An inductive classification of types of social innovation

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AN INDUCTIVE CLASSIFICATION OF TYPES OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

Bill Slee

Abstract

Though widely regarded as ill-defined and lacking conceptual clarity, social innovation has been heralded as a desirable response to social economic and environmental challenges arising from market and policy failures. Based on a definition of social innovation as involving the reconfiguration of social practices through civil society engagement, this paper offers an inductive classification of the diverse types of social innovation found in Scotland, based primarily on rural examples. It is argued that not only does social innovation occur in a diverse range of fields and in many different forms, but also that the Scottish Government policy has explicitly connected to social innovation as a means of delivering a communitarian policy agenda. However, without affirmative action, the community empowerment agenda is likely to widen the gap between communities with strong social capital and those with weaker social capital,

thus undermining another strong strand of Scottish policy which supports greater equality and social inclusion.

Key words: Social innovation; community empowerment; classification

Introduction

Much importance has been attributed to social innovation, in spite of social innovation being described as ill-defined and as a buzzword (Polle and Ville 2009: 70) and the concept is associated with much conceptual ambiguity (Benneworth et al. 2014). Bouchard et al. (2015:70) have also noted that 'most social innovations are often not labelled as such'. Nevertheless, social innovation has emerged as a significant part of public policy discourse, with leading political figures suggesting its importance as a means of enhancing wellbeing and increasing competitiveness. It is manifested in institutions such as former President Obama's office for Social Innovation and Citizen Participation and its salience is evidenced in former EC President Barroso's statement in 2009 (European Commission, 2009) that 'the financial and economic crisis makes creativity and innovation in general *and social innovation in particular* even more important to foster sustainable growth, secure jobs and boost competitiveness' (my italics).

Much of the current interest in social innovation arises from recognition of the apparent inability of the state and the limitations of the market to deliver sustainable prosperity, adequate services and social justice in the wake of the financial and economic crisis from 2007 and the subsequent 'austerity politics'. The prevalent argument for the withdrawal of the state from the economic arena is challenged by Mazzucato (2011) who makes a strong evidence-based case for the state as an active and crucial part of the innovation system, although the state's role in social innovation is not made explicit. The third sector, comprising social enterprise and civil society-organised delivery of goods and services has a long history of innovation which has been rebadged as social innovation (Mulgan 2007). Indeed, in many countries, the third sector has shown very rapid growth in recent decades. In some ways, this represents a form of induced social innovation that parallels the idea of induced institutional innovation recognised by Ruttan and Hayami (1984). But, because social innovation stems from citizen-driven social actions addressing local problems, these innovative actions are often place-based/specific. Social innovation is thus characterized by a wide range of institutional forms and social practices.

Social innovation can be conceived in a minimalist view as a myriad of novel, mostly small-scale, civil society initiatives that seek improved wellbeing for

particular communities – sustainable place-making in the words of Baker and Mehmood (2015). In a maximalist view, it can be conceived as a set of diverse civil society-driven or partnership driven innovative structures and practices involving public and private sectors, which can scale up and operate in the space between narrow conceptions of the market economy on one hand and state-controlled economic activity on the other to address the grand societal challenges of the twenty-first century (Magabeira Unger 2013). It can thus be framed either as a set of interesting citizen-driven experiments and practices or as a potential solution to some of the grand societal challenges of the twenty-first century.

Scotland provides an interesting case for exploring social innovation. There are substantial areas where the market economy is weak, including former heavy industry areas and remote rural communities. Government finances have been constrained by austerity. The Scottish Government's policy has taken a distinctly communitarian turn, providing support for a range of community-based initiatives through land reform legislation, through the Community Empowerment Act and in other areas. There is now a firm legislative basis for the third sector to operate, both alongside the market economy and as a substitute for the state in delivering employment, providing key services and contributing to cohesion and wellbeing.

Given the absence of clarity and agreement as to what exactly social innovation comprises and the delimitation of its field(s) of activity, the task of identifying different types of social innovation is also likely to be confused (Bouchard et al. 2015). In this paper, I define social innovation, review its evolution, review the Scottish context of a supporting policy infrastructure and propose an inductive classification of the types of social innovation, backed up by Scottish examples mostly from rural Aberdeenshire. I then provide a longer list of fields and forms of social innovations found in Scotland.

If social innovation occupies an eminence given by leading politicians and commentators, it is incumbent on those designing and delivering policy to know what is – and what is not – social innovation, especially when public support is being designed to help increase impact. There has been much discussion regarding its definition. Social innovation is both ambiguously defined and weakly conceptualised (Bekkers et al. 2013; Benneworth et al. 2014; Nicholls et al. 2015; Howaldt and Schwarz, 2016). Anderson et al. (2014) note the wide use of the term social innovation accompanied by a frequent lack of definition. Neumeier (2012, p.59) argues that 'the different ways of defining social innovations constitute a broad and inconsistent range of meanings,' and van der Have and Rubalcaba (2016, p.1924) also point to the need for greater clarity over definitions of social innovation. Franz et al. (2012) describe social

innovation as no more than a descriptive metaphor while Grimm et al. (2013, p.5) concluded that its meaning continues to be 'ambiguous and vague.' Even recently, Bock (2016, p.3) has noted that it is difficult to present a general definition of social innovation. This is not a promising foundation on which to build either a coherent conceptual platform, a clear classification of types of social innovation or policies of support.

Moulaert et al. (2005, p.1978) describe social innovation as 'those changes in agendas, agency and institutions that lead to a better inclusion of excluded groups and individuals in various spheres of society at various spatial scales.' This definition, which explicitly addresses exclusion, is broadened by Mulgan (2007, p.8) who asserts that social innovation comprises 'innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and diffused through organisations whose primary purposes are social.' This is broadened further by Hämäläinen and Heiskala (2007, p.74) who see social innovation as 'changes in the cultural, normative or regulative structures [or classes] of the society which enhance its collective power resources and improve its economic and social performance,' thereby including economic outcomes as a consideration.

The widely used idea of defining social innovation by reference to improvement is replicated by Phills et al. (2008, p.1) who assert that social innovation is 'a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals.' Without reference to explicit 'improvements' in the definition, Westley and Antadze (2010, p.2) define social innovation as 'any new program, product, idea, or initiative that profoundly changes the basic routines, and resource and authority flows or beliefs of any social system'.

The widely used BEPA (2011, p.9) definition asserts that:

> Social innovation can be defined as the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. It represents new responses to pressing social demands, which affect the process of social interactions. It is aimed at improving human well-being. Social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance individuals' capacity to act.

The Young Foundation (2012, p.18) repeats the BEPA definition.

Cajaiba-Santana (2014, p. 44) suggests that 'social innovations are new social practices created from collective, intentional, and goal-oriented actions aimed

at prompting social change through the reconfiguration of how social goals are accomplished'. Rehfeld et al. (2015, p.6) suggest that social innovation comprises 'novel combinations of ideas and distinct forms of collaboration that transcend established institutional contexts with the effect of empowering and (re-)engaging vulnerable groups either in the process of social innovation or as a result of it.' Howaldt et al. (2015, p.31) suggest that:

> social innovation encompasses new practices (concepts, policy instruments, new forms of cooperation and organisation), methods, processes and regulations that are developed and/or adopted by citizens, customers and politicians, in order to meet social demands and to resolve societal challenges in a better way than existing practices.

In summary, social innovation embraces governance changes, usually involving an enhanced role for civil society, acting collaboratively, often with other forms of agency to address societal challenges. It often involves an alteration of power relations, where the state or private sector cede power to or share power with civil society groups of various types.

Social innovation can thus be conceived of as:

   (i) The purposeful (if sometimes experimental) reconfiguration of civil society-led or dominated formal or informal institutions or networks to create new relationships between civil society and public or private institutions;

  (ii) Actions/practices by civil society actors, institutions or networks that seek to deliver either services or products in novel ways;

 (iii) The viral replication of institutions or networks or actions/practices in new places or with new constituencies,

       ....all of which should seek to enhance outcomes on societal wellbeing

Thereby, the novelty of 'social innovation' can reside in novel institutional structures/networks/ governance, the resultant innovative social practices or the place where the innovation occurs. However, it rarely, if ever, takes place in a policy vacuum and the extent and efficacy of supporting policies is likely to be fundamental to its impact.

The Scottish context: community empowerment as a strategic response to both nation building and austerity

The overarching purpose of the Scottish Government is sustainable inclusive economic growth. In order to achieve that purpose, it seeks to nurture

empowered and resilient communities which help the Government to deliver the national outcomes it seeks. These outcomes are specified in the Community Empowerment Act Scotland 2015. By 'empowered' the Scottish Government wants local people to be able to help shape actions that improve their community's wellbeing. By resilient, the Scottish Government wants local communities to be better able to withstand shocks that could reduce wellbeing and be able to adapt successfully to changed circumstances.

Supporting the achievement of the desired outcomes there is an overarching economic strategy with a raft of national level sectoral strategies and frameworks in six identified growth sectors, including food and drink and tourism. As well as actively promoting growth through innovation, the strategy also seeks more inclusive growth, which entails reducing social and spatial inequalities. Partly in response to the politics of austerity and partly because Scotland has a more instinctively communitarian set of values, over the last decade, Scotland has focussed on developing a suite of policies to 'help communities help themselves.'

From the late 1980s, rural development has been promoted through a partnership approach (Scottish Office 1995), both because of a perceived need to bring different agencies together and to dovetail with European policy architecture. More recently, although partnerships remain as part of the thinking regarding how development can best be supported, there has been a marked communitarian turn in policy support, whereby either legislation or new bodies are created to better enable communities to act. There have been some ground-breaking policy developments. ***The 2003 Land Reform Scotland Act***[1] enabled communities to become collective owners of land resources, to the extent that now 70% of land in the Western Isles is now in community ownership. This has enabled the provision of land for social housing and the development of community-owned renewable energy developments. Since 2011, the ***Community and Renewable Energy Scheme***[2] has provided grant and loan finance to communities developing renewables project and it has been crucial in providing bridging finance that could not have come from commercial lenders. Community-owned renewables can be funded by normal sources of finance but smaller projects may not interest the banks and may need to resort to crowd sourcing which is enabled by the UK-wide ***Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014***[3]. In the field of social care, the Self-directed Support (Scotland) Act 2013[4] makes legislative provisions relating to the arranging of care and support, community care services and children's services to provide a range of choices to people for how they are provided with support. This means that third sector organisations can develop projects where other care providers are failing to deliver effective service.

A key piece of overarching legislation is the **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**.[5] It consolidates earlier obligations for public sector bodies to develop more integrated strategies but also increases individual communities' powers to act by creating scope for community asset transfer whereby disused public buildings can be transferred to local trusts and increases the scope for community land purchase. It also enhances the possibility for re-energising local democracy through means such as participatory budgeting.

Types of social innovation

This section explores typologies and classifications of social innovation, firstly identifying and critiquing others' typologies, then moving to a pragmatic typology that seeks to capture the diversity of social innovations in a relatively constrained geographical area in Scotland, but is almost certainly broadly representative of the UK. It is a marked feature of the social innovation literature that although many authors cite examples, few endeavour to classify them in any way. An effective typology should help to discriminate between different types of social innovation and offer policy and practice communities greater clarity as to what is and what is not social innovation.

TEPSIE (2014) offer a fourfold typology of social innovation which includes the following categories: New services and products; new practices; new processes; and new rules and regulations. Whilst some of their examples appear to comprise institutional innovation by the state, these categories constitute a reasonable starting point. If, however, one sits down with a list of what are widely perceived as social innovations and seeks to put them in meaningful categories, a more refined classification might be called for.

The innovation literature often distinguishes between disruptive and incremental innovation (Christensen et al. 2015) but this applies to technical and system innovations. It is perhaps questionable whether this dualism applies to social innovations, which tend by nature and place- specificity to be more incremental. Many social innovations arise in the absence of a good or service that civil society is seeking, so there may be no other system of provision to be disrupted. One or two examples, such as the Grameen Bank, which displaced exploitative moneylenders with a credit union for poor rural people initially in Bangladesh, might be considered disruptive.

Nine main types of social innovation are identified below. In all cases, there is a presumption of civil society engagement in the practice. Examples are given

of each by reference to social innovation, most of which are evidenced in rural Aberdeenshire.

- New institutional/organisational forms (including new forms of governance)
- Established institutional forms in new places
- New constituencies of interest/foci for established social institutions
- Revitalisation, renewal and major change of established social entities
- New practices and processes in social institutions
- Known social practices in new places
- New social products and services
- Known products or services in new places
- New enabling/support policies

The following list can be considered a microcosm of the range of social innovations found in rural Scotland and more widely. In order for social innovation to occur, it is important to distinguish between routine third sector activity and novelty, which is normally seen as a decisive identifier of innovation. In practice, the penetration of social innovations into new communities of interest or new places is often seen as social innovation[6], so the exact delimitation of social innovation remains a moot point.

New institutional/organisational forms (including new forms of governance, new rules and regulations)

There are four main forms of new institutional arrangement evidenced in a Scottish context that can be considered social innovations. First, there is a range of community-led, place-based development entities. In Scotland, the dominant form is the Community Development Trust (CDT). Many CDTs act as hub agencies which support the initiation of other arms' length but more focused activities in fields such as farmers markets, heath promotion activities, community energy production, social care etc. which may be constituted as Community Interest Companies (CICs) or cooperatives. Second, many issue-based institutions have been formed to address particular problems/issues by formally involving civil society actors, for example in catchment management partnerships or trusts, which address water quality and environmental improvements. Different legal entities can pursue almost identical agendas, but operate with different governance structures. Many are partnerships. Partnerships normally have public sector, private sector and civil society

membership. Where partnerships are delivery agencies connected with particular policies, such as the EU LEADER programme, membership rules may be prescribed. A third type of new institutional arrangement is the social enterprise. Such enterprises tend to be initiated by socially motivated individuals and operate in particular fields (Defourny 2001) such as disability, or unemployed young people, often with a training and/or therapeutic activity as a key element of their activities. The fourth form of new institution is a charitable body, often a trust, whose modus operandi is prescribed by law, although this may differ from country to country.

Huntly and District Development Trust is the community development trust for the town and rural hinterland of Huntly in West Aberdeenshire. With a historic dependence on agriculture and woollen mills, Huntly's local economy declined over the latter half of the 20th century and Huntly is now one of Aberdeenshire's more disadvantaged communities on the basis of SIMD scores. It is too far from Aberdeen to benefit from significant commuting. A council-led town development project morphed into a community develop-ment trust, which always struggled to secure funding for its operating costs. It sought, and after several years of struggle, managed to get shares in two commercial windfarms and develop its own community turbine. This will secure core funding for 20 years and allow the core staff much more time to devote to community development activity. Community energy thus provides an economic guarantee to underpin the operating costs of the trust, as is already the case for many highlands and islands communities in Scotland.

Operating at a national level rather than locally**, Scottish Environment Link** was formed as a consortium of environmental charities in the late 1980s to enable a common platform in seeking to engage with policy makers (Scott, 2007). Its strength as an entity is that it allowed a collaborative negotiating platform for consultations between a group of Scottish conservation bodies and the Scottish Government. It replaced a confused set of negotiating arrange-ments with a common platform and created efficiencies for both the charities and the Scottish Government with whom they met on a regular basis. Thus, it is the processes of engagement that can be seen as crucial in this innovation, as much as the collaborative institutional structure.

Highlands and Islands Forum was set up in 1986, to provide a voice for local communities and to help communities to articulate practical responses to land planning challenges. If focussed on developing participatory processes that drew on local knowledge that helped communities confront the top down approaches that were prevalent in land use decision making. Such participatory processes are now much more common and Highlands and Islands Forum was disbanded in the late 1990s.

Established institutional forms in new locations

Whereas Huntly was an early adopter of the community development trust, Upper Donside, one of the most sparsely populated areas of Aberdeenshire and remote from Aberdeen, has a long history of population decline. It has recently set up the **Upper Donside Community Development Trust** to push forward community development planning. Aberdeenshire already has many community development trusts, the most successful of which are having a significant impact on community development. This example is of an established form in a new place.

New constituencies of interest/foci for established social institutions

This section explores the ways in which established entities can branch out into new fields. The long-established **Deveron Projects** (an arts and cultural group) in Huntly was a key figure in initiating a series of events to welcome Syrian refugees in rural Aberdeenshire. They were involved in setting up a group **Huntly in Solidarity with Refugees** and there have been several events such as ceilidhs, food sharing, coffee mornings and arts events which have brought the local population and the refugees together.

Braemar Community Ltd, a community development trust is supporting investigations into repatriating social care for elderly people back into the community. Changes in elderly care have led to carers coming long distances to deal with elderly people in their own homes at inappropriate times, with service quality consequently compromised. **The Braemar Social Care project** is being developed as a social enterprise within the community. In addition to providing a professional and more timely service, the proposed project is seeking to have a volunteering element where social visits and shopping can be undertaken by volunteers who befriend elderly people. The development trust has also supported development of a castle as a social enterprise and a community hydropower scheme.

There are a number of well-established institutional forms such as cooperatives or charitable bodies. New cooperatives in new places or new arenas of activity can be considered as social innovations. The Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS) the body that promotes farmer cooperatives in Scotland was instrumental in setting up cooperative wood processing. Since the late 1980s, many farmers had adopted tree planting grants for reasons of financial expediency, but lacked the knowledge and

skills to manage their developing forests. As wood energy markets were expanding, a local SAOS study revealed the possibility of developing cooperative arrangements for harvesting and processing wood for energy. The same coop has established a Scotland wide co-op selling farm woodland carbon credits.

Revitalisation and renewal of established social entities

Most rural communities have a village hall. Their condition varies greatly. There are still many village halls with poor and deteriorating infrastructures. Most are locally owned and run by elected committees. Whilst their refurbishment is often supported by local government there are still major demands for locally raised funds. **Tullynessle Hall** in Mid-Donside was a main meeting place for a scattered rural community, with the parish having no obvious centre and primary school, pub, church and hall all some distance apart. The pooled efforts of a refreshed committee were able to build the expertise and gather the resources to refurbish the hall (Fagan and Watson 2017). The refurbished hall has seen a massive increase in use both in terms of overall numbers and uses, with use increasing by an estimated 400% (Watson pers comm.). For example, it now holds a regular craft and food market, it is widely used by families for special events like weddings and it is used by a much wider range of groups for exercise classes and other events.

New practices and processes

New practices can arise from public sector innovation, private sector innovation or third sector innovation. Arguably social innovation only arises when there is high level civil society/third sector engagement. Whereas there have long been formal women's groups – Women's institutes were formed in several countries around 1900, the closest men's equivalent, Men's Sheds, started only in Australia in 2006 as place-based charitable trusts and are now found in many developed countries. They provide a meeting place for men (many have now opened their doors to anyone regardless of gender). Different sheds have different emphases included crafts and activities, therapeutic socialisation, health and skills development. Many countries have national level associations providing support to new place-based developments and some are endorsed but not directly supported by public policy. The village of Alford has established **Alford and District Men's Shed** as a charity and it is in the process of acquiring a part of the former secondary school through a

community asset transfer, which is enabled by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

A second type of social innovation is community organised arts and cultural events. Some such events have become annual features, but many communities use carnivals, arts and cultural events to engender community solidarity and to bring in visitors to share experiences and spend money at the festival/event. The village of Tarland in Aberdeenshire runs a weekend-long **Tarland Food and Music Festival** which features traditional music sessions, food demonstrations, open gardens etc. Portsoy has an annual boat festival; and Ballater, a walking festival.

A third novel form of social innovation is the result of offloading of parts of the public sector portfolio of activity such as leisure and recreational functions, to charitable trusts. A former Aberdeenshire Council plant nursery at Pitcaple in rural Aberdeenshire has been transformed into a training centre for disabled people with gardening and recycling functions and a community café. The council owns the site but the training project is in the hands of a social enterprise **Pitcaple Environmental Project**. Aberdeenshire Council also formerly owned several caravan sites which it has offloaded to either the private sector or the third sector. The caravan site at Portsoy in North Aberdeenshire has been taken on by the local **Portsoy Community Ltd**. Further, Aberdeenshire Council proposed to turn all its libraries into trusts, with a greater proportion of staffing covered by volunteers, but later retracted this.

Known practices in new places

The development of social enterprises for therapeutic training of and provision of work opportunities disabled people has a long history, dating back at least a hundred years. **The Seed Box** is located at Ballogie Estate in rural Aberdeenshire is a relative newcomer currently with eight service users, having been established in 2013 in a former walled garden, from which it supplies a shop in the village of Kincardine O' Neill and runs a vegetable box scheme with a tiny environmental footprint. The social enterprise is supported by the estate owner in many ways to maintain its viability.

The Dee Catchment Partnership was formed in 2003 to bring together diverse public, private and third sector actors which 'works for everyone' with an interest in the River Dee. It operates similarly to the Tweed Foundation which was formed in 1983. It acts as a focal point for catchment management and a key coordinator and actor in catchment management planning in

one of the most important river catchments in Scotland for salmon fishing and rural tourism.

New products and services

Ballater Walking Festival has been running for 19 years and lasts for a week in the early summer. Managed by Ballater (RD) Ltd, the local development trust, it organises a series of guided walks of different grades. The aim is to enhance the tourist experience through a programme of guided walks and improve the occupancy rate of tourist accommodation in the shoulder months. The organisers put on a barbecue and a traditional music evening to provide a finale to the week.

Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival has taken place in Portsoy in Aberdeenshire for the last 24 years. It was intended as a one-off event to celebrate the existence of a harbour for 300 years but has become an annual event and a major formative influence on the development of a vibrant community development trust which now has a portfolio of initiatives. The festival celebrates fishing, traditional boats, food, crafts and music. Other facilities/ enterprises include a caravan site, a bunkhouse, a museum and a boatshed.

Rhynie Woman started in 2013 as a community group based on arts and food (in a pop-up café) supporting an Aberdeen University archaeological dig in an area where important Pictish remains had been found since the 1970s. The so-called 'Rhynie Man' is one of the most significant archaeological finds. Two female local artists drew down support from Huntly Cultural Fund and Creative Scotland and ran a pop-up café and temporary displays. It continues as an artists' collective. Archaeology and heritage emerge as powerful building blocks for community development, both in urban and rural settings.

Known products and services in new places

There has been a latent demand for allotments in the Donside village of Alford for some time, with the need for allotments being a commonly expressed demand in community consultations. As a result of a pending community asset transfer land has been allocated for allotments, which will be the property of **Alford and District Men's Shed**, a recently formed charity. To the villagers of Alford allotments are a welcome innovation, brought about by a new charitable institution.

New enabling/support policies

Whether public policy actually comprise social innovation is questionable. We include it here because of its enabling nature. Arguably it is not the enabling legislation that comprises social innovation but the novel institutional and governance forms that arise as a result of the new policies. The statutory basis of community planning is found in the Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) and was deepened in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Community-based activity was seen 'a key driver for public service reform' but it revolves more around collaborative coordination among public sector agencies than community empowerment. The 2015 Act also empowers community asset transfer which enables third sector groups to bid for redundant public sector land and buildings. Community empowerment was also stimulated by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act of 2003, which provided the enabling legislation for community land purchases. The Alford developments described above are contingent on policy support.

Prior to the mainstreaming of LEADER in the early 2000s, the Scottish Government has already recognised the role of rural partnerships in providing a vehicle to coordinate rural development. A number of partnerships were developed to stimulate activity in particular areas, bringing together different interests. For example, in the mid-1990s, area-based partnerships were formed in the Kilmartin Glen area of Argyll and in Breadalbane in upland Perthshire to tackle locally specific challenges. More recently, Aberdeenshire Council supported the establishment of area partnerships in each of its five council sub-areas. As independent charities, these provide advice and small grants to support community-level activities throughout rural Aberdeenshire. Operating with a modest budget, the **Marr Area Partnership** provides advice and small grants to rural community ventures throughout west Aberdeenshire. Argyll and Bute Council uses area-based partnerships as the basis for economic development planning but these are more strongly council-led and economically focussed than the Aberdeenshire area partnerships. A mix of public and third sector agencies come together in such council-led partnerships to provide the delivery mechanism for different activities supporting economic development of the region.

LEADER is perhaps the most widely recognised partnership mechanism but builds on and potentially connects to a much longer history of area-based partnerships in rural Scotland. Started as a pilot community-based, area-based, bottom-up approach to rural development in the early 1990s, Leader has now been mainstreamed, and its activities have been extended to include rural areas which have experienced fisheries decline. Coordinated by a local action group

(LAG) or fisheries local action group (FLAG), they have strong civil society membership and act as pivotal agencies pursuing social innovation through developing a local action plan and grant aiding a variety of activities and actions to meet the aspirations of the plan.

Behind the expansion of CICs and social enterprises there is a body of law. Those laws supporting CICs were established under the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004 which covers all of the UK, except Northern Ireland.

Rather than being seen strictly as an enabling policy, municipal off-loading of certain activities to the private or voluntary sector has been a major stimulus to social innovation. Many councils have off-loaded leisure and recreation services including, in some cases, library services, to create charitable trusts as the service providers. Equally, the withdrawal of public funding from other areas such as public transport, social care, mental health, workforce skilling and environmental management in a time of austerity can be seen as a further policy-led stimulus that results in social innovation as some communities use third sector means to respond to service loss.

Fields in which social innovation has occurred

Table 1 summarises the types of social innovation found in Scotland, both in relation to the type of product or service and the institution or organisation. The list is illustrative rather than completely comprehensive. The first three columns classify the fields in which social innovation has occurred while the last column indicates the institutional forms. All the above examples cited connect to at least one of the boxes in the three left columns and one of the organisational forms in the right-hand column.

There is a wide range of institutional forms and social practices that can be considered potentially innovative. But we might ask whether small changes in social practices comprise social innovation of an incremental kind or simply adaptive behaviour. Further, it might reasonably be asked when does the innovation cease to be an innovation? Rogers (2003) suggested the idea of a series of stages in the adoption process in which only the early adopters could be described as innovators, although by also including early adopters as innovators, about 15% of the population of adopters is included.

The notion of diffusion of technical innovations from knowledge centres and adoption curves sits uncomfortably with many of the types of innovation described by van der Ploeg and Long (1994) when the key to innovation resides in the deconstruction of the innovation and its application in local practice.

Table 1:
Arenas and institutions in Scottish social innovation

Products/Goods	Services	Club/Public goods	Organisational
Food	Housing	Environment	LEADER
Energy	Retail	Water quality	Partnerships
Manufactured cloth	Elderly care	Climate change	Local development trusts
Timber	Child care	Safety/security	CICs
Bakery products	Recreation	Sports clubs	Cooperatives
Traditional crafts	Health	Recycling	Community Land Trusts
Beverages	Disadvantaged groups (often training related)	House insulation projects	Self-organised common pool resources
Soap	Transport	Allotments/community orchards	Charitable trusts supporting SI
Fish farming	Youth/young adults		Food banks
	Education		Climate Challenge Fund
	Furniture repair/resale		Laws enabling social enterprise
	Informal labour sharing in agriculture		Non-incorporated clubs and associations
	Cultural festivals		Community Energy Scotland
	Arts projects		Charitable trusts with social cultural or environmental aims
	Tourism		Novel networks
	Refugee support projects		
	Credit unions		
	Food services		

Later work by van der Ploeg and colleagues (van der Ploeg and Marsden 2008) explores social network developments as underpinning mechanisms in rural development. This work builds on and connects to the idea of social learning in which different actors collaborate, experiment and learn as they develop solutions to resource management dilemmas. Whereas the adoption of technical innovations is responding to a known technology, the development of novel solutions through social learning is collaborative, uncertain and open ended, and often rather incremental.

In policy appraisal relating to EU policy, the nature of innovation has been widely discussed, particularly with respect to the LEADER initiative which seeks to promote innovation. The adoption of a known social innovation in a new location is still often considered as innovation, regardless of how widely the social innovation has been adopted. Further, the transfer of a known social innovation in one group to new groups or constituencies of interest is also widely considered to comprise social innovation.

The Scottish examples illustrated are formal institutions. There are also likely to be many informal institutions that never metamorphose into something more formal. Local history groups, genealogy groups, support groups for families with Asperger's syndrome children, local branches of Watch (Scottish Wildlife Trust) for young people can all be seen as novelties when they have never existed before in that community. Hardly social innovations, but often contributing to the wellbeing of their membership, these social institutions ebb and flow depending on local leadership, which may be facilitated by a school, a library or a council, or by a motivated civil society actor or group of actors.

Smith (2014) explores the link between social movements and social innovation. He argues that social movements lie behind many social innovations. Community forestry in Scotland has been much influenced by Reforesting Scotland, an active NGO that has been able to influence policy and practice. An individual community's community forest may be a social innovation for them, but behind it lies a social movement. Social movements are not essential precursors of social innovation but there is often a profound and important link. Further, behind many community actions is a decision to act collectively. When and where collective action works successfully has been an object of intensive research by Ostrom and others (Ostrom, 1994; Meinzen-Dick et al. 2004).

The space to act is often enabled by the size and *modus operandi* of municipal authorities and the strengths and weaknesses of market provision. Where parishes and communes have significant power, resources and room for manoeuvre there is perhaps less space for civil society actors to be active.

In Scotland, municipalities are very large, so there is much more space for lower level entities to emerge. Arguably, the local development trusts and policy-induced civil society actions like community planning are more significant in Scotland because of the large scale of formal local government entities in Scotland.

Several of the examples of social innovations used in this paper were novel when initiated but have since often become regular events or established entities. An obvious example of this is now-established annual festivals. An event, such as the example of Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival, began as a one-off event but has evolved into an annual event, with regular changes in the mix of activities. Arguably, such changes can be considered as a form of continuous innovation associated with social learning with new events or elements being added over time. In other cases, something like a reformed village garden club's annual show event, with a virtually unchanging format, might be consider rather less innovative and not constitute social innovation.

The extent of civil society engagement in partnerships might be considered a decisive factor in determining whether some types of new institution are social innovations. Multi-agency partnership has emerged as a widely adopted institutional form to deliver place-based developed, both at national and European levels. Where the partnership has negligible or tokenistic, civil society representation such partnerships are probably better considered as institutional innovations (see Ruttan and Hayami, 1984). Further, whereas LEADER cannot really be considered as a social innovation, since it is now a well-established European policy instrument, it can reasonably be seen as an enabler of social innovation through its support of particular projects. Partnership-type structures may bring different actors and stakeholders together, but they often face the same challenges of shortages of finance, limitations of commitment etc. that confront individual members (Ekos 2011). Further, the desire for a lead partner to control can stifle the innovative potential (Dargan and Shucksmith 2007; Dax et al. 2013). Knickel et al. (2009: 1) also point out that 'institutions, administrations and extension services, whose mission it is to support changes, can become barriers to innovation if they do not acknowledge that the needs of farmers and of society have changed.'

As with LEADER, so community development trusts are not of themselves social innovations. They are well-established institutional forms. However, where CDTs become focal hubs for a series of innovations in satellite bodies, promoting and midwifing new social enterprises and CICs, it is reasonable to think of them as socially innovative. There are many examples of highly socially

innovative communities with a hub CDT and a range of satellite organisations. The actions, the agency support and the novel social enterprises can all be considered as social innovations.

Most of these illustrative examples are not capable of significant upscaling. However, many illustrate examples that could be replicated in other places. Place could easily be a decisive variable in the success of certain examples. The more place-specific a social innovation, the more limited the scope for direct up- or out-scaling. Nonetheless, an ability to transfer process rather than product may enable social innovation to occur more easily in other communities.

Some of the most significant social innovations such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh started as small, place-based innovations to address much wider problems of poverty and lack of access to capital at reasonable rates. The model was replicable and over time evolved to become a significant player in credit markets for poor people. The hospice sector has also shown rapid growth in the third sector. But many social innovations will remain small because they are enabled by local social capital and comprise civil society responses to local contexts.

There are unmistakable temporal and geographical differences in the extent of social innovation which are likely to be influenced by variations in different types of social capital. In developed countries where the drawdown of public support is often conditional on strong bridging capital, rather than buffering the poor against the challenges of neoliberalism and weak markets, social innovation may well reinforce inequality, unless positive discrimination can be exercised through the combined means of social paternalism, social enterprise or state-supported action is practised.

One of the main challenges of social innovation is that the political rhetoric of social innovation has become so pervasive that it tends to capture and embrace actions and activities that are not conceived of as social innovations even by those enacting them. If such a mismatch occurs, those framing policy need to think very carefully about how to communicate policy messages about social innovation to civil society.

Davies has described neo-communitarianism as 'an emergent set of critical interventions and new policy techniques' and concludes: 'neo-communitarianism might succeed (or not) as a means of alleviating the most critical failings of neoliberal government, but will also bring as-yet-unknown threats, frailties and pathologies with it to be encountered in due course.' In this spirit, the extent to which the communitarian policy architecture in Scotland is genuinely empowering or ushers communities into the arena of neoliberal policies has been questioned by Macleod and Emeleju (2014). Poverty and disadvantage may limit capacity to develop assets for community

use and potentially compound relative disadvantage by privileging com-munities with strong human and social capital.

Conclusion

Using a definition of social innovation based on novelty of institution or practice and the active engagement of civil society, it can be seen that a number of types of good and service are provided by what could reasonably be considered as social innovation. Usually, social innovation is not the only way in which that good or service could be provided. Social innovation arises because the public or private delivery is lacking or deemed inadequate or when a social enterprise produces the good as a means to another principal end, such as training and supporting disabled people. When the same good or service is provided by more conventional means, there are substantial benefits of comparing the social innovation's institutional forms, practices and outcomes alongside those of the conventional means of delivery.

There are many areas of activity and institutional forms that have underpinned social innovation in Scotland. While there are likely to be some social innovations that are distinctive to Scotland, many are likely to be replicated in other developed countries and sometimes more widely. Increasingly, the types of institution that either practice or facilitate social innovation are hybrid structures with many types of partner, necessarily including civil society agency.

Those countries promoting communitarian policies, with perhaps Scotland the extreme case, need to consider the extent to which a communitarian policy agenda has the capacity to compound spatial inequality, in the absence of affirmative action to support disadvantaged groups and communities.

Social innovation inevitably takes on a number of forms and operates in a range of fields. Common origins include the withdrawal of state or private sector from a field of activity, or a decline in quality of provision from the public or private sector. Sometimes the innovation can be entirely spontaneous and locally led and delivered. Often, however, public sector agency influences the framework conditions through policy and law; and a number of pieces of significant enabling legislation have shaped the emergent institutional forms and, most likely, the speed at which they have emerged. It is clear that social innovation is now an important and potentially transformative force, that social innovation often arises as social learning within an innovation system or an innovation ecosystem but also that its impact varies greatly from one place to another, contingent on the ongoing agency of markets and the state.

Notes

1. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/2/contents
2. https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/Energy/Energy-sources/19185/
   Communities/CRES
3. https://www.fca.org.uk/firms/registered-societies-introduction/co-operative-
   community-benefit-societies-act-2014
4. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2013/1/contents/enacted
5. http://www.scdc.org.uk/what/community-empowerment-scotland-act/
6. This is argued for in the case of evaluation of innovation within the EU's LEADER
   programme.

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Appendix 1 Websites of projects described (all accessed 9–10–2017)

http://alfordcommunity.co.uk/mc-events/
inaugural-meeting-alford-mens-shed/

http://www.deepartnership.org/

http://www.deesidepiper.co.uk/news/care-initiative-for-elderly-in-braemar-1-4252085

http://www.deesidepiper.co.uk/news/funds-for-upper-donside-groups-1-2186287

https://www.deveron-projects.com/rhynie-woman/

http://www.dtascot.org.uk/content/directory-of-members/braemar-community-ltd

https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/fp/news/local/ceilidh-set-to-welcome-refugees-into-community/

http://www.huntlydevelopmenttrust.org/

http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/syrian-refugees-to-work-on-huntly-art-project-inspired-by-middle-east-conflict-1-4372107

http://www.marrareapartnership.org.uk/

http://www.pitcaple.org.uk/pep/

http://www.portsoy.org/

http://www.scotlink.org/

http://www.theseedbox.org.uk/

http://www.tarland.org.uk/food-music-day/

http://www.tullynessleandforbeshall.co.uk/

http://www.walkballater.com/

Your short guide to the EUP Journals Blog http://euppublishingblog.com/

***A forum for discussions relating to
Edinburgh University Press Journals***

1. The primary goal of the EUP Journals Blog

To aid discovery of authors, articles, research, multimedia and reviews published in Journals, and as a consequence contribute to increasing traffic, usage and citations of journal content.

2. Audience

Blog posts are written for an educated, popular and academic audience within EUP Journals' publishing fields.

3. Content criteria - your ideas for posts

We prioritize posts that will feature highly in search rankings, that are shareable and that will drive readers to your article on the EUP site.

4. Word count, style, and formatting

- Flexible length, however typical posts range 70-600 words.
- Related images and media files are encouraged.
- No heavy restrictions to the style or format of the post, but it should best reflect the content and topic discussed.

5. Linking policy

- Links to external blogs and websites that are related to the author, subject matter and to EUP publishing fields are encouraged, e.g.to related blog posts

6. Submit your post

Submit to ruth.allison@eup.ed.ac.uk

If you'd like to be a regular contributor, then we can set you up as an author so you can create, edit, publish, and delete your *own* posts, as well as upload files and images.

7. Republishing/repurposing

Posts may be re-used and re-purposed on other websites and blogs, but a minimum 2 week waiting period is suggested, and an acknowledgement and link to the original post on the EUP blog is requested.

8. Items to accompany post

- A short biography (ideally 25 words or less, but up to 40 words)
- A photo/headshot image of the author(s) if possible.
- Any relevant, thematic images or accompanying media (podcasts, video, graphics and photographs), provided copyright and permission to republish has been obtained.
- Files should be high resolution and a maximum of 1GB
- Permitted file types: *jpg, jpeg, png, gif, pdf, doc, ppt, odt, pptx, docx, pps, ppsx, xls, xlsx, key, mp3, m4a, wav, ogg, zip, ogv, mp4, m4v, mov, wmv, avi, mpg, 3gp, 3g2*.