as it would impact too much on the atmosphere of the initiative.

To sum up...

We identified a range of approaches to communication and negotiation that were used in CBI2, placed in an interesting ‘stress field’ between structured (meetings, AGM, joint writing of a manifesto as a Google document) and unstructured (conversations at home and in the café) communications (see also the very first paragraph of this section). It is also striking that some conversations and negotiations were apparently not had – e.g., open discussions within CBI2.2, and between CBI2.2 and the E&P committee about their roles, expectations and relationships. This allowed certain tensions to persist.

It seems interesting that disagreement over political views (in CBI2.1) was seen as less tolerable than disagreement over work in the café, and led to quite strong reactions by Anna, who used expressions such as ‘they’re banning this symbol’, ‘they’re censoring us’ in a rather defensive way to protect her and her friends way of expressing their political opinion from co-users of the café space. Her solution was to write a manifesto that prescribed CBI2.1’s rationalities and approach, which in itself is interesting as a means of institutionalising their rather fluid, performed rather than stipulated idea of a political café.

The key conflict in aspirations and rationalities was probably between different ideas of change as expressed by CBI2.1/E&P members on the one hand, and CBI2.2 members on the other hand. Each grouping held a different implicit theory of change (systemic and radical versus behaviour-based and individual), and although both recognised that engagement of people (who can then effect change) often happened through the backdoor (e.g., via an interest in cooking rather than in political issues) and appreciated the others’ approach in principle (but not in practice, e.g., CBI2.1’s criticism of the use of freebies and impression management rather than real impact in CBI2.2), their different approaches did not align.

5. Changes of rationalities and aspirations over time

Key changes of rationalities and aspirations:

• The different parts of CBI2 are inherently dynamic, not least because of the varying funding and university support,

• This means that rationalities and aspirations will vary over time, along with the more structural changes that are gc year or so. There is also only a very limited ‘institutional’ memory which makes it difficult for new people to engaged with the history of the initiative.

• In CBI2.2, there might now be, due to the CCF funding, a higher focus on project management and formalities (in fi two years ago) but interestingly, there is not much about this in the data, possibly because most members of CBI2 (whether pr however, some (Simon) suggest that this might just be an excuse to hide behind when in fact it is the individuals in SF that

• The E&P committee’s and CBI2.1’s rationalities and aspirations vary over the years, depending on the political vie the whole thing quite precarious – they have to hope that the new people will want to do politics as well as the café (e.g., Anna).

• The ways in which their overall objectives (eg political change) are expressed through campaigns vary as well, for very flexible, heuristic and not really defined beyond ‘someone has an idea so they run with it’ (discussed by Francine/Anna). Beyond how the group make a decision which campaign to go with, people also seem to just decide to be involved without much thought - Francine just happened to be in the room and there is a discussion about mooncups so she chose to join in, it felt like it was almost on a whim. So campaign decisions are mainly down to individuals’ interests and who chooses to come to the meetings that day.
One thing that changed in CBI2.1’s aspirations was the aim to give money to help other co-ops starting up. This was inspired by the fact that they started to make quite a large profit. The increase in profit began when they moved from the Chaplaincy (they got kicked out) to the kitchen where they are now. This move spurred them also to move from a ‘pay what you can’ to a set price, and to offer vegan instead of cheese toasties, as they are cheaper. They also grew substantially in turnover when they decided to open 5 days a week rather than just on Wednesdays, which was due to a more commercial café in the same building closing.

This growth also meant that they had to reconsider the organisation of the work (e.g., introducing formal rotas?) but essentially, decided to stick to their old rationality of running the place as informally as possible.

As a result of all these changes in the parts of CBI2, the interplay between them (and between them and university) varies as well.

6. Implications of specific aspirations for change of rationalities, and implications of changing aspirations and rationalities for the initiative

See above sections. There is something to say about implications in terms of...

• The consequences of the tensions between parts of CBI2: To which degree has this influenced the initiative? Has the divergence between theories and practices of change (between CBI2.2 and 2.1/E&P) stifled the different initiatives’ impact, power, creativity?

• The change in funding and access to capital (i.e., a kitchen): To which degree will this influence aspirations and rationalities going forward (but we don’t have any data on this)?

• Changes that have been decided against, as there were seen as too risky in terms of their implications for the spirit of the initiative (e.g., employing paid staff in CBI2.1).

7. Any other observations

None.

8. Summary

See summary paragraphs in Section 2-4.

9. Important factors for development, up-scaling, replication, and/or diffusion of community-based initiatives

See CBI1 memo (which also includes findings from CBI2).
Memo from JHI

**TESS WP3 rationalities and aspirations – CBI1 (Kirsty and Anke)**

1. Introduction

Our data is based on two study cases, CBI1 and CBI2. We’re largely basing our analysis on the interviews we conducted (CBI1: 7 members +3 stakeholders; CBI2: 9 interviews +3 stakeholders), but also draw on our numerous field visits in both sites (including participant observation). This memo is about the data we collected with CBI1; the data from CBI2 is analysed separately.

The CBI1, also known as ‘CBI1’ in this memo, is situated in Scotland. It has around 300 members (some not in any way active) and is managed by a board of directors. Michael is the lead director and Ross is the manager of CBI1. It is a voluntary organisation, although Ross, Paula (project leader for The community farm community farm), Stuart (project manager or the Green Travel Hub) and Debbie (administrator) are paid employees.

In total we interviewed 11 people from this CBI; Michael, Paula, Ross, Stuart (positions noted above), as well as one person – Authur– from Community Energy Scotland who are the public organisation helping CBI1 develop renewables. Andrew and Sarah are both from the local community council, and Craig was involved in the Local Authority and in particular the which the CBI1 developed from. Finally, Josh and Sarah are part of the board of directors (who sit with Michael to make big decisions – although Michael is the main director), and Fran was part of the board but has now retired.

A very brief history of CBI1 (important to understand the rationalities and changes as outlined below). ‘The Partnership’ was an initiative set up in 1998. ‘the partnership’ can be understood as the first stage of CBI1. It was set up as a project by Yshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Grampian and Community Scotland. The idea behind it was to try and make the main settlements of Yshire better places to live, work and visit. In 2004 the ‘the partnership’ arrived at The town and set up and ran (from 2004-2008) an organisation that was later to become the CBI1. Ross who is the manager of the CBI1 today also ran the ‘the partnership’ project. In 2007 Ross saw that ‘the partnership’ funding was drying up so those involved with ‘the partnership’ at that time asked the community if they should continue their work in a new form, to which they said yes, and so CBI1 was born. The CBI1 began officially in 2009 (the ‘the partnership’ finished in Dec 2008). There was a period for 6 months when Ross was self-employed doing contracts here and there.

Today CBI1 has a broad range of activities – it is developing a renewable energy project at The community farm (a piece of land they bought earlier this year) and a sustainable transport hub. In the past they have done different activities such as community consultations for the Local Authority (LA), developing signage for the town, setting up a farmers market and developing a footpath to connect The town with other towns.

*Note: All respondents have been anonymised – the names written do not correspond to their real names*
2. Aspirations

a. Financial sustainability and survival

Up until now one of the main successes of CBI1 is that they have kept going, and have survived. This is also a key aspiration in CBI1. In particular survival of CBI1 is linked with financial sustainability. For some, CBI1 cannot survive unless it garners long term financially viable projects which provide an income to cover the core costs of the organisation. As Michael points out, securing finance is an imperative for him: “I would say...ensuring that CBI1 stays alive, and ensuring that there will be enough income in the future to keep it going...” beyond this, securing finance will keep them going in the future: “But survival, not just in the short term, because with the renewables we’ve got coming on-stream now, that will ensure that there is a CBI1 in some shape or form for the next twenty-five years.”

In order to meet this goal, they bought a community farm – The community farm – and are developing a renewable energy project there. As well as these sources of income, Michael negotiated a deal with a nearby windfarm which will give the community 10% of its after tax profits in the form of a community benefit payment.

Talk around securing sustainable funding points to the precarious position that CBI1 find themselves in. Over the years different bits of income here and there have given relief to CBI1, however these sources of funding are often short term and when they run out they have to search again for funding opportunities. There are also a lot of references to opportunities for larger income that, after a long time of working towards them, then did not materialise (e.g., because a landowner changed his mind in the last minute). Ross hints the difficulties in not having secured longer-term funding: “And yes, that’ll still need to be topped up with other things, but it allowed us to sort of breathe a little and...eh, you know, look out for...go after specific projects, specific targets and funding that we need to deliver those specific targets, knowing that we’re not looking over our shoulder...” Not only does CBI1 have to spend a lot of time on hunting for these opportunities, it also causes stress for the employees; one time Ross recounts sitting with the Director discussing his P45 (a form that is issued when an employment is ended), at any minute he could have lost his job. There is therefore a strong desire to have reliable, larger and longer-term sources of funding.

b. Community engagement

CBI1 strives to involve the community in everything it does. This has been done in a number of ways, for example, Paula set up a series of community consultation events in the planning process for The community farm. The ‘community’ and their needs are at the centre of many conversations in CBI1, in particular with Ross, who sees CBI1 as being driven by the community and that it should aim to meet their needs.

CBI1 recently changed its name to make it more inclusive and for the benefit of the wider community beyond the town. When interviewees talk about ‘the community’, there seems to be an idea of a coherent community existing in The town that members of CBI1 call upon to explain their motivation or aspirations in what they do – as Ross says - they do things for the community, or are driven by what the community want. Many interviewees talk about engaging ‘the community’ – a community as one large body that has similar and aligned demands, that can be reached out to. Some do hint that there is a large sector of ‘the community’ that CBI1 does not engage, suggesting that a poorer area of the town that is harder ‘to reach’.
Andrew suggests that the community in the area may be more of an imagined body and that in fact it bubbles up around some particular issues. Instead, ‘communities’ are interested in specific topics, arise and disperse and may be contested: “But if something does really threaten their community, like the [?] 0:36:14 for example – when they thought they were going to lose that – then...they all got up in arms and said ‘Well this isn’t happening…’ and we’ll do something about it’… […]But then, once that threat was over...they stood back and said ‘Well that...that’s it done’…They won’t follow through necessarily and eh...keep the momentum going, you know, it’s...but they will...if they feel threatened with something changing in their community or not happy about it…”

c. To have a resilient community; a holistic approach
Some of the members understand CBI1s activities to be centred on developing a resilient community that can cope with change. Sarah discusses her understanding of the aspirations of CBI1: [we are] “Working with others to build a resilient, inclusive, enterprising community capable of dealing with ongoing change’ […] covers everything really doesn’t it?” There is an understanding of a holistic nature of resilience; resilience as a term that is multi-faceted; it can encompass local enterprise, community engagement, keeping young people in the area, having a sense of place etc., but at the same time it may mean nothing at all, because it is so broad. There is a recognition that all of these aspects of resilience are interconnected and depend on each other; by bringing in businesses, young people may stick around rather than going to nearby cities like Y. Again, when there are social projects happening, people may get more involved and feel more included. All aspects of the idea of resilience work together to make The town “a better place to live and work”.

With the broad umbrella of resilience, others focus or have aspirations and interests in specific elements – Michael focuses on the need to bring in jobs and attract business in The town: “I think we need to generate more...to get, to attract, more business and more people to The town. If you bring jobs in, you’re bringing people... It’s a really nice place to live actually, The town and District, although it’s too far from Y at the moment […]I think, marketing The town to companies as a site for their businesses, and to individuals to come and live here, is really important.” (Michael); Craig on improving the “look of the town” and both Michael and Josh on improving sports facilities: “As part of attracting people to your town you’ve got to have the facilities. So we need to improve the way that sports facilities are utilised – it may not necessarily mean improving them, but improving utilisation.” (Michael).

d. Visions of The community farm; imagination and cohesion
Some of the aspirations for the community farm centre around getting people excited and engaged in the project: “I hope it can be something that everybody can get excited about.” (Paula) For them the thing that is special about the farm is the participatory nature of the planning process, rather than the outcome itself. They have developed a working group and are planning together (with the community) what they will do with the land. The farm is special as it brings people together and the aspirations are around team spirit and cohesion. It is seen as something quite innovative in that the working group are a ‘random’ mix of people with different skills and all come together to organise something that’s important to them.

It has also captured imaginations and minds of those involved– the sheer breadth of possibilities of what they could do with the land excites and seems to animate people. Because nothing is set in stone yet, there is a feeling of great possibilities as people discuss the possibilities for the farm land: “Apparently, Ross’s got this daft idea for…but might...might end up being a goer...Ehm, there’s a need for bamboo at Edinburgh Zoo […] But there’s...there’s a bamboo growing
project in Alford...ehm, so it...it has been known... So it’s not...you know we haven’t ruled out the idea, but if we could make a lot of money doing something like that, ehm, to save them having to import it from the other side of the world...” (Sarah).

e. The Travel hub driving lessons: reducing carbon emissions and making social impact

One of the activities of CBI1 is a sustainable travel hub which offers a car sharing scheme and lessons to teach people how to drive in an environmentally friendly way. The benefits of this are framed very much in terms of how to reduce the drivers fuel consumption, rather than how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions: “Yeah just to give them a few...a few tips and techniques as to how to drive more...how to make their fuel go a bit further, essentially...”(Stuart). Nonetheless, beyond this Stuart (project manager) hopes that the project will have “a really deep sort of social impact” and that it opens up doors to work with groups “that we wouldn’t normally work with.”

f. The all singing, all dancing CBI1; a drive for a coherent mission

There is a feeling in CBI1 that sheer breadth of their portfolio is a barrier to their success, and therefore their aspirations need to be narrowed down: “we need to be clearer on the projects that we get involved with and...and actually...learn to say no on some of the projects...” (Josh). Josh talks about the goals being “wishy-washy”. He links this to the days when the CBI1 was part of the Local Authority: “it’s evolved from the ex-council days”.

The precarious nature of their available funding means that there is a constant drive to secure new projects to bring in an income. Some feel that the CBI1 have said yes to everything rather than being more selective, resulting in a very broad portfolio of seemingly unrelated projects that can sit under the broad banner of ‘community development’. This is suggested here for example by Ross:

Interviewer:  So, can you just give me a sense...in...in your own words I suppose, of what, ehm, CBI1 does?
DB:................................................................. Ehm, too much is probably [laughs]...”

And again by Josh: “Cause I was gonna say that...yeah there’s...when I read that kind of strap line   I think ‘Oh wow, you know, this...it’s kind of...it wants to do everything, this organisation”

To sum up...

- CBI1 undertakes a broad range of projects that fit under the umbrella of “community resilience”, these range from improving employment opportunities to making the town a nice place to live though having sports facilities or the look and feel of the place.
- There are however limited to what CBI1 can do because it is a voluntary organisation and although they have staff members, it’s difficult to keep a drive and a focus because each volunteer comes on with their own agenda and interest.
- The ‘community’ are central to all that CBI1 does, however sometimes the community may be imagined to be a more coherent body than it is. In fact it is acknowledged that it bubbles up in response to certain issues.
- The sheer possibilities of The community farm have sparked the imagination of the staff and volunteers, but also the process itself, of involving and managing a large group, with diverse backgrounds, who all chip in to help is an inspiring and rewarding process for those involved.

- Some feel the mission of CBI1 is too wide and an ‘all singing and all dancing’ CBI1 is difficult to communicate and market itself to the outside world. There is a drive therefore to focus on a few bigger projects, for example a sports hub.

- One of the frequently talked about ambitions of CBI1 is the need to be financially sustainable. The precarity of their funding system - of being reliant on small pots of money can be strenuous, time consuming and disrupts CBI1s activities.

- Beyond thinking about large social change, survival is a key aspiration of CBI1. Most of CBI1s energies go in to simply survival. It is questionable how far CBIs can make an impact when they are struggling.

2. Rationalities

a. The fear of failure

Linked to the drive for economic sustainability is the fear that the CBI1 could be like a nearby centre (Alink) that went bust. The centre received money from the EU but in the end it had to be bailed out by the Local Authority (LA). Many respondents use the same anecdote to project their fears about a possible future for CBI1, and therefore as a rationality to explain why they must only take on financially profitable projects and why their key drive must be financial sustainability: “We […] can’t afford anything that sustains a loss – an ongoing loss… And therefore anything that we have to get involved with has to sort of make money and stand on its own two feet from day one… So, there is nervousness about doing another Alink.” (Josh). CBI1 don’t want to be another “substantial embarrassment” to the area.

b. No more “crumbs off the public sector table” and watching others in their search for an asset

CBI1 link the drive for an asset with what they saw other community groups around them doing. They witnessed a trend in Scotland of these groups trying to buy assets, and in particular renewables. There was also a pressure from DTAS (Development Trust Association Scotland) who had the motto (according to one participant) – ‘you buy the asset, and we’ll help you do something innovative with it’: “If you look at what other communities are doing, they’ve got themselves into the renewable energy field, particularly Orkney, ehm, and the Western Isles communities have been successful in developing, ehm, community-owned wind turbines… And what they’d been doing, effectively, was their asset was…that stream of income that was generated by the turbine that would come into the community for…twenty years, ehm, twenty-five years whatever it is, and support community regeneration… So we switched our focus on that, and at the same time there was quite a lot of renewable energy development going on in the area, you know, lots of external companies coming in and putting up wind turbines” (Ross).

c. The town’s demand to be represented and the shrinking state

The political culture in the town is seen as something which is unique to the area and one of the reasons CBI1 is here today. CBI1 was developed to respond to the people of The town’s perception that they we not being represented by local government – for example the council allowed Tesco and Asda to develop in the town which is seen as the reason the High Street has declined.

In 2008/2009 the financial crisis was also underway and then there was a budget cuts for community based projects in 2010/2011 and the public sector was significantly reduced. This meant that the level of demand for the types of services that CBI1 offer went up, but also the
budget went down. Ross describes the situation as we look at a graph on his computer: “basically it shows the widening gap between finance that’s likely to be available for, ehm, the public sector – sort of local government as a proxy for the public sector in general – and the level of...well, the level of demand is going to put on the, ehm...local government finance, and they have availability of the supply of public finance, and you can see that yawning gap that opens up...”. The CB1 is therefore seen as responding to this gap, and as to have arisen from the political drive in The town to be represented by a local body other than the LA.

The drive to secure an asset and develop renewables is a response to declining public sector spending, and therefore there are less and less opportunities to access state funding mechanisms which CB1 had previously heavily relied on: “a lot of these organisations are reliant on, you know, crumbs off of the public sector’s table, and those crumbs are becoming more and more difficult to find... Ehm... Whether it’s in the form of, you know, Seedcorn funding or...small amounts of capital or...or even advice in particular areas...” Securing funding is a way to become self-sustaining and be independent from the LA and other funding mechanisms, ultimately giving CB1 security and “breathing space” (Ross).

d. Limited liability and assessment of risk

There are suggestions that actions of CB1 are driven by the legal organisation of CB1, and therefore the directors’ perceptions of risk. Until recently CB1 was a limited company meaning that the directors have to take responsibility if they make a loss (it is now a registered charity). As a charity, the directors still have ultimate financial responsibility and have a legal obligation not to continue trading if they see that they cannot meet their liabilities i.e. staff costs.

Some interviewees have suggested that this encourages CB1 to focus on economic sustainability over other possible aspirations/rationales and that the board are “risk averse” as they are personally financially responsible if anything goes wrong: “You know, but...[? 0:47:31 – 0:47:33] going back to those directors... They’re all volunteers...they have joined up to...steer CB1 on behalf of others, they get no personal gain from it whatsoever, but their neck’s on the line if something goes wrong. So if we trade insolently, if we enter into contracts, if we don’t pull the plug when...when there’s no prospect of us meeting any commitments [? financially 0:47:55], you know, their...their necks are on the line, their houses are on the line, their... And none of them signed up for that. So I...I totally understand where they were...where they were coming from, but things...things got really quite ehm...fraught” (Ross).

Craig suggests that CB1 can also be very risk averse, and this led them to turn down a potentially lucrative contract which could be to the detriment of CB1: “My perspective was that you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink... And that the people...they’d got to the stage in their development where they were becoming very risk averse – they didn’t want to take on something which might have implications for them personally as directors, or for their future existence, and they saw that as being a risk too far... I wasn’t there at the time – I wish to hell I had been... Because, I would have argued...for them to just bite the bullet and go for it...” (Craig).

e. Sticking points – the past shaping the future and searching for an identity

This history is very important and has strongly shaped what we see as the CB1 today. The goals of the ‘the partnership’ have had an impact on the goals and development of CB1, in that one emerged from the other and are thus very similar. Craig talks about the aims of the ‘the partnership’, which had similar aims to the official aims on the website of CB1: “a holistic
approach where you looked not just at physical developments, but you were also looking at social development and economic development too, so you would try and build capacity within community organisations to get them more involved in decision making, on the basis that things would move faster, be more effective, last longer, if the communities were involved.”

Because one of the main funders of the ‘The partnership’ was the Local Authority (LA) – Yshire Council – Ross was seen as an employee of the LA. Today as a result of this legacy, CBI1 also have a close relationship with the LA. This has had two main implications. Firstly it been useful because Ross has been able to secure short term small contracts when CBI1 were in financial difficulty, after ‘The partnership’ dissolved, but secondly, it has also be problematic because many people in the village do not distinguish between CBI1 and the LA. As such the desire to distance the CBI1 from the LA, to construct a new identity, has driven much of what CBI1 does today.

When CBI1 first began (when it first became the CBI1, rather than ‘The partnership’ some respondents felt that the kinds of projects that it did could be performed more suitably by the LA, or rather that they were things that the LA should be doing - things like putting road signs and doing community consultations. CBI1 was seen almost as an arm of the state or a way to devolve responsibility from the LA to the community: “I...my feeling was that they saw it as a way of kind of...devolving responsibility.[…] And, ehm... ...and a way of saving money in the long term....” (Fran). This leads some to believe that since its inception, the CBI1 has worked as a kind of community facilitator (like the LA), rather than carrying out projects in its own right. Craigs says that this history has shaped the identity of CBI1 and means that they have adopted a legacy of doing work that is “not visible” to the community and may resemble a LA rather than anything else. The focus on securing an asset and adopting a business like mentality is described as a reaction against this past.

The search for an identity meant that the CBI1 today tries to distance itself from the LA:

“Ehm but again I think it’s just a clear message as to what we are, who we are, what we’re trying to deliver, and how...how we can support the community, and sort of we actually need to sort of disengage a little bit from the Council...even though, you know, we have no direct...involvement with them but...ehm...we have to be seen to be slightly less...positioned I think... ” (Josh).

f. Relying on volunteers

Certain aspirations can be hampered by the fact that it is run mainly by volunteers; because they are unpaid there is a limit to how much they can do or expect others volunteers to do. Volunteers have to juggle family and work commitments with their volunteering duties. The fact that they are very much reliant on volunteers means that maintaining a drive for their objectives is challenging because there is a constant flux of people coming in and out of the organisation, each wanting to do something different, and sometimes with little idea of what CBI1 has done in the past: “Over the last two years we’ve been fighting...you know, trying to achieve funding to fund positions... You know...we do have the...the core staff that we’ve got there, and without that core staff – if you’re just one hundred percent reliant on volunteers – we wouldn’t really achieve half of the things that we’ve done... It would just be...we’d have a continual stream of volunteers coming in for one particular project, but there would be no overarching continual drive – it would...directors would come in, directors would drift off just ‘cause work commitments and life commitments mean that...they were unable to commit long term to CBI1. So we have to be able to pay...or, eh...fund the initial core funding that allows us to deliver the overall projects for the community, and that has been the main focus for the last two years...” (Josh).
To sum up…

- The reduction in public funding available for CBI1 has had consequences; it is one of the key reasons why they have focused on renewables. Without government funding such as The Scottish Land Fund that helped them buy the land and the FiT (which makes it a profitable investment), CBI1 would have had to close.

- The history in Scotland of public costs reductions and growing administrative district areas is said to have created less local representation and more demand for organisations such as CBI1.

- The legal status of organisations has an impact on the projects that trusts take on. Where there is a perception that individuals with be personally financially liable, there may be more risk aversion. This may also prevent people from volunteering to be on the board in the first place.

- CBI1 has been shaped by a number of institutional sticking points which arise from its specific history and relationship with the Local Authority. Interestingly, the legacy here is in a way negative: rather than sticking to an old practice, the organisation actively tries to define itself in contrast to and as different from its old version. Understanding legacy of CBI is important for understanding what they are trying to do now, and where they may be going in the future.

4. Communication and tensions

In this section, we present the diversity of communication mechanisms used by CBI1 to negotiate their aspirations and rationalities, and tensions that emerged from conflicting interpretations of these (and how these were then dealt with).

In CBI1, discussions over the aspirations and rationalities took place in various ways, for example in the working group meetings (i.e. The community farm working group, or the sports working group). These working groups could decide on some day to day plans for their projects, however this was based on the assumption that anything regarding money would go through the project manager (where applicable) or the board. Michael as the director ultimately decides the direction CBI1 takes. He came on board with a very clear business vision, and he is working to make this happen. Although the board do get a say, Michael has a strong leadership role and his confidence and focus on ‘the bottom line’ make for a convincing argument. Some people have quit the board because they did not like how Michael has shaped CBI1. Michael explains why he has to turn down some ideas and choose his perspective over others “it has to be sustainable, and that...[inhales] that is critical. So therefore, we have to make some... difficult decisions in terms of ‘we’re going to not please everybody’ and therefore we have to then decide which route we’re going and...we have to inform partners that ‘Sorry, it doesn’t fit with the overall model’”.

Tensions

The following points emerged from the analysis of aspirations and rationalities above:

a. Drive for financial sustainability vs needs of the community
The main mission of CBI1 at the moment (depending on who you speak to) is to become financially sustainable. This is taking up the majority of staff time. This is rationalised by the participants in a number of ways, but mainly it is seen as a way to become self-sustaining, not have to rely on the LA and other funding mechanisms, meaning that they will ultimately have “breathing space” (Ross) to do the projects that they, and the community, want to get done. There is a sense that CBI1 almost see this as a trade-off, spend the time now on getting the finances in place, and then they will have enough money to do the things they want to do.

Because of the focus on renewables CBI1 have particularly limited resources in terms of time and money. The director and manager are spending most of their time on the development process suggesting that this drive for financial sustainability comes at the price of not doing any projects which may be more meaningful for the community. There is always a trade off in terms of these two missions: “At the minute, yes. We’ve got very limited resources... We’ve got somebody working part time on The community farm that needs the support of the other members of the team within there, ehm...and the other members of the team being Ross...Therefore, other projects...kind of get dropped...Not dropped, that’s the wrong...choice of word.....but the priority is...” (Josh)

However there is also a contradiction for some in this drive for economic sustainability; in trying to survive, it detracts from actually working with the community and doing things that benefit them: “That’s what we set out to do from the beginning, and it’s been this sort of split personality organisation from day one – we’ve wanted to do these good things that everyone says they want to see happen, so, ehm, ‘Make us healthy and happy’, and the way you do it is to bring everything together, and that’s been a lot...you know that’s...that’s always been my...mantra ‘We’re stronger together’ or ‘We’re...’, you know...blah blah blah. But at the same time, while trying to do all these good things, if we’re going to survive as a Trust we have to be commercially viable, and, trying to do some of these things actually...makes it very difficult – (Ross).

Some have suggested a contraction here, between meeting the needs of the community and their need to secure funding. Ross for example suggests that this means that CBI1 try to respond to the demands of the community: “We’ve been more chasing the money rather than...than being more focussed on delivering on what we want for the community, or what the community wants for the community...”.

There is a sensitivity in how this has to be handled, and one interviewee (Craig) noted that CBI1 were perceived to be out to fulfil their own interests in developing renewables because there was little being done in terms of ‘community projects’. Ross highlights this dilemma: “you know the focus is the thing that you should have, that’s the one thing that... And...you know, I hear all that and I’m absolutely...you know, one part of me totally buys into that, and then the other part of me thinks, you know, if we’re a community organisation, then we’re there to respond to what the community wants, ehm...you know, how...how do we handle that? We’ve gotta be very very sensitive of how we handle that, if we...if we’re gonna be here long term”

b. Competing and contradictory aspirations and interests

The focus on financial sustainability is contested by others who feel their visions are muted or not seen as compatible because of the focus on profits. Topics or projects related to social development for example social inclusion and which is a need of the community are not
focused on, because they are seen as unprofitable: “And to me that’s what...you know, that would priority to be looking at ‘Well OK, how do we help with those things?’... But then there’s always the...the balance of the social stuff doesn’t, on the whole, tend to bring in the income, so there’s a tendency to push all that stuff to one side. But for me...for me that’s kind of really key to what a community organisation should be trying to do... And so... I...I don’t know, I’m on the outside so it’s very difficult... And they’re doing lots of good stuff... But I don’t...I guess I’ve...my impression, and I may be wrong, is that what...a lot of what’s being done is because it’s of specific interest to the people driving it – you know, the sports in particular...” Here Fran hints at the sports hub which is also a controversy, because those who drive for “financial sustainability” may recognise that this project may not make a profit but are happy to go ahead with it anyway. As such she suggests that the projects pursued actually more represent the interests of certain individuals.

c. To broaden or not to broaden?

As noted in the aspirations section above, a key debate in CBI1 at the moment is about if they are doing too much, and if they need to reduce their activities a bit. On one hand, some say that this is required to make organisation have an identity, to improve its profitable status, but on the other, some suggest that it still needs to be responsive to what the community need. As well as that, CBI1 is made of individuals who come on board with interests that they want to pursue and they therefore should be allowed to do that, as at the end of the day, these projects all make The town a better place to live:

“KH: ..................................................................So is the perception that it’s...it’s too broad and it should be more narrow?
R: ..............................................................................Well some people think we’re taking on too much...
AP:.................................................................................................................................Oh...
R:But my view is that you have to...you know, if there’s somebody on the Board who’s interested in one particular...!

d. Business vs ‘soft’ visions

There are competing visions for CBI1, disagreements what CBI1 should do, and what projects it should take on. The research participants often put this down to the different backgrounds of the members: “But, again Michael’s from a commercial point of view, Stuart to a certain extent... Ehmm...but Stuart’s time is...is tight... Ehmm... I’m just trying to think who else... Some of the newer members probably will as well – sort of...some of their backgrounds would probably support it more... Ehmm...but again, ehm...it needs to be pushed through – there’s no date come forward for a second...” (Josh).

There is a clear divide in CBI1 between those who associate themselves with being ‘business men’ and those with ‘softer skills’. The business people legitimise their views based their own specific career trajectories, and experiences in running successful business. Those with business backgrounds rationalise activities of CBI1 using specific language - in terms of targets, the need to avoid wasting time through deliberation, the inefficiencies of the public sector, the need for efficiency, clear visions etc. The ‘others’ are those without a business background, they are communicated by the business people as indecisive and they categorise the ‘business people’ as almost ruthless and driven only by their vision for financial sustainability. This is about competing rationalities of how things are done or should be done. There is a stark contrast between the business men and the softer skilled people, and causes individuals to identify with others with similar rationalities; ‘He will like this idea as he is a businessman’.

e. Moving away from the Local Authority days
The past relationship with the LA and their desire to be less associated with them (see above) has greatly impacted how CBI1 has been shaped over time. At one point the LA offered them a large sum of money (£100,000), but they attached the condition that the money had to be spent on property development as a way to regenerate the city centre and provide a community hub of sorts. Accounts of this history show a contested story; on one had CBI1 was severely financially struggling, but at the same time the board chose not take the money offered because they argued that it was not financially viable. This caused a rift in the organisation. On one hand people saw that the income was very important to CBI1, especially since it was close to closing: “This is ridiculous, you’re talking about winding up CBI1 and yet you’re turning down a hundred thousand pound” (Fran).

Some of the board justified turning down this money as their attempt to move away from the LA; as one respondent states that the boards arguments were very persuasive, and their economic rationale trumped all others; “but then they were making the argument that there was not...the business case just didn’t stack up, you know, and without actually seeing what they were basing that judgement on, it’s very difficult to challenge, you know…”

To sum up…

- Engaging in renewables has taken up most of CBI1s time for the last couple of years. In doing this, CBI1 has had to evolve into a particular type of organisation – more professional in a sense, because of the huge efforts and costs that developing renewables takes. This may not be what others envision for CBI1, and limits the work that they can do in the short term for the community.
- In limiting the scope of CBI1 (to make it more business-like and focused) some feel that it becomes less responsive to the needs of the community – they only invest in certain projects that are profitable, and also less responsive to the needs of the volunteers – everyone should be allowed in a way to work on a project that they are passionate about, after all, volunteers become involved because they want to change a specific thing about their locality.
- In becoming more like a business different skills have been emphasised and are sought after, and others are tossed aside. People with backgrounds in business consultancy, marketing etc. are sought after and their skills are called upon at certain times, appealing to their ‘business sense’ – this may create coalitions amongst the members. Talk of economics has become a hegemonic discourse in CBI1; others who do not share this vision can sometimes get frustrated.

5. Changes of rationalities and aspirations over time

a. Pursuit of income and business focus – shift in focus from the intangible to the tangible

One of the main ways the rationalities and aspirations of CBI1 have changed overtime is related to the pursuit of income. This became an imperative after the ‘The partnership’ funding ran out; “the pursuit of income to sustain CBI1 over the future became much more important, because the warm blanket of local authority funding had gone... So we were forced if you like, into pursuing commercial agreements – for example, as we have with one wind farm developer. We developed a project to put an Archimedean screw into the River Bogey – a small hydro scheme... We pursued putting our own turbine up, and also we formed a partnership with a developer to buy ten percent of their project... So, all of that – the sustainable, the renewables – became very important, ‘cause otherwise there’s not gonna be a CBI1 in future... “ (Michael).
As Ross points out the council money came with a strong warning that spurred them into action “‘It’s a one-off seed money, you’re not going to be able to come back to us year in year out for more and more and more’. So that was the message from day one. “

Michael explains the need for a business outlook for CBI1 “Although it’s a kind of social enterprise type organisation, it needs to be run as a sort of business – you can’t do things that are gonna lose you money, you’ve got to generate money, you’ve got to generate surpluses, you’ve got to maintain employment... So, you need a certain amount of hard-headed business sense to run...I think to run it successfully.”

Previous to becoming more focused on bringing in an income, CBI1 were financed by the ‘the partnership’ and therefore financing was less of an issue. During this time CBI1 engaged in community consultations, and other ‘less visible things’. Michael describes them as ‘intangible’, but he notes that when the funding ran out this drove an “emphasis on actually trying to do something tangible – you know produce something that people could see and do and use...”

As part of the pursuit for income CBI1 has become more business focused; delivering projects, rather than commissioning studies. There’s been much more emphasis on attaining sustainable income flows for the future”. As part of this CBI1 has had to change how it does things, change its language, outlook and how it approaches its work; “we’ve become much sharper – much more action focussed – than we were... ... People who work in the public sector... ...seem to use words like ‘debate’ and ‘report’ and ‘consider’ a lot, whereas those of the sort of private sector tend to think about ‘action’ and ‘achievement’ and ‘doing’” (Michael). CBI1 has become more focused on a mind-set of action, achieving and doing. In the past Michael goes on to say that this has changed from the past which was more about “studying, producing, recommending”, which is where he came to ask the question ‘Well what are we actually doing?’ Michael discusses the change in rationality as a shift in focus from deliberation towards producing action.

b. Pursuit of an asset

Buying an asset is seen as the main way to secure an income for CBI1, again, as above this became the main focus because of reductions in funding and the perception that they need this to see CBI1 into the Future. CBI1 also saw other Trusts and community groups around Scotland trying to buy an asset, and in particular renewables causing a change if aspiration and rationality: there was a “major shift in thinking happened, ehm...when we did our learning at the beginning and talked to other trusts and talked to DTAS the idea of, ehm, securing an asset became really really clear to us, the fact that successful trusts have one or more assets in their ownership – that gives you sort of a robustness, something on your balance sheet that, you know, you can borrow against, it makes you...you know, people trust in you.”

c. New leader

Much of what CBI1 does is driven by Michael and Ross. Michael has his own personal motto which guides how he leads CBI1, much of this is shaped by his former career in management consultancy in London; “So, I think I’ve had some success in building a good management team and a good board – that’s ongoing [laughs], because people come and go... Ehm... So, I think a determination to succeed, willingness to take risk, not having...a background that would make me timid about the potential of failure, emphasis on financial discipline and the bottom line...and, being able to get the best out of people...”

The difficulty in attracting a new Director is pressing CBI1 at the moment. Michael has been saying for a long time that he is going to leave, however they never find anyone to replace him. His house is for sale and he plans to move soon. People fear that the amount of responsibility that the new CBI1 director would have is very high and very few people would want to take such a task on. His leaving will cause CBI1 great pressure. There is also a risk of burn out and people staying on longer than they should because they can’t get a replacement. This again may point to the limitations of relying on volunteers. CBI1 is very precariously placed, and could at any point take a tumble, based on who comes in or leaves.
To sum up…

- One of the key determining factors of the change of rationality and aspirations over time is because of the director. Michael has enacted his vision for CBI1, and there is a perception that the next one will also do the same. Without a strong leader there is a concern that CBI1 will suffer because of lack of direction.

- The pursuit of an asset and developing a strong sense of business in CBI1 has shifted the focus on CBI1 away from things that are seen as less profitable – ultimately intangible things, towards more tangible and profitable activities which are presumed to have more value.

6. Implications of specific aspirations for change and rationalities, and implications of changing aspirations and rationalities for the initiative

This is strongly tied to the previous topics anything I write here will be a repetition of what is already noted above, for example CBI1 is now business focused and as such is focusing on securing an asset meaning that they are focusing all their energy on that rather than doing community projects.

7. Any other observations

Write here about any other observations you might have made related to our theme, that might not fit into the categories above.

Everything included above.

8. Summary

Write here about what you felt the key findings were – what are the patterns that emerged from your data? Where do you feel your data is unclear, or where do you have questions? What is striking about what you found?

See ‘summing up’ sections

Important factors for development, up-scaling, replication, and/or diffusion of community-based initiatives in the context of the rationalities and aspirations theme – CBI1 and CBI2 (Kirsty and Anke)

Our two initiatives (CBI2 – in fact an agglomeration of at least three different entities and CBI1, see memos) have very different organisational structures, and their trajectories are, not surprisingly, very different. This also means that their strategies are very different – and some of the factors that characterise success in some parts of the initiatives might therefore not apply in others. There seems to be, for example, a fundamental difference in purely volunteer-run (CBI 2.1) and staff-run (CBI1, CBI 2.2) initiatives – not least because they require very different amounts of funding, and can cope with lack of funding to very different degrees. This is important to keep in mind when we talk about success factors.

Findings for the CBI1 (which might also hold for other initiatives that employ staff):

- The importance of obtaining funding that, ideally, is, substantial, long-term and reliable (and doesn’t come with strings attached, e.g., an overly close relationship with the Local Authority,
or the need to pay interest on what might be seen as state aid). Sometimes, these funding opportunities materialise in a serendipitous way, i.e., they depend on the interactions between several factors and can’t always be fully planned (and sometimes, opportunities that could be seen as relatively safe can still fall through in the last minute).

- However, some of the interviewees also recognise that in spite of this quest for funding, they should not forget about the other key part of their mission, namely to improve community life. The balance between acquisition of funding and community representation is sometimes difficult to strike, and a too strong focus on funding might over time undermine legitimacy and support from the community. Over time it can be difficult to balance the competing demands of the CBI – on one hand they must be self-sustaining whilst on the other they also want to be responsive to the needs of the community they represent. In striving for financial sustainability, CBIs may not have any time to pursue projects which may be more socially useful or desired.

- In striving for economic sustainability, CBIs can become more business focused, and focus on tangible social projects – another trade-off exists between what is considered to be tangible and bring in money, over what is needed by a community e.g., social equality.

- If securing an asset is seen as the pathway that the most ‘successful’ CBIs will take (because asset ownership is the key basis for long-term streams of income) – there must be appropriate financial and other support in place to allow this to happen - government policy around land ownership and supporting community ownership is central to this.

- Assets can serve for long-term income generation (renewables, e.g., a wind turbine) or as a venue for community activities (e.g., a community hall) which then in itself needs funds for its upkeep – so often will have to be used for income generation, too (but this then requires extra work). In The town, both is wanted from different parts of the initiative, but at present, there are mostly plans for income generation, and less emphasis on a community venue. While this follows the business logic of the CBI it doesn’t satisfy the needs of those parts in the initiative that are looking for a space for community activities.

- Personal liability of the directors for losses incurred by the CBI and the resulting priority of economic viability leads to a preferential selection of business-savvy directors but renders other, ‘softer’ skills less important. Business-focused individuals attract and preferentially engage with like-minded people. This creates a self-perpetuating system in which financial considerations have the highest importance.

- This trend towards a business focus is amplified by the CBI’s desire to distance itself from the Local Authority, which is a legacy from their earlier, close relationship, which is now regarded as unhelpful.

**Summary:** Key success factors at the moment seem to be the ownership of income-generating assets, and related to that, a long-term, reliable income. This is fostered by the business mindset held by key players in the initiative, but is extremely precarious and reliant on serendipitous luck and supportive institutional structures (e.g., legislation, grid access and subsidies related to wind energy). On the long run, we can foresee problems with other, more community-minded ideas in the CBI which are not brought on board and seem to be sidelined at the moment.

**Findings from CBI2**

CBI2, as considered in our analysis, has three different parts, and each of these depend on different factors, depending on their organisational structure.

- The E&E committee obviously crucially depends on funding from the university, as the president is a student on sabbatical leave, paid by the university. This particular post was only created two years ago, due to successful lobbying. There is a restructuring and revision of the
number of sabbatical officers overall underway; while this particular post does not seem immediately threatened, it appears obvious that the post has to continue to prove itself, in order not be abolished. The rest of the committee is elected, but not paid. The entire institution of an E&E committee therefore relies on student engagement (voting and candidacy).

- CBI2 depends on funding from both university and external sources (e.g., Climate Challenge Fund). The university matches the funding secured from the CCF, and as external funding dries up, so does the university funding. Sustainable Futures ceased to exist in spring 2015.
- Shared Planet relies on volunteer engagement, on their customers (who might or might not be volunteers), and – this tends to be underrated – access to facilities for free: the kitchen and café space, which doubles up as space for the Corner and the vegbag. The vegbag scheme also needs access to a van to pick up the vegetables from the farm/wholesaler. The café was closed in summer 2016 due to a complex mix of factors, including re-arrangement of space as the Student Association temporarily moved to a new building, (alleged) negligence of hygiene in the kitchen at the end of term, and competition over space with more commercial outfits.

**Summary:** While both CBI 2.1 and CBI 2.2 did a lot of things ‘right’ (see memo for details – we could learn a lot from them about success factors in this respect), it was ultimately the lack of funding (CBI 2.2) and assets (CBI 2.1) that brought them down – at least temporarily (time will tell how they manage to recover from that).

**Observations across initiatives (CBI1 and CBI2)**

- Funded staff appear to be very important for CBIs – they maintain drive and focus of the activities of the CBI which can sometimes be difficult when there is a flow of volunteers coming in and out, with little mechanisms in place to store information about what has been done in the past (institutional memory). At the same time, not having paid staff makes an initiative much more flexible, and much more independent from permanent income.
- Even the most ‘successful’ examples of CBIs are extremely precarious because of the constant search for funding that they have to undertake. Rather than the grassroots as a space of inspiration and success, it is also possible to consider it as a space of difficulty and challenges, where all focus goes on to securing survival. It may be appropriate to thinking about a grassroots that is highly contingent on securing an asset and dependant on government funding. Without government funding and securing an asset they can barely survive. Being reliant on small pots of money can be strenuous, time consuming and disrupts CBIs activities.
- **The analysis of our cases highlights the importance of very basic factors for ‘success’ – those that allow the survival of the initiative: funding and physical capital (e.g., in the form of space, a kitchen or other necessary assets).**
- It seems striking that the CBI1 is almost obsessed with the funding question, whereas CBI2 isn’t (although CBI 2.2 has this year failed in securing sufficient funding, and therefore closed down). Can we speculate about the reasons behind this difference? For the key players in CBI1 who are strongly business-minded, failure is not an option. Keeping the project manager employed is an (implicit but highly visible) indicator of success or failure. Obtaining enough funding to maintain employment is therefore of highest priority.
- It is striking that in the CBI1, divergences in mindsets (e.g., business versus community) are blamed on the ‘background’ of individuals. This highlights that CBI1 doesn’t have a **consolidated, shared vision** of what they are – they have very broad remit of enhancing community resilience that allows strong factions to evolve: business vs community focus,
each subtly denigrating the other side. By contrast, CBI 2.1 have a joint vision although very different factions exist, too, with different interests (food vs politics) but these appreciate each other, recognising and accepting diversity. **While this is not a factor that is currently causing success or failure of any of the initiatives, it might have consequences in the future.**

- Another factor that comes out implicitly from our analysis is **the interplay between top-down structures and bottom-up action.** Top-down supporting structures are absolutely crucial for bottom-up action (e.g., the university’s support of a paid E&E president, or of CBI 2.1 as a volunteer-run initiative, or the office space provided by the Local Authority to CBI1). The challenge is to keep top-down structures (e.g., funding) as open as possible to not stifle bottom-up creativity – but this creativity is often at odds with the mindset of top-down structures which require accountability and health and safety standards etc. Equally, grassroots-level action should recognise the importance of top-down structures and work together with them (this was possibly a mistake that CBI 2.1 made by not recognising the importance of the kitchen space in time). **There needs to be more of a mutual recognition of each other’s value and potential.**
Memo from OUAS

1. Introduction
Below the sample and the CBI are briefly introduced. The CBI in question has operated in Finland quite long, and it has been an example to other similar CBIs that have emerged after in Finland. On a large scale things are running well in the CBI, and ‘aspirations’ were not that extensively talked about. The objective, the raison d'être (if you may) seemed to be pretty clear to all. No ideological aspirations occurred, the interviewees had their feet firmly on the ground.

2.1 The sample
5 interviews (total duration 5:46:29)
6) Informant Jaana\textsuperscript{15} (female) – Employee.
7) Informant Pekka (male) – Founding member.
8) Informant Risto (male) – Member, also a participant of the board.
9) Informant Lauri (male) – Former employee.
10) Informant Matti (male) – Stakeholder (and a member).

1.2 The CBI (referred later in quotes as OUASID00002)
The CBI has started off as a food circuit in a district of Helsinki. It has since expanded to community-supported agriculture (CSA), relocated to another area and is now a co-operative. In fact, the CBI in question introduced the CSA model to the Finnish context, and is a pioneer in this respect. Other similar kinds of CBIs have emerged since, but not as successful or big as this one. The CBI was first interested to co-operate with farmers, but since none was found the initiators decided to establish a co-op, employ a farmer and rent a field to the CBI’s purposes. Today, to become a member of the CBI one has to pay a one-off joining fee (170€) and a crop fee (450€/season).

In the beginning the CBI faced difficulties to find a field suitable to organic farming and to get it productive, but “after many problems and quite unreasonable years (OUASID00002, Pekka, founding member, 2014)“, with learning by doing -approach and by employing vital personnel the CBI has gradually become bigger and more successful: It has increased the number of members, modest investments to machinery have been made and the co-op has also expanded. The CBI manages now also a small recreational ‘Our own greenhouse’ next to which they have a small herb field, both located near the main field. Currently the field is located in southern Finland and it is accessible by public transportation e.g. from the city of Helsinki (takes an hour).

Today, the CBI is owned by some 200 households (or groups), which altogether involve some 300 people. From the very beginning the CBI has actively sought (and found) partners. The field is farmed by using biodynamic principles, which a shared crop rotation is carried out. Around 40 plants are annually grown, and the harvest is delivered in five separate distribution points in the Helsinki metropolitan area and is run by volunteers. Two employees (6 and 8

\textsuperscript{15} All the names are pseudonyms.
months) take the main responsibility of the field. 10-20 interns are employed as additional work force annually. Also the CBI arranges international work camps (2 weeks, 4th time in 2015) in July (organised by Finnish Branch of Service Civil International) and plans to hire young citizens of Vantaa (max 4 persons/2 weeks) by utilising so called ‘summer note’ -system\(^\text{16}\). The responsibility of the various working groups of the CBI is shared among (almost all) board members.

The CBI counts very much on the voluntary work. Most active ones are women (btw. 30-40yrs), who have young families, and in general the members represent (upper) middle class. No immigrants (or other cultural minorities) are represented among the members. Active pensioners are appreciated for their contribution. Most mentioned reason for a regular turnover of the members\(^\text{17}\) was too little amount of crop received in return for crop fee.

The CBI has been awarded several prices: 2013 Sustainable economy idea contest (1000€), 2014 Future makers of countryside -award (2000€), 2015 Grass root award (5000€). It is allowed to use Demeter brand (biodynamic farming) and Organic brand for its products. Due to its organic production the CBI is regularly controlled by the Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira and audited by the Biodynamic Association (once/year).

2. Aspirations

As the main and unanimous aspiration of the CBI stated by the interviewees was very plain: to produce clean and local food (e.g. to know where it comes from and who cultivates it) and to enhance community spirit (“thing”), which makes a co-op –type of farming possible in the first place. In between the interviewees, e.g. whether a stakeholder, an employee or a member, there occurred no particular differences in this respect. Each interviewee stated also other, more personal aspirations that scattered and, perhaps, described more about their own motivation to participate than about the overall aspiration of the CBI.

"the fundamental goal is that by investing the money of the members [of the co-op] a kind of versatile and biodynamic farming is enabled, and then we cannot do anything about it if we also introduce new ways of consumption, new taste experiences to people and new raw ingredients" (OUASID0002, Pekka, founding member)\(^\text{18}\)

"as I see it, it [the objective] is the community spirit and doing things together, which produces these pure raw materials (...) Or (…) the biodiversity of nature, biodiversity comes there like into sight. Like we have various communities, different kind of people but at the same time this biodiversity is brought forward so that (…) In principle it is said that with eating you can also then protect these threatened plant species, root vegetables, potatoes, which otherwise might be forgotten, that no-one would every know about these particular species. But through co-operation it can be shown that it is possible to have an effect to the environment in a positive way" (OUASID00002, Matti, stakeholder, 2014)

\(^{16}\) The ‘summer note’ –system is meant e.g. for companies and associations, who hire young citizens in summertime for minimum 10 days (max 50 working hours), pay minimum 350€’s wage, and for that are subsidized by the city for 300€/an employee.

\(^{17}\) E.g. in the end of 2014 20% of the members informed to be uncertain about their continuation.

\(^{18}\) The quotes are not literal translations of the original data, but more like recaps underlining the meanings of what was said by the interviewees.
“Social change would be exactly that people would desire more this type of gardening or self-steering production activities, with the precise thought that also there, persons living nearby, would then be those who would take part in bees and would do such physical, concrete production work and by doing so would have an effect with their own contribution, that not everything must necessarily be brought to grocery shops as much as are brought today. And then it is also social, 'cause it is pleasant for people to have fields around, it is nice when it is green and verdant, and then again, it is nice to be in the field. That when you do the work, pick up some carrots or break tops or so, it is quite alright. It is sort of being together and all” (OUASID00002, Risto, member, 2014)

“well I think that the biggest reason [to join, which has not changed over the years] is to get clean food and to know where it has grown. How like the whole chain starts from a seed to a complete product. (...) It is about townies, for the most parts, so probably also the fact that one gets to make such food, to participate to the production of the food ingredients. (...) I think that it is experienced as such a nice thing. To be part of the making.” (OUASID00002, Lauri, former employee, 2014)

“I do see that these three years when I have been myself involved [in the CBI] have been successful. The yields have been good and we have carried off. (...) [one of the objectives is] like to bring back working with one’s own food and through it appreciation, i.e. this kind of new food culture and to townies a new roots’ culture [is introduced] and they are proud of their own food and at the same time appreciation for food grows. (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014)

As slightly shown in the previous quotes all interviewees commented also the social aspect of the CBI and it seemed that the approach was somewhat, and as expected, co-op related. All highlighted how working together is the reason to get good harvest and clean food, which all members should appreciate. However, what all desired from their CBI was that it would be more efficient (referring to its ability to function) than it is today. The requirements were addressed e.g. to the board, to all members (field work) and to the key people in the CBI (employees and the chairman). All highlighted that if things were better there would be no free-riders so that the work load of the volunteers would be more equally and evenly shared compared to the current situation. All these could be seen as an indication of aspiration for more internal social sustainability.

Each interviewee elaborated relatively broadly about the goals of the CBI. Yet one's profession and the role in the CBI became explicit in the responses. E.g. Jaana, the employee, discussed widely the benefits for participating and commented the CBI’s potential when aiming at enhancing social sustainability and low carbon agriculture. One of the success factors of a CBI could perhaps be that it allows pursuing various (shared), but sufficiently linked aspirations, which appears to be the case in this CBI. Those who due to their role are more involved in the operations appear to recognise the shared aim from a more macro-level perspective than those less actively involved. This could cause tensions in the long run, since for some the reasons to join and where they would like the CBI to focus on in the future are very pragmatic and tied to the work in the field. This came out particularly in the interviewees ideology vs. realism – discussion (see the following 4. Negotiation chapter).

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19 For instance in the results (of the feedback questionnaires carried out yearly) the wishes related mostly to the next season’s farming: what vegetables and root vegetables to include and/or to exclude.
"I do understand that people [in the CBI] have a thought of producing nearby that this is as carbon free as possible, these are really important values to these people [in the CBI] (...)" (OUASID0002, Risto, member, 2014)

"For some the reason [to join] is that (s)he wants organic food, someone else favours biodynamic food, for a third party it can be very important that (s)he comes with his/her family and children to the field, and for the fourth person it can be a sort of neighbourhood-thing, sense of a community that I want to collaborate with my neighbourhood and revitalise it. For some it can be that (s)he is interested in the economic thought [of the CBI] and wants to see how a co-op works and wants to try this kind of economically, socially and ecologically sound enterprise and to see whether it is possible” (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014)

3. Rationalities

As illustrated in the previous quote, the food co-op was regarded, before anything, as a possibility. It brings together and allows various interests and motives, which was seen as strength and an asset for the co-op. The observation was that if the same kind of operations (renting a field, farming, managing a greenhouse, distributing the harvest, the food circuit, communications etc.) would be run and managed as a private company, it would not be possible and the company would collapse. Within the CBI people are employed, all kinds of co-operation, shared learning and farming is enhanced and take place, people network and local businesses find and benefit from each other. The interviewees saw that the influence and appreciation were earned by doing concrete deeds: the more people, the more indirect (and bigger) effect (~ co-op’s leverage potential), yet without a proper co-operation and commitment things become difficult. Radicalism or involving politics was not favoured or found relevant if a CBI wishes to grow or become more successful.

"This does bring together various interests (...). When you have some own interest and you can connect it, in some way, with [other interests], for some it really can be that (s)he wants to learn cultivation and to come here to the field and learn it and [one] has always wanted to put his/her hands in the soil. And for some it is that one sees similarity or one experiences that one works with like-minded people” (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014)

“I guess that the world is changing also to such direction that the impacts do not start from me telling and then people begin just to act, but that someone acts and then some other notices that hey that is much more clever than what we have done earlier, I too want to do things smarter than foolishly, I’ll move to the smart side, like when spelt out” (OUASID00002, Pekka, founding member, 2014)

“well I don’t know, from my point-of-view no politics is worthwhile messing up with (...) To such it could then, it could easily limit the members’ [participation] (...) That is if there is somehow a certain politics there (...) Well to my mind it is not (...) I don’t think it is a good thing” (OUASID00002, Lauri, former employee, 2014)

“I think there is no point to go against something (...), but to forget others who make unsustainable alternatives and to put the energy to positive, sustainable ideology and start for
instance a food co-op and built the community (...) in order to find some farmer, and then grow together and farm these raw materials and put that energy there, because that is where the change is about to be made. When you begin to work sustainably, in a good way, in a respectful way against the others, then the others start wondering and look that but those are operating in such a way but we are not and maybe we ought to act accordingly. It is vain to go for resistance, but to favor kindness when acting towards a sustainable change. I think it is a waste of energy if you try to be in an opposition against some action” (OUASID00002, Matti, stakeholder, 2014)

"(…) these funding parties, but does it entail then such sponsor’s expectations (…) What the sponsor then (…) Nobody starts financing anything if he himself does not benefit from it. What then would be the sponsor’s, what he would expect to get out of this that would it then help us? We would get the money but what would it then require? (…) Our input for the money? That would it then become (…) Or I don’t know ’cause I’d rather not involve the politics. Would it then be some member of parliament or a minister that would bring forward this matter that would it then get more coverage, well I don’t know” (OUASID00002, Lauri, former employee, 2014)

“in the end with such going to barricades [attitude], with such terrible activism and fuss one does not achieve or perhaps reach those wanted goals. And if one thinks then about the big issues like one thinks societally and on Finland’s scale it is pretty small and little and local to what with these kind of things [a CBI] can affect and do” (OUASID00002, Risto, member, 2014)

“I personally find very risky that we exist for the environment’s sake. Damn true we are acting for the environment, but [we are] not depending on a single card. Or like this would be some support to the Greens\(^{20}\), well it is not, but rather that environmental matters must be taken into account but they cannot be the only thing and if it is the only thing then those [co-ops] become such preaching type and like ‘we are right and you are wrong’. The correcting act should start off from us going slightly towards a better direction all the time” (OUASID00002, Pekka, founding member, 2014)

“I think, and especially with this radicalism, that on contrary it is not needed that we go quarrelling but more like co-operating with all possible parties towards sustainability (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014)

Furthermore it appeared that the co-op was favoured because it embodied a certain flexibility, adaptability that are uncommon to a firm. Compared to a typical private enterprise a co-op involves less risks (although good yields cannot be guaranteed) and allows a different kind of small-steps’ development. According to the interviewees with little deeds economic balance, ecological and social aspects (co-operation in- and outside the co-op) are gradually improved. Interviewees admitted that things have been learnt the hard way through the (tough) years and small changes have been made and taken place annually (e.g. soil enrichment, crop pickup, use of biogas, variety of (root) vegetables).

Yet the interviewees pondered whether there was a limit to how big a co-op can grow. According to some interviewees with growth things become more complicated and the original reason for organizing in a certain (and current) way would face severe challenges. Things would become unfocused, and more bureaucracy and a new need for additional labour would occur, crop and membership fees would be raised and the challenge to involve members to voluntary work would become even greater. Rather, after things become more routinized one of the key members emphasised that improving commitment is more important than growth, and

\(^{20}\) A reference to a political party.
in particular to be able to find new ways to enhance external participation (e.g. with the unemployed, young citizens) i.e. equality within and outside the co-op.

"If we grow then we must increase also the resources, like employ staff, [increase] rate of machinery capacity, these things, which are expensive. I see that such small units could come about then. Certainly we can still grow a little bit” (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014)

"its operations have like improved. It improves with time, it is like, it is a living community that evolves when the community itself wants and feels up to it. There are no pressure to grow fast or (...)I see that it has operated smoothly, that the community somehow like defines its own speed of growth and what it is it wants to do (...) It is a non-profit community that it does not have to grow” (OUASID00002, Matti, stakeholder, 2014)

“does it have to grow big and should it grow bigger or would it be better to have another food co-op and this [CBI] would be a sort of a satellite (...) or like un umbrella that they are nearby, but does it have to become very large” (OUASID00002, Matti, stakeholder, 2014)

On the basis of the interviewees the non-profit CBI cannot escape the realities of economy when carrying out its operations. The importance of economic sustainability stood out in the interviewees as being one of the cornerstones for the success. It was well acknowledged by all and highlighted that with the economic stability and permanence other dimensions of sustainability would be possible to enhance too. But the pursuit of economic sustainability does not happen so that the aims are forgotten. The main goal of the CBI remains clear while trying to find various innovative ways to deal with the economic pressure. The interviewees did not particularly talk about economic efficiency, but the demands of economy that have to be somehow dealt with and cannot be bypassed.

"the main objective has remained the same, perhaps it has been sometimes forgotten or maybe the realities have become that we have noticed that some things are not achieved right away, but one has to have a long term view and as the very first [thing] to get the economic side functioning in some ways “ (OUASID00002, Pekka, founding member, 2014)

"well of course when a co-op is in question that money side then is in a way (...) I don’t know whether it has in deed slowed things down, not everything cannot be gotten right away (...) But we do have a machinery in use, well they are then (...) It is old. And then there is not of course always the money to buy right away some newer or a substitutive” (OUASID00002, Lauri, former employee, 2014)

“I see that the biggest risk here is that we fail to manage the financial matters properly and then the job like falls and we lose the trust of our members” (OUASID00002, Pekka, a founding member, 2014)

“the funny thing here from my point of view is that we have sustainable development that we try to go for it, but it is impossible to have sustainable development in the beginning, but it then comes (...) after that [economic balance], it can be somewhere there in the thought” (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014)
"(...) we want this to be one example of sustainable development that here we would have everything sort of in order, but clearly we are not yet in that stage and I have also noticed that it does not come quickly" (OUASID0002, Pekka, a founding member, 2014)

4. Negotiations

The CBI relies on a sense of a community, togetherness, which causes a constant challenge and appears in many ways. The organization and division of labour aroused talk a lot. How to share the workload in a fair and equal way seems to be the main challenge. There are those members who do not participate at all, and yet to the participation the CBI relies on heavily. This has been tried to remedy with an obligation to work -decision (min. 10 hours/a season), which is interpreted, motivates and appears in various ways. For some it means hard work and for other members a picnic with a family. E.g. if a four persons’ family stays in the field for 2 hours, the sum of working hours is 4*2=8hrs. This causes tensions within the CBI. Also if there is no desire to participate to the fieldwork, one can pay oneself out of it (10 hours cost 100 €).

The crop fee (450 €/a season) brings cash/liquidity, but being relatively high it a) rules instantly some ‘ordinary people’ out and, on the basis of the interviewees, b) seem to give to some members a free-ride ticket. Various experiences were shared. Female members (30-40 years old) were regarded as the most active ones, and as said previously, the participation of the pensioners was appreciated. But even so, the key persons were overwhelmed with the workload. Several interviewees saw the membership being only a status matter for many. For general annual meetings only about 10% of the members participate. Some of the respondents pondered that this kind of co-op might be a matter of status for many. That if the co-op would be a joint effort of a nearby (urban) area or a village, would then the activity or the energy put to the field work be totally different (i.e. better compared to what it is today).

“well I think that if we don’t get this personnel thing organised well (...) I don’t know, I feel that does the field then exist any longer. It becomes too tough for two people to do it. (...) The co-op most surely continues but it might be that the field is given away. It is pretty challenging to get it functioning. ” (OUASID00002, Lauri, former employee, 2014)

“there is a lot of work to run all the management, and it has been done all the time by volunteering and it means that I’ve done it. It is now kind of in a crisis that how to deal with it [the management] next year in order to get it such that one could honestly see future for this” (OUASID0002, Pekka, a founding member, 2014)

“i got that obligation there. It is my suggestion, I said to the chairman that this is, damn it, this work such that few people work on hourly sense, night and day [they] work hard (...) and others like, against the membership fee, just wait and take for granted that everything must be ready for the table (OUASID0002, Risto, member, 2014)

“in the summer I wondered, when we had these bees and not many people came even though there are plenty of members, to some this is such kind of a question of status, to be like a member in this kind of modern food system” (OUASID00002, Lauri, former employee, 2014)
"we are facing the fact that for many members, who come from the metropolitan area, this membership is more like a kind of a question of status. It is nice to write to these facebooks and what other twitters there are in today’s public media where one can tell ‘what I have done today’. It is like ‘beneficial for me that I’m ecological, I’m green, I think like this and this and therefore I’m like a communal person and know my responsibility’.” (OUASID00002, Risto, member, 2014)

“I bet a lot think when they pay the crop fee that with it one gets the vegetables. (…) They come once a week (…) For that they don’t have to do anything. Well, it is a bit (…) Why do they pay? If one thinks what the fee is and what one gets with it, well, with the similar amount of money one would get from the grocery shop organic [food] fairly good amounts. (…) Why the member then wants or the person wants then to be a member, invest the money even if (…) I cannot help myself thinking that it is only a sort of a question of status” (OUASID00002, Lauri, former employee, 2014)

The role of the employees (two farmers) was found very important for the CBI and it was acknowledged by the interviewees. Although the pronounced roles of the (personal) farmer and of the chairman were questioned and appeared to cause tensions in the CBI. The initiative is very much depended on these two persons, whose decision-making style was criticized and seen harmful to the development. Yet all of the interviewees stated that in the co-op you could speak up and that there was enough information available. Rather the issue was more about the communication working mainly one-way, and those remarks not supporting the main agenda (of the key persons) were not taken into account. Partly this had to do with ideology (vs. realism) discussion that was questioned (and also recognised by the key persons). Also the fact that none in the board had agricultural background and/or education [during the time of the interviewees] was regarded as a drawback for the CBI: "amateurish" (OUASID0002, Risto, member, 2014).

"he is the founder and wants to hang on to this i.e. to his own view. In the long run it won’t necessarily lead anywhere. One like needs to take into account other aspects to things” (OUASID00002, Lauri, former employee, 2014)

"what has been interesting here, actually the whole time is that the own gang has been given inspirations and sort of thoughts to operations” (OUASID0002, Pekka, a founding member, 2014)

“there in the co-op we have precisely the problem that people who come and give new fruitful, like such fresh breaths of air, that we would have alternatives of another kind, we have other ways of doing things. Then some are perhaps too strongly in the ideology or you know tied so firmly to some cause that one is not prepared to bend the rules and adapt and adjust” (OUASID0002, Risto, member, 2014)

"it [the co-op] does not like [run] only with ideology, it involves a lot of heavy work to make it run (...) realism has come in along the journey, ideology has sort of changed to realism and sometimes some decisions must have been difficult for our board. This [co-op] like lives all the time, and changes, and goes forward” (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014)

"but then this co-op model, what CSA is, has not yet taken shape entirely, so there are often such matters, related to the field, which no-one else notices and then they are like left to me
(...) since I work here (...) we are a pretty big co-op, not everyone’s wishes can be fulfilled (...) yet if someone groans (s)he can himself have an effect (...) but there are very little, there is nothing [big that has been complained about]” (OUASID00002, Jaana, employee, 2014)

7. Any other observations
None so far.

8. Success factors
The CBI in question is one of the largest, longest-lived and most successful non-profit food cooperatives in Finland. It has been an example for other similar CBIs emerged since. The trajectory of the CBI shows that the operations have been gradually developed and the main challenges have been openly tackled. In the course of development work the CBI has tried not to forget, but to keep the main thrust i.e. shared goal clear (i.e. how to produce local, clean food by relying on the community’s commitment and participation) and how, in the end, all parties win in a co-op. One of the strengths of the CBI has been its innovative approach to deal with the workload farming and the field involves. It has actively sought for and created various partnerships with the nearby school(s), library, kindergarten. Furthermore, it has searched independent financial possibilities (like the summer note –system) to cope in the summer season. Yet these do not resolve the volunteering –issue within the CBI.

As long as volunteering remains a responsibility of few, the CBI cannot define itself as successfully socially sustainable, where the tasks and responsibilities are equally shared among members. Yet in a sufficiently big CBI such ‘going solo’ –attitude (the free-riders) is possible (though not desired, at least not by the most active ones) provided that there are enough those willing to participate to the work (in the field). The size of a CBI has various implications. E.g. as regards to volunteering there is more margin for breakage, but on the basis of the interviews the size seems to have its boundaries. If growing too big things become much more complicated (e.g. operations, management, decision-making, employees, participation, commitment) along which also various conflicting aspirations could occur.

On the basis of the interviews the size of a CBI is also related to its scope and leverage. A bigger CBI has more possibilities to have an effect, influence to its surrounding society. Even though the food co-op was regarded somewhat big, its potentials as an influential player were seen low. There occurred no disagreement in this respect, and no-one particularly pointed out that the CBI should aim at more influence. They reviewed the development and success of the CBI mostly from the local level. The issue of pursuing first and foremost economic balance aroused similar type of like-mindedness.

In the food co-op the question of ownership appears to cause tensions and complicate things. Being an independent and non-profit organisation the idea of being ‘forced’ to comply with an ‘outsider’s’ (e.g. a sponsor, a political party, an investor) suggestions, wishes and whims etc. is not supported. Since the CBI in question is a tenant in the field the control of what takes place, how the planning and cultivation is done rests indirectly in the hands of the private landowner.
(E.g. once the CBI has cultivated and fertilized a certain plot, the owner can take possession of it and give a weed-full-plot in return).
Memo from Sapienza

1. Introduction

The Ciclofficina Centrale\(^1\) (CO) is a bike repair shop and community center providing free access to bike repair materials and tools, the chance to build a bike from scrap materials collected by the CO and also bike repair services. Although there are many ciclofficine\(^2\) in Rome, the CO is not a for-profit business. They are concerned with providing free access to anyone who is interested in bringing in their bike and their primary goal is to get as “bikes under the bottoms of people as possible”. Many Northern Italian cities are well-equipped with public infrastructure for cyclists (e.g., Bologna, Padova) but biking in Rome has been challenging despite the flourishing of many Ciclofficine in the last twenty years. There are a wide variety of organizations and bike-activist groups working to increase the number of cyclists in Rome: some push for more bike-friendly infrastructure and work more closely with the public administration while others take more confrontational approaches, refusing to collaborate with city officials and taking a more grassroots, guerilla approach to challenging the lack of modal shift in Rome’s transport system. The CO falls closer to the former and despite their more unconventional history. Respondents cite the first Critical Mass event held in Rome in 2002, as the catalyst for the collective bike movement here: two Ciclofficine were founded in occupied social centers, or squats, the following year in Rome\(^3\). The Ciclofficina Centrale was third, created in 2004, as a result to growing interest in the neighborhood where it was founded. Since 2002, more than 16 ciclofficine have emerged in different neighborhoods of Rome.

The CO began as part of a historic squatted, social center in the historic center of Rome called Angelo Mai, formerly located in the neighborhood of “Monti”, very close to the Colosseum. There were very strong ties between the CO and the residents of this neighborhood and, with respect to other Roman ciclofficine; it was able to attract a more diverse population of students, foreigners and other citizens that frequented the center of the city even if residing in neighborhoods further away. We are strongly linked to the neighborhood where we are located, for many different reasons. The central location is a key aspect for the functioning and the success of the initiative, because is at the crossroads, and it is easily accessible for everyone (M).

Angelo Mai was evicted by the Municipality in 2006 and given a new space in another part of the city. At this time the CO decided to form their own separate legal association, the “Association Ciclonauti”. In this way, they formalized and legalized their activities as a separate entity from the Angelo Mai: as mentioned in the footnote above, the cultural association is the umbrella organization which manages the activities of the CO. Through an agreement with the Municipality of Rome, the CO was given a space a block away from the original Angelo Mai for a very low rent. However, during this period there was a big shift in terms of governing relations; although the CC still operates at the border of “formal rules” for several aspects, it should be noted that a large part of the founding members were opposed to this move and therefore decided to open another Ciclofficina (Ciclosoccorsi – Bike aid).

Ciclofficina Centrale is member of the network “People’s Ciclofficine” (ciclofficine popolare) which are ciclofficine that do not charge tariffs nor set specific prices for their services, instead accepting donations. The only fixed tariff is the annual membership to be a part of the Association Ciclonauti, justified by the fact that insurance costs are required to cover the CO. The fee for membership is very low and also not mandatory. The cost is 5 Euros

\(^1\) The Ciclofficina Centrale is recognized both as a bike repair center and also as a registered community and social association, officially known as the Associazione Culturale “Ciclonauti”. When referring to the CO’s activities I include both groups’ activities as the distinction between the two is only nominal.

\(^2\) A Ciclofficine literally translates to a Bike Office in English. In Italy, although ciclofficine can offer a variety of services from repair, sales of bike parts, training courses similar to a bike shop business, they can also be differentiated by, e.g. their non-profit status, their focus on sociality and community-based service provision.

\(^3\) “Macchia Rossa” in the neighborhood Magliana and “Donchissciotte” in the neighbourhood Prenestino.
annually. The CO has “political” aims for increasing the visibility of cyclists, the number of cyclists on the streets and giving access to bikes to all. Their primary objectives link closely to their vision for a more “sustainable, livable and just city”. This experience is particularly relevant in Rome which suffers from a series of mobility issues: heavy traffic and congestion from high individual car and scooter use, a weak and underserved public transportation system, and a lack of cycling infrastructure such as bike lanes, paths, and stoplights.

2. Aspirations

Generally speaking, the CO interviewees refer to the social importance of cycling in the city, the ways that it has the potential to help shift towards a more inclusive, just and sustainable society. Equipping as many people as possible with bikes is only the starting point of the changes that they aspire to catalyze: they see themselves as actively being part of a wider community of not only bikers but also citizens who inspire others to live sustainably, to regain a lost sense of community.

The bike and the activities of the CO are not merely centered around mobility related issues or goals but they also extend to more ambitious goals and socially relevant issues of (1) sustainability, (2) inclusivity, and (3) a sense of community. The key ideas expressed by the interviewees reflected this reach of how their activities are part of a vision to make and leave the world better than how we found it (L).

Although all respondents agreed that the primary goal is to get a bike under everybody’s bum (X), to promote the use of the bike as a mode of transport in the city (G). The goal of the CBI extends beyond simply getting people on bikes: by increasing the total number of bikes on the road, the CBI aspires to lead by example and help sustain the transition to a more just, equitable and sustainable society, with benefits for public health, safety, the environment and society more generally.

Another aspiration that is indirectly referred to by many respondents is a hope for local institutions to finally acknowledge the need for more bike infrastructure and to create more policies and programs which could facilitate this modal shift away from individual car or motorscooter use: you need to redesign the streets, not just put up signs (G). A final aspiration is that the work they do with children and more generally in partnership with some of the local public schools, they will engage a new generation to be more open to choosing a bike instead of a car or scooter as their mode of transport as they approach the legal driving age.

(1) A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY— The CO aims to help shift towards a more sustainable lifestyle. Many people were clear in their problematization of mobility in Rome and when asked about what the CO’s objectives or goals were, they often related this to problems with mobility in the city before then discussing the ways that society should be. Biking and promoting cycling as a means of transport is seen as part of creating a more environmentally aware, ecologically sustainable lifestyle. …you can really, truly, give a way of transport which lets you be and feel good yourself, physically … it does good to the environment. (C)

…materials that are not wasted and are introduced to a logic of circularity…we have a relevant ecological footprinting because before all the bikes became waste and this meant that energy was needed to treat the waste metals... (X)

…My impression is that they [CO] have attention towards people with certain lifestyles, more eco, more savings, more sustainable. (C)

The belief in a different mobility... a sustainable and responsible mobility. (N)

I would like to think that our presence in the city, the role of the CO … it helps and does good to making change happen. It’s a change that we are trying to find across the ways that we grow and increase the number of people who live sustainably, living differently, that bring a city which is more liveable and we are also, well, so we have this idea for longer term change. (C)

Another aspect of the aspiration for sustainability is that future generations will be inspired to be more sustainable. Kids that start to get in their heads that they can go to school
by foot or bike and not with cars, this is a big force for the citizens (...) Rome is huge cities but there are other bigger cities that have made it work, like Paris (X). One respondent commented on the role that younger generations have in contributing to environmental sustainability: Parents are a lost cause, while kids, when you tell them that in Rome you could live better than this, they immediately answer It’s true! (X)

One respondent reflected on how different lifestyles for young people are now as compared to when she was young: mytime was spent going to the bar and chatting, we were going to the cinema, not going to the shopping mall. Nowadays most kids just want to go and find each other (...) but they could go and meet up and go around by bike. (L)

(2) **A MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIETY** – This aspect was reflected in the respondents’ aspirations for a more just society, partially seen through bike accessibility as a right. Bikes should be available to everyone, regardless of their ability to afford one or their social or economic status or otherwise. Inclusivity is an aim in the sense that they aspire to give a bike to anyone and everyone who wants one: ...we give things to everybody, with no distinction. We have helped also people who used to sleep under the bridges: they wanted to use the bike but they didn’t have money to pay. We always give the same answer: don’t worry, someone else will leave 20 Euros and that can cover the cost of what we are giving you now. (G)

...the idea of being a “people’s” bike workshop really there to allow every person to work on and maintain their bikes in a people’s way meaning without paying exorbitant costs and spend lots of money and to diffuse the use of the bike so for some people of certain categories can have a bike or a bike that works. (C)

Another component of the drive for inclusivity is the creation of a place and a community of people who share an interest in cycling can meet. The aim here is to include everybody regardless of their background or political leanings. In our place, we do different projects, collaborations, we are also maybe not specifically the CBI but parts of the CBI have different interests in different realities, we each bring a part of the CBI outside. (C)

We need to work also in a cultural context, social, to make change happen. (G)

(3) **A BETTER SOCIETY INCLUDING MORE CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY, SENSE OF COMMUNITY**– Some people expressed this aspiration for the CO in terms of reflecting on the drivers of unsustainability, the duty each person has to society and a certain sense of a loss of community: ... [biking] is good for society and to be good with others... (C)

The first decision to act in a certain way, the first decision you make to live that way well in consequence you have the responsibility to live for the commons, for the common good to live sustainably it means also being welcoming 360 degrees means to also have open eyes (being open minded) towards the rest of society around you. (C)

...the dedication that is social, that is for the environment and for safety. For a return to living like a citizen that is really human, unfortunately in a city like Rome we have completely lost the sense of civility and the human aspect of being together. (L)

We constantly refer to the advantages of collectivity, of alternatives mobility, the newness of what we do with respect to what were used to. (G)

To render [Rome] a better place in which we can continue to live because otherwise the other solution would be to run away where things work better like others have done... for us the result most important isn’t how many bikes we can repairs, how many people leave happily every night, the result that’s biggest is to live in a better city. (G)

Part of the idea of civic responsibility and aspirations for social change is seen in respondents’ references to justice in society. Aspirations for justice were sometimes related to citing environmental or social injustices, subtly linking the use of bikes to a critique against individual car use and congestion issues, bikes as having a right to reclaim public space, as evidenced in the following quote: This is an amazing and gorgeous city and it could be approached by foot or by bike and it’s a shame that when you cross the city you can’t even see the buildings that are there because they are blocked by all these cars, that park everywhere... it’s a shame that there are all these cars that have a negative function – unsustainable traffic and to make the city ugly, hard to see the beautiful city for itself. (C)
3. Rationalities

Rome is a city where biking is perceived of as dangerous, lacking infrastructure, and the local government was often blamed for not taking more action in facing social, environmental, and economic issues. The core rationality expressed by all respondents was that by showing others that it is possible to get around the city by bike, they will indirectly influence this lack of action by the public officials. By showing the benefits of having more cyclists, the logic seems to be that there will be a shift on the part of the public officials to support cycling more in the city. it’s a chain of things – if the Comune di Roma (local government) has 300 people who don’t go by car or bus, theoretically they should officially recognize them when they see that people are healthier, they should be treated and like not get killed, it would be good to have them recognize it and promote the use of the bike because it’s good for your health, less stressful, fewer heart attacks, happier, less cholesterol, less smog, etc but in any case remember that the CO, what the association does has a benefit, it has a direct relationship with biking and also with others. (L)

...you need to redesign the streets, not just put up signs. (G)

“The public administration or the mayor or a party can count on votes of 10,000 or 100,000 people, if they do things that are pro bike friendly then they can count on their votes, there are not as many bikers as there could be, tons of people that have bikes sitting in their houses, with sympathy or other things they could show that they are doing something...until we can’t show them we are here they won’t do anything (...) The politicians don’t give us a hand until there is a representative voter population which is there” (X)

The CO is a peculiar mix of political activism with practical approaches to catalyze change. The CO emerged in a “leftwing” environment” and distances itself from radical rightwing movements while at the same time keeping an open mind to anyone who wants to join. The CO is considered more inclusive than other ciclofficine in Rome: I believe that even the users are agreeing that the CBI is a place that is more welcoming, less radical in its rules and principles in the sense that there are others where there is a political involvement which is stronger. (X)

...we had discussions with volunteers that have decided to vote for Movimento Cinque Stelle24. If you say something similar in an assembly of the Ciclofficina SNIA25 you get knocked out immediately. (X)

The CO’s activities carry out their message of sustainability in part through a collaboration with the public institution AMA (Rome’s waste management company): this interaction gives them the opportunity to meet and perhaps influence people who are curious about what they are doing. The fact that we are here and we are present on the streets with our bikes, that we exist and the relationship and agreement with the AMA for the bikes to get recycled is extraordinary. We have these encounters, these important moments and dialogues to be citizens and the response is always really positive, people often that come to take the couch from the trash and want to take the bikes too from the trash and we talk to them, they ask what we are doing. They are curious about it. We talk with them and it’s a chance to plant the seed about being curious and saying yeah, we can do it, we can go by bike, these types of ecological Sundays going around by bike, it’s a chance to get “touched” by the bikes, to learn and see that CO and other groups with bikes, people look at us and see what we are doing, I think that we can give a signal that we are here, we do this and if you want to you can too. Like in all processes, learning and the working of the activities, it’s easy to see that other types of activities can work. Demonstrating that it can be done. (C)

Bettering society was a theme that frequently emerged – all respondents related the activities that take place at the CO to changes in people’s thinking and behaviour towards society outside of the CO. The objective of the project is this, i.e. to do something in a way that

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24 A popular leftwing Italian political party.
25 A historic, more activist and politically-minded ciclofficina.
people keep the same ways that they are here into the outside world, the things that we are really focused on. (G)

What we do is to demonstrate that money can be useful but moreover it’s just a way to make a project work and to keep it alive, that it [money] isn’t everything. (G)

One aspect of how they achieve some of their goals is related to their approach in diffusing ciclofficine throughout the city: the process of establishing new ciclofficine is highly informal, with people taking the initiative to open a new ciclofficina after having worked with a pre-existing one. Some stakeholders see this as organic and positive, an inclusive approach to membership which helps reinforce their message about diffusing and giving access to bikes: strong social ties to the neighborhood and good relations are key - new ciclofficines have been welcomed, especially in neighborhoods that previously did not have one. We’re really tied to our neighbourhood for a lot of reasons, at the beginning it was so we could be in a central, accessible area, for us that place is fundamental ... it’s the place where a lot of people cross paths, people go there because it’s easy to get to without too many complications from any part of Rome ... lots of foreigners, tourists, students that live more or less within a certain distance have an easy way to get there and it allows for a lot of people to come. (M)

Another component of why their approach works is that they respond to a demand they see unfulfilled. For sure it’s a different context that brings part of the ciclofficine (COs) in Rome – the exigencies and particular qualities of this place that need these centers, depending on where they need it, maybe they wouldn’t need them in other places perhaps. (C)

Building social capital by word-of-mouth and informal recruiting has been one important way that the CO has gained more members. Social interaction and conviviality that exists within the CO has proven crucial to their success. The CO is also simply a place where to meet and talk about bikes. (L)

If the CO has been able to exist for the enthusiasm and energy and responsibility of the people there who respond to an exigent concrete reason, together with the... well, it’s not only the desire to be mechanics but it’s a place where people can meet and have the possibility to not only be a mechanic, if you are a cyclist or just another person who needs to get to the city and you can find more people, meet new people and share moments and also organize things outside of the CO so it’s a, there’s a double function I think that is important. (C)

...from the grassroots and other associations that move slowly towards something, slowly, slowly, the word gets around and people start to become more conscientious of what they do. (L)

The CO organizes and hosts many social events, like fundraising parties or dinners. According to some the members, bikes are particularly effective in stimulating social interaction and bringing people together to build the social capital necessary to regain a sense of community. ...there are a series of events that we host, like dinners, festivals to diffuse and expand the work of other initiatives which might be connected to the bike but they’re not mechanic work for bikes, although part of mobility and so that’s ok but the idea of being a ciclofficina popolare (the people’s bike workshop) really there to allow every person to work on and maintain their bikes in a people’s way meaning without paying exorbitant costs and spend lots of money and to diffuse the use of the bike so for some people of certain categories can have a bike or a bike that works is something that could be lost. (C)

One respondent relates organizing bike-related activities as just part of efforts to get people to build relationships to one another: The more sides you attack the question from the better it is... whether for one reason or another point is that. (N)

There is also an element of reliance on key members to help attract people and be inclusive towards a diverse membership as noted by one respondent: I can say that CO has groups which are really diverse (...) In any case, there are some more charismatic people (...) who are really attractive for the CO. (X)
The CO sees children as key to enacting the changes in local attitudes and practices, to achieving the social changes which will be necessary to have a better future: they [children] are surely the people most adept at receiving our message, our initiative. (X)

...starting as kids, well, collaborating with them as they grow, we can help build another mentality...maybe not when they are 5 years-old but maybe 15, so they see Rome and can come into close contact with other capital cities to see how you can live, other cities in the world where the change has become real. (G)

Visibility and achieving a critical mass is key to helping raise awareness and convince people that it is possible to change their mode of transport. Living by example is something which was commonly referred to in explaining how reaching a critical mass is key. Part of the logic of working with bikes and helping others is that it will be a positive experience that can inspire and motivate others to do more of the same. The CO believes that the alternative organizational form and social and economic exchange that they demonstrate as successful is a practical way of achieving their goals...I think that I would like more people, most people to be able to use this different way of getting around that is good for you, physically etc but also good for the others, for the environment. More bikes going around, less smog, fewer accidents, people that go by bus give less traffic and using the public transport is all a chain, a wheel of effects. (L)

I see it a lot like a visibility issue: I am one more bike on the street...people are starting to realize and see that who takes the bike is not just to take a nice ride around, people are sometimes just using it for that (L)

The CO also sees their alternative form of sociality or conviviality that is based on collaboration and mutual exchange, a stronger sense of community, as part of a more just society: I am living, above all, something social, civic, apart from the bike thing, that is clearly something big, the idea to think that because of bikes, lots of people can get together more towards a better use of mobility...We constantly refer to the advantages of collectivity, of alternative mobility, the newness of what we do with respect to that we were used to. Even with those who come close to our reality without having had experience.

Key to the success of getting people on bikes is the fact that they don’t charge for their services: we could give them a place that are already a part of and they give the services to another population, another group of people who can’t afford it, maybe they don’t work and they study, if you go to the shops and they ask for 11-15 Euros for adjusting the brakes. Well then they won’t be on their bike. (C)

All that we do is finally aimed at modifying the idea that the life of the people should be aimed at gaining and obtaining some profit, not only in economic terms. We show that money is useful, but it is not enough. If people don’t collaborate or participate, even a well financed project is destined to fail (...) we try to take back humanity in the cities and countries where we live, asking people not to be so focused on profit. (X)

The activities which help to inspire a more lived, more sustainable lifestyle extend beyond the use of bicycles and include alternative economic forms. One time we talked about how to make soap at home, Most part of our furniture were second hand gifts or recovered from the trash. (G)

A society that is founded on a system which only cares about earning profit, it’s a society destined to be impoverished in a way that isn’t economic but in the humanity sense. (G)

Finally, solidarity with other cycling organizations is also key to their vision for change: We hope for a transition for our city – for Rome but also for others. We are closely tied to people who are doing the same things in Naples, Milan, Torino, Lecce, Catania and we try to stay in touch and to share information, experience and our solidarity. (G)

I think that going by bike even like maybe going closer to an association minded population, that should be groups of people that are associated and band together to do something etc. (L)
4. Communication and tensions

Some of hopes are only shared by certain members and at times, there have been conflicts regarding a few key issues: whether the CO should expand beyond bike related activities; if there should be more “professional” attitudes as opposed to issues which arise from a volunteer-based approach; if the CO should try to up-scale and expand, even working more closely with local government or other similar CBIs. Another issue relates to the limits of their physical space and whether or not they will be able to expand their membership beyond the current size in the future. These tensions are mostly about what the CO should aspire to and though issues were raised in most of the interviews in one way or another, it is clear that for the most part the decision making process and the negotiation of these is carried out in a democratic manner with each of the volunteers having an equal say, an equal influence on what path the CO should take in the future.

The way that these aspirations and rationalities, conflicts and tensions, are communicated among the members is through a monthly meeting for volunteers: anyone who wishes to propose a new activity or project is able to do so then and these meetings are open to everyone. Whomever is present during the meeting has the right to voice an objection or support for the project and although there are no specific guidelines in the Statute, acceptance of proposals are generally only taken by unanimity. There is a delicate balance between the formality of these meetings and the flexibility needed to keep it loose enough to allow for everyone’s voice to be heard: We have an approach which is very democratic. The choices that deal with the association over what we do, how, become decided in meetings which are less articulated in the mailing list. We have the daily things but every decision is taken by majority. The choice to buy something or not, to do a project or not, whether we do something is taken and put on the table, we decide and express how we feel, in every possible way and who is against or for it can say it and then we decide among the participants of the discussion in the meeting. Those who are there, they decide for everyone if they are there at the meeting. (C)

The decisions are taken by consensus but we never vote, they don’t raise their hands, we look to discuss to find a solution and if not found ... (G)

There is a bit of flexibility that we are able to maintain, running the mailing list or other situations that deal with things like only being open certain times, luckily there is flexible and we try to keep it in a way that never scares anyone away (M)

Their approach to resolving conflicts or differences of opinion is very open. Many interviewees talked about the ways that disputes at the CO are simply part of the dynamic of living within a community, a shared space: when you decide to take a serious role, you have to realize that there is an expectation of the structuring of the CO and people can trust you, that you live in a community and so there are people who are different with personal differences, with different attitudes, those who are messier and cleaner, less precise etc and really to live together all as one you have to have the will to organize and know how to do it (…) The way of dealing with this, if you see someone who is less likely to clean up, umm, well, you can say like with roommates, you help them notice that they are not cleaning up. (L)

When talking about how they have pacified conflicts in the past, one stakeholder said: there were times when proposals were made that we should have more people or fewer people, there were times in the past that there was a group that wasn’t liking something and they aren’t around anymore, they didn’t come anymore but now actually we are doing what they wanted. (N)

Shifting towards professionalization is another issue that relates to the size of the membership and the potential limits of the space. It is clear from most respondents that the volunteer based model for staffing the CO is functional for now but one issues raised by many was the hours in which the CO is open. The CO is open every evening and their rotating schedule works quite well meaning that they are generally not understaffed. Some expressed the desire to employ someone at least part time, partially because there have been many volunteers who were unemployed and willing to take on more responsibility. For instance, the
idea of formally involving the CO in activities like European research projects that could help support a salaried position is offset with concerns about require human resource and time commitments which may not be feasible with the current organizational model.

Some felt that they should develop stronger communication strategies, outreach and expand (N) to support an expansion of the CO’s membership. What I see is that the upwards growth which has stopped and so since the CBI has been around for a while and it works well, it still does work well, but with all CBIs there is a great start and then at some point you need to re-think and realize and re-do a strategy for what you are doing, you started off strong and then the time comes when you need to recap and think about what you can do to maintain the positive wave of activity, otherwise there could be a downward trend. (C)

Most interviewees would like to see the CO offer more services, a wider variety of activities. Only a few of the interviewees were concerned about the fact that in recent years they have expanded their types of offerings to include things like photography courses or work with charitable organizations. There is some concern over their ability to sustain this: something that makes me a little nervous, people who are serious, trustworthy, that do or take on the weight of the work that are the equivalent of the people who can guarantee a place where we can stay. This in my opinion is another thing that we need to look and try to teach beyond the mechanic skills – to learn to be responsible, to be a mechanic or a volunteer of the CO isn’t something which you can do if you think like oh I do it sometimes and sometimes not. (C)

One respondent raised the issue as framed within a trade-off perspective: what they do and do well is working with bikes, repairing them and putting them in the hands of as many people as possible, despite their ability to afford one. The concern was that they are slacking on keeping the volunteers adept at bike repair because there are too many other activities which require time and organization, manpower to staff (C). My opinion can be that it could be positive, the idea I have and that I have shared with the others is that the sense is that in these 3 years we’re doing less mechanic work on the bikes and I’m sorry for that because instead it’s one of the founding parts, why we exist, why we were founded on this. (C)

Money, or views on the role of charging for services, is another point of contention: the CO pride themselves as being a place for non-economic exchange, they do not charge fixed prices for their services and instead accept unsolicited donations though some feel that changing this could help resolve some limitations they are facing. We had to foresee a fee that could be paid, 10 Euros for an hour and you do a lot of things then we could offer work to help these volunteers. Maybe a small quote could have gone to the volunteer, another to the CO and there is a solution which we could find but having the space like the CO with the tools that for principle chooses to not do any business with economic return in my opinion is a limitation in this moment of crisis. It’s even bigger now because it could have been an opportunity for the mechanics and the people that look for help with their bikes. (C)

The fact that they have resisted a more business-like approach is key to distinguishing them from other ciclofficine in Rome. It is not necessarily a criticism of others but more a principle they share in terms of being non-exclusionary, providing access to those who for social, economic or other reasons may not otherwise be able to have a bike. This sense of explicitly refusing to charge those who frequent the CO has been a source of tension among certain members with some of those who have pushed for a change in policy. There have been proposals to start operating a separate cooperative which would charge for services and using this to financially support the work of the CO. However, despite much debate and serious consideration, it was decided that this would change the nature of the CO and go against their principles for open access, inclusivity as well as create a number of organizational changes that they were not prepared to make. It is a recurring theme among the longer term members. If I am a mechanic who volunteers and have other skills maybe I am unemployed and why can’t the CO give me the space and for use for others who ask me to do other things, repairs. There are those who ask for the help with repairs and ask us to do them the repairs, we respond to them and there are others who can go to a mechanic because they can afford it but there are others who can’t afford it and won’t use the bike as a result. In this way we lose a chance, an extra chance (C)
There was a time when some proposed that we add a bit of profit to what we do, to create a cooperative that could finance the initiative...it caused really serious discussions because it seemed like we should become a bike shop... (G)

Some people decided they wanted to work more like [a shop], a normal business, they said we should do that... and our reply was, ok, then go do it. (M)

For instance with the auction there’s a price ceiling...even if there can be like 18 people who all offer 30 Euros and sometimes some say hey, we could sell more bikes for more and make more money. (N)

The meaning of being a people’s CO means that we give what we have to everyone, it’s very leftwing, like we give the change to have a bike to anyone...and I agree with this but sometimes people see money like a bad thing, we have to keep the cash flow low because if we become rich, well then we’ll be bad people and I don’t really agree with this. (N)

5. Changes of rationalities and aspirations over time

Although the aspirations have remained the same over time, the way in which they strive for this has changed and evolved over time. They have re-organized their physical space to be more effective, the organization of volunteers has become more structured, and their offering of activities has expanded including extending their opening hours. The success of CO in Rome and the growing demand from users have been key factors in these changes.

I don’t know if the identity of the CO will always stay the same or be altered, I’m the only one left from the start. There is a high level of turnover and while the context has changed, the commitment has remained the same, changes can come and go but there is always a strong faith in our original statute. (G)

The level of sociality among the members and with the surrounding neighborhood has increased. Since the shift from being part of an occupied social center to becoming an officially registered association existing it, the CO’s decision to stay in the same neighborhood was an important change for many of the respondents. We were the first reality to collaborate with the institutions and access a space which was abandoned, but with contract, rent, with rules. The first reality structured in an association that had all the bureaucratic rules of a real association: a president, a secretary, a bank account...all a bunch of things that others didn’t have. (G)

A big change more recently has been in diversifying their activities in order to achieve their goals. They have branched out from bike repairs and collection to, for example, offering courses for schools; organizing dinners or other social events; producing T-shirts and other CO merchandise for sale, etc. (N) In these years we have also taken part in projects with ASL [azienda sanitaria locale] for municipal projects that involve psychiatric patients, we did a lab for mechanics with various ASL centers and were reimbursed for this activity from ASL not as a payment but because there was a cost to set up the lab, put in the equipment and we gave the people that took part a little set of tools so they could go and work. (G)

As the number of volunteers has grown, they have also had to make adjustments to how internal decisions are made - they have more structured inclusive mechanisms than before when these were made among only 5 or 6 people (M). The aspirations of the CO and the ways in which they strive to influence the local government has also shifted. In the first phase probably nothing was attached to politics...all the founders of the assoc C come from critical mass. They are founders of critical mass in Rome. (G)

Even though the “political background” of the initiative may not be clear, some external stakeholders see the experience of Ciclofficine as clearly political: ...usually participants to ciclofficine are young (20, 30s) and they have a political nature. (X) Although many of the members have a history in more radical leftwing activism, they decided to make the ciclofficina a “less political”, more inclusive and participatory project (M).

Many respondents also stated that they are apolitical with respect to alliances to certain parties, and also stressed that their lack of political alignment differentiates them from other
ciclofficine in Rome, a city where political beliefs are often at the core of social centers: ...we are political for the bike. (X) In Rome at least, the bike has become sort of a cultural niche that has political connotations, it has become something more accepted or even considered cool and that’s good, it’s good to feel like it’s great to go by bike. (M)

Although the concepts of sustainability and social change have been steady throughout the history of the CO for many this might not be the only motivating factor in recent years. Some in the CO see that members are now motivated by more simple rationalities: economic or financial hardship. Following the economic recession in 2008, part of why they do what they do is also in response to the need for economic means of transport in a city where public transportation is poor. There’s definitely been a lot more people that come too though because of financial hardships, whereas before maybe a student had a motorscooter now they are choosing the bike because they could get one here or maybe because they can find a cheap second hand one because it’s cheaper. (M)

6. Implications of specific aspirations for change and rationalities, and implications of changing aspirations and rationalities for the initiative

Reflections on implications related to these changes were difficult to elicit from the interviewees. My interpretation was that implications were more challenging to talk about since in the minds of most interviewees, the aspirations and rationalities have not changed over time: they are first and foremost there to get bikes into the hands of as many people as possible. In this section I will instead focus on changes they mentioned that they relate to the activities or presence of the CO, signs of success that the interviewees brought up.

One implication of their work is in terms of seeing changes in transport behavior taking place in the city, visibly getting more cyclists out on the streets: I would like to think that our presence in the city, the role of the CO...the world of cyclists that we try to support, I think that it helps and does good to making change. (X)

Numerous cases were cited where the expansion of activities has benefitted the CO by, e.g., allowing them to buy new equipment or reach those who they feel are most likely to help effect the change they want to see: ...the people who were in the course were really happy to work with these users...the activities we did with the patients, with the money, they came in and we were able to buy new equipment and let all the users get involved. This helped us buy more equipment but this is only an example. (G)

Form the point of view from our activities during the evenings in CO and also weekly e.g. the lab for bikes, mechanics that do stuff with middle school once per week, surely one point of success in 5 years is to find a lab for mechanic with more than a school with students of middle school because that’s the right age not just a school but more because they are surely the people most adapt at receiving our message, our initiative. (G)

Many see that the CO has been good at developing professional skills, in particular for the mechanics that work on bikes: if you don’t know anything about bikes (...) you come and learn. I started in the CO by self-taught means, not formalized yet very practical, by watching YouTube videos and getting help from other users of the CO. (M)

At the same time, as mentioned above, there is concern that the expansion of their activities may risk losing the transfer of these skills as a result (C). To promote the use of the bike, the use and sharing of the competencies of bike repair and this means that we are being reduced to being incoherent with what the association should do...It is compensated by other activities that are continuing to be inclusive, to be moments of meeting and sharing and all positive things but the thing that I want to say is that not that I am opposed to these other things, I just don’t want the other things to delete what our main point was, the main goal of the organization. (C)

There were some concerned that the inclusivity and free offerings of the CO may limit their ability to provide support for other activities. This tension between members has, as mentioned above, led some members to leave. When the participants of the CO can’t accept as
a majority to introduce activities that give an economic return of a certain kind, until then that kind of thing won’t be possible to support something like that. (C)

Another key point is that their decision to expand their offerings to other types of projects has been a key to their success. The “outreach” and work with a wider set of users, e.g. students, homeless people, and immigrants, has helped in diffusing the use of the bike. With the skills that these users have gained from the training courses, they are now able to help others with their bikes and some have even gone on to open bike rentals (M). At the same time, some respondents came back to the issue of how the lack of growth may hamper their ability to continue their activities. One respondent saw the lack of a longer term communication strategy as a limiting factor for the future – if they don’t try to reach people beyond their target group (those who are already interested in biking) then they may not attract enough people to help them continue and face the logistic issues that are already problematic (N).

Finally, as a side note, one of the implications of remaining in the same neighbourhood was brought up saying by a member – the fact that they were so adamant about not moving has meant that they also are restricted in terms of the size of the space and perhaps are limited in who they can reach and in what ways: we have sort of reached a plateau in terms of the number of users we can accommodate, that we can satisfy and help, what we can do with the limited space we have. (M)

7. Any other observations

Not at this point.

8. Summary

One of the main patterns that emerged relates to the success of the CO’s approach in getting more cyclists on the road. Many referred, indirectly, to a comparison with other ciclofficine in terms of how they differentiate themselves from others in Rome: their apolitical stance, their sense of community within the CO and the crucial role that this plays outside of the CO, their non-economic sense of not charging for parts or repairs. There was a general sense of socially-motivated reasoning for what they want to achieve and how they aim to get there. I felt that there was an ideological view driving the members to participate in the CBI which extended far beyond sustainable mobility or biking in general. A shared vision of what a better, more sustainable, just and inclusive society looks like was more or less expressed by all interviewees. However, the reflections on what they are doing and have done in the past, as well as how effective it has been and will be in the future, are varied. The key messages from the interviewees were partly a critique of how poorly public infrastructure and local government in Rome provide the services needed to move towards a more sustainable transport system, partly a critique of wider changes taking place in society (e.g., the economic recession). What is clear is that the bike is the medium through which they hope to achieve a number of societal changes. Biking can be a way of reconnecting people to one another, to achieve a sense of community which seems to have been lost. The CO’s success in recent years can also be a response to economic hardship or merely the desire of many to seek out more convivial opportunities, a chance to meet like-minded people and develop relationships. Since its founding, the CO has held a clear and simple objective to get a bike into the hands of as many people as possible. The ways in which they can attract people’s attention and build awareness on health, environmental, social or economic issues have been varied and been very diversified. There don’t appear to be any underlying conflicts or tensions they are currently facing nor have faced at anytime in the past. While there are differences in how they should go forward, e.g. to expand their activities and or try and gain new members, the rationality of using bikes as the portal to having a better society is clear. In terms of implications of aspirations and rationalities I think that some interviewees were not explicit about how has or may have changed. Perhaps this was the weakest category in the coding.

9. Conclusion

I think that the research here reveals the importance of the following factors for development and up-scaling (that I ir

• the importance of community building and inter-personal relationship development;
• leading by example (for instance, by showing others that it is possible to live another way) and hoping that as more cyclists become visible, society will begin to recognize that alternative forms of mobility are possible;
• creating an inclusive environment which gives access to bikes for everyone, irrespective of their social, economic background, their race, gender etc.
• expanding activities beyond the scope of sustainable mobility and engage as many people as possible in reconnecting to one another, helping those who are less well-off.

At the same time, feelings about making development and up-scaling aims or goals in the future are mixed. I got the sense that they have, as one interviewee mentioned, reached a saturation point in terms of how many people they can reach and involve in their activity. Any future expansion of activities or membership may further hamper their ability to provide services which are key to achieving a critical mass of cyclists and also in enabling the societal changes that are part of their vision.
Memo from USV

Introduction

CCN describes itself as a civic and ecologist association, with activities meant to improve the responsibility of citizens in the field of sustainable transportation, especially by promoting the bike as transport alternative in the cities and for tourism. Additional to this, they have moved to actions dedicated to environment protection, watchdog role and initiators of local regulations in mentioned fields. CCN is nationally and internationally well connected, with an extended network of partners.

EcoBucovina is formed mainly from students and graduates of the Faculty of Forestry of the Stefan cel Mare Suceava. The main aim being to promote and support ideas and actions for a clean and healthy environment. They have started the initiative through volunteering for environmental cases, and then slowly they have initiated and developed small projects and partnerships. The association as organizational form came as a normal step in order to increase their credibility in the eyes of partners, stakeholders and public institutions. Currently are more then 20 volunteers actively involved in all activities, and others involved from time to time. The main stimulus to involve is represented by the general attitude and by the feeling of contributing to society development. Some members have declared that the main motivation is "that we succeed in raise awareness among people to make a difference between good and bad in what concerns environment protection and sustainable development".

Both associations are assuming an important role of "activist" of social society where are acting. The life-timeline of initiatives is different and the members involved in their activities as well: CCN started in 1992 and Eco-Bucovina in 2012(Club) and in 2014 in this structure. As well CCN has evolved and developed a trajectory after different strategies and actions, after experiences made in cooperation with members and public institutions. Informal relations, parallel with formal structure specific for NGOs are dominating for both initiatives.

CCN has tried on their 25 years of existence different approaches, from passive witnesses, to dog watch actors, to fighters for their ideas with public institutions. They have changed the approach and now are counsellors and partners of local administration institutions than radical opponents. In the last described approach, they have faced opposition from the city hall and they were not invited anymore to different events or public consultations. CCN is cooperating with a lot of similar initiatives in Romania and abroad. They offered support in start up of initiatives, in writing the status for NGO set up. They are members and they have initiated the Federation of Bikers in Romania and several years they have contributed for running and consolidating the federation. As well they have formed a coalition for environment of all NGOs in Cluj, called ECO Cluj, but the networking is not very intensive in last time, because that all organization are quite busy in surviving as volunteers and in acquisition of EU founds for running the associations. The connections at international level are with ProVelo from 2012, International Bike Federation since 2008. They have financed actions of National Bike Federation (participation to international Bike European Federation Velo Mondial). As well, they are not only networking with national Bike Federation, but they are as well undertaking some activities in their name, in order to help and support the federation.

EcoBucovina identified in their lifetime two stages: 1. the student level, acting at the level of the university, and 2. the legal statue of the association from now, managing more important projects. According to L.N. from EcoBucovina, "the aim, as far as I perceive changed. The association started with the idea of an organization within the Faculty of Forestry, in response to current problems in forestry, it started some time ago, when these things were not yet in media attention." So it was an internal reaction. Currently purpose widened much more. They intent to become members of the Association Coalition 2000, to take over all nationwide environmental issues and discuss them locally". According to EcoBucovina, radicalism is good only if you stand up for very simple actions or ideas. If the problematic is much complex, radicalism is not the appropriate solution.
We will combine in the present memo the input received from the interviews of both CBIs: Ciclo Club Napoca (CCN) and EcoBucovina (EB). The names of the members and stakeholders will be mentioned by using their names initials.

I. Aspirations

As most CBIs in Romania, both CCN and EB were initiated with the hope to improve the social responsibility in various fields and with the goal to implement the changes that the members wanted to see in the society. Almost all interviewed members have declared that they wanted to get involved in groups or organisations, with the aim to improve the society. Such organisations were difficult to find and for this reason they agreed and search other colleagues/persons motivated by similar goals.

"I am a member since 2001, and I have searched a long time, since my students-time, different groups connected with the nature and nature-oriented activities, but I couldn't find. In CCN I have meet people that were moved by the same things like me, and I had the chance to grow with them."

(CCN/LP)

The main aspirations are connected to the main field of activity: expansions of cycle trails, increase of number of persons using bikes as a transportation alternative. Another goal is connected with the quality of the bike infrastructure, local in the city of Cluj, but as well at national level, through a powerful lobby at Tourism Ministry, done over the years.

"And, on the unspecific part, just to see, finally, that they make cyclists infrastructure in towns, but especially, to make it qualitatively good. In the last 6-7 years was no move in this direction, or very rarely, one tiny piece, now they began to do but to make it very bad, the most of them should be abolished, as they did now they are compromising the idea. And then, a success would be to see that, finally, it puts into practice all sorts of promises, which dragged on for many years. Similarly, the number of cyclists, if you see that growth trend continues, you can say it's a success, but here it is difficult to say what percentage was your contribution. 

(CCN/RM).

The goal of BN is related to their specific activities connected to environment protection, but the members would like to move from the stage of a club of students to a strong and powerful organisation, able to fight for environment preservation. "I think that the main goal for us for the next period is to evolve from a student initiative to a real organization that could fight for the environment problems, especially in the forest preservation and waste management". (EB /LN). As well, the EB role is perceived like a structure responsible, reactive that should advise and take action if the public administration is taking wrong decision for the environment and for the society. "Where should I complain if I see that they are cutting trees, or I don't know...as well urban planning, here is the need for an active organisation, that should participate to public consultations" (EB/LN).

Responsible for the future of next generation

It is a strong connection and determination of both initiatives to contribute to a desired change of society. The members are feeling themselves responsible for the future and for the future generations: "Da, pentru ca să lăsăm, toată lumea, cât de cât...într-un anumit fel şi pentru generaţiile care vin” // "Yes, in order to let, anyway...the world, in a proper way to the future generations” (CCN/LP).

"Yes, or at least we should develop a sustainable management. To have clear policies, so that the next generation to benefit from the same things at least that we can benefit today” (EN/IN).

Civic responsive and oriented to an open and transparent society
Despite the fact that CCN has started as a sport/health initiative, they have developed intensively the civic/responsible part, mitigating for the bike as a mean of transportation, for environment protection.

"At us, as also the Statute, says clearly: Association for Tourism, Sports, Civic and Ecological. The bike has a share of about 40%, 40-45%, and when I say bike I mean at the cycling bike and at the part of promoting the urban cycling, bike as a means of transportation, we don’t make the sports part, we dealt just a while because nobody did, and I said, with a purpose to promote, let’s say. I had at the side Sports Club, we had Balkan championships, but after that I gave up when this profile was to strong and I said that there should be somebody else to deal with it. And after that, comes the environmental protection part, which is somewhere, clearly, at 30% and after that...”RM/CCN.

**Diversification of initial goals, as response to societal needs**

Both CCN and EN have proven that they filled in some gaps existing in the society, and they have developed additional functions and goals, either those were not stated or formulated at the beginning.

"...and so, as a profile, I can say it was a change, I initially went with the bike and the environment, in 1992, in 2000 there was a significant change of Statute, technical and local... youth and civic. Youth and civic because...in fact, in 1995 he got youth and civic in the Statute, the civic part, we, at the beginning, we have not intended to deal with the development of the NGO sector or civil society in general, but we found that if there is a barren land, you, if you want to be one plant, you do not really work. And wishing or not, we needed allies and we had to do educational work, to deliver help in the creation and development of other organizations, in our field and in other fields, in Cluj, and at national level, so it seems we were the first organization with our profile” (CCN/RM).

**Strong personal connection to CBI needs**

What is specific for both CBIs is that the members are strongly connected to the goals of initiatives, they are investing their time, their ressources. The paternity of the initiative is assumed, despite the fact that this is bringing dissatisfaction in the personal life (less free time, sacrifice the family time etc.) . The vision and objectives of the CBIs are strongly connected with the members, with their personal profile and their attitude toward society. The profile of activity is dictated as well by the profile fo the founder members. The rationality for setting up the initiative was a common vision of the members that have joint at the very beginning the initiatives:

"If you came after many years and you find a cohesive organization with a certain organizational culture, then you are not so spiritually connected and maybe this is why you don’t stay so...because clearly, how should I say, the goals, the objectives reflected some of the original stuffs, that's why you have associated with those people, because you knew that they had basically the same vision as you and style and interests, that is why they will always be important. And secondly, there's a thing of ambition. (…)” (CCN / RM)

The attitude of CBIs members is striving toward large-scale change and societal transitions. Despite the fact that the objectives were not ambitious formulated at the start, they were adjusted in time, targeting a more ambitious vision.

**Unity of vision and common goal perception of the initial members of CBIs. Expansion of initial declared vision. Cohesion**

The members that have founded the initiatives are more connected with the goals of the initiative. Some of them are feeling that somehow, the new entered members, are not so deeply connected with
the goals of the initiative. This is the case of CCN, EB being a new initiative. The identification with the vision and goals is related as well to the loyalty of the members.

"If you came after many years and it was a cohesive organization with a certain organizational culture, then you are not so spiritually connected and maybe this is why you don’t stay so..." (CCN/RM).

The goals, the objectives reflected in the original stage of the initiative, were associated with the people that have started the initiative, because they shared the same vision and same interests.

**Contributing to environment protection**

The goals related to environment protections were connected not only to the actions that the initiatives have initiated, but also with the involvement in legislation changes, law of protected areas, water law a.o. CCN had the advantage to have specialists in law and a diversity of professionals in the initiative. Due to competences they have contributed to the legislation for bike transportation, natural preservation and others. Their goals for the future are connected with future changes in the legislation: bike routes, protected areas a.o.

"That's hard, because being a complex activity, it's hard to summarize so, you have to take it step by step. On the environment line, success would finally be to see some important changes in legislation, for which we fight for more than 10 years, the law of protected areas in the Forest Code, the Water Law, and some lines on protected areas and so on. On the bike line, if we could finally see resolved the legislation with the marking routes for bike tourists or some terrible barriers of the traffic laws, that interdiction unique in Europe to not ride the bicycles if you are under 14, which only exists in Romania. If I see them removed it would be...yes, I would say, yes, we are successful, we finally made this stuff, because there are things for which we fight for 10-15 years, 20 without touching yet success. On the Civic line, if we see some barriers raised from the NGO legislation or on the tax line or so on, some clarification, it would be some important steps on the specific part.” (CCN/RM).

**Gaining authority in the local community and in relation with public administration**

Both CBIs have referred to the community and to their power to influence the community and to improve their involvement and awareness in their activity field: slow transportation, environment a.o. The "power" relation is expressed using the reports with the community but as well with the public administration, as stakeholders. CCN for example moved during the years from different positions: watchdog and militant against the passivity of the local administration, to a more comprehensive approach based on cooperation, realising that the activist behave had lead to expulsion from the process of public consultation process, exception from information network a.o. EB Initiative have expressed similar goals, but the ways to achieve these, were not so clear stated: "CN: So...you intend to grow, or not necessary? IN: To increase our authority, I mean...to improve the public policies for environment protection, to increase awareness raising for the environment problems” (EB/IN).

2. Rationalities

The rationalities of the interviewed CBIs were not necessary explicit, but their stories underlined some important common features, for both CCN and EB:
CBIs were started by enthusiastic students; the difference is that CCN started about 25 years ago, and EB is a relative new initiative;
- In both cases, the rationality of setting up the initiative was to overcome an existing gap between a desired society and the lack of action of the society and of the administration, in field of environment protection;
- Despite that they have focused at the beginning to a narrow action field (bike transportation and ecology), they expanded in other civic and social fields, overcoming barriers and supplying information and attitude in different situations;
- The behaviour of CCN has alternate a radical position with a cooperation/easy-going attitude versus public administration, trying the keep open the dialogue between all involved stakeholders;
- CCN has expanded from local actions to national, being a model for other initiatives, and developing up scaling models all over Romania; CCN have expanded as well, initiating different projects and campaigns; EB is kept as local as possible, but they are cooperating or getting into contact with national/international stakeholders like National Ecotourism Association, WWF Romania a.o.

**Joint vision of the members**

The members of EB and CCN are sharing the same vision and similar values. The membership is developed mainly through networking. “Yes, there were some common values, some common concerns, some common activities, so it was a personal relationship of the initial nucleus at the base and, in fact, the organization so grew, each of us has brought friends, relatives, colleagues, neighbors and fewer contacts found out from the media, from the Internet or seeing us in public actions and so on. The rule was increased from person to person, so, an organic, natural and exception was one formal, from actions or that someone sees, hears and simply seeks contact in blind and when he taken contact with you he doesn’t know personally nobody in the organization.” (CCN/RM)

**Influence of leadership over the initiative start and evolution. Informal network as start of initiative.**

Role of the leader (informal mainly) is very important. In all CBIs it was a hard core that polarized the other members with their enthusiasm. In both situations the founders were colleagues or students. CCN kept over the years this hard core of member, but a lot of them have migrated in other countries or in other cities (home cities mainly). There they initiated similar CBIs or have coordinated similar activities. EB was started as well by a group of students, motivated and assisted by their professors, with the goal to fill in the lack of attitude of civil society in problems related to the environment.

**Role of key members**

The determination of key members was/is very important for the life of initiatives. The dialogue with the staff of CBIs has lead us to identify the “stars” of the associations. For CCN, is RM, that has coordinated from the beginning the association and that has declared about himself: “I am a very ambitious and constant guy, heavy stuffs don’t scare me, and the things that I know that need long time or that can be solve on long run. It can be also a matter of this ambition, you don’t give up, you fight for a goal and maybe ... I'm the man in charge with the research, because they know that I am not terrified by one week of work...namely to stay with the nose in foreign laws and to look after I don’t know what. Others would go crazy about it, to stick with his nose in the study with days for better alternatives.” (CCN/RM).

For EB a key player was a professor, that inspired the students and encouraged them to start the initiative.

**Transfer of best practices from abroad**
The best practices from abroad have played an important role. The key members of initiatives and most of interviewed persons have travelled or have worked abroad. We assume that this fact has contributed to their decision to get into action and to contribute to a CBI:

"Da, da...la mine a fost o experiență să zic, interesantă, faptul că eu am fost în Germania și am locuit acolo aproape 5 ani, am făcut doctoratul la Heidelberg și acolo mijlocul de transport era bicicleta, deci o păcere și plus de asta era și cel mai ieftin mod de a face mișcări și de a merge în natură și atunci ziceam, nu merg singură că merg cu bicicliști?" // "Yes, yes...for me it was an interesting experience, let s say so, that I was in Germany and I have lived there almost 5 years, I took my PhD. In Heidelberg and there the main way of transportation was the bike, so...a pleasure. Additional to this, was the cheapest way for practicing sport, to go into the nature, and then I was not alone, I was with other bikers " (CCN/LP)

**Expansion of activities. Renegotiating of the goal. Coping additional fields**

The members of EB have declared that they would like to expand their activities from environment protections, mitigations a.o. CCN has done this in the past, in the moment they saw that other initiatives have taken over. They have tried to fill another sector that needed support from CBIs.

"Ceea ce am făcut noi foarte mult a fost să creștem vizibilitatea de a folosi bicicleta și pentru copii am organizat timp de 11 ani Cupa Napoca de mountain bike, aici în zona Clujului eram singurii care făceam, în zona asta a Ardealului, nu știau, făceam concursuri și în momentul în care au apărut în țară mai multe, am zis "ok", noi ne oprim pentru că noi avem alteva de făcut, noi vrem să mergem pe transportul durabil, nu atât pe concursuri, între timp am crescut, să zicem așa."// "What we have done really was to increase visibility of riding the bicycle. For 11 years we have organised a mountain bike contest, and we were alone in our area, and in the county that have organised such activities. Then other similar contests have occurred and we have stopped, let them to organise further such events and we moved toward support actions for sustainable transport" (LP / CCN).

**Value of money. Different stages of CBI financing. Professionalization versus volunteering**

The EB are in an early stage. They intend to apply for financing projects, in order to consolidate their activity, for employing additional staff. In the same time, CCN has lived a similar experience, but, after a peak of their activity, when they had projects financed by different foundations and organisations, they decided that they have not the capacity and the time for a more intense activity, that the project-work is time demanding and generator of stress in the given conditions, with all members employed in other organisations, and involved as volunteers for the club. LP for example, described the situation: "We had a growth at a time, through the years: the late 90s up through 2005 was a period when we had an office and was a place where we met and it was very, very cool, that anyone, anywhere, could come and leave, may have some business in town, he let his bike and went, it was somewhere in the middle and very practical. - Who had financed the office? - That was financed by some projects we have worked in, I do not know exactly all the details, but I know there were some funding. We could not keep the office, because there was no time for applying for other projects. We realized that to write an European project, is to much paper work and overload for an NGO, and we are all volunteers and all we do is voluntary." (CCN/LP)

The EB have a different approach, perhaps due the fact that they had no previous experiences with financed projects, but they are hoping the move through projects toward a professionalization of their association.

**In search of continuity.**

If EB is concerned about gaining new members, CCN is concerned how to find new member that could continue their vision and sustain their undergoing activities. The general perception
of the respondents from CCN is that the new "entries" in the club, are not so open to contribute to the organisational tasks, they are more passive actors.

"That's the problem, there is a core from 1990, people that remained and did not intend to go, but from those who come later, many left for other horizons and then, we fail to have the new generations, people who remain, that can develop further, which could take over the leading of the club, at a high level, that can keep up the arms, that could keep a good quality of our activities. We fear a decline of activity. We can not get involved either in 10% of what we want and we know where we have the know-how and the will and so on. It's simply lack of time. How many changes in legislation, many proposals for cooperation, how many opportunities to go for..." (CCN/RM).

**One the rationalities: to make good things with others, to contribute**

For both initiatives, the members have declared that one of the rationalities to join the initiatives was to spend time with other persons with similar values, and to serve a good cause. As well, the students are seeing the membership in EN as a way for personal development as well.

"Get involved in a student initiative, is quite beneficial, we learn to communicate, learn to know other institutions, we contribute to a good cause, I do not know, for example, afforestation or whatever, you get to know people, not just at the events that we do public, I personally advise my colleagues to come to work as volunteers, have nothing to lose, eventually come to a meeting and get involved in some actions, I do not think it takes a lot of time. In the end is better than sitting at the computer, better get out and serve a good cause. CN – From your point of view, which are the most important accomplishments of your initiative, until now? – What we are doing right now, the protest against the waste dump on the top of Mestecanis mountain, the debates that we have organised on 16th of May, and all others..." (EB/B.D.).

CCN are spreading their experiences and they are promoting their principles outside the organisation. "And on the training side, here we have the know-how, here we have good people, with much experience, unfortunately, the time of those who might be trainers and of the volunteers does not exist, so that you can carry out a lot of formal training. I would like very much and we are doing now more for the people from outside, we make presentations and I, personally, and other colleagues who were invited to the universities and we kept things for the students pretty often, and we have made public presentations and briefings and so for free, for whoever wanted to come, but all the things were somehow punctual, about 2-3 hours or shorter modules, but substantial stuff from lack of time, both of those who had to teach, and those who are educated, even if it was free, it was a big problem. Although the need is great, time availability doesn’t exist." (CCN/RM).

3. **Negotiations**

3.1 **Communication and tensions**

The analysis of interviews has showed up that in both CBIs there are not open or declared tensions. We have identified more references to aspirations that were not fulfilled, or to decisions that were taken at a precise time and now, are disputed or putted under the questions mark "was the best decision?", "did we had a better alternative?".

The decision making process is described by the members of CBIs as being a democratic one. Usually the tensions that we referred above are generated by limited resources (financial, human or technical) and at some point by discussions connected to the approach that the initiatives should follow: radical versus mainstreaming.
We will present below the tensions that we have identified in the expositions of the interviews.

**Different involvement of the members. Work overload**

In both initiatives the discourse of interviews suggested that are members overloaded with work, and others have a sporadic involvement.

"...The biggest problem is that "let's do that, that" after this, "Good, who is in charge, who takes it?" "Oh...well, you know, I'm not sure, because I do not...". And then...that happens, so 90% of the stuff is not done because it doesn’t have who, in particular, because we don’t have enough human resources. And finally, and on the recruitment part we could attract many more members, but you are running around in a vicious circle, as long as you do not have someone to handle the job consistently and you have no interface, that you don’t have your own headquarters and so on, only during a fieldwork somewhere comes someone, knows you and says "how will we do?". And you say that in about two weeks we have a projection, a march of cyclists and the rest "Come on, I do not know, come over evening at my office"... It's like a vicious circle, because also CCN, like the most, that's economic theory, like the planes on the runway. If they are standing or running with different speeds, but they are at the ground, you have to pass a certain threshold to get up and after you get altitude they do not need such a power in motors and speed." (CCN/RM).

A constant involvement of the members is interpreted by CCN like a success: "And perhaps the greatest success would be to see that you have a dozen people involved constantly and so on, on which you can count and they are few... because, that is in fact, the rest, the lack of financial resources or materials is a symptom, not a cause, it is in humans. That would be the great success and sustainability, to see that you have again a nucleus of people, as you had in the 1990s." (CCN/RM).

**Lack of reactions from public administration**

The role of CBIs is not well understood and tensions exist in most cases with local public administration: CBIs are disturbing because of their radical position, CBIs are pushing the local administration institution to organise public consultation, they take action against their decisions, are playing watchdog role. As well, frustration is perceived, mainly due the fact that public administration is not taking the proper actions, expected by CBIs.

"Who should be additional involved? Let the authorities involve themselves. We have given to them year after year all the information, documentations, tones of papers, then, the ministry in charge, the mayor is changed...and so on. (...) Divergences are all the time, because the city hall is following the own interest, and we want the good of entire community, we explain them how to do, we have done field work and documentation work week, with a person from the city hall, for nothing” (CCN/LP).

Other tensions that were mentioned are with:
- community (not all so open to change; suspicious members of community);
- state and state institutions (are not sustaining the ecologist NGOs and the NGOs in general);
- other stakeholders (like forestry direction).

**Change of the generation. Inclusion of new generation in CBI**
CCN was started 25 years ago, in an important university-town of Romania, Cluj Napoca. A lot of members have lived during the years to move abroad, to return to their home towns. If the founder members have formed a strong and reliable hard core, the members do not perceive the new "entry" members as motivated as they should be. They are subscribing to the goals of the initiative, but there are not volunteering as well for organisational tasks, they are not investing their time and energy in management tasks of the CBI. They prefer more to be silent participants or witnesses.

"So that's a problem that we feel by us and it feels as a problem of generation. The ideal of the organization is to have a constant flow of input and output and so on, but the reality shows you that many organizations are born, grow and die with the initial nucleus. And we see this issue, that the average age has risen and we attract less fresh blood, young people, students or young graduates who come now or come, but the involvement is smaller and on one hand we say that we didn’t gave them enough power to make decisions, autonomy, on the other hand they say they do not have the time we had in the 1990s. We have this problem, we see it and we actively strive to refresh the organization, but it is not working as we would like to. They came very many, I was super excited, but almost everyone after a year-2-3 went through other horizons. ” (CCN / RM).

Limited time, limited resources

Both initiatives have stated that the resources (especially financial and human) are limited, and for this reason at some point the actions to be implemented, should be selected and prioritised properly.

"Secondly, most of those who are the kind of people we would need in our organization, determined people, dynamic, with ideals, they are those that in our days are very, very busy or they go to work abroad. As other NGOs from Romania, with our formal members, we could open branches in Canada, USA, Germany and so on. Most people from the best went and somehow, just a few crazy people remain here to fight for certain ideals. And there is the factor, as I said, in the 1990s, people had time. Those who were students usually were not students at two universities, they were not working as students, so it was” (CCN / LP).

"... somehow, I think often and I talk often about this job and then there was not such a thing, I am trying all the time to have a certain distance and to watch things in time. On the other hand, with every such thing, others say “leave it, in the end, they will solve it.” (CCN/RM); ”But there is that internal motivation, that has ensured whether you are happy or disappointed of your colleagues or about how the institutional side is evolving, you can go forward.” (CCN/RM);

3.2 Negotiations. Changes of rationalities and aspirations over time

Changes toward professionalization.

For EB we can hardly discuss about changes of rationalities, due the short life-time that they have. They are streaming for professionalization, for increase of financial power via EU projects. The most members explained that was not a change in the goals and aspirations ("The association is to young for this" EB). We could describe their aspirations as being oriented toward consolidation and expansions of initial proposed activities.

Some other members of EB have declared that they have moved from a student club to a responsible and community oriented initiative. The have set up an NGO and they have made changes in the inner organisation. The management of the association is structured on fields of activities (communication, ecology and waste management campaigns, public debates).
"Ecology, waste management. Are different goals, da.... But I don’t think that the goals have changed over the time. I think that they were just amplified". (EB/G.N.)

For CCN, different stages could be identified in their existence: early stage, with an orientation to promotion of bike as a safe and health way of transportation, diversification of field of action to environment protection, initiation of regulation, watch dog campaigns, radicalization. We can hardly discuss by a constant evolution, it was a process with ups and downs, due the direct dependence of activities on the time and resources of the members and leaders. The evolution was not necessary planned, but more as a result of the reactions that they had on society realities. They have developed a network of good practices in all over Romania, new initiatives were started thanks to their inspirational example. They are connected as well to international networks and associations. They have contributed to the expansions of the Europeans bike trails to Romania (Eurovelo) and have mitigated for bike roads, they have initiated legislations and they have coordinated lobby actions to different ministries.

"Definitely, that's both good and bad for the organization, because in the early 1990s several factors were clear: once it was a hope and enthusiasm and mobilization, which today no longer exists. Today is much discouragement or cynicism, new generations say that there’s no point, you get no change or the report is disastrously between the effort invested and so. It doesn’t worth, simply not worth to put my shoulder, I do not think anything is going to change soon or so. "”(CCN/LP).

"... and so, as a profile, I can say it was a change, I initially went with the bike and the environment, in 1992, in 2000 there was a significant change of Statute, technical and local...” (CCN/RM)

"... youth and civic. Youth and civic because...in fact, in 1995 he got youth and civic in the Statute, the civic part, we, at the beginning, we have not proposed to deal with the development of the NGO sector or civil society in general, but we found that if there is a barren land, you, if you want to be one plant, you do not really work. And wishing or not, we needed allies and we had to do education as well, to help in the creation and development of other organizations and in our field and in other fields in Cluj, and at the national level, so it seems we were the first organization with our profile. And our former members who were students in Cluj, graduated, went home, local organizations were set up there, at others were initiative group, we contact them, help them, I was writing the Statute, helping them to develop, we were doing projects together and so on. Similarly, at Cluj, we started doing contacting, sectorial coalitions, sectorial coalitions, to do to make the secretary of the coalitions, to make county forums, NGOs and so on, so from zero. By 1996-97 began to grow the proportion of actor in the NGO sector and civil society, in general, and in today’s issue it is strong, many years we have functioned informally, even as a kind of NGO resource centre and even today we are, at the national level, even with such a role and we publish guides for setting up NGOs and so on.” (CCN/RM).

3.3 Implications of specific aspirations for change and rationalities,

The member of EB don’t have described relevant changes done in the CBI, and as well they don’t think that significant changes should occur, excepting the move toward professionalization. The changes that they are expecting are from outside, especially from the side of public administration.

"The only need that we are expecting is a more open and supportive approach of the public administration. If we will have the support of public administration, we could change a little bit more, we could have more trust and more courage to continue” (EB/IN).

„Well to start as any NGO or association began timid, do not know the order was implementing policies or best environmental practices and public awareness. That was about.
(... Well, from the beginning when I was a student association, so to speak, I tried today to keep in touch with students, the projects we run, we had before, but we're working on older stuff, so with bigger budget. Professionalization is a good thing when we're not, we're just getting started, and people who know these things’ll guide you. In other words we try to attract people who are experts in the association in a particular field.” (EB, IN).

The members of EB have mentioned that they are hoping to write and to apply for financing their activities through EU projects. The financing projects are perceived as a chance for professionalization, for extension of the activities and for diversification.

"And even if don’t have yet financial strength, lead them or help them to earn some financing through projects.” (EB, LN external stakeholder)

The same stakeholder, LN, is mentioning that from the outside, it looks that the goal of EC has changed.

The goal, as far as I perceive it changed. The association started with the idea to be an organization within the Faculty of Forestry in response to current problems in forestry. So it was an internal reaction. Currently purpose widened very much. Think that they have become members of the Coalition 2000, an association nationwide, that I believe that assumes all environmental issues and discuss them locally. But that idea, that something that was focused on forestry, had such a development, that a student went to represent the area to national workshops, in issues related to local environmental.

The diversification strategy is not an alternative for EB. The large initiatives are wasting their forces on to many fields, and is hard to have expertise in many different domains. EC fears that if the diversification will occur, they will not have technical capacity to solve the problems that they will deal with. This opinion was formulated by LN (external stakeholders): "The goal is good. The problem with these big initiatives is, that if you expand a lot the activity on different fields, is hard to have in expertise for all these. From my perspective the members should stick to their initial goal. They could be more professional if they will stick to the field of environment, forestry and waste management, natural parks, natural reservations, in this domain”. (EB, LN).

At CCN, the growth of the initiative from 50 to 150 adherent members brought additional concerns and internal implicit conflicts, due the unequal involvement of members. As well, the initiative has no staff, and is leded only by volunteers. The coordination of a quite large number of members is difficult and the organisation of some activities is as well a challenge for the most active members (almost the same that are involved in events, campaigns a.o.).

(...) So, we started with a few dozen people and still we are as active members somewhere around 50, 150 adherent members, these that come rarely, a few times a year or more outgoing. So still, we are a small local organization, as, unfortunately, are mostly from the sector of NGOs. For example, environmental NGOs, from the about 200 active in Romania, almost all, what to say, about 95% have no paid staff and somewhere between one and three dozen of members, more or less active. So that's the typical model of organization, here we are also, unfortunately. As number it has not been a change, it is slow growth in the last 10 years, but it's slow, it's not very significant. That is, the number of members obtained in addition to the number of members lost. Qualitatively, we evolved a lot, in the sense that if in early 1990s, most were students or graduates, now three-fourth of the people are people somewhere at 30-40 years, graduates, many have liberal professions or so on, technical, so, somehow, the expertise level is much higher in the organization, but time and resources availability, has decreased in proportion to the situation and that's not really positive, the increase in the average age, because, while we strive and try, we fail to provide a flow of constant activities. (CCN/RM)
Money and CBIs

Memo from CF

I. Introduction

Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust (Colglen) is one of the TESS key case studies based in Scotland (and the only key initiative interviewed by Climate Futures). Colglen is in a remote rural area with a small, sparse population and a fragile economy. It shares many of the characteristics of most of rural Scotland such as: declining and ageing population, shortage of jobs and training opportunities particularly for young people, poor public transport, many holiday homes and a lack of affordable housing, loss of local services – threat of school closure, closure of pub and shop and post-office, loss of doctor etc... as well as a highly skewed land ownership structure and very remote ‘local’ government.

Colglen’s primary concern is rural regeneration, reviving the local economy through moving to a re-localised, low-carbon, future. They see community ownership of assets as the key to local regeneration by providing opportunities for new livelihoods and skills development. They also see ownership of assets, such as land and renewable energy generation, as being crucial to generating long term income to fund the ongoing work of the trust in enabling new initiatives and projects for the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the community. In Colglen’s case this means ownership of 600ha of forest and, they hope, of a currently derelict former hotel. This is partly about gaining the potential to generate income (for example through sites for renewable energy generation) and create jobs (in the forest, running the hotel etc.) but also about overcoming the current ‘disconnect’ between the community and its land and local resources (which is so prevalent across Scotland).

Renewable energy is primarily seen as a source of long-term income for achieving the wider regeneration goals of the trust. The Trust seems to have a very entrepreneurial approach and the confidence and ability to grasp opportunities that other groups might not, for example through their innovative model for bringing 600 hectares of forest land into community ownership. They see community ownership of assets as crucial to the long-term financial sustainability of the Trust as well as being the key to local regeneration.

Their main projects to date have been: Warmer Colglen, a project funded by the Scottish Government’s Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) to provide home energy efficiency advice and implementation support, Greener Colglen, another CCF funded project which has set up two large commercial sized community polytunnels, Stronfian Community Forest – the purchase of 600ha of former National Forest Land, part financed through selling the rights to most of the timber for the next 99 years but leaving the community areas of native deciduous woodland, sites for community energy generation and woodland crofts and a large area available for practical skills training and recreation. They are progressing various renewable energy projects and other projects such as the Cowal way, a long-distance footpath through the area that will connect the Kintyre Way with the West Highland Way.
One major barrier that Colglen have faced is Scottish funders’ interpretation of EU State Aid regulations that limits the amount of grant funding that the group can receive in any three year period. This has so far stymied fund raising for purchase of the hotel and meant that they had to sell most of the timber extraction rights in the forest for 99 years in order to fund the balance of the purchase price.

They have directly received or leveraged funding from a number of sources into the area, over £2.2million since 2008. Until they succeed in getting their renewable energy projects up and running they are still very dependent on short term project funding.

Between January and May 2015, we interviewed a range of staff, board and ordinary members as well as external stakeholders in local and national Government and intermediary network organisations.

This memo also draws on qualitative data from interviews with four other case studies, including the social enterprise ‘Remade in Edinburgh’ (RME), Transition Black Isle (TBI), Comrie Development Trust (CDT) and Highland Perthshire Cycling (HPC) as well as on background knowledge from personal involvement with a ‘Transition’ initiative as well as with the Scottish Communities Climate Action Network, Community Energy Scotland and Scottish Community Alliance.

**Remade in Edinburgh (RME)** which is probably the most relevant of our other case studies for this theme. This is a social enterprise which is focused on giving people the skills to repair and reuse computers, textiles and furniture and which is intending to roll out a network of similar ‘repair centres’. Remade in Edinburgh is also about restructuring the economy, putting in place the infrastructure, giving people access to the skills and changing the prevailing culture so that repair, reuse and upcycling become the default options and ‘waste’ becomes a resource in a circular economy. They are currently very reliant on grant funding but seek to generate as much of their income as possible and are actively seeking ways in which they can expand their impact through using a social franchising model to replicate themselves. They ensure that their services are available to those on low incomes by cross-subsidising and through support of the local authority.

Whilst there is a considerable amount of funding available for community projects in Scotland, particularly in more ‘deprived’ areas, there is general frustration that this is not used as efficiently as it could be if funders better understood community projects and were prepared to enter into more of a dialogue: ‘Just think how much work could get saved along the way if people were just genuinely listening to each other - rather than coming up with grant criteria which you then have to try to slot into.’ (RME1 –founder)

Both of these case studies (Colglen and RME) are really about restructuring their local economies and their current need for outside funding is in part because of the current dysfunctional nature of the mainstream economy with its externalised costs and highly skewed ownership of, and access to, wealth generating assets. Unfortunately, we don’t have any data on our interviewees’ thoughts or understanding of how the money system currently functions or how reform of this, or creation of local alternatives, could support their work.

**II. Analysis of coded themes**

RQ1 Perceptions of money
All the initiatives interviewed by Climate Futures expressed the need for financial sustainability and frustrations related to grant dependence. The initiatives are highly dependent on external funding sources and all of them use money in a conventional way. Sufficient monetary income is perceived to be one of the key success factors mentioned by members of Colglen and supportive case studies.

1. Transparency and money making

The interviewees expressed the need of being transparent in terms of public funds allocation but also the difficulty of communicating to local people about the value and costs of projects for which they have received funding. Some of them are concerned that the community members who may not directly benefit from the initiative can be suspicious about the how the money is being spent and about the motivations of volunteers who devote so much time and effort to raising funds:

“(…) I think, if you spoke to some members of the community, they would probably off the record, they would probably say, yea they are probably lining their pockets and all the rest of it, you know what I mean. ”<CGDT1, staff member>.

There is also a feeling that people in general don’t appreciate either the costs involved or the length of time it can take to overcome bureaucratic obstacles, plan projects, secure funding and deliver tangible outcomes:

“You know, people saying, ‘Oh look, they’ve been going for two years now. They, there should be a lot more done than now’”<CGDT5, member>.

or of the restrictions on how project funding can be spent: “…and ‘They must have lots of funds’, ‘No, at the moment we haven’t got any funds.’ You know? A lot of things like that.”<CGDT5, member>

2. Ability to generate money seen as a measure of success

One of the interviewees at Colglen perceives the fact that ‘a lot of money has flowed through it (the project)’ makes it a positive and successful initiative.

“You know, there are good things that have happened. The community garden is a good thing, the Greener ColGlen project was good. A lot of money has flowed through it. I think that’s very positive. Just quite how engaged the community is, I don’t know.”<CGDT8, stakeholder>

3. Sharing economy

Whilst all the communities we interviewed use money and necessarily try to function within the existing economy, they are all very open to the ethos of ‘open-source’ and ‘creative commons’ and regularly share learning and knowledge with other community groups. Indeed: “The whole ethos of the development trust movement is built around that shared learning”.<CGDT7, stakeholder> Remade in Edinburgh won a social innovation incubation award from the Melting Pot, a co-working, office-share, social innovation space: “There was no money but it provided free use of their space and was a peer learning scheme for eleven social enterprises that were starting up. So that was a good way of networking.”<RME1, founder>

RQ2 Function, use of money

At Colglen money is used for accumulation and investment with the aim of securing long term financial sustainability. The initiative uses money to support the community buyouts, regeneration of the area, renewable energy projects and to create new jobs. Sustainability in financial terms is often seen as an important goal and measure of success by the interviewees. The interviewees at Colglen did not mention any other...
uses of money other than the standard use; neither did the representatives of supporting cases.

1. Community buyouts

At Colglen a crucial function of money is to provide the capital to allow the community to take over ownership of local assets and resources (forest, land, hotel etc). Which local assets they have sought to acquire has been “a bit of a shot in the dark: ‘Do we buy the forest?’ is one thing. Do we buy the hotel? Do we, do we buy the closed-down shop, do we buy... You know?” <CDGT2, board member> determined in part by which they felt could have the most potential to become viable businesses with a place in their vision for a regenerated local economy but also by the circumstances of assets, such as Stronafian Forest becoming available through the National Forest Land Scheme, together with government funding through the Scottish Land Fund. They see community ownership of assets as crucial to their long-term success and aim within the next five years to have “achieved this, these community buyouts of these local buildings, and put them to good use, and they would be where the employment would be based.”<CGDT4, staff member>

Whilst issues with State Aid rules meant that they had to sell most of the timber rights in Stronafian: “that’s 1.3 million quid’s worth of wood that could have been kind of profiting the community”<CGDT6, stakeholder> "by selling the timber in advance, it has meant that the community has been able to take a much larger section of the land back into community ownership”<CGDT1, staff member> which has opened up possibilities for long-term income generation through sites for micro-hydro power and wind turbines as well as for woodland crofts to provide woodland based livelihoods, as well as for skills training, particularly to provide future opportunities for local employment for young people.

2. Regeneration

Regeneration through opening up local job opportunities is seen by the interviewees as a key measure of their future success. When “we’ve got forestry employees, we’ve got Cowal Way employees, and we’ve got employees for the hotel itself, so, you know, we’ve actually done something here which has regenerated a disused building, a disused business, and established two more businesses in it. You know, and that, to me, would be a huge success. It’s within reach.”<CGDT2, board member>

Using renovation of community facilities, pathways and bringing old buildings into life “will open up a whole range of practical skills training opportunities and volunteer programmes” <CGDT1, staff member>, whilst refurbishing their village halls is also ensuring very tangible benefits in terms of the social hubs they provide “because everybody, at some point or other, will end up in one of the village halls - more or less, anyway, you know? ”<CGDT1, staff member> and opening up the Cowal Way and developing the tourism potential of the forest through development of a visitor centre, interpretation boards paths and bike trails etc. should help to bring more money into the local economy.

Other communities in the neighbouring area are following the same direction and investing funding into renovation of touristic sites: "We secured a million pounds of funding to set up a...it is now a limited company, to renovate the mausoleum which is now a visitor centre for tourists
and ....we are involved with a hydro scheme on a burn that should generate some income for us in the years ahead.’ <CGDT8, stakeholder>

3. Support for establishing renewable energy projects such as hydro and wind farm projects.

Colglen, along with several of our other case studies, has received Scottish Government grants for carrying out renewable energy feasibility studies and loans for the costs involved in employing specialist consultants to work up detailed design proposals. Recent UK government proposals to drastically cut financial support for renewable energy generation look likely to stymie development of future community renewable energy generation. If Colglen do manage to progress their schemes, they are likely to be financed by a mixture of bank loans and community-shares, a model that has proved very successful at drawing in investment from ethically minded small investors across the UK.

4. Job creation

In the short-term, project funding has enabled Colglen to employ staff, creating new local jobs (in an economically deprived rural area) running projects which themselves have the intention of creating longer term local employment opportunities. “The forest we already have. The Cowal Way - we are waiting to hear if we’ve got the funding to put it on a much firmer footing. And if we did that, we would have two further employees based here, working on the Cowal Way. If we could then pull in the old Glendaruel Hotel, we’ve got a centre, we’ve got jobs, we’ve got the forest, the Cowal Way and the hotel all coming together (…)”<CGDT2, board member>

As for future plans and aspirations, ColGlen sees it’s success in being able to fund its own long-term employees who work to create new local job opportunities and make it easier for people to work remotely. The poor (or completely lacking) rural broadband service is a major issue across much of Scotland with considerable frustration at the lack of urgency with which this is being addressed by Government. “Bigger, long-term, paid staff. Key to that, though, would be we will have achieved great internet connectivity. Because that then would allow anyone who - anyone else who lives here who isn’t employed by the Trust or self-employed to work from home.”<CGDT4, staff member>

5. Criticisms of the use of money

In Colglen, as in any community, people have differing opinions on what the priorities are and how available funding should be used to better serve the community. This is particularly evident in relation to ideas for buying and reopening the former Glendaruel Hotel: “Well, I think it needs to happen. I mean, my own view is that they should, they should buy the hotel, but not as a licensed premises. I think that’s madness. I think that would just be a drain on finances. But I think they could take that building and probably demolish it and build some housing and get a housing association involved.”<CGDT8, stakeholder>It also applies to the use of funding from a ‘community benefit’ fund from a local commercially-owned wind-farm. There are many such funds across Scotland, attached to commercial wind-farm developments as a sweetener for the local community but they are mostly so hedged around with restrictive criteria that one stakeholder was clear that “ I think that money has been completely wasted. I think it’s just been frittered away. A lot of the money went into a playpark in the glen, which I don’t think - you
know, there are hardly any children, you know?” <CDGT8, stakeholder> However, “the original impetus [from having this fund] was good, ‘cause it made the community say, ‘What do we want?’” <CDGT8, stakeholder> which was one important factor in the establishment of ColGlen as a trust.

This same stakeholder was critical of a perceived lack of strategic planning, the number of projects that have not been progressed and was clear about the crucial importance of Stronafian Forest as a flagship project: “I think buying the forest was probably, had to happen at some stage for the Trust to survive. If that hadn’t happened, I don’t think the Trust would have survived, because people would’ve said, ‘What’s it there for?’. The Trust, the forest is therefore the focus at the present moment, but it’s had a lot of projects that might have happened, that have never happened. And I think, you know, some questions need to be asked with that. On the other hand, the commun-, the two polytunnels have been good, the Greener ColGlen move to - for insulation and stuff has, as far as I know, been good.” <CGDT8, stakeholder>

RQ3 CBI activity and money-dependence, money-making

Their dependence on project funding, its limitations in terms of restrictive criteria, short life funding and short-lived funding streams and issues around the ‘de minimis’ rule were all mentioned several times during the interviews. Whilst grateful for the funding they have received and what this has enabled them to achieve, the interviewees expressed frustration at the lack of availability of core-funding and the lack of collaborative dialogue which could allow for more creative funding, better informed by the community needs.

1. Public funding

All our case studies, and ColGlen in particular, have benefited from substantial amounts of public funding and this has been crucial to their activities to data. These have been from a number of sources, including: the Scottish Government’s Climate Challenge Fund – set up to support community efforts to meet Scotland’s carbon emission reduction targets, the Scottish Land Fund – established to support community buy-outs of local land and buildings, Coastal Communities Fund – a UK wide fund which supports coastal communities, particularly with regeneration, Big Lottery – which has a number of small grants for feasibility studies and small projects as well as substantial capital grants, particularly for organisations working in economically ‘deprived’ areas and LEADER funding – part of the EU funded Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP).

The Climate Challenge Fund has funded a couple of projects in Colglen with tangible benefits to a wide range of local people; Warmer Colglen which provided home energy advice and support for people to make their homes more energy efficient and less fossil fuel dependent and Greener Colglen which has enabled and encouraged local food growing as well as prototyping a low-carbon method of eradicating the menace of invasive Rhododendron Ponticum and demonstrated its use as fuelwood. Both these projects are now contributing on-going local economic benefits through retaining money in the local economy that previously was paid out in fuel bills or for car mileage from driving the 70 mile round trip to the nearest supermarket. “We’ve got this hall, here, that is - we’ve got new heating; we’ve got, you know, we’ve got new, we’ve got insulation. We’ve got all sorts. And it is all to
do with the fact that we got the funds from the Climate Challenge Fund." <CGDT5, member>

Initially run entirely by volunteers, RME benefited from a small grant from Edinburgh City Council “(...) the first piece of funding that we got was a ‘waste action grant’ from the council for £2000 and that was really helpful because it was meant we could start paying our room rent. After that the next piece of funding was from the 10:10 campaign, a crowd funding campaign, no not crowd funding, it was a kind of ‘dragons den’ event where people pledge money and we go £6500 from that event and then after that we got £5000 from Lush cosmetics company because that have a charity funding stream and then they increased that to £8000.” <RME1, founder>

Scottish Funders’ interpretation of EU State Aid rules and the ‘de minimis’ limits which restricts the amount of public funding that can be received to €200k in any three year period has been a major issue for Colglen in particular: “State aid, state aid and state aid all the way, yes. It is not only the de minimis, although that is an issue, it is about whether the tests for state aid are being appropriately applied because there is a tendency for funders to be extremely risk averse and to say that if it is public money, it is state aid.”<CGDT7, stakeholder> and significantly reduced the amount of public money that they were able to access in order to transfer the 600ha Stronan Forest from state to local community ownership. There has since been new guidance issued to funders by the Scottish Government and, increasingly, Development Trusts in Scotland, with support of their networks, are being robust in insisting to funders that grants should not be classed as State Aid, unless there really are potential issues of distortion of EU trade. ‘They [Scottish Govt.] have issued new guidance now that makes it much clearer that this shouldn’t apply -but whether funders believe it or not is another matter. The Lottery clearly picked up this very quickly but not all funders ..asyet..we still have to see.” <CGDT7, stakeholder>

2. Financial sustainability

Our case studies often mentioned financial sustainability as one of their main goals and a key measure of their success: “That is the success, when we are financially self-sustaining...showing that the model can work...because if you can prove that the model can work you can then use that as a template and you can go to similar communities and you can say, ‘listen, this is what it took, it took five years, this is how much money we had to tap into, this is where we are now’ and that is success, not the projects because we have got them now.” <CGDT1, staff member>

In their view, and in the model for Development Trusts that is promoted in Scotland, the main route to sustainable finances is through ownership of local assets that can provide opportunities to generate an income. “Land ownership and the resources to be able to sustain that are key elements of Development Trusts.” <CGDT7, stakeholder>

Moreover, as far as possible, Colglen aims to secure the future of its projects by making them viable as enterprises in the long-term. So the Greener Colglenpolytunnels will continue as an independently run group with members paying rental fees for growing space, sufficient to cover on-going maintenance costs. And they hope to overcome the current lack of broadband provision using an enterprising approach: “We need broadband, in both communities now and we’re just not seeing any movement, so we are going to use satellite broadband I think, and try and get that in wholesale for an 18 month project which might actually end
up being without funding because we should be able to make money on it."<CGDT10, board member>

Where an ongoing subsidy may be needed, for example for their planned training and skills programme, their intention is that “the community hydro scheme that we are looking at, just near the forest, the income that that is going to generate, a proportion of that income is going to go towards funding the skills for regeneration programme so that we cover all the overhead.” <CGDT1, staff member>

Currently, all our case studies are very dependent on a significant input of volunteer time, including from paid staff. Whilst positive in many ways, and a significant ‘in-kind’ contribution, this is also potentially a problem if it leads to burn out or if key people leave for any reason. “(...) they are doing what the voluntary sector usually does, paying themselves for two days per week and all working for seven days...you know. and that is not sustainable. The Board, not just Colglen, we all do it, we do it here. There is something about recognising that they are going to have to invest in people...as well as investing in projects. If they actually want to see these projects succeed.’ <CGDT7, stakeholder>

3. Business approach (money-making)

ColGlen “wouldn’t be a development trust if they weren’t at least trying to ...you know, the extent of most community enterprises is that at best they are marginal businesses. I think that Colintraive is aiming to be a bit more than marginal...they would like to generate more of their own income to give them that level of independence. I think Colintraive is moving quite quickly towards bigger scale stuff to be able to do that.” <CGDT7, stakeholder>

The interviewees have different ideas regarding which enterprise ideas would bring greater benefits to the community, however, the business approach is apparent: “You know, I mean, I’ve been opposed to buying the hotel, because it seemed to me that if you bought the hotel and ran the bar, you wouldn’t make any money. There was a group that wanted to set up, build a new community pub on the shinty field, that would be a pavilion for the shinty field and a licensed bar. You could have a room there for the doctor to visit, you know - it was a really good idea. Just ran into the ground. I would say let’s, let’s do one or the other. Let’s have that in our vision, so we’ll revitalise the Clachan<CGDT8, stakeholder>

The Rhododendron project is just one of the examples how the community has managed to turn a major local problem into a business opportunity which can provide training and local jobs as well as contributed to tackling fuel poverty and eliminating the carbon emission resulting in conventional control methods.

“when you drive up the glen later on, if it is not dark, they are all very small nice pretty bushes that are ready to just start putting millions of seeds everywhere ...I said to A ‘we need to tackle this’. so we are now looking at a management that is looking at trying to make the problem pay [using it as a biomass resource]” <CGDT1, stakeholder>

RQ4 Impact of the initiative

Currently, the impact of our case studies is highly dependent on availability of public funds with which to implement projects that support their long-term aims whilst, hopefully, creating potential opportunities for gaining financial sustainability in the long term, for example through supporting community asset transfer and developing local skills and capacity.

1. Local economic impact
An important consideration for our case studies is that project funding is used to benefit the local economy as far as possible, not just through long-term regeneration projects but by ensuring that funding is spent locally and benefits local people in the short-term wherever possible: “...I needed some digging work done a few weeks ago up at the forest, a local contractor who has access to a digger got that work. So I think most people see that we are trying keep as much money in the glen as possible.....The hotel benefits because we have lunch over there, the village hall benefits because we hire office space. Certain people within the community and organisations benefit.”<CGDT1, staff member>

Transition Black Isle has established a separate bike hire company that “also has a remit to extend and improve the tourism in the Black Isle in terms of economic benefit and there has already been set up a tourism group which I think will long outlive Black Isle Bicycles.”<TBI1, board member>

In 2007, Comrie Development Trust was able to take advantage of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to purchase 54ha of former army camp and adjoining land at Cultybraggan just outside the town. It is developing part of this as local enterprise hub which so far has created around 70 new local jobs and generates over €2M annually for the local economy apart from the savings in car mileage for those that previously commuted the 45km or so to work in Perth or Stirling.

2. Community ownership and regeneration
Several interviewees expressed the view that the ownership of assets and regeneration of the local area not only have a financial impact on the local economy but also empower and motivate the community members through reconnecting them with their local environment and resources and giving them a feeling of control: “I think things have changed a great deal since communities have been allowed to be, to be more involved and to actually take ownership of, of land, say, like the forest, or, or a whole island, you know? And I think - I, I really believe that the more people are involved and have ownership of something, the more they care about it.”<CGDT5, member>

If all Colglen’s current plans come to fruition, they have an exciting opportunity to realise their vision of a regenerated, low-carbon economy: “The forest we already have. The Cowal Way - we are waiting to hear if we’ve got the funding to put it on a much firmer footing. And if we did that, we would have two further employees based here, working on the Cowal Way. If we could then pull in the old Glendaruel Hotel, we’ve got a centre, we’ve got jobs, we’ve got the forest, the Cowal Way and the hotel all coming together: bang! Right in the same place.”<CGDT2, board member>

3. Money savings
Apart from the direct local economic impact from attracting funding and enabling new local enterprise, the interviewees have mentioned benefits which arise from e.g. energy savings through improving energy efficiency and changing behaviour which reduce the leakage of money out of the local economy, for example to large energy supply companies: “But the
Warmer Colglen project benefitted quite a lot of people, ... for instance, eight households had saved, what was it, over 6,000 pounds between them in a year, through energy efficiency measures and changing behaviour...” <CGDT4, staff member>

RQ5 Evolutionary phase of the initiative

Community initiatives in Scotland are highly dependent on external funding and, quite often, the availability of even a small amount of grant funding can be a direct factor in an initiative’s emergence and early development. Colglen, for example, was founded as a result of the Community Council obtaining a small amount of funding to commission outside consultants to work with the community to develop a regeneration plan. They then received a two-year grant of £40k from the local wind-farm to employ a development officer. Remade in Edinburgh developed from a small volunteer run initiative when they obtained a £2000 grant from the city council.

Once an organisation is established and has a track record it becomes that much easier to attract more substantial funding to implement more ambitious projects. The danger is that this can lead to grant dependence and volunteers may disappear if they perceive that staff members are now being paid to do the work. Short funding cycles can also lead to inefficiencies as staff expertise is lost when funding comes to an end. “...if somebody's got a two-year contract, the bit in the middle will be really good work that they do, but the bit at the beginning is the start-up. The bit at the end - you're looking for another job. You know?” <CGDT3, member> However, our case studies were all well aware of the need to find ways to generate their own income and were actively seeking ways to wean themselves off the vagaries of project funding which, they felt, can easily knock young groups off course, designing projects to fit the funding and too focused on short-term outcomes.

All our case studies were very keen to learn from and to share knowledge and experience with other similar groups: “If they are doing good positive work and it is tackling the issues then we are all...we are all creating templates for other communities to copy because with knowledge you can share it, what is development if you can't iron out the problems and go to someone, 'do it this way instead and do it twice as fast for half the money' “ <CGDT1, staff member>. As mentioned in the introduction, Remade in Edinburgh is actively seeking ways to increase its impact, not by expanding the size of its operation but by replicating similar initiatives through some sort of franchising model that rewards RME whilst enabling other groups to learn from its experience.

III. Summary: money and their contribution to the success factors

To a large extent, all our case studies view themselves as enablers/catalysts facilitating the transition to a sustainable future. In the long-term, they therefore view success as being when their work is no longer necessary and their organisation becomes redundant.

In the shorter term, success will be when the trust is financially self-sustaining and able to facilitate and enable initiatives and projects that regenerate the glen as a thriving and sustainable, green, community, and a model for others. It is about weaning themselves off dependence on grant funding, creating models of income generation that achieve their aims whilst enabling them to be financially self-supporting and able to employ long-term staff who can take forward projects in line with locally set priorities.
rather than having to try to fit projects into boxes designed by funders and stop-start funding meaning that staff have to be laid off and their expertise lost when funding finishes.

At the moment all the operations of the organisation are highly dependent on external funding sources and the community members realise that in order for the projects to continue they need to generate their own income. They hope that their income can in future be generated from renewable energy generation as well as from enterprises (such as the hotel and forest/visitor centre), supported by grant funding where necessary.

Through gaining ownership of local assets they are opening up new opportunities to generate income, in line with their principles.
Memo from OUAS

1. Introduction: an energy co-operative utilizing wood for district heat production

In this memo, one Finnish energy co-operative utilizing wood for district heat production will be analyzed in terms of money. This energy co-operative is a locally owned and run community-based initiative that produces heat energy to local community with locally sources wood. The co-operative has currently tens of members as compared to just a small group at the beginning. It is organized in a hierarchical manner with the annual general meeting being the uppermost decision-making body and the executive committee running the daily administration. It is located in a small rural community in Finland. The data used in the analysis includes 5 qualitative interviews with the members of the co-operative between 29.10.2014 and 14.11.2014 (the chairman of the co-operative, the person responsible for administration, the person responsible for wood procurement, an ordinary executive committee member, an ordinary member), one semi-structured interview with the chairman of the co-operative on 31.3.2015 and 3 qualitative interviews with some stakeholders of the co-operative between 19.1.2015 and 17.2.2015 (the former mayor of the municipality, a bioenergy expert in a forest advisory organization, a lecturer from a higher education institute) that they have had active collaboration with over their evolution, also as active participants in its establishment process.

Overall, this initiative is highly dependent on money, i.e. its operations are based on monetary exchanges and in its current form it could be described not to be able to exist without these exchanges. Money dependence is evident as the co-operative is considered a type of enterprise in Finland, yet this co-operative is supposed to benefit members also in social ways. Especially the interviewed members talked a lot about financial issues in relation to almost any given topic which can be interpreted so that money is central and common uniting factor for the activities of the co-operative for instance as a medium of exchange and a measurement of value.

The co-operative has had a strong linkage with the local municipality and its residents as customers and beneficiaries. However, the commitment of the municipality has been very strong commitment in the case of this energy co-operative as it was the municipality which made the first financial investment to the first heat plant in order to get the district heat production in the community. Then the co-operative started to supply this plant with wood and produce heat for the community. Later, the co-operative bought the heat plant from the municipality and built its own plants, i.e. they became financially independent from municipality, yet the municipality is still an important heat customer for the co-operative. Although the co-operative members did not mention it in the interviews, this independence may have also meant that they do not have to worry about the continuity of their activities for instance due to tenders that some non-independent energy co-operatives in other municipalities may be facing regularly.

2. Perceptions of money

Monetary income and financial sustainability is a part of perception of success for this co-operative. They are dependent on money as their operations are based on monetary exchanges and money was strongly present in the discourse of the energy co-operative members. Also the stakeholders emphasized financial matters but not to that extent as the co-operative members did which may reflect their general position being external to the everyday activities and reality of the co-operative. With the co-operative form of activities, money is in an essential role in
running this community-based initiative. No interviewees mentioned anything about non-acceptance of monetary interactions but instead it was mentioned how important they are, for instance volunteer work was done only at the beginning of the co-operative. It was aimed to compensate each person financially after this initial volunteer stage for the work that they do for the co-operative.

“Well, we don’t really have volunteers, everyone is paid fair compensation for the done work--“ (the chairman, 29.10.2014).

Perceptions of money seem to strongly interlink with many interviewees' background in entrepreneurship, mainly in the fields of agriculture and forestry. In general, interviewees link money and its importance strongly to establishing, running and developing the co-operative. However, there seems to be two kinds of members: those who want to take entrepreneurial risks and develop the co-operative further by investing financially in it, and those who are more reluctant in taking entrepreneurial risks.

“-- we had in the administration in the co-operative quite clearly two different lines, so that some wanted to proceed with careful steps and on the other hand others wanted to take a bit more brisk ones. And I have been always a bit more brisk walker and I promoted the line that we should expand. And luckily I promoted this line, it was a very good time to expand. So we are now a clear market leader in our area. So we are soon starting to reach the limits of growth soon in this area, we no more have targets (suitable buildings to be heated).” (the person responsible for wood procurement, 14.11.2014).

As all the interviewees talked about money to smaller or bigger extend and the importance of money running the co-operative, money also seems to be a motivating factor for the people to participate. One interviewee points out this motivation explicitly in his speech.

“Well, isn’t everyone now running after euro even today, they seem to run always after it. I don’t know how it (motivation) has changed then. (an ordinary executive committee member, 6.11.2014)

Money was perceived as one central element in the development process both by the co-operative members and the stakeholders, for instance in relation to being competitive in the markets and benefiting the local community. It was perceived as an element for also benefiting the local community both directly and indirectly.

“For sure this heat price has been less expensive when compared to our competitors. This must have been a kind of factor that we have been able to expand.” (an ordinary member, 6.11.2015).

“--it is nice that this kind of energy producers do well as regionally owned. There is courage to invest, there is courage to make investment decisions, use support forms of the society which can be used and then sustainable activity with it. And as a result there is inexpensive heat in this case in this community.--” (a lecturer in a local higher education institute, 17.2.2015).
Money was also perceived as a basis for benefiting from the co-operative, not only from the perspective of members but also from the perspective of the customers or the local people. In this sense, money was in the centre of the idea of how people benefit from the co-operative.

“Well yes it, so that this is sustainable and profitable, it is the whole organization, everyone should receive equally. So that non-one would feel that someone is a payer and then someone else just a beneficiary. Everyone had to feel that they benefit from this and receive a fair compensation for themselves” (the chairman, 29.10.2014).

None of the interviewees had aspirations for non-monetary based exchanges and dependence on money was not questioned.

3. The function of money for the CBI

In this energy co-operative money is used as a means of exchange for physical and time related resources. However, it was also mentioned that during the early stages of the co-operative volunteer work was done but they quickly moved to a stage in which all the done work is compensated for. Only one example of current non-monetary exchange was given: the ashes produced in the heat plants are given for free to be spread to forests. In this case the exchange could be described as the co-operative giving ashes for the exchange of time given by the forest owner. Also when ashes are taken away for free, the co-operative does not need to pay for their transportation to recycling. In addition, in the co-operative money was used for investment such as for investing back to the operations and for participating as a partner in research and development projects. Money is also used for training of its members for specific tasks, yet the source of money for this reason was not discussed about. Financial sustainability was emphasized in different forms in all the interviews of the co-operative members.

“Well, in my opinion it (the biggest achievement) is that the heat distribution network is own and the heat plants are currently own too. In my opinion it is positive in a way that financial solidity has been improved then and the activities so called run well” (an ordinary executive committee member, 6.11.2014).

When the co-operative was established, money had an activity facilitating function as the municipality did the first investment in a heat plant that the co-operative, on the other hand, started to supply with forest chips and produce heat with for the local community. After this initial stage, the co-operative could start its activities and some years after its establishment it bought the facilities from the municipality and invested in its own new heat plants too. The co-operative has received also external financial support for developing its activities. The function of money has been enabling to start, develop and maintain the activities of the co-operative. At the moment it seems that the co-operative is doing financially well and is not anymore so dependent on external funding sources.

Besides the immediate function of money as a means of exchange for the co-operative, the co-operative also says that it is able to provide the local community with inexpensive heat compared with the competing heat energy sources such as oil. This is why the function of money seems to be also to offer monetary benefits for the local community in the form of inexpensive heat. At the same time some of the heat buyers may benefit from another end too: as sellers of wood to the co-operative. If they are co-operative members they receive better price for the wood than in the normal wood market and at the same time they may pay with this
income also for the heat that they buy from the co-operative. However, the co-operative didn't know how many people may be this kind of double-beneficiaries.

The co-operative strongly emphasizes the local economy benefits of the energy co-operative. As all the wood is locally sourced, members are local, heated buildings (and at the same time customers) are local and people taking care of the daily activities of the co-operative (such as heat plant supervision, wood procurement and administration) are local, a significant part of money that flows through the co-operative may circulate in the local economy from one actor to another. As the co-operative replaces a significant amount of oil annually in heating local buildings, the amount of money that circulates locally could be described to be significant. According to the chairman (29.10.2014) the local economy benefits were in mind already during the development phase.

4. Money and CBI activity

In the energy co-operative money is generated by converting wood into heat energy and selling heat as a product to customers. However, at the same time money generation possibilities are enhanced by investing money to the heat plant and distribution network facilities, and educational, research and development projects.

In the co-operative there had been some tensions related to how revenues should be used, i.e. if they should be used back in investing to the co-operative or saving for it, or if the forest owners who have sold wood for the co-operative should be compensated with better wood price at the end of the year. These tensions were very carefully mentioned.

Both some of the interviewed members and stakeholders pointed out instable policies affecting the financial stability of the co-operative as one inhibiting factor in the development of the co-operative. According to one interviewed stakeholder, financial preconditions for energy co-operative activities are caught in the political debate in which large scale companies have a lot to say.

“Well the state energy policy has been foolish. -- And large forest companies guard Finnish politics so that wood price is aimed to be kept low. Because of this they are against energy support which local entrepreneurs would need for energy wood procurement and getting energy wood in use. So this is directly forest industry against the polarity of small actors. It is at the moment on the list of the government, these days. Political groups are against, some are against and some keep the side, some have relations messed up. So this bouncing and instability of Finnish energy policy, they are a significant societal problem, both for people in this municipality where the co-operative operates and others. These other means are just, or these other challenges are just marginal related to this.” (a lecturer from a higher education institute, 17.2.2015)

5. Relationship between the impact of the initiative and money

Different environmental, socio-political and educational impacts of the Eno energy co-operative were mentioned implicitly or explicitly by all interviewees. Many interviewees considered the co-operative to provide benefits for the local economy through money staying in the local area by using local wood instead of imported oil for heat production.
The local approach was emphasized not only in monetary sense but also seemed to be a more fundamental value for the interviewed people, i.e. a value that is affecting why people do what they do. In relation to this, all the interviewees of the energy co-operative could be described to be local. Also the interviewed stakeholders could be considered local as they have lived in the surrounding region for a long time, yet they may have roots outside this region or the area in which the co-operative operates. For the co-operative money is not only a means of exchange but it has value in local development as well, for instance creation of jobs was mentioned by the interviewees as an outcome of the co-operative activities. Environmental impacts such as better air quality and smaller emissions, and better forest conditions were mentioned by the interviewees. The local approach was emphasized also in relation to environmental impacts. All the interviewees considered their activities to have several different benefits.

“--Well it is of course positive in this that the euro is made to re-circulate here locally.. In a way we get to utilize the product which has been earlier left in the forest, so branches and so forest have been collected away then. So we have received some kind of salary of them to this procurement side. Of course it (the pay) is not very good ever but it is better than composting them in the forest. Then we get to supply the municipality with heat.” (an ordinary executive committee member, 6.11.2014).

“Customers receive less expensive heat, many people are employed in the co-operative, they receive good income more in a year, forest management improves, climate emissions reduce, oil import to Finland reduces, national economic benefit or this current account improves in it, and also we get this kind of local communal activity progressed and interaction between people advanced.” (the person responsible for wood procurement, 14.11.2014).

6. Relationship between the evolutionary stage of the initiative and money

At the moment the energy co-operative could be described to be in mature, well-evolved stage when considering its activities and how they are organized and how the co-operative is managed. It has evolved from a small number of members at the establishment stage in 1990s to a co-operative with tens of members. At the beginning it had no own monetary resources and the only resources that could have been described to be present were the forest holdings of their members and possible social ties. The municipality had an important role in the establishment of the co-operative in taking the first financial risk by investing to a heat plant that the co-operative started to operate and provide the community heat with.

“Uh, this had been decades ago first time planned little but time was not yet ripe then for sure. And then during 90s there came well, there were kind of, there were kind of men of action in the founding members and they considered this to have a kind of chance at that moment. And at that time there was the municipality and the municipality was also well involved and the first heat plant was owned by the municipality. Then years later it has been bought to the co-operative. So that there was a kind of need then that heat is produced in own municipality. --. (an ordinary member, 6.11.2014).

The co-operative could be described to be a partial replication of earlier energy co-operatives. In this region another energy co-operative had been established earlier. The earlier established co-operative was first observed and later when it proved to be functioning well, this energy co-operative was established. This example shows in how important role the financial
sustainability has been in the evolution process of this co-operative. If the activities would not have been proven to be sustainable in economic terms, it seems that the co-operative would not have been established.

“And we visited in the other energy co-operative which was the first energy co-operative in this province.--We took example from there. And they had been operating already a couple of years. A Finn always wants to see that what happens to others, that will like be in bankruptcy in a couple of years. So there were good examples elsewhere in Finland that this business can success and from this the activities started.” (the person responsible for administration, 29.10.2014).

The core group of the co-operative which is basically the executive committee and people involved in the daily management of the co-operative are the people who make daily decisions and who could be described to have significant influence on the decision-making of the co-operative. This is facilitated through their continuous access to information that ordinary members may not have between the general annual meetings. A majority of the active members could be described to be double-stake members, i.e. besides the member role, they have some kind of stakeholder role in relation to the co-operative.

“Well, we have to tell first that we have a kind of team work core group in which these issues have been taken care of. We have succeeded in the personnel selection already at the beginning so that we have a close co-operation first with own people and then there are many different ..with the surroundings. So that we do co-operation with many different actors. And this has created a kind of spirit of happening so that we have got the work meaningful. So also compensation for entrepreneurs is sufficient and I have myself seen that work flows when we agree them and then it is done so that everyone would receive..we haven’t done anymore volunteer work in many years. So this is good in combination with my daily work. A place of experience that one can see this kind of entrepreneurship from inside, meaning co-operative activities.” (the chairman, 29.10.2014).

7. Any other observations

The co-operative form means also some legal requirements for it for instance in a form of financial reporting. Yet co-operative is one form of an enterprise, it could be described more as a socially oriented enterprise in terms of the benefits it provides to its members and the local area. With the local people being involved as a group in the co-operative, it seems that money has more value than profit making: it seems to have value as a development device that the local people have control over. Money that the co-operative makes seems to be more than money in this sense.

The municipality had a crucial role in facilitating the establishment of the co-operative with its investments which may have affected other municipality supported development efforts in the area.

“The first project (the heat plant) was worth of significant amount of money so that competed a little bit. Of course it competed. It displaced someone else. (the former mayor of the municipality, 19.1.2015)
8. Success factors

It seems that aim for financial independence and reaching it is one of key success factors for continual evolution of the studied energy co-operative. Financial independence seemed to have allowed for instance this energy co-operative to be more active player in local development dynamics, e.g. by actively participating in research, education and development projects as a partner or lately being able to expand their activities without relying so much on external funding for their development. Financial independence means that this energy co-operative has been able to contribute to local conditions in an independent way, in a way that is not dictated by external funders only. However, the level of financial independence has varied throughout its evolution, for instance at the establishment stage the investment of the municipality on the first heat plant could be described to be crucial for the evolution of the co-operative as this facilitated the co-operative to establish itself — yet at this stage as an organization highly dependent on the municipality. Financial independence seems to have been reached also through good financial management, i.e. a skilled person has been managing finances and the co-operative seems to have been able to focus on long-term development goals instead of shorter term individualistic goals for instance in how revenue is used (investing back to the co-operative vs. paying more for the producers of the wood).

Besides good quality finances, the co-operative has been very open to outside ideas and it has had an active approach in learning new and participating in educational, research and development activities, for instance in 2014 the co-operative received hundreds of visitors from Finland and abroad. The co-operative could be described to be actively mobilizing its external and internal social ties and absorbing what they need to develop further. Openness and participation and strong ties to different local external stakeholders such as the local higher education institute seems to have opened them possibilities to do things better and at the same time possibly also more profitably in financial sense. The external ties are realized not only through contacts to fully external actors but also through double-stake members who have a role as a member and who may also hold a position of trust within the co-operative, and who have different active roles in the society through their work or other activities for instance in municipality, forestry development or local entrepreneurship.

Local approach was mentioned by all the interviewees in different ways. With members and stakeholders being local, it seems to be natural that local approach in their activities is in focus. Also some of the active core members are working actively with local approach in their daily work and it could be that this is one of the reasons it is so strongly emphasized in this co-operative. The local approach is used in talking about the benefits of the co-operative, for instance money circulating in the local area, local heat customers benefiting from the inexpensive heat produced with wood and jobs being created in the local area due to the activities of the co-operative.

9. Summary

It was very striking that almost to all the questions the members of this energy co-operative linked financial matters. Financial issues were dominating throughout the interviews. The way the interviewees talked about money and the local approach made me think that they are key values for the interviewed members: they are values that direct what they do and how they do it. It was also striking that how much financial independence matters at the end for the success of this energy co-operative. However, it is unclear how surroundings have affected to this dependence and independence as this energy co-operative could be described to be the only actor in its area. It could be that financial independence matters more in some regions than
others. The community-based initiatives have emerged in a certain socio-cultural-political setting which is unique to each of them – yet there may be some similar components in them. Thus, also money has different roles in their development and different development phases and success. However, all in all money has a very important role in the activities of this energy co-operative and it seems to be a fundamental value as a base for the activities and a means of achieving different impacts in the local community.
Memo from PIK

1. Introduction

In this memo the different attitudes, functions, and influences of money shall be analysed. The question of money and financial capital for CBIs in general has to be considered programs and individuals who make donations to and other non-monetary contributions to CBIs. How money is used and what the participants think about it are important research questions that can improve policy programs and lead the flow of money into the most useful direction. After a short introduction, which describes the daily work and intention of the two main case studies, the coding results are summarized and analysed. Notes taken from the WP2 interviews with the non-key case study initiatives were included. Nevertheless, the focus here is on the two key case studies which are analysed in more detail within each below.

Naming the quotes:

(PIK1/PIK2, position of the person, year)

Also included here are case studies from WP2:

Urban Gardening Rosa Rose (PIK3)
Repair Café Kreuzberg (PIK4)
Oktoberdruck (PIK5)
LEILA (PIK6)
StadtMachtSatt (PIK7)

a) BürgerEnergie Berlin (PIK2)

The initiative “BürgerEnergie Berlin” aims to buy the license for the energy grid in Berlin. Unlike in other cities, Berlin has to open a bidding process to the market every 20 years. Companies, cooperatives, and the city of Berlin itself can apply for the license. The bidder must fulfil certain requirements that prove their ability to run the energy grid. The last 20 year licensing period expired in 2014. The chance for a change in the energy system, from a company-driven grid to remunicipalization or even cooperative-owned, was seen by the founders of PIK2. They began gathering together interested people in 2012 and based their cooperative on the experiences of the city of Schönau, where a cooperative bought the energy grid in the 1990s. The Schönau cooperative also provided expertise and knowledge to PIK2.

The cooperative has gathered 11 million Euros (Sep 2015), which was contributed by 2300 members, to buy the grid. The money is saved in a bank account and cannot be used for the daily campaigning purposes. These costs are covered mostly by external stakeholders, such as sponsors or other associations.

Due to procedural errors, the bidding process has been paused until the end of the year 2015. This time has been used by PIK2 to raise awareness about participation, the energy grid, and the necessity of a change to renewable energies.

b) PIK1 (PIK1)
“PIK1” was founded in 2012 to reduce food waste and according to their own description, to organize people who want to reduce food waste. This initiative operates mostly in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. As food waste is not only produced by the consumer, but of all parts of the food chain, “PIK1” not only approach the consumers but also the retailers.

This organization developed out of two initiatives. One part of the current initiative was developed from the “dumpster diving” scene and from people who wanted to legalize saving the food waste from supermarkets. The other initiative had the goal to reduce food waste by sharing food of private individuals which would not be eaten for different reasons (bought to much or the wrong food, XXL-packages, etc.) with people who want to eat it. The initiatives merged in 2014 in order to pursue their common objective more effectively. Currently PIK1 has more than 11,000 members who are organized on the platform PIK1.de and more than 2000 cooperating retailers.

PIK1 is organized on the platform PIK1.de and in several facebook-groups. A private person who would otherwise throw away edible food can offer the food via the platform “PIK1.de” or via one of the numerous local facebook groups of “PIK1.” If another member of the platform or the facebook group can use that food, they can meet to handover the food and so the food is not wasted.

PIK1 wants to encourage people to share their food instead of throwing it away, so anybody who does not want to register can also pick up food or bring food to a “fairteiler.” “Fairteiler” are openly accessible shelves or refrigerators.

The second function of the platform is for the retailers. “PIK1” tries to build cooperation with different retailers like bakeries and supermarkets to convince them not to throw away eatable food and instead give it to “PIK1.” When there is a standing cooperation the retailer can decide how often “foodsaver” shall come to the store to pick up the food.

2. Perceptions of money
2.1 Money as a contradiction to ideology

Almost all of the case studies do not see money as the goal itself, but as a mean to reach a certain – mostly ideological – goal. Money, donations and financial capital in general is used as an instrument to keep the project running and get daily work done. The members accept it as a necessary mean to fulfil their idea and to build up an infrastructure from which this idea can emerge. They highlight that most people participating in initiatives do not receive financial benefits from participating. They are driven by ideological reasons and the few paid participants say they would work in the project even without getting paid.

“Money is necessary to keep the projects going” (PIK7, manager, 2015)

“We are acting because of conviction, not for financial reasons." (PIK6, member, 2015)

Members highlight that economic aspects are seen rather as means to an end, social and ecological aspects are far more important. Even if some participants say it would be great to be able to pay the monthly bill through income from the initiative, they sometimes work for many years without getting paid. Whenever a donation or sponsor is mentioned as a necessary source
of financial capital, it is connected to cover costs of the project and therefore save its existence rather than to get profit from it.

This attitude has is also due to factors in the participants’ personal circumstances. The refusal of money or getting paid for most of the participants is possible since their work in a CBI is more a hobby rather than their source of income. Most of the participants have a main (“regular”) job for paying the bills. For the founders and the few permanent employees money is indeed an important factor for the existence of the project. Nevertheless, the interviewees highlight that they only want to cover their daily costs instead of amass riches. The ideological belief in their project makes them more accepting of a life on the lowest level of income.

Also for the PIK2 initiative, the general perception of money is a pragmatic one: money is seen as an instrument to fulfil ideological goals. The participants’ wish to shift the energy system in Berlin to a more sustainable one causes them to deal with large amounts of money. Although more than 10 million euro have already collected for purchasing the energy grid, costs for the campaigning work are not allowed to be covered by this collected money. The campaigning work is mostly completed by volunteer or a small budget provided by sponsors and external stakeholders. Profit appears to be a secondary goal. Since the chances of the license for the energy grid is being awarded to PIK2 are not high, profit is a long-term aspect most of the members do highlight yet. Interviewees instead highlight the intention to be a part in the energy transition and see money as an instrument to reach it rather than a goal. Only the most necessary expenditures are undertaken, sometimes even a 40€ difference in costs for an information stand can decide whether the event occurs or not. All in all the perception of money for PIK2 reaches from pragmatic to instrumental.

“There has been several people really interesting from an idealistic perspective and do not look into the profit at all, they really want to push ‘Energiewende’ and shift and transfer money and thereby help to contribute.” (PIK2, Founder Member, 2015)

“And it is to notice that there are a lot of the members not participating because it is an investment but see it from an ecological perspective.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

“Money in my opinion does not play the main role. Important is to be a good initiative.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

In contrast PIK1 avoids money as an instrument to reach their goal. From their perspective, money is not necessary and a successful project can exist without using money at all. The initiative avoids working with money in general. Intended by the consumption-strike of the founder of PIK1, the CBI neither works with money for covering costs nor do they accept any financial contribution by external stakeholders. Money is perceived as a danger to the project since it causes dependence and can lead to a strong influence by external stakeholders. Members of the project also see their role in showing an alternative model to the conventional business- and lifestyle models. Needed infrastructure (server, webpage) are provided directly by sponsors and money is not accepted for it. Expenditures for the daily work (the foodsaver license card e.g.) are covered by volunteering or private money. Relying on investments that have already taken place in the past or have been made by private persons is not fully consistent with the idea of working without money. This contradiction is not explicitly named by the interviewees. Their attitude can also be seen as a protest against the business model they are trying to improve in which maximizing profit and not valuing the food stands is representative of the capitalist system. Especially from the perspective of the founders, the logic of criticizing this business model is to work completely without money.
“For sure we deal with this question. How do we want to organize it in the future. But we don’t want to do it paid. We want to go on with it on a voluntary basis.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

“Financially the guideline is not to accept donations. Mostly the costs for the homepage are covered by private persons. This is my information. Not to accept any funding from companies or other financial contribution.” (PIK1, Member, 2014)

“I think it’s important to draw the line. I mean working without money; for sure we could reach much more with money, but the clear definition “this is us” is very important to get the people and to build up a feeling of community” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

2.2 Perception of money and success

Since PIK2’s work is tightly bound to money, this subheading shall summarize some other aspects on how the role of money is discussed.

The minimum participation for a financial membership in PIK2 is 100 €. Participants in the initiative talk self-critically about this barrier which could lead to a not representative structure within the CBI. Since some people cannot afford the minimum deposit they are not included in certain decisions.

“Even if we tried to lower the barriers, this barrier that you can only participate 100% if you guarantee minimum 100 € is still there and means that some people cannot afford it.” (PIK2, Managing Committee, 2014)

The money builds trust and tightens relationship with their members. They try to give them the feeling that they are contributing to something larger than just a new way of organizing the energy grid (cooperative-owned instead of market-owned). They highlight the ideological value of their intention and therefore make it more likely that people guarantee money, even if they do not know much about the potential profit. This perception of money can also be seen in the crowdfunding campaign which was started to cover the campaigning cost. People support more the idea than the actual technical procedure of running the energy grid (this sometimes seems to be forgotten, since the campaign is only the first step of the actual intention of the CBI).

Another interesting aspect is the view of some external stakeholders regarding money and profit. They highlight the relevance to save expenditures and make profit to provide more public money. Their argument is something like following: cooperatives or even the municipality are not able to organize or invest money in a way to gain profit. Private companies can provide this function. Therefore cooperatives or remunicipalisation mean a loss of money, companies mean profit. That the city of Berlin is not receiving this profit is not taken into account in their argument. This could show that the business-model of cooperatives or state-city-owned infrastructure is still bound to prejudices and insecurities that maybe occur due to bad experiences decades ago (before the wave of privatization).

“Q: You would not see re-municipalization as a possibility? A: I don’t think it’s necessary and I think it would cost too much money, which we don’t have here in Berlin.” (PIK2, External: Political Party, 2015)

3. The function of money for the CBI
This section is somewhat similar to some of the sections above. Since the perception of money also influences the way how money is used, this section can be seen as the real outcome of an embedded abstract ideology.

As already mentioned above, money is mostly needed and used to keep the daily business running, to secure the existence of the CBI and to cover the most important costs. Extra profit is not used to build a lot of capital or to increase wages. It is used for campaigning work and for extra investment into the CBI. It shows that the CBIs do not work like a company for which main function it is to earn profit. The members of the CBI see themselves not as important as the project and the idea and the focus is on the CBI. Thus they contribute a lot of spare time and energy to the initiative without asking for money. Due to this voluntarily work money can be used for things other than wages. It seems the only purpose of money for the CBIs is to improve and emerge the project. This function is also supported by the openness for material support, which is highlighted by the CBIs as a main driver for success (offices, infrastructure etc.).

Money has an extraordinary role for PIK2. Since it intends to buy the Berlin energy grid, a large amount of money is needed. Even though it is not possible to foresee whether the CBI will be chosen to run the energy grid; the CBI has to prove that they have a certain level of financial capital to even apply. One could argue that money is an essential aspect of the whole CBI’s activity in this case. However if we take their core ideals into account, the image changes: they want to buy the energy grid not for profit but to shift the energy mix to renewable energies and thus a sustainable transition in the energy sector. If this goal would be achievable with other means, they would do it. So although money is a central aspect to their work, it also can be seen as an instrument and exchangeable mean.

This leads to a conflict, which occurs in almost all of the interviews with PIK2. Since the members’ money (minimum 100€ per person) is meant to buy the energy grid, discussions arise on whether to cover costs for campaigning work with this money or not. Since the campaigning work is only the first step without knowing if they get the chance to buy the grid, using the money for campaigning would mean to decrease the quantity of money available for buying the grid itself.

“Well, paid employees are always related to the question if we touch the capital of the cooperative. So far we managed to cover costs for the office and managing-committee by sponsors.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

“Do we really want to spend money that will miss in any other part then (…). If we do, we break with our guideline and spend part of this money to set this project up.” (PIK2, Managing Committee, 2014)

“As far as I know we raise donations and spend them in our daily business.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

PIK1 used a crowdfunding campaign and had raised 12,000 Euros to cover basic costs like advertisements, flyers and information material. Once this infrastructure has been created, money no longer is needed by the CBI since it is an online platform (the server is sponsored). Also, since also daily business is covered by personal contributions or sponsoring, money can be seen as an instrument and an avoidable aspect for PIK1. For them the disadvantages (dependency, pressure etc.) prevail.
4. Money and CBI activity

For all of the non-key case study CBIs and PIK2, money is mentioned as an essential aspect influencing the existence of the CBI. Firstly, the members mention financial problems that bind their daily work and are a barrier to the CBI emerging. This shows a strong connection between the financial background and the reach of the project. It could also mean that projects with less money have less chance to spread. PIK1 shows the opposite, but has to be seen as a special case: since it is not reliable on any physical infrastructure (office, employees) and the daily work is in a way self-organizing, its activity is not dependent on money. For initiatives like repair cafés, urban gardening, or PIK2 money is crucial especially in the initial phase of the project. Several projects may not have been started because of this lack of a solid financial background. Secondly the high dependence on money can also be seen in the CBIs’ demand for donations, supporters, and sponsors. Sometimes the work could not even go on without the help of external financial sources.

In general, financial crisis and problems are often dealt with by private investments, either financial or time- and energy-related. This is an evidence for very unstable circumstances. The initiatives are built on a thin financial basis changing every now and then due to donations or other contributions. This is also a reason why they are so dependent on voluntary work.

Reading from the WP2 interview notes shows the financial situation of most of them:

“The sectoral crisis leads to financial problems.” (PIK5, managing committee, 2015)

“there are no other volunteers at the moment, she does it all on her own
- money-making: sometimes she receives fees, sometimes she sells products (apple juice), she receives donations and has won prices
- at times she had 3 employees for specific projects
- financial shortcuts (as at the moment) make it difficult to start a new project
- financial support is existential” (PIK7, manager, 2015)

“There are no employees within the initiative, no one gets paid, that is also not planned for the future. They received funding (“Ehrenamtsmittel”) from the Bezirks- und Ehrenamtsfonds (Bezirksamt).” (PIK3, founder, 2015)

“the volunteers do not have time for fundraising or mapping out strategies
- project is dependent on the engagement of one person who does not get paid
- sometimes they get paid for workshops
- the project is not profitable
- management is mainly done by one person” (PIK4, founder, 2015)

Obviously money is not a goal for the initiatives. Even larger projects with permanent employees (“PIK5” e.g.) are not profit-orientated. Their goal is to carry on the idea and pay an acceptable wage to their employees. For them a lack of money could mean giving up the CBI, while smaller initiatives could carry on with volunteer work and sponsoring for a while. Summing up, for most of the CBIs money appears to be one of the main influencing factors for the realization of their idea. In addition to the idea itself and committed participants, the financial background greatly determines the development of the CBI.

As mentioned above, PIK1 works within different circumstances. Once the rough infrastructure was set up (server, webpage and communications platform) the members were self-organizing the daily work and do not need any resources provided by the CBI. This makes their activity
almost independent from money. Existing expenditures are sometimes covered by the members themselves, or, in the case of the IT-infrastructure, provided by external sponsors.

PIK2 is also relying on the financial contributions of their members but also needs an extra budget for campaigning work. This makes the relationship between money and activity more complex in this case study.

“It’s is constantly about the question how to go on, how to raise money, how to get cooperative-members and trustees in the boat.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

“They tried to get an office. An office which does not have to be paid, thus find a sponsor providing it to us and we found that. This was the basis, also the software programs that we got them for little money. Computers were sponsored; this was the starting day of the cooperative. (PIK2, Accounting, 2015)

For them more money also means more budget available for campaigning work and also higher chances to be able to buy the energy grid. A higher level of members’ and trustees’ deposits supports their political campaign and gives them a louder voice to spread their message. Thus money for PIK2 also has an externally visible effect on their work.

5. Relationship between the impact of the initiative and money

The impact of the initiative and money is described in this section. In none of the case studies is this relationship is stronger than in the case of PIK2. Since the goal to buy a whole energy grid demands for a lot of money, the collected amount of 11 million Euros (Sep 2015) gives the initiative a high credibility and a strong power of impact. A CBI with the same goal, but only a few participants and less money maybe may nothave been accepted as a serious player in the license awarding process.

“I think especially in the beginning the role of the financial contributors was really important, to reach a certain bargaining position.” (PIK2, Member, 2015)

Nevertheless, because the costs for the energy grid are calculated to be around 1 billion Euros, an external agent mentions concerns about their real ability to be ‘part of the game’:

“They try to change a huge issue here in the energy grid. The grid would cost more than a billion Euro if the buy it. That is the price they have to pay cash. I think they underrated the whole issue.” (PIK2, External: Political Party, 2015)

For PIK2, it can be stated that more money means more impact since their chance of buying the grid increases. Only by succeeding in this would they have the environmental impact they want to reach: changing the energy mix to renewable energies and avoid coal and gas. Until they reach this goal, their environmental impact is more negative than positive, since the campaigning work needs resources. At the same time, they provide a high educational impact, since their campaigning includes aspects of participation, democracy, renewable energies, and alternative economy.

For PIK1 this correlation between money and impact is not as obvious. From their perspective, money would not increase their impact at. However, their dependency on external contributions
(donations, sponsoring, crowdfunding, private volunteering) allows for the potential to spreading the CBI’s idea. Although a lot of people participate already, more money for campaigning could mean that they would be able to include more retailers and supermarkets and thereby increasing the amount of saved food. Thus the environmental impact could increase by having more money. Also, the crowdfunding campaign they started in the beginning to raise some money for information material helped them to spread their impact. Nevertheless their environmental and educational impact is really high, even without accepting money. Tons of food are saved every week and their message spreads very sustainably in the society. It has a high number of participants (> 10,000 in Berlin) and they come from a diverse background.

In general the different case studies provide a high educational impact by spreading their idea and raising awareness. The media and press help to increase this impact and is not related to money. Workshops, social interaction and presence in daily life favour the educational impact and can also lead to a positive environmental impact, if the behavioural changes are adapted in individual lifestyles. CBIs, like Repair Cafés and Urban Gardening, focus their work on influencing local attitudes and behaviour. So even if their finances are endangering the existence of the initiative, they still can have an impact due to volunteer work. The notes of WP2 support this argument:

“PIK6 as a cultural meeting place, stimulation of social interaction and benefits for needy people.” (Notes Repair Café PIK6)

“educational impact due to conferences, workshops, informative meetings, campaign workshops.” (PIK2 Notes)

“Social impact of making the consumption of organic food possible for people who couldn’t afford it otherwise. Enriching the biodiversity within the city, recycling material, saving CO2.” (PIK3, founder, 2015)

6. Relationship between the evolutionary stage of the initiative and money

The CBIs mention problems during their evolutionary stage related to initial funding and starting the project. Many members mention that they relied on external funding (donations, sponsoring) to get the initiative started in the first place. At the same time they complain about the difficulty to get financial contributions without having established a name or idea.

“The eight people who founded it worked without salary for one year.” (PIK2 Notes)

“The initiative emerged from a financed project of the Bundeskulturstiftung (national culture foundation), of which she (the person who founded it) was part.” (PIK7 Notes)

“Receiving the Berliner Umweltpreis (Berlin Environment Price) 2013 was important for the further development (financially and for publicity).” (PIK4 Notes)

For small projects, without an existing social network which includes decision makers or other influential people, starting a CBI which requires a minimum of money appears to be difficult. In almost all of the cases external sources were used either in the very beginning or a while after of establishing the project.

PIK2 complaints about the issue of funding a cooperative in the early stages of development in general:

“It’s a general problem all cooperatives have, that there is almost no money for the establishments. This makes it super hard to receive means, since cooperatives mostly are not charitable and therefore every form of funding is not accessible.” (PIK2, Managing Committee, 2014)
At the same time they highlight that the intention of most of the members is to contribute to the idea and transition rather than to get profit out of it. This may explain the long period of time participants work without any financial benefit (PIK2 only has very few permanent employees). Other projects, like most of the non-key case study projects and PIK1, do not provide any financial incentive. Instead the reason for establishing and developing the CBI is ideologically driven. External funding is only needed for daily business and providing the infrastructure in which the project can emerge (an office e.g.). Especially in the beginning without the necessary expertise to apply for external funding, the members try to build the infrastructure on their own:

“Special factors that hindered the development… I think at the beginning it were the missing IT- and coding skills.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

This quote shows very clearly the CBIs’ way of working on problems: Since money is not really accessible and very rare, first intention is to ‘Do it yourself’ or to acquire expertise and knowledge from the social network (in this case a friend of the founder helped to build up the webpage then). This saves money and the members learn to keep the project running almost without money. Other projects have difficulty emerging either they need infrastructure that cannot be provided by external sources (offices, printing material etc.) or their network cannot help them to acquire the resources needed.

For all initiatives, the larger they grow the more money is needed. At the same, a large size can contribute positively to being awarded donations, sponsoring or other contributions. Important to mention is the role of crowdfunding. Some of the case studies received money by a crowdfunding campaign. These campaigns are used in the very beginning of a project to start the work and establish early infrastructure.

“At the beginning we did a crowdfunding campaign and collected 12,000 Euro and we paid flyers and posters for PIK1, but that’s all, normally no money is used.” (PIK1, Member, 2015)

6. Any other observations

Already mentioned above, but outstanding in all of the cases is the ability of some CBIs to carry the project on, even without money. In opposite to standard enterprises or public institutions, money is often necessary for carrying for the CBI, but does not always determining the existence of the CBI. Periods without money can easily be sustained with volunteer work or a pause of the project. Since for most of the members the work in the CBI is not the day job, they do not rely on income from this work. Therefore money is seen as a helpful instrument rather than an inevitable requirement to reach a certain goal.

8. Success factors (for Isabelle and the deliverable)

Below is a brief reflection on important factors for development, up-scaling, replication, and/or diffusion within the Money and CBIs theme based on surveys from the WP2 surveys with non-key case study CBIs, “BürgerEnergie Berlin” (PIK2) and “PIK1.” We focus on factors for the development and diffusion of the initiatives as there is evidence for both in the Memo above.
Money was essential to the emergence and development of the non-key case study CBIs and PIK2. For the most part, money is essential to the CBIs work and realizing their goals, especially in the beginning for infrastructure. Moreover, collected money is what makes PIK2 a serious contender for the Berlin energy grid, increases their chances of success in their bid, and allows them to purchase it. However, PIK1 does not accept money as a donation because they believe that it will make them reliant on donors and they will be pressured into different actions. However, they too needed money for their emergence and used crowdfunding to collect it. What both PIK2 and PIK1 do accept regularly and attribute to their development is non-cash donations such as office space, free printing, and website hosting.

Money is not only important to the emergence and development of CBIs, but also to their diffusion. Many initiatives discuss the important of money to the growth of their initiative. However, again PIK1 shows that this is not necessarily the case as it has managed to grow dramatically without much use of money. This could be because it has little physical infrastructure, such as offices, and organizes through its online platform. Moreover, CBIs seem to be able to hold over where there is little money by using volunteers and taking a DIY approach.

9. Summary

Money and CBIs – this relationship is complex and shows different characteristics depending on the CBI. Nevertheless, this Memo tried to analyse the most important aspects and draw some patterns for different aspects included in the coding scheme. The dependence of a CBI on money changes with the demand for infrastructure. Although the CBIs show a different ability to gather money or to deal with situations without money, some general patterns could be examined.

First of all, the evolutionary stage of the initiative seems to be determining for the further existence of the CBI. Some initiatives complained about a lack of financial support in their early stage, where it was mostly needed to build up a first infrastructure. Other CBIs complained about missing funding while growing and thereby extending their demands (big office needed, complex IT). Although money is mentioned here as an important driver for the development of the projects, most of the CBIs seem to have learned to work without money and to handle periods without financial support. This is also assisted by other material support, offices, computers, etc., that replace the function of money and contribute to the project.

This leads to the second finding, which describes money as a means rather than a goal. Both, the members' ideology and their daily practice, show that the first priority for participating in the initiative is not profit. It is their belief in the idea and the feeling of contributing to a societal transformation that makes some of them work voluntarily several hours a day. This is supported additionally by the material support they get: an externally supported infrastructure provides the same function as money for them. They only exceptions are those CBIs with permanent employees (they need to pay wages) and PIK2, since money has also serves the function of political pressure.

Thirdly, the potential to spread the idea and to grow with the CBI could be higher with more money. However, since their educational and environmental impact is quite high already (compared to the little money they use) the question has to be asked, whether it makes sense to
grow with the initiatives or if it is their advantage to be small and local. The social aspect is mentioned in many of the interviews as an important driver for participation. Some of the CBIs even state that money could lead to complex structures and therefore the loss of social closeness.
Memo from Sapienza

Introduction – Background

The CBI object of this analysis is a community bike repair shop (or people's bike workshop as they self define); their main scope is to promote alternative (yet sustainable) mobility through the diffusion of the urban cycling culture.

The context into which the experience of this CBI flourished is of dramatic importance in understanding how it was born, and how it evolved. Indeed, the evolution of the CBI goes side by side with the evolution of the cyclo-movement in Rome. Sometimes the path taken by the CBI is more in line with the mainstream characterizing the discourse of "alternative mobility" in the city, while some other times it follows a divergent trajectory from the main stream. Both orientations heavily contributed in shaping the CBI as it appears now, and in marking it success both in terms of achievements as in term of a recognized established landmark for the whole cyclo-movement in Rome.

One of the stakeholder collaborating with a long experience in the cyclo-movement in Rome briefly summarized the history of the CBI in this way: "... they were born when there were already few other community bike workshops in Rome. It was initially installed in a recently squat social centre called Angelo Mai. When the police cleared the squat some people within the CBI decided to consitute an association (Associazione Ciclonauti, which in Italian means Ass. Cyclonauts) and obtained from the public administration a space where to do their activity. This was the same place where they are located now."

This happened in a moment of great expansion of the cyclo-movement in Rome, which was fuelled, boosted and inspired above all by the international cycling movement of protest known as Critical Mass. As reported in a document written by the network of the Roman community bike workshops :"in Rome the Critical Mass get together started thanks to the personal initiative of few brave urban cyclists" in 2002. At the very beginning it relied solely on the stubborn effort of 20/50 cyclists that spontaneously met the last Friday of every month. Although the euphoric momentum boosting the movement at this initial stage - when the surprise faded away - regular traffic and population strongly opposed to it, thus slowing down its take off. But inertia is fundamental; especially for a movement that aim at reaching a Mass considered Critical. Thus, the most active members of the movement realized that meeting once a month was not enough for the cycling movement to "reclaim the right to be traffic per se", as the oldest member of the CBI said; something more was needed. Although the Critical Mass philosophy refues the idea of having leaders and official structures, there was the need to put landmarks in the city; recognizable places where the movement could grow and spread. In other words, '"in order to augment the protest audience and efficiency, in order to crunch the gears of the system, and to effectively promote cycling through all strata of population, there was the need to create safe places where every urban cyclist could feel part of something bigger. Head-quarters equipped to repair and tune their bikes, social places where to learn from each other" while reinforcing their motivation, enclaves where the protest could organize, heal and grow.

Is in this context that year 2003 welcomed the dawn of few places willing to serve those purposes; the preferred form was a community bike workshop - or as they prefer to say "people's" bike workshop - usually hosted in a social centre. This fertile soil for the popping out of several community bike workshops was the realm of the multiple movements characterizing the political radical left scene in Rome. Hence, community bike repair shops
were not seen exclusively as places where to repair a broken part but become think-tanks and innovation laboratories for alternative and sustainable mobility activism. In 2004, coincidentally with the first international Critical Mass get-together organized in Rome, a new community bike workshop opened. This was the "Ciclofficina Centrale" (which translates from italian into Central Community Bike Workshop). The adjective central refers to the position and not to the importance, in fact it was initially located in quat near the Coliseum, in the old city centre of Rome. Is in this context that community bike workshops' appeal was initially also augmented by the fact of being entities politically recognizable even if a specific brand was not visible. An old time meber and experienced cyclomechanics says :" i joined the community bike workshop because i wanted to satisfy my crave for political activism that had to be stopped for few years due to personal reasons. The CBI seemed to be the right place for this, because it is a place where you can go and understand immediately what is all about even if you have been missing from the scene for a long time".

Meanwhile, the movement kept growing, Critical Masses reached an important magnitude :"few thousands cyclists". Thanks to this increasing participation :"with a monkey wrench in the hands the Velorution starts its diffusion, and here in Rome assumes one of its most radical declination"

The squat hosting the CBI in 2006 was cleared-off by the police; this was a harsh time for the CBI but as one of the stakeholder collaborating with them said :"their experience did not get lost: the Association Cyclonauts was founded, and after a long negotiation with the Municipality of Rome it obtained a space where to do its activity". This was not an easy turning point. Some people did not agree with the formalization process and with the dialogue with institutions, so they quit and they founded another people's bike workshop in a squat a little further away :"A group of the cyclomechanics from the Ciclofficina Centrale did not join the Association Cyclonauts, and opened another bike workshop called Ciclososcorso (which translates ino Bike-aid in Italian)"

In the last 11 years the CBI grew, refined its activities, people within it changed, someone left, some others joined. This period helped the CBI to reach a maturity stage , and as such it is an organism per se that could live independently from its members, one of the young meber of the CBI said that: "this place is so strong that it stays like that... People have changed almost completly, but there is no need for someone to tell and explain how and what to do. Everything is written down in details so it is human-proof, it is a project that started really well...".

Although, almost all members agree that something has changed, maybe not in scope or aim, but in its charachter. Probably the strong political polarization charachterizing the CBI in its inital stage faded a little with the change of people, thus helping the CBI to became more inclusive and consequently increasing its numbers (volunteers, beneficiaries, bike repaired, opening hours, etc.). An old member said: "for sure from being a place for the social aggregation of only one kind of people it turned into a place more inclusive oriented also to different kinds of people. However what continues to attract people is the promotion of the cycling culture..."

RQ 1. Perceptions of money
(thesese codes relate to the first research question on attitude and perception of money. Results from here can then be compared with results on the CBI activity, impact and evolution phase. Here also code if money is perceived as a goal, is it perceived as a measure of success, note down the measures of success if any)

Money does not play a relevant role within the CBI, however its perception is quite peculiar to understand and characterize the relationships within the CBI and between the CBI and the
external world. In fact, initially the CBI was characterized and influenced by a radical political left ideology, thus it followed – and it is still doing it nowadays – a Marxist philosophy, as one of the oldest member cited with: "... from everyone according to his capacities, to everyone according to his needs". Thus, implicitly money does not represent a success per se at all, and neither is considered the fundamental mean to achieve other things. Actually, sometimes oldest members of the CBI are somehow very strict about it, they see: "money as the devil" as one of the fresher member of the CBI said. In principle, older members, the ones that saw the entire evolution of the CBI perceive money as a potentially deceiving factor, in fact no profit at all can be made within the CBI: "we are not a bike workshop... we are a people's bike workshop"; while conversely newer member are reluctant to deny the role the more money could potentially mean for the success of the CBI.

RQ 2. Function/use of money:
(how is money used: only for exchange? for valuation? for savings which could be invested in future activities?)

There is not a regulated use of money. The only thing that has a cost is the subscription of volunteers, which is 5 euro per year since the beginning (2004). Everything else such as reparations, spare parts, cyclomechanics support, the use of tools, etc. is given for free to anyone who asks for it. Of course people can leave a tip, and many do that, others who cannot afford to do it either leave something else in exchange or just use the service for free; "we do not care if you leave 10 euros 20 euros or nothing for what you take or use, because if you do not leave a penny there is going to be someone else that will leave enough for the both of you. Some people who can afford it leave more than necessary, some others may instead leave another object, e.g. a wire for a tyre, but we also had homeless people that needed to repair their bike because it is nearly the only thing they possess, we grant access to spare parts tools and services to anyone with no discrimination"

RQ 3. CBI activity and money-dependence/money-making:
(here information on CBI organizational/decision-making structure and activities -> (what is the organizational/decision-making structure of the initiative, how many volunteer/members, has it changed over time) and its approaches to funding: how does the initiative make money - by selling, by writing projects, by donations, elsewise? Any reports on financial problems, shortages, financial instability? Here we will try to understand whether conventional money is fundamental for the activity/mission of the initiative, or it performs its core activities without much money)

Money however does play a certain role in the CBI to a limited extent. Money is used to buy consumable materials such as grease or tyres or tools, to pay bills and rent. The CBI gets its money from donations (tips for the service) from subscriptions and from bike auctions. The latter are some cycloenthusiast public events were the CBI auction bikes that have been recycled and repaired. Bikes are not really sold to who offer the highest price, usually price are capped to few dozens euros (max 50), but the bike usually goes to who win a sort of game that is organized on the spot (silly clowny games). These events take place usually twice a year in a public square nearby the CBI, and when it happens is a party for the entire neighborhood, in fact there are people that attend the auction just to see the show and not really to buy anything. No shortage or problem of funding reported, actually the CBI is very precise in paying every
month rent and bills to the municipality so to have the full entitlement to occupy the place where they are now which is by the way given for a subsidized price.

RQ4: Impact of the initiative
(put here anything that has to do with environmental, social, political and educational impact of the initiatives, and if time you can mention: env. impact/social impact/political impact, etc. During the analysis this information will be related to the function/role of money in their organization/group)

Impact of the CBI is definitely multidimensional, although its quantification is not that easy. Members of the CBI agree in asserting the “definitely the amount of materials they recycle coupled with the promotion of the urban cyclist culture the do have a relevant environmental impact”. The social impact is also substantial; although the CBI reduced the number of social events hosted/organized in order to favor more importantly the service for beneficiaries, it is now a place more socially inclusive than it was at the beginning. The transition from an illegal to a legal status made the CBI focus almost exclusively on cycling culture promotion and not collateral political initiatives, as a consequence it became a place not so strongly politically polarized but rather a place more welcoming where anyone interested in cycling could go. So, even if the CBI activity is less focused on social events is definitely a landmark for social gathering in the district. Politically speaking, probably the impact on institutions has not been that great, however the fact of passing from a squat to an association made the CBI a legitimate interlocutor of the public administration. The CBI sometimes did develop activities with the institutional stakeholder although it remains very critical of the political power managing the city. In this sense they hope to be more incisive for the future, in fact they now started a program of cyclomechanics for schools which is giving some very goods results, thus they hope to change the future by educating young minds today.

RQ 5. Evolutionary phase of the initiative
(CBIs trajectory and money: here the use/availability/making of money will be related to the different stages of CBIs. Put here anything that explains whether the initiative is in the phase of emergence, or rather in resisting/persisting phase, in a conflict/debate/reorganization, or in an expansion/growth phase; if time please specify any of these; here we will try to understand how money dependence/money making influences the trajectory of the initiatives)

The role of money did not change since the beginning and it remained the same also when the CBI decided to pass from an illegal to a legal status. Before the transition money was used mainly to buy tools and materials, after the transition the CBI already got a bunch of useful tools and workstation, so it is now mostly used for rent and bills, even if the number of beneficiaries and consequently the number of bikes repaired increased exponentially since then. This can be done because the CBI even without relying on the use of money has been capable of building a network of ties that either donate (this is the case of regular bike workshops that collaborate with the CBI or the Public Garbage Collector Company that gives them what is still useful and is found in the trash) to the CBI the materials that are needed. However, money has been recently the subject of a clash, the reason for a debate within the CBI between newer and older member of the CBI. Older members believe that the use and the amount of money circulating in the CBI should be minimized because they refuse the
idea that every exchange between people shall be mediated by money and they are also scared that an increased use of money within the CBI may corrupt the CBI's nature. Conversely, newer members believe that if they could make more money through the offer of a structured service or by auctioning a higher number of bikes, this may help the CBI in achieving better results. Probably the explanation is that while for older members success is not related to money but to the spillover of knowledge; in a sense for them success is when the CBI does not keep growing but make possible the contamination of other places by replicating the CBI's experience with other CBIs. Conversely newer members seem to realize that the CBI somehow reached is natural limit in term of growth (due to space and equipment) and so they are wondering whether it would be beneficial to change the scale of operations and upgrade to a bigger size. To do this they see money as a relevant part, because it is the mean through which more initiatives can be organized, a bigger place could be rented, more tools and workstation could be bought. This debate is not central in the CBI but it keeps recurring from time to time. Only times will make us see how this contrast is going to the CBI in the future; so far it was quite resilient to such a theme.
Memo from T6

Introduction

The memo includes the following: 1. a short description of the sample, 2. an outline of the interviewed CBI, and an analysis of the sample according to the coding (3. Perception of Money; 4: Function of Money; 5. Money and CBI's activity; 6.Money and CBI's impact; 7.Money and CBI's evolutionary stage; 8.Any other observation). One final paragraph illustrates 9. Summary and success factors

1. The sample

5 interviews (total duration: 8 hours) to different participants of one CBI:
- Interviewee 1 (I1): founders (one male, one female)
- Interviewee2 (I2): director of one of the facilities, the Ecologic Culture Centre (one, male)
- Interviewee 3 (I3): Solidarity Purchasing Group members (two, males)
- Interviewee 4 (I4): worker in the organic pub (one, male)
- Interviewee 5 (I5): participants to the urban gardens activity (4, one mail, three female)

2. The CBI: CasalePodere Rosa

CasalePodere Rosa is a non-for-profit association established in 1993 in a peripheral area in the north-east of Rome. It manages an old country side building, a library and some fields on behalf of the local Municipality. In over 20 years of activity it developed a wide network of activities with the aim of protecting the natural environment, supporting social and workers rights, spreading and promoting an environmentally sustainable way of living and a life-style based on better and minor consumption. Its activities include but are not limited to a solidarity purchasing group, an educational botanic garden, 100 urban gardens, a farmer market twice a months, an organic restaurant, the management of the “Ecological Culture Centre” library, the energy production through solar panels and more. Around 500 people and more than 100 families in the neighbourhood benefit from and contribute to its activities and its presence strongly contributed to shape the current identity and quality of the surrounding area.

These achievements, which are quite unique in the urban scenario where the initiative is settled, are the results of a specific and careful management of the relationships with the local institutions and the local community over the years, and of an ability in taking advantage of the peculiarities of its neighbourhood, about which the founders and participants of the initiative have a deep knowledge. The emergence and the strength of this initiative comes from the working class
background of the neighbourhood and from its history of social struggles over the ‘60 and ‘70, which over the ’80 evolved in a concrete commitment for the protection of the local green areas, threatened by an aggressive urbanization plan. A coordinated action involving a significant part of the local community managed to save the neighbourhood park (more than 50 hectares of mostly abandoned fields) and to obtain an old building in the proximity to keep working for a more environmentally sustainable and equitable urban life.

Analysis

3. Perception of Money

Money is a core issue for the initiative from more than one point of view: it characterises it in its choice to focus on paid work as one of the two main goal of the initiative (together with environment) yet it is not a goal in itself. Moreover, it marked the different stages of its evolution, during which fundraising became increasingly problematic. Both this aspects, though, are perceived somehow differently from different members of the initiative, mainly depending on their role within the organisation and their age.

The fact that making money it is not a goal in itself clearly emerges from most of the interviews in different ways: the common thread appears to be for all of the participants a ethical choice reflecting a way of living, instead of an economic choice, which is well summarised in the following quotes:

“I had also and other job before, which was surely more stable from the economic point of view, and this is a relevant aspect. But working for the initiative is more motivating also because of the opportunity it offers to create a social lab, (...) it is a far more gratifying activity from the professional point of view, less so from the economic point of view but I don't care (I2)”.

“I prefer to work in a place like this, instead of in a place where there is less attention towards (ethical) issues and more focus on income, on generating a profit, putting less care in the relationship with the community. (I4)”

The approach consistently emerges also in the Solidarity Purchasing Group relationship with external producers: interviewee reported about one of their favourite producers stating that it was not willing to grow its business any further, as it would have implied the risk to loose the close relationship with people and solidarity purchasing groups, which was not their idea of sustainability. The SPG members themselves claim that “companies that produce non-organic products too for commercial reasons are far from our approach” (I3). Moreover, they discourage
people to join the group mainly because of the small saving they can obtain through it, because the change in habits is quite demanding and not sustainable without wider and stronger motivations (ethical, environmental).

The theme of a relationship with money driven by ethical choices returns in recurring examples of very successful activities offered to the local community for free (i.e. a highly successful meeting organised with British director Ken Loach, or the many roundtables about current environmental topics) and in the choice to avoid as much as possible private funding “as an ethical statement” (12). A part from the paid workers, with whom we’ll deal in more detail a few paragraphs below, other participants to the initiative and strongly discouraged to see any activity as a mean to purchase money. A good examples is represented in this case by the conflict arose with some of the participants to the urban gardening activity: despite selling products is forbidden and the idea behind the activity is to challenge the productivity criteria, organisers suspect that someone does sell its products and occasionally attempts to use some forbidden fertilisers to reinforce its production. In this case peer to peer control seems to work as a good deterrent.

Finally, a very relevant example of different approaches to money management emerges through the conflict with a close by and somehow similar initiative, a “casale” occupied in recent years and currently used as a social restaurant. The choice made by the people who occupied this place is radically different from CasalePodere Rosa: the initiative underwent no concertation process with the local institution, as happened for the Casale, it does not pays for facilities and tend to avoid as much as possible paid work, relying strongly on volunteers. People managing the place are “youngsters still living at home with parents, wealthy people, retired people: all people who don’t have economic problems or who have other incomes. As individual, they do not have earnings issues” (12). Hence, people are not paid there and considering that on top of that they do not pay nothing to the local municipality, this allows them to keep prices for everything extremely low, really lower than Casale itself that is already quite cheap (i.e. one plate of pasta there could cost around 2 euros, while at the Casale is 6 or 7 euros). The Casale’s members criticise the approach as a kind of “unfair competition” and also as a not sustainable, not up-scalable system that does not try to integrate itself into the society, which is a core point to the Casale, and, above all, do not recognise the importance of paid work as a right and a way to guarantee people’s dignity. On the other side, “a peculiarity of the Casale is to have always paid people working there in a legal, transparent way” (11).

This choice, which is not called into question, does anyway generate the necessity to carefully balance the expectations because “the attitude of paid people is different, it has always been like that during our history, also in the management of the organic pub. Someone who until the day before was volunteering and highly motivated, putting personal resources to contribute to the good functioning of the initiative... well it is truth that if you are a volunteer it means that you have time, which makes you care less about time itself. Anyway, once you’re a paid worker you
care about time, about tasks. I am not saying this is necessarily bad, it just the way things go” (11)

On the other side the same interviewee notices that, asking people to devote their time to such an initiatives in a volunteer way, rise the risk for them to have their life basically coinciding with the initiative’s mission and evolutions, which might be negative to some extent and can be a personal choice but not something that an initiative expects from participants.

The choice of the Casale makes possible to have people approaching it because “I was in need of money, so I joined the guys working in the organic pub (14)”: here the money provided by the initiative are clearly perceived as a need by the interviewee, which also proudly underlined that “contrary to many similar initiatives in Rome, this initiative elected to be up to date with payments of bills and to regulate paid staff. Staff salaries are low, but everything is regular – the initiative feels that this attitude is part of is vision and mission concerning workers rights”.

The fact that people contributing to the initiative’s everyday activities do not seek for making money and feel the responsibility of this approach is testified by the fact that, when circumstances called for it, paid staff autonomously elect to reduce their salaries, while there is no increase in salaries if things go well (i.e. the guys working in the organic pub). On the other side, in the recent past money management generated some minor conflict concerning tips, about which a “misunderstanding” (14) occurred, with people working in the organic pub expecting to be entitled to perceive the tips too and the initiatives founders and managers claiming the money as donation to the initiative, which was in the end the common agreement, also in the light of the current very tough economic situation of the initiative.

This brings up the last point concerning money perception: money are currently viewed as an essential but highly instable asset, their flow is difficult to predict and the change in the institutional support over the last two decades (analysed in more detailed in section 7) makes it progressively more uncertain. There is, from some members, the perception of money as a measure of success, not in terms of the amount of income but in terms of sustainable financial management of the initiative as a whole. This also generates different views about more innovative and potentially risky coping strategies and more careful and conservative ones (i.e. about the opening time of the organic pub).

4. Function of Money

The CasalePodere Rosa sees money as a mean to achieve some basic goals and to guarantee a clean and functional relationship with the local community and the institutions.
Since the very beginning, founders did not put themselves in opposition to the local institutions, which should in their view be the highest expression of the local civil society. The occupation of the casale was then agreed with the municipality and a low fee has always been paid, together with facilities bills.

“The Casale thought from the very first moment that this place could be managed through volunteers, but also that part of the money should have used to pay regular workers. Today we are more convinced than ever, as voluntary work is something that people do when they have time, when they are in a personal and economic position that allows them to do it. Starting working activities in the Casale meant to add resources to the place and the people (I1)”.

Today there are people actually relying on the small income provided by the Casale. The balance between aspirations and economic constraints, though, is not easy: in the members’ view the place and its initiatives should be open as much as possible, providing its services and spaces to citizens. In reality, “people tend to join activities and to go to the Casale mostly in some days, mainly during the week and, mainly during the evening, and without the appropriate resources it is actually impossible to keep the place open all the time, it is a luxury that we cannot afford (I1)”.

In short, the current economic situation and lack of regular and consistent money income allows the initiative to cover the expenses (facilities, personnel) and to keep basic activities running at minimum speed.

Another function of money is to allow the initiative of making distinction between higher and lower income people and households, and try to support the second ones. While selecting participants to the urban gardens activity for example (as there is always a long list of people asking to join and only 100 lots available), low income was one of the criteria for selection, despite the fact that “urban gardens have no economic aim themselves (I5)”. Similarly, the SPG envisages lower fees for low-income households, despite being always in need of money to pay the part-time person who manages the operations.

5. Money and CBIs activity

With the exception of pocket costs, the initiative re-invests all of the income in the activities themselves and, for the services that come with a cost, it keeps prices for the consumers very low.

“There is not only what we earn, but also what we do not earn because in reality there is a form of personal investment, of volunteer work to some extent, a small part that anyway adds up to a significant contribution (I4)”.

In this way the initiative manages to keep offering also a relevant set of services for free (movie projections, the library open four days a week, conferences and debates). Unfortunately and as explained in more detail in the following
paragraph, the decrease in money availability implied a reduction in the frequency of such activities.

Moreover, with regard to the initiative activity, the initiative approach allows to the SPG to have one part-time paid person managing all the operations revolving around the activity, which includes up to 80 families and more than 200 people. The presence of this person is seen as highly beneficial for the group and a result in itself from an ethical point of view, as through a small increase in the participation fee the members manage to provide a job to a person. As the SPG is a non registered group, “this would not have been possible outside the context of the Casale, which is a structure that protect us and allow us to have this person, hiring him/her with a regular contract, while we put the money with an extra fee on top of the expenses for the products (I3).”

The SPG tries to preserve its effectiveness and sustainability also asking to participants a quarterly fee, in the attempt to avoid occasional, one-month only subscription and to induce people to join if they are ready to take a minimum engagement.

6. Money and CBIs impacts

Between late ’90 and early 2000, CasalePodere Rosa gained a tender, securing a considerable amount of money for a few years. That allowed the initiative to perform many highly inclusive and high level activities, offered to the local community for free: training courses about environmental issues, big conference with national and international speakers tackling the most pressing topics concerning environment, consumption, sustainability, activities for schools, offered with no costs for the school themselves. The presence of founds was particularly relevant for the involvement of schools, which usually do not have many funds themselves. In the years of prosperity, the Casale could hire skilled educators to develop specific courses about the topics of interest of the initiative and related to the background of the neighbourhood. As anticipated, the lack of funds in recent years slowed down the initiative and allowed for less frequent and activities.

Today one of the most relevant impacts of the initiative with respect to the economic approach is its choice to support small and local producers by hosting a farmer market twice a month and by pre-financing some producers through the SPG.

“We have some pre-financing projects. You need to really believe in them to join, otherwise nobody would pay some coffee six months before getting it. (...) Without us, big producers would keep working as usual, while for small producers the support of SPGs can be very good, because they want to keep working at that level and maintaining the direct relationship with people(I3)".
In this way, the initiative is concretely contributing to spread a different approach about the consumer-producer relationship, a relationship in which no one is exploited and small producers call sell their products at a fair price, quite higher then the one that big retailers would offer. This also allows them to avoid expanding their plots for surviving, with a beneficial effect on the surrounding environment.

7. Money and CBI’s evolutionary stage

As anticipated, the availability of money was crucial for the evolution of the initiative and it is strictly related with a change in the institutions attitude. After more than a decade of activities, the relationship with institutions changes for different reasons (change in political positions and approach, financial crisis), inducing a significant shift in the institutions’ financial approach. Local institutions, in fact, manifested an increasingly strong intention to perceive a money flow from places such the one that hosted the CasalePodere Rosa, either transforming its overall purpose or asking the initiative to pay a far higher fee and encourage more commercial activities. The initiative opposed a strong refusal to both scenarios and over the last 6 or 7 years, and on-and-off conflict begun with part of the local institutions, despite collaborations keeps happening about punctual events or initiatives. The main and more impacting result is nowadays a constant lack of funding and the impending menace of having the municipality asking for more money all of a sudden. In 2014, the costs usually covered by the agreement with the municipality have provided for less than half of actual expenses.

This main issue arise in a context that is significantly different from the one of the initiative’s early stages:

“Twenty years ago, when the park was at risk, people manifesting in the streets have been a vital asset, a more instinctive and spontaneous approach, less rational. This reached the goal to stop the overbuilding project. Today we are in a different phase, where is crucial that together with an idealistic vision there is also the capacity to identify the “legs” (of the project). Feasibility and economic partners are necessary to go on (I2)"

About this necessity, the main current strategies are not sustainable in the long term:

“Even with crowd funding you can rise some funds for a specific project that starts today and ends in an other day, but you cannot make crowd funding about the entire management of a library, it does not work like that. Also, it does not have the continuity that is essential for us. (I2)"
In parallel, the weight of voluntary work decreased:

"It did not change after an assembly decision, it changed because volunteering is something that fits into a period of your life. If at some point your life, also privately, changes, you go and work somewhere else, you change anyway. Ideally you keep staying in the place, so it changes as a matter of fact, naturally, at least for what concerned the Casale management. We still have volunteers, but it is more separated (from paid work) (I1)."

This does not mean that there has been the possibility, in recent year, to increase the number of paid workers. On the contrary, due to the situation and with the exception of the SPG, the number of paid workers has decreased for the main building (the Casale), for the library (that until some years ago gave work to 6 or 7 people, while today are 1 or 2) and for the organic pub. The last one, still, remains an activity that seasonally manages to bring some extra money to the initiative:

“...The organic pub is one of the source of income, most of the other activities are still for free, (…), the pub is the only real source of income, somehow it manages… generally more in summer. In summer we manage to earn something more than the expenses, a part from paying our own work, and we can pay some debts made in winter, when we are almost always in deficit (I4)"

8. Any other observations

The interviews were realised in a very transparent and direct way. The interviewees gave their availabilities accordingly to their possibilities and there were no restraints in discussing about any aspect concerning the initiative’s life.

One observation that may fall outside the scope of the coding but is still relevant for the context of the “relationship with money” topic:

• Generation gap: the economic instability is perceived as equally critical from all the initiative’s members (with the exception of the participants to the urban gardens activity, who are involved in such topic only indirectly), but older and younger generations expressed it with a different emphasis. Moreover, despite no one gave a clear indication about potential solutions, the reasoning of older and younger members heads towards different directions: while the older seems to expect a (more favourable) rearrangement in the relationship with the institutions, younger members seems more inclined to think that the Casale should have its own business plan and aim for an higher economic independence.
Final remarks

9. Summary and success factors

As anticipated at the beginning of the analysis, to the initiative money is:
• not a goal in itself (strong non for profit position)
• a core component of one of its main goal, which is support paid work
• a relevant factor influencing its evolution, during which fundraising had been marked by increasing difficulty in raising funds.

The initiative relationship with money reveal a clear path that started from a phase of relative prosperity in mid '90, and started to decline after mid 2000 mainly because of a change in the external economic scenario and in the institutions attitude. Up-scaling in itself is not a goal for an initiative focused on offering a model that is alternative to the mainstream, commercial one. Anyway, through time the need for a more structured management and participation emerged for ethical and practical reasons (more paid workers, less volunteers).

The importance of an efficient money management emerges clearly from the interviews: with the institutions less and less inclined to support the initiative and even actively making things more difficult for it, the need for a new approach surface very explicitly from the voices of younger generations and more carefully from the ones of the older members.

From the economic point of view, the choice to proceed in agreement with the local institutions and to identify paid work as one of the core identity feature of the place has been a rewarding strategy until few years ago. Now, lacking the economic support of the institutions, the economic balance requires a new approach about both the relationship dynamics and the fundraising activities, to overcome the unstable flow of resources preserving the non for profit strong identity of the Casale.
Memo from UAB

1. Introduction

Perceptions of money and their use by grassroots (community) initiatives is a relatively unexplored issue in academic journals. The following memo thus firstly focuses on the approach and perceptions which community initiatives have towards money (Section 2). Next the different functions and roles which diverse CBIs assign to money are explored (Section 3). Section 4 looks at the particular use of money level (dependence on money) among different CBIs. Sections 5 and 6 relate initiatives’ use of money and their socio-political impact and evolutionary phase. Overall, the innovative perceptions, practices and approaches to money are brought up for reflection to the extent that lessons can be transferrable to a wider part of society.

The data below is drawn from diverse types of initiatives, the first one (Totacucaviu, TCV) is a cooperative of 23 households who organize and commit themselves to purchasing (seasonal) fruits and vegetables from a local organic producer on a weekly basis all year long; the second type is their (Totacucaviu’s) local organic producers – initially Kosturica and after a change after a conflict - Aurora del Camp (AdC); the third one is the Som Energia (SE) energy cooperative consisting of individuals who jointly purchase energy with a green certificate, while slowly starting to invest in alternative energy capacities; the forth type of initiative is a bicycle repair workshop (Biciosxs) using an occupied space and working without monetary exchanges; the fifth is a 30-member household community which is cooperatively purchasing and producing fruit and vegetables (Can Masdeu, CMD), while undertaking a wide range of social and political activities; and the sixth one (Calafou) is a defined as “post-capitalist industrial complex” by its members, a household community of 30 individuals dedicated to communal cooking, food recycling and various forms of production (from soaps to furniture, software and metal elements). Data from the first four has been extracted from a qualitative semi-structured interview using previously defined research questions (RQs), while the basis for the second four is a quantitative survey marked as DAS (Data Assessment Sheet) below. While mostly including closed questions on the organizational, economic, social, and educational structure of the groups the DAS incorporated open-ended questions and spaces for feedback around each thematic section, which allowed for the incorporation of a wide narrative base on the set of questions used for the analysis below, such as money-making, money-dependence and income generation.

2. Perceptions of money

2.1 Money is key but not a goal in itself

The perceptions of money of interviewees tend to merge with ideas on ‘materialism’ and ‘self-sufficiency’. Materialism is here understood as the importance of money and possessions for one’s well-being. All local organic producers mention in some way convictions and beliefs as having a heavier weight than money-making when initiating their project, and state a clear preference for a life based on coherence with one’s vision for what a good (and meaningful) life should look like.

“I would have made a living working as a computer specialist, but this did not nourish my soul, nor was it coherent with my beliefs and ecological convictions”. G., a member of AdC.

“Materialism does not satisfy you. I do not search for social recognition through my property. Nor do I need an amazing house. I have chosen a life based on simplicity, where I can do what really fascinates me. It is the normal and logical way to go”. R., a member of AdC

“Talking about degrowth, … sure we want to make a living from our work, but keeping in mind that one does not need that much. There are different ways to cover our needs….There is no limitless
growth. We just have to make the best use of what we have (land, machinery), we do not need to keep on growing and growing forever” D. a member of AdC networks of producers.

While a preference for a life of simplicity where money is important but not a goal in itself is elicited by the producers, there is no mention of anything in this respected by the interviewed members of the consumer cooperative (they serve). Yet, most cooperatives’ members share a critique of market-based interactions and associated perceptions that all needs shall be individually served through monetary interactions. Community-based organization is hence perceived as an alternative to the culture of individualism.

“We have been raised in an individualistic culture with a market-dependence”. V. , a member of TCV.

Perceptions of money among the food cooperative members surveyed are related to the pricing of the organic food and ensuring that it does not become an object of the ‘bourgeoisie’ consumerist culture.

“Many of us would like to avoid being ‘ecological bourgeoisie”. T. , a member of TCV.

The food cooperatives emerged as a response to the dilemma between the higher price of local organic production delivered by small-scale farmers in comparison with the one provided by conventional non-organic and “conventional organic” enterprises. Removing the cost of intermediation and organizing orders jointly through volunteer work they could have local, ecological and socially-just production at affordable price. Yet, having good quality healthy food at low price is not the single driver behind the emergence of food cooperatives in Barcelona. For many it is the “Powerful experience of communal work and self-organization on the level of the cooperative”. V. , a member of TCV.

2.2. Challenging the ‘monetary logic’

Two individuals from initiatives based in occupied spaces, operating as social centers mention that their existence is a challenge the so-called ‘monetary’ logic. The interview from Can Masdeu touches on the role of reproductive and care work as one of the factors that enables an operational mode where money is not central. The larger part of their activities and achievements would not be possible if the community was focused on the logic of money intermediation. This shall not be confused with a lack of funding, rather with certain type of achievements, relations and results which can only emerge and thrive for being outside the monetary realm.

“An organization which coordinates 5 projects and a social centre, which covers the bigger part of the daily necessities of its 30 inhabitants, which has two community vehicles ... which constantly renovates and works on the space, maintains its infrastructure and buildings... All this for [an yearly income of] 30 000 euro? This is a completely miserable amount. Yet, this is because part of the work is outside the monetary logic”. A.,a member of CMD.

The members of Biciosxs(BX) explicitly reject the use of money for the aims of their community initiative, stating that socializing and sharing tools is the single driver of their activities. Alternatively they opt for an exchange (or barter), where people can use the space free of charge as long as they respect its rules (politeness, bringing tools back to their place) and contribute to the project with gifts (bicycle parts, new tools or just food and drinks).

“We want to support the barter, as we consider ourselves anti-capitalist. Money corrupts us. Now money is in the center of all. People believe that they cannot do anything without money. We want to demonstrate that indeed, you can do a lot without money...I am not sure if this enters within the idea of sustainability but I do see it as a basic principle”. P.,a member of BX.

A critique to the centrality of money in modern societies is one of the underlying reasons for the existence of Biciosxs. The project can be perceived as an tiny experiment for the hypothesis whether basing the micro-economy of a particular project on gifts could generate a particular climate of human relations where trust, gratitude, altruism and solidarity are fostered and eventually spread.
"Many people come to ask for help. And when we tell them that they don’t have to pay they are shocked. They come back feeling very grateful and bring you food or something else to express their gratitude...Bicosxs is a space for socializing, given certain established standards for respect and tolerance. The use of tools serves as the basis for this socializing/recreation... Here you can come for a drink with us, while we are working. Our basic premise is that this is a free space for interaction." P., a member of BX.

On a more philosophical note, the project of Calafou(CF) provides a different conceptualization of the economy, which is understood as matching resources with needs within a particular community. Money is then perceived as an intermediary, but not something which stays at the core of a household economy. Needs can be matched through various resources including official money (euros) but not exclusively using them. Housing, health, education and all material and immaterial resources needed for the reproduction of oneself and one household can be provided through different ways – exchanges, swaps or gifts, through social currencies.

"By economy I understand the development and sustaining of all aspects of life...this is very different from talking about the economy of finance, for me the economy is not related to money but to our needs and desires; finance relates to money." R., a member of CF.

When interpreting data along this category we should keep in mind that no specific question was made on the perception of money, implying that information elicited might be partial.

3. The function of money for the CBI

3.1. Money an instrument to reach project objectives

For the local organic producers money functions like in any other small enterprise: it is the basic medium of exchange. Sufficient revenues must be generated so that costs are covered. The new element here concerns costs. While these need to generate sufficiently high incomes for maintaining a family and kids is a pressing goal for some, the role of money for both interviewees is not associated with profit-making, nor with social status. Money is an instrument needed to reach the project objectives; on the one hand - to serve a need which has been clearly articulated in the local community; and on the other - to sustain fair living conditions for those who serve this need. Economic strength is furthermore seen as a prerequisite for having social tariffs toward more economically disadvantaged individuals.

"We have to arrive at a given economic objectives because the family depends on those...it is true that we make money. But even if I make more the costs I wouldn’t put it in a new car. I will invest it in improving our practices on the farm, or anything. Buying a new car simply does not interest me. When you start your farm you do it because you really believe in it, and profits are not a priority" G., a member of AdC.

The organic producers who start from scratch tend to be at economic disadvantage not only with respect to conventional farmers, but in comparison to inheritance-based family farms. Small-scale organic agriculture projects like Aurora tend to kick-off, grow and sustain themselves despite the relatively risky prospects for profitability. In many cases their economic sustainability can be based on self-exploitation (as is the case for Kosturica) or free labour provided by volunteers. This is one of the risks which Aurora intentionally tries to avoid.

"Any small agriculture project would be based on self-exploitation...But in our case in Kosturica, the first years we worked 12 hours every week, and sometimes we manage do have a vacation only because we could substitute for one another" M., a member of K.
The function of money within the energy cooperative initiative is perhaps somewhat more important than in the case with small local farms: an increase in revenues is required for the initiative to successfully meet its objectives. Yet while seemingly standard, there is one important innovation in the function of money, which cooperative and trust-based mode of organizing enables. Electricity credits are proposed as a means of exchange, or as means of repaying back small-scale loans: through the cooperative and solidarity based networks of the initiative individuals are asked to lend small amounts for investment in new renewable capacities. There will be then repaid to creditors in the form of discounts in the electricity they consume in the future.

"Everyone who can invest in renewable installations would not have a financial return, but a discount in the future energy they consume. In that way we empower small-scale investments of 100 to 300 euro. ... The return will be long-term .... which helps us raise the money for new generation capacities". P., a member of SE.

3.2. Money as a field of innovation in the means of exchange

The autonomous initiatives which do not have the economic imperative to generate economic revenues and build electricity-generation infrastructure have more leeway to innovate with respect to money. In the case of Calafou hours and social currencies are used as a way to replace and/or complement official money (euro).

"You can either contribute in the form of working hours ... or in money. Yet, the hours you put in the project are not sufficient to maintain it and bring it forward. Also the hours you eventually invest 'in yourself' are also part of the work.....There are people here working for the CIC (the Catalan Integral Cooperative) who are paid in social currency". R., a member of CF.

Members of Calafou have furthermore opted for diverse types of self-made products which can be exchanged for food or services through the use of a local social currency (RIUS), which is used only within the geographic territory of Anoia. The RIUS, initiated and managed by the local network of producers and consumers the “Ecoxarxa de Anoia”, follows the example of Ecoxarxa de Montseny. It operates on the basis a free software (CES), which allows for the registration of exchanges in a transparent and decentralized way, so that all transactions are recorded for all members to see. All movements on members’ accounts are made visible so that abuses are prevented through 100% transparency. To participate one starts from 0 and can either offer a particular good or service for exchange, or exchange Euro for Rius to acquire the goods sold through the system. Thanks to the use of Rius the members of Calafou can serve their basic needs without having the obligation to earn (a lot of) Euros. In other terms, they can reduce the time used for earning euros through meaningless jobs and increase the hours dedicated to activities they have reasons to value. To add one level of complexity more, exchanges are also taking place through the local food cooperative (Rebost) where members of Calafou offer their products in return for Rius, or Euros.

"This currency unblocked so many opportunities. I can now be paid in alternative currency, I can offer my products and receive Rius: ...I can pay my Calafou food quota in it; I can buy ecological fruit and vegetables, as well as the products which are sold in the cooperative with it; I am not obliged to work as a waitress any longer. I can live here developing my projects using a different type of economy, while serving my basic needs and even more". R., a member of CF.

The interplay between money and time are also present in the collective of Can Masdeu, where parts of the community-related jobs can be “paid” in terms of money or in time, depending on the personal choice and priority of its members. Such flexibility works well for collectives with diverse member profiles so that different skills can be matched through different jobs and tasks.
“We have a form of self-employment within the community – there are people who perform some of the house-related tasks which the community does not have the capacity to put jointly hours into; and we do not want to cover them because not everyone is interested in dedicating so many hours at particular task; at the same time there people within the community who need money; .. we have a minimum hourly work which everyone of us should contribute, and the rest of the tasks are distributed between professionals who do the work, volunteers, free time contributions and self-employment; ...at the same time there are a number of services which we offer free of charge:..” A, a member of CMD.

The last statement touches on the type of activities where no use of (standard) money is made, such as educational events, community garden activities, or various practical workshops. The schemes where volunteers offer their work for food and accommodation are normally popular in rural farms. Here we can find such schemes (with little or no exchange of money) is peri-urban (Can Masdeu, Calafou) and urban environments (Biciosxs). The latter for example opt for using barter as a form of compensating their members for the efforts in maintaining the cooperative bicycle repair workshop and serving the community of people who appeal to their help. Groups like Biciosxs are minoritarian and their existence requires null or minimum engagement with public authorities. Yet, they stand out among the rest of the initiatives in both the critique of using standard money and its physical enactment.

“Money is not welcome here. We want to function without money, supporting the barter economy, recycling, living and functioning by rejecting consumerism, as well as the sale and purchases of new goods... People just come here and resolve their problems without money.” P, a member of BX.

4. Money and CBI activity

4.1. High dependence on income generation

The generation of (standard) monetary incomes is key for the existences of certain type of community initiatives such as organic food producers, and electricity cooperatives, and less of a priority for consumer cooperatives, occupied social centers, or collaborative communitarian bicycled repair ateliers. Stated otherwise, all initiatives can be considered dependent on the existence of certain means (unit) of exchanges, and while for some this unit is the state-issued currency (the euro), for others it is the hours of work put in a project, a social currency, bicycle repair parts or food.

Starting with the first group of initiatives, members of the energy cooperative (SE) openly state that number of clients must increase beyond the 20 000 currently achieved, so that funds are generated for investment in new renewable projects. Economic consolidation is one of the means to achieve the initially set goals.

“The objectives ..is having more clients and invest in new projects.... We need economic consolidation, otherwise we cannot function.” P, a member of SE.

A closer look at the functioning of SE brings up a number of differences with large sized energy companies however. The imperative to increase profits and repay owners/shareholders is not there. The cooperative maintains a minimal margin between costs (energy bought) and revenues (energy sold) which is used to cover the salaries of the technical personnel serving the cooperative. While this keeps its costs low and attractive, it gives the company little capacity to absorb losses associated with unpaid bills. This eventually can be a limiting factor to their growth.

“ Why did SE not make more contracts with municipal institutions?...SE cannot take the risk of hospital not paying its bills....Delays in payments now are about 6%..The 100 euros entrance fee serve to some extent as a cushion” I, a member of SE.
Transparency of costs and revenues is another strategy of SE, which makes it distinct from conventional companies in the sector. All financial information on revenues and costs, as well as salary levels is presented to all members and clients.

“Our strategy is to be transparent, state clearly which is the cost of each KWh at the market”. D., a member of SE.

Among the small-scale local organic agriculture farms, paying due attention to the cost and revenue structure of their production seems to be fundamental. One of the reasons for the good kick-off start of Aurora has to do with the state subsidy for young farmers they obtained after passing through a long and burdensome paper work, creating business and economic plan with multiple tables with technical details.

At the same time the importance of project profitability could be easily underestimated when the social network of buyers is very supportive and empathic. Also, in economic terms, commitment to direct democracy within the farm-management, so that newly entered members are given equal decision-making rights as senior members eventually implies a loss of “productive” hours spent in meetings and discussions on the day-to-day management of the farm. When this is combined with a model of bigger family team, allowing for substitution, working less and having more free time among workers, costs can rise even higher. A mode of working which is more oriented towards social justice and political coherence than generating revenues, could at times jeopardize the entire project. The social networks on which the project rests could suddenly turn less supportive and commitment of newly integrated project members might not be as high as initially expected.

“We did not dedicate enough attention to the economic management of the project....yes, we are a project which is looking for alternatives to capitalism, but at the same time we were producing and had to make a decent life ...without working 80 000 hours...Although we were four people working full time we gave ourselves a salary of working at 80%, even if we are getting old and want to work a bit less to take more care of ourselves.” M., a member of K.

The ‘second-generation’ organic agriculture projects surveyed starts in an environment of higher demand but also - higher competition, and thus with stronger focus on economic sustainability. In the case of Aurora the project kicks-off in a moment when (in the words of its initiators) organic agriculture seemed more economically rewarding than earlier years. While very much embedded in the social networks of food cooperatives in Barcelona, the successful start of the project is also probably related to the business and management skills of its founders. The project received a European start-up subsidy for young farmers and thus had all necessary technical (productive) equipment for the project. As with Som Energia, focus here is on having a salary which is fair and corresponding to the commitment and work one puts in the project. Another characteristic of Aurora, which also very much holds for Kosturica, is collaboration with other local organic producers in selling goods among themselves so as to serve the needs of their each other’s cooperatives.

4.2. Medium dependence on income generation

On the consumer side, having little dependence on money for self-organization is put forward as one of the advantages of autonomous food cooperatives. One of the members of Totacucaviu food cooperative explains that the number of family units there cannot exceed 28 because autonomous self-managed way of functioning where decisions are taken through consensus and tasks evenly distributed within the group. Now members have to volunteer between four and five hours every month to run the cooperative. This did not go without conflict. Not all members of the cooperative could prioritize its communal management and commit to the required number of hours. Eventually conflicts emerge between those involved more actively and those contributing less to the cooperative, creating a quick rotation of members. Only one
of the five members interviewed defended a change in the structure using monetary intermediation, through the introduction of a paid coordinator. He believed that food cooperatives could provide employment possibilities for workers’ cooperatives which are socially or non-for-profit oriented. In that way people with money and no time could find it easier to participate.

”Micro-enterprises based on workers’ cooperatives could provide professional services to food cooperatives…..generating employment in the social economy” .V., a member of TCV.

Yet, majority of the members of Totacucaviu would still opt for sharing tasks and working without money.

”Actually Totacucaviu as an example works, because it is kept small because of the way we work and organize. There is not so much money involved, nor do we make money out of being in Totacucaviu. These are some of the fundamental issues that make it successful….Sometimes they (social movements) do not need money. Sometimes they need seeds. …sometimes what they need is someone who helps them organize a meeting”.T., a member of TCV.

4.2. No dependence on money
On a final note, Biciosxs is the type of initiative which is least dependent on money. Actually their existence seems to be inversely related to money, namely – in neighbourhoods with high level of merchandize and tourist services projects of the kind find it difficult to emerge and thrive.

”The pólice would not permit a project like ours in the central parts of Barcelona… (Biciosxs) does not generate any revenues and taxes, …..does not require entrance fees, …it provides free services for the …people. In neighbourhoods …exposed to so high levels of tourism as Raval, for example, with so many problems of migration and prejudice, you will have a strong socio-economic pressure”..P., a member of BX.

5. Relationship between the impact of the initiative and money
5.1 CBI size, political influence and money dependence
One of the common impacts which all community initiatives surveyed tend to have is the sense of meaningfulness they give to the ones involved. This can mean a shared feeling of being part of something bigger and transformative; a format, space or structure where everyone brings their bits and pieces together so that eventually impacts keeps growing; something through which a change can be communicated. An impact which often comes up in the interviews is initiatives’ capacity to change certain patterns on the level of societal imagination, such as the impossibility to imagine a different way of functioning from the status quo.

“For me the biggest impact (of SE) has been the change in the discourse/imagination of people.”.D., a member of SE.

”Som Energia contributed to some extent to the change of mentality and to break up with the understanding of energy as something metaphysical which comes when you switch on the plug. We showed that at a group level we can invest in capacity costing 3 million euros, without the use of banks”.P., a member of SE.

In the case of Som Energia having a critical mass of members and clients has had the double effect of generating the ‘gravity’ to open up the debate on energy generation and distribution in society at large and challenging the social imaginary that a different scheme of electricity distribution and generation is possible. This implies bringing the political, environmental and social aspects of energy generation and distribution together as much as possible.

5.2. The social/educational impact of CBIs and money
The above impacts also hold for the initiatives within the domain of organic food production and distribution. Their presence is somewhat more visible and more transversal. A farm which is easily accessible by public transport from urban areas has a significant attraction power for the urban population, especially when organized in food cooperatives. For the individuals in the consumer groups, apart from an improvement in their health, the food cooperatives provide a sense of security and a reason to choose living in certain neighbourhood. Almost all interviewed mentioned that food cooperatives make the life of the neighbourhood richer. There is also a clear perception of the positive environmental impacts of local organic consumption.

"We are a local project, with a direct impact in terms of the people who consume the vegetables we produce, who come to the farm parties and thus form a particular kind of community. It generates a different relation between producers and consumers... everyone of our clients has been “impacted” by simply knowing where their food comes from....

...We are also a green lung, an area of nature preservation. The neighbours here prefer having us than a conventional farmer” G., a member of AdC.

A key impact which the small-scale organic farms and the food cooperatives associated with them have concerns the creation of the agroecological movement and a network of producers. The movement is very much engaged with the political side of consumption. The way of consuming that boycotts certain contaminating and profit-oriented businesses and supermarkets and commits to small-scale producers with more cooperative structure is seen as one of the most powerful approaches to raise awareness, defend direct democracy and transform society.

“We are not here only to eat lettuce. We are creating a social force in the neighborhood ....against the construction of the new hotels, or to defend the public spaces from cars. We can be active and share information”.T., a member of TCV.

In sum, the quantity of funds circulating between local organic farmers and their cooperatives does not emerge as a factor for the socio-political impact of both groups, neither in terms of increasing the social cohesion in the neighborhood, nor in terms of challenging perceptions and imaginations on how food should be produced and distributed.

6. Relationship between the evolutionary stage of the initiative and money

Overall capacity to generate sufficiently large incomes marks and drives the evolution of the initiatives whose mission depends on making sufficiently high revenues, such as Som Energia, Aurora and Kosturica. This is not the case for the food cooperatives, social centers and cohousing projects, using squatted or self-acquired terrains. In all cases, however, having diversity in the means of exchange that groups utilize is beneficial for achieving their short and long-term aims.

Economic sustainability is overall taken as one of the criteria for measuring the evolutionary stage of an initiative, which has a high dependence on monetary revenues. Following this criteria, Kosturica can be considered to be in a phase of "survival", while SE and AdC - in phases of expansion and growth. Dependence on monetary revenues, however, is mediated through the quality and type of human interactions within each of the three initiatives and their respective networks. Thus the influence of economic and of human relational factors cannot be always easily disentangled from each other.

When initiative’s dependence on monetary incomes is less evident, their trajectory and development is influenced more by the quality of the human relations in each group, availability of trust and mutual support. This is especially the case for the bicycle workshop. BX has reached a phase of maturity, which has been achieved mostly through the strong agency of a few individuals and their social networks. To some extent this is also valid for the collectives of CMD and CF, although their phases which can be jointly considered as
“between initiation and maturity” also depend on individuals’ and group’s agency to pull their economic resources together, or generate certain type of material production together.

7. Any other observations

There is something unsaid about all community initiatives in our sample, and this concerns their focus. All of them are before all directed to filling a socio-environmental or socio-political vacuum, or addressing a societal need, which is not fulfilled by standard enterprises or non-governmental structures. Whether they have emerged in the so-called niche-space (Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012), or curing the socio-environmental damages done by conventional forms of organizing the production of food, energy and housing remains a matter of theoretical framing. What does matter is the extent to which initiatives’ relation with money, experimentation with money and independent from official money improves their capacity to contribute to environmental sustainability and social justice.

8. Success factors

Most groups perceive success in terms of being there and resisting, or simply placing as a viable alternatively to a market/capitalistic mode of food production and provision and would not put success in terms of material acquisitions. Some perceive independence (from the money generation imperative) as a measure of success in itself.

Groups in the field of energy perceive the generation of sufficient funds as a success in terms of having the possibility to invest in infrastructure for production of renewable energy. Obtaining a grant from the state, as in the case of Aurora, is considered a tool that contributes to a future success, rather than success in itself.

9. Summary

One of the key and reoccurring findings with respect to initiatives’ relationship with money concerns the role of beliefs and convictions. The major factor for the kick-off for all projects has been a social, environmental or political vacuum in modern society, expressed in the form of various necessities such as:

• need for communal organizing and mobilization;
• need for provision of local organic vegetables with a familiar source and a sense of connectedness to the land;
• need for transparent and democratic generation and distribution of (renewable) energy;
• need for co-housing and co-living spaces where time and lives are managed in relation to needs and desires, rather than the obligation to earn (the standard currency);
• need for collaborative spaces, based on exchange, recycling and reuse, where trust and altruism are enforced;

Apart from the rather ‘utopian’ grounds of all projects, the diversity in way money is perceived, used and depended upon ranges in function of the domain and activity of each initiative. None of the initiatives perceived money as a goal in itself. Its function differed whether initiatives are operating in the market (of energy, or vegetables), or serving a social (or community) need. For some money is a means to achieve stated project objectives, while for others it is not needed at all. The scale of dependence on money ranges with the size and orientation of the initiatives. The larger groups, oriented towards energy generation would rely heavily on the generation of funds. Smaller groups, having less ambitious objectives, who decide to opt for recycling of buildings and items would have negligible or zero dependence on (official) money. The capacity to diversify with respect to replacing official money with other intermediaries increases in the spaces and projects, which are less dependent on money generation. Creation of social currencies, or exchanging time for a service, seems to increase the feeling of autonomy and the quality of life for the members of more self-organized collectives.
Money and pricing could nevertheless be a source of conflict between groups who collectively organize to lower down the price of local organic food and the farmers producing it. As illustrated by the case of Kosturica, there is an unresolved tension between the low purchasing power of the precarious members of food cooperatives and the tendency of farmers to self-exploit themselves in order to keep their prices affordable.

References: