Atlantic Social Lab

Cooperation for the Promotion of Social Innovation

TRENDS ON SOCIAL INNOVATION: PERSPECTIVES FROM FOUR DOMAINS

EAPA 246/2016
ERFD-INTERREG
WP6 Atlantic Social Innovation Observatory

Interreg Atlantic Area
European Regional Development Fund

EUROPEAN UNION

The project Atlantic Social Lab is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the INTERREG Atlantic Area Cooperation Program (EAPA_246/2016).

TECHNICAL DATA

Organisation Hugo Pinto, André Guerreiro, Paola Di Nunzio, Carla Nogueira

Photographs Project partners

Revision Amandine Bonneau, Fiona Henderson, Geoffrey Whittam, Juliette Crowley, and Project partners

Final editing Hugo Pinto

How to cite this document Pinto, Hugo; Guerreiro, André; Di Nunzio, Paola; Nogueira, Carla (org.) (2020) Trends on Social Innovation: Perspectives from Four Domains, Atlantic Social Lab and Centro de Estudos Sociais: Coimbra.

Acknowledgements: Hugo Pinto is thankful to Raquel Travia, Dabylla Oliveira, Mamadu Alimo Djaló and Sophia Bueno, research interns at the Faculty of Economics – University of Algarve, for providing support in an early phase of the reflection for this report.

ISBN 978-989-8847-26-3

CONTENTS

TECHNICAL DATA I

CONTENTS 2

LIST OF FIGURES 3

LIST OF TABLES 3

INTRODUCTION 4

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW 5

Social Innovation 5

Social Innovation and Public Engagement 7

Social Innovation and Green Inclusive Economy 9

Social Innovation & Social Economy and Social Responsibility 13

Social Innovation and Welfare Services 15

THE ATLANTIC SOCIAL LAB PROJECT 17

Working Group Discussion 17

Pilot Actions 18

DOMAINS FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION 19

Social Innovation and Active Public Engagement 19

Enhancing Public Engagement in Cork, Ireland 19

Public Engagement and Participatory Budgeting in Santiago, Spain 20

Trends and final remarks 20

Social Innovation and Green Inclusive Economy 22

Social and Green Inclusive Economy in Enterprise North West, Ireland 22

Green and Circular economy in Bretagne, France 22

Trends and final remarks 23

Social Innovation & Social Economy and Social Responsibility 24

Strengthening Social Enterprises in Cork, Ireland 24

Developing New Industries in Bretagne, France 25

Trends and final remarks 25

Social Innovation and Welfare Services 27

Social Clauses in Public Procurement in Avilés, Spain 27

Wellbeing of isolated senior citizens in Pau, France 27

Trends and final remarks 28

CONCLUSIONS 30

REFERENCES 31

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. *Growth in social innovation publication, 1996-2019* 5

Figure 2. *Participation in voluntary activities or active citizenship in the EU* 8

Figure 3. *Circular economy diagram* 11

Figure 4. *Value added by circular economy at factory cost in the EU (millions of euros)* 12

Figure 5. *Number of persons employed in the circular economy sector in the EU* 12

Figure 6. *Projected total cost of ageing as percentage of the gross domestic product (AWG reference scenario)* 16

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. *Paid employment in the social economy (2014-2015)* 14

Table 2. *ASL partners that implemented the pilot actions.* 18

Table 3*. Current status and future trends within the area of Social Innovation and Public Engagement* 21

Table 4. *Current status and future trends within the area of Social Innovation and Public Engagement* 23

Table 5*. Current status and future trends within the area of Social Economy and Social Responsibility* 26

Table 6*. Current status and future trends within the area of Social Economy and Social Responsibility* 28

INTRODUCTION

The Atlantic Social Lab (ASL) – Atlantic Cooperation for the Promotion of Social Innovation – is a research project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (EAPA_246/2016) through the INTERREG Atlantic Area Cooperation Programme. It comprises 9 partners, seven of whom implemented the pilot actions while the two other partners provided the underpinning research. There were a further 10 associated partners from the countries that compose the Atlantic Area of the European Union: Portugal, Spain, France, United Kingdom and Ireland. The leading partner is the municipality of Avilés, Spain.

The ASL project has the goal of promoting and developing Social Innovation approaches in order to come up with better solutions to complex social problems located within the regions that constitute the Atlantic Area. Ultimately, the program intends to produce social change by involving citizens, social enterprises, third sector organisations and public institutions, in finding sustainable solutions to existing issues.

The project began in 2016 and has since promoted several initiatives and pilot actions across the regions in the Atlantic Area. These pilot actions were divided in four domains: (i) Social innovation & welfare services, (ii) Social innovation & active public engagement, (iii) Green inclusive economy, and (iv) Social economy & social responsibility in the private sector.

This document is the report on the implementation of social innovation and its trends within the four thematic areas of the project. It is organised as follows.

The first section is dedicated to a theoretical review on social innovation. Its relation with the selected topics of the ASL project will be explored, along with the conceptual framework of the areas under consideration. The second section presents the Working Group Discussion method used in the project to identify problems and possible solutions as well as a brief general overview of the pilot actions undertaken by the project partners. The third section contains four leaflets (technical files), one for each field of the ASL project, where the specificities of the pilot actions are described according to the themes addressed. The leaflets also identify some of the current and future trends for each area, concluding with some final remarks and recommendations for practitioners. Finally, the document presents some overall conclusions on social innovation and the ASL project.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

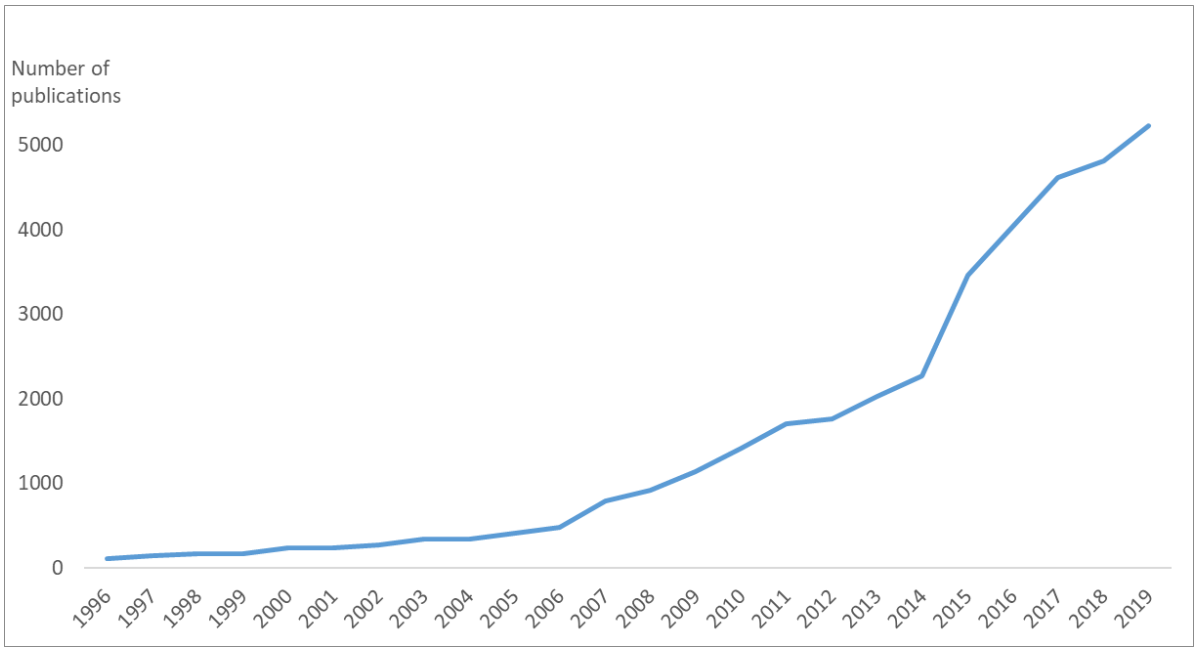
Social Innovation

Social innovation is a recent subject of research, even if the first works and discussions on the subject of innovation focused on social rather than on technical innovation. Regardless, innovation would only gain some popularity from the 1930s onwards, in no small part due to Schumpeter's (1934) contributions to the subject of technological innovation. As a result, social innovation became an obscure term in academia, being used descriptively more often than not and without much attention given to its definition. Nonetheless, there were some theoretical developments in the social theories more closely related to social innovations, such as social movements, social change and cultural transformations, to name a few.

Social innovation started to gain some popularity in the 1980s (Hulgard & Ferreira, 2019), but even then, the concept remained very much restricted to academic journals and would not gain traction until the mid-2000s, when it became a recurring topic in policy and practise, particularly in social enterprise and the wider third sector (Ayob, Teasdale & Fagan, 2016). This rise in popularity was linked to the 2008 global economic crisis and the ensuing austerity measures undertaken by European States, leading the European Commission (EC, 2017: 11) to conclude that social innovation had become a "necessary corrective strategy to tackle the social problems emerging due to state retrenchment and austerity policies".

Since then, much has been published about social innovation and academic research in the field has grown exponentially (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Growth in social innovation publication, 1996-2019*



Source: Web of Science using search string "Social Innovation"

However, this rapid growth in academic interest did not directly translate into a systematic approach to social innovation, even if it continued to be extremely popular within the scope of public organisations, policy making forums and supranational organisations (McGowan, Westley & Tjornbo, 2017). An unfortunate consequence of this rapid evolution (or perhaps one of the causes of it) was that the concept didn't fully mature before it was adopted as a policy option. Definitional confusion still persists as a result of various interpretations of the concept and a lack of theoretical development to frame social innovation research (Backhaus, Genus & Wittmayer, 2018). To this day, social innovation remains a "fuzzy" concept (Marques, Morgan & Richardson, 2018), not least because of its application as both a concept and a practise (Moulaert, Mehmood & MacCallum, 2017).

Amongst the Atlantic Social Lab partnership, we conceptualise social Innovation as distinguished from other forms of innovation by its focus upon social change through social movements, through new forms of social relations, and through new approaches capable of addressing social problems (Ayob *et al*., 2016). Therefore, social innovation is conceived as an idea that **deliberately** attempts to better satisfy explicit or latent **social needs and problems**, resulting in new or improved capabilities, and in the **transformation** of social and power relations, aiming at **social change** and the establishment of new social practices that positively affect the lives of individuals (Guerreiro & Pinto, 2020).

For an innovation to be properly understood as a social innovation it has to fulfil the three key elements highlighted in the following rationale:

- Social innovation must be deliberate and not an unexpected by-product of something else. Innovations and discoveries often happen by chance, but in social innovation that is not the case, as it cannot be an accidental outcome (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014);
- It needs to address a social problem or need. An innovation cannot be deemed social if it merely intends to create or improve something that is not related to a social problem or need (The Young Foundation, 2012);
- When successfully implemented, social innovation will produce some degree of social change. This might take the form of restructured power and social relations (new legislation, new procedures, new organisations and support, etc) or the empowerment of those who benefitted from the social innovation (Haxeltine, Pel, Wittmayer, Dumitru, Kemp, & Avelino, 2017).

Even if all types of innovation can, directly or indirectly, aim at one of these end results, social innovation requires all of these aspects be met. Otherwise most, if not all, forms of innovation can be labelled as social innovation, since even technological or organisational innovations can often produce one of these three key features of social innovation.

This definition helps to shed some light on the elements that make the concept of social innovation appealing for organisations and policy-makers. It demonstrates that social innovation is well suited to address complex, wicked social problems that challenge institutions and elude usual solutions,

requiring a different approach to be studied and solved (Nicholls, Simon & Gabriel, 2015). One significant attraction of social innovation arises from its research being built upon case studies in all social areas, from healthcare services, infant education, employment support and professional education of vulnerable groups, to areas such as culture and sports, together with a growing presence in the creation of sustainable alternatives and local development. Consequently, social innovation is often considered an evidence-based mechanism capable of promoting social inclusion in policy design and programs, with added value arising from its engagement with different levels of actors in the pursuit of solutions to "wicked" social problems.

For all these reasons, transnational institutions, and the European Union in particular, have paid a great deal of attention to social innovation, pushing for more research projects with the goal of expanding the existing knowledge on the subject and learn how to integrate social innovation in public policies at several scales (McGowan *at al*., 2017). This expansion intends to provide the basis for a new generation of policies that aim at changing social and power relations, fostering inclusion by empowering individuals and promoting sustainability at multiple levels (Asenova & Damianova, 2019).

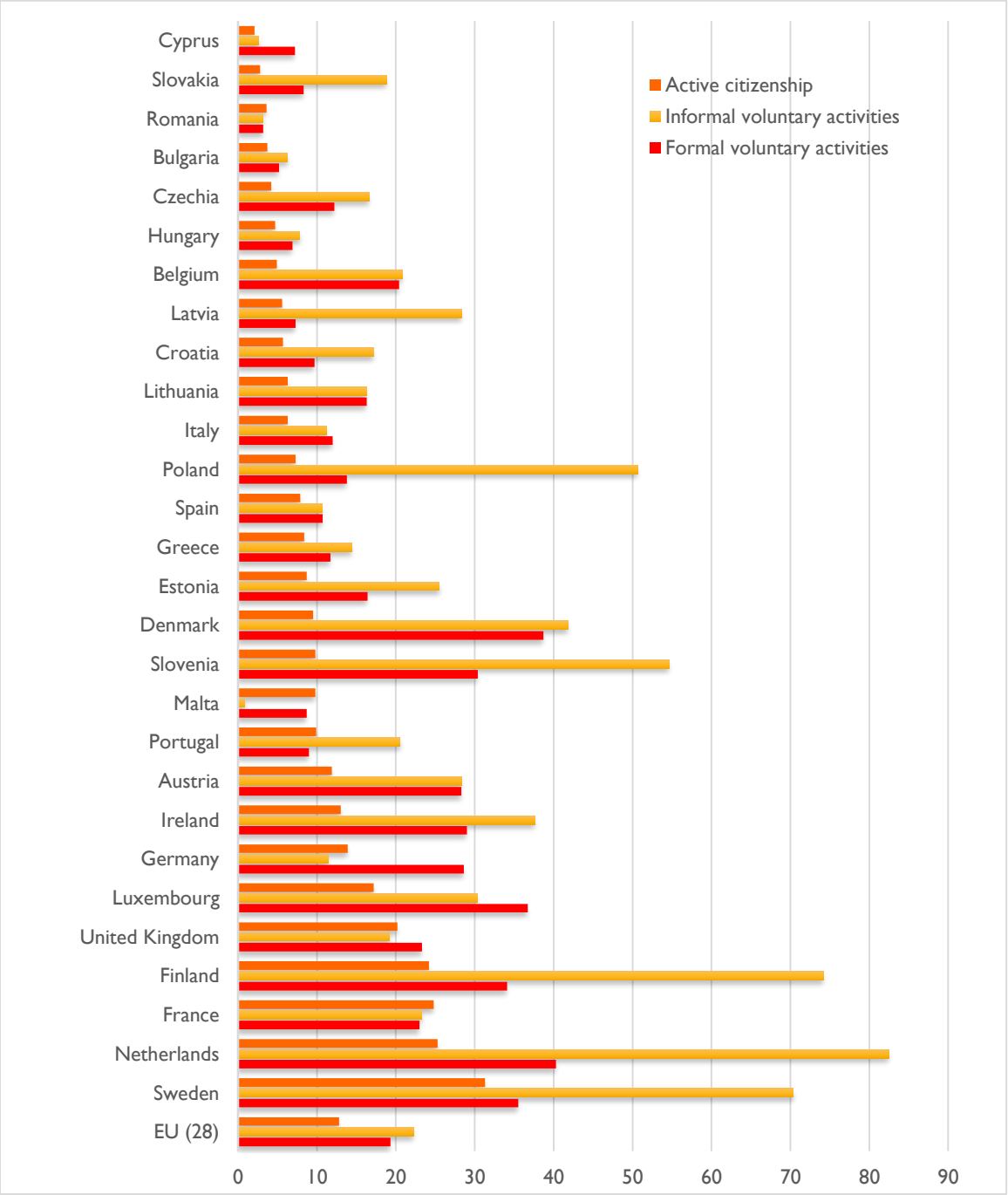
Social Innovation and Public Engagement

Public engagement is often used as an umbrella term for other more precise and established terms, such as *citizen engagement, public participation*, *public communication* and *public consultation*. Nevertheless, public participation and *citizen engagement* are often distinguished from *public communication* and *public consultation*, as these terms are most often a description of one-way information process from the state to the public, rather than engaged two-way communications (Davies & Simon, 2013). The term *public participation* has become increasingly commonplace in Europe where it is conceptualised as the "involvement of the public in the affairs and decisions of policy-setting bodies" (Rowe & Frewer, 2015: 251).

The idea of public participation can be traced back to the classical antiquity, with Athens using a democratic form of government in which every (male) citizen could hold an office and be accountable to his peers. This form of participatory government and its inherent inequalities would not be tolerated in Europe today, however, as it was restricted to adult males and excluded women, foreigners and slaves. Today, the term *public*, in the European Union, includes all members of society, involving on occasion the population with no citizenship rights awarded (i.e. recent migrants, asylum seekers), in the political life of the State.

Public participation techniques often focus on the role of the public in the decision-making processes at political level, whether local or national. These processes intend to accentuate democratic values, legitimacy, justice and improve government relations with a wider public (Fung, 2015). Among these instruments, participatory budgeting is a recent example of how local governments can engage with the population and find out their needs by directly appealing to their contribution and providing a platform for their voice, consisting in the implementation of a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget (Sintomer, Herzberg & Rocke, 2008).

Figure 2. *Participation in voluntary activities or active citizenship in the EU[1] (%)*



Source: Eurostat, 2015 (EU 28).

[1] **Active citizenship**: consists in the participation in activities such as those of political parties, local interest groups, public consultations, peaceful protests, signing petitions, writing to a politician, etc.

Informal voluntary activities: informal unpaid activities not arranged by any organisation, like helping others people not part of the household, helping wild or homeless animals, cleaning a beach, picking up trash in forests, etc.

Formal voluntary activities: any unpaid non-compulsory work for or through an organisation, formal group, club or association. Includes unpaid work for charitable or religious groups or participating in events and meetings promoted by them.

European Union institutions have tried to open their processes to allow for an increased public participation, fully recognising the challenges that transnational institutions face when attempting to engage with the public. These challenges are, among others, the lack of sufficient means and channels to allow for this participation, the sometimes-scarce sense of EU belonging or interest of the population and their limited information on how to engage with such institutions (Goodhart, 2007). For these reasons, over the last few years, EU documents have tried to put added emphasis on the importance of involving the public and civil society groups in policy-making processes and research efforts, in an attempt to promote civic participation, especially in member-states with lower values of public and civic participation (see Figure 2).

The "Atlantic Social Lab" is an example of a project designed according to these principles, as it includes a series of actors and groups in the process of creating social innovation. In fact, social innovation fits within the values described in the above definition because of principles of inclusiveness and equality. The collaboration of social actors, organisations and institutions in creating solutions through social innovation combines efforts and the sharing of knowledge and experiences from different instances and perspectives. This facilitates the creation of solutions that not only address specific social problems, but empower and enable those directly affected by them to actively contribute to their solution (Moulaert, MacCallum & Hillier, 2013).

One can also argue that science has also followed a similar process over the last two decades, considering the fact that it had lost some of its credibility in the eyes of the public (Wynne, 2006). In fact, efforts have been made in scientific research to involve the wider public more often, while knowledge transfer and sharing as well as methodologies that involve the public, have become a staple of many areas (Pinto & Guerreiro, 2019).

Social Innovation and Green Inclusive Economy

Green economy has been a much-discussed concept lately. Like social innovation, it has been appropriated by political and media discourses and thus suffers from the same common-sense trivialisation. As a result, green economy has become an umbrella term lacking operationalisation. The more common definitions stem from reports published by transnational institutions, but some common ideas are related with an economic model that improves wellbeing while reducing environmental risks, that is low-carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive, and that preserves natural capital (Loiseau *et al*., 2016: 2). Green economy is often used interchangeably or along with inclusive green growth, which OECD (2011: 8) defined as:

> *(…) fostering economic growth and development while ensuring that the natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies. To do this it must catalyse investment and innovation which will underpin sustained growth and give rise to new economic opportunities.*

Green economy became a discussed subject in academia in 1989, when David Pearce, Anil Markandya and Edward Barbier argued that the definition of "price" disregarded environmental issues and consequently was meaningless. Instead, a more sustainable approach to economic development that took environmental sustainability as a necessary condition for sustainable or green growth was necessary (Le Blanc, 2011).

Nonetheless, it was not until 2012's Rio de Janeiro's Conference on Sustainable Development and its manifesto "*The World we Want*" that green economy and sustainable economic growth became two central notions in many countries' policies and transnational institutions agendas (Hickel & Kallis, 2019). The financial crisis of 2008 revived the term in the context of discussions on the policy response to multiple global crises, leading to various initiatives and meetings that culminated in the Rio de Janeiro's Conference. The encouragement of policies promoting a green economy has been proposed as a climate change mitigating action, capable of developing sustainable means of consumption and promoting social equity.

The European Union has been a strong advocate of sustainable solutions to common problems for many years and pushes the green agenda forward in each new programme, as reflected in European budgets. The public has shown itself receptive so far, with green parties gaining a considerable number of seats in the recent European Parliament elections of 2019.

Despite the attention received, there is no internationally agreed definition of *green economy*. However, there is broad agreement that a green economy "results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities" (UNEP, 2011). What makes this notion of economy different from others is the heavy emphasis it puts on ecological sustainability, as well as on the well-being of humans. In fact, while economy in general strives to generate value, that value is not always universal (i.e. it might come at a cost for someone else). In contrast, the concept of *green economy* promotes an economic vision that rests on the premise that the only value worth creating is one that is good for everyone and that makes the world better, without sacrificing the environment.

While social inclusion is an important notion, green economy and green growth do not directly lead to an improvement of social indicators. While it is true that environmental issues affect individuals from lower income classes more than middle or higher class individuals, green policies can also negatively affect these individuals as well. For example: taxation of specific products, such as plastics, non-reusable items or fossil fuels would affect these individuals the same or more than others, as they often lack the resources or know-how to look for affordable alternatives (World Bank, 2012).

Therefore, while green policies consider the social elements as important as the environmental ones, care must be taken to ensure that green policies are created with an inclusive dimension in mind, that covers and supports the most vulnerable social groups. This is one of the hardest aspects on green growth: not only creating policies and programs that make economic growth environmentally sustainable, but also ensures that it will be inclusive, requiring a deep understanding of the underlying social reality of the affected territories and proximity policies that complement larger pieces of legislation.

This is the reason why, along with green economy, the concept of Inclusive Green Economy (IGE) gained notoriety, embedding in itself the very notion of inclusivity in order to avoid the risk of exclusion of vulnerable individuals. The Inclusive Green Economy (IGE) has evolved from earlier work on green economy. In its simplest expression:

> *(…) such an economy is low carbon, efficient and clean in production, but also inclusive in consumption and outcomes, based on sharing, circularity, collaboration, solidarity, resilience, opportunity, and interdependence. It is focused on expanding options and choices for national economies, using targeted and appropriate fiscal and social*

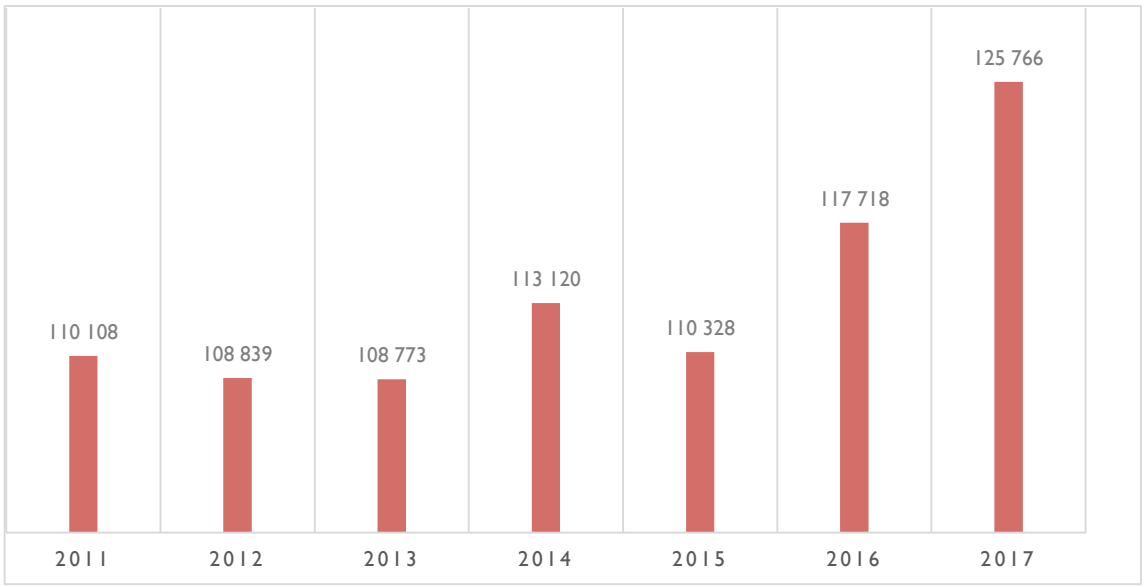
protection policies, and backed up by strong institutions that are specifically geared to safeguarding social and ecological floors. And it recognizes that there are many and diverse pathways to environmental sustainability" (UNEP, 2011).

The Circular Economy (CE) is a related concept which is also getting increasing consideration as a way to overcome the problems of negative externalities associated with an economic model of production and consumption based on continuous growth and increasing resource utilisation (Ghisellini, Cialani & Ulgiati, 2016). It promotes a closing-the-loop production pattern (Figure 3) to increase the efficiency of resource use, with special emphasis on industrial and urban waste management, redefining growth and focusing on positive society-wide benefits (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2014).

Figure 3. *Circular economy diagram*

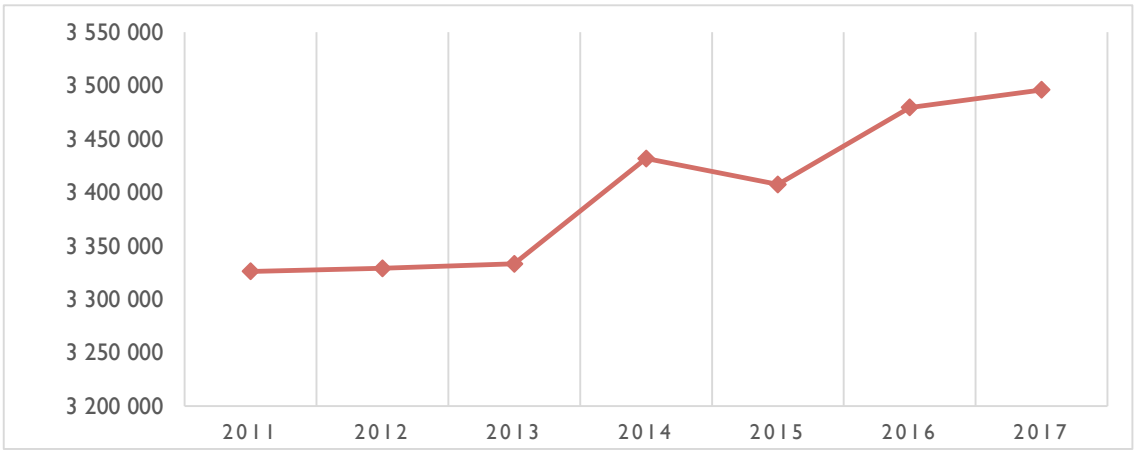
Source: European Commission, available at https://ec.europa.eu/environment/green-growth.

Figure 4. *Value added by circular economy at factory cost in the EU (millions of euros)*



Source: Eurostat, 2020 (EU 27).

Figure 5. *Number of persons employed in the circular economy sector in the EU*



Source: Eurostat, 2020 (EU 27).

The green inclusive economy and social innovation are complementary concepts. Indeed, one theory of social innovation offers a framework for social change with sustainability, and presents social innovation as bound to sustainable and inclusive growth while improving individuals lives and promoting sustainable policies (Asenova & Damianova, 2019).

Small social groups have the ability to act as a test-bed for innovative experiments in environmental and sustainable living (Reeves, Lemon & Cook, 2013). The Atlantic Social Lab project and its pilot actions use small group test-beds with the aim of providing a sample of good practices that are replicable and inspire new ways to mitigate social and environmental issues. Such small-group experimental social innovations also contribute to the enrichment of the research and the literature on the subject.

Sustainability has been a field of interest and one of the key-elements stressed in social innovation research due to its emphasis on restructuring power relations and empowering individuals. Combining micro and macro level perspectives, social innovation is at the heart of research agendas exploring sustainable research practices and green policies, especially when they have a strong territorial focus.

Social Innovation & Social Economy and Social Responsibility

Since the 1990's, the social economy has been recognised by the EU for its contribution to local development, promoting civic participation and engagement, social inclusion, entrepreneurship and employment (Lukkarinen, 2005). The social economy consists of different activities and jobs that provide opportunities for individuals and their communities while participating in the process of local development and economic regeneration by addressing local needs (Amin, Cameron & Hudson, 2002).

The social economy encompasses various types of organisations and collective legal forms that operate in the solidarity (third) sector such as associations, cooperatives, foundations or mutual societies, social enterprises, etc. Formal definitions of the social economy vary according to the country in question, since many national policies and programs define which legal forms are included or excluded from the category based on one understanding of the concept or another. Nevertheless, these organisations tend to face the same kind of social problems and deal with the same issues in all countries, even if they can vary in their legal form and internal structure.

They provide assistance to groups of people such as unemployed, NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), disabled, children and youths, victims of domestic violence and other forms of abuse, the poor, minority and vulnerable groups or the elderly. We can further add that these organisations are people-centred and are owned and run by their members, pursuing democratic and solidarity-based social aims (Lukkarinen, 2005).

From an historical point of view, social economy and solidarity organisations have existed since classical antiquity in one form or another. They were often formed based on professional relations (artisans' associations, guilds, artists' associations, craftsmen colleges, etc). The more modern versions of these organisations date back to the Industrial Revolution. This period marked the transition from church-based solidarity organisations to other types of institutions, usually either state-based or formed by movements or associations of workers (Moulaert & Ailenei, 2005).

More recently, the '70s and '80s saw the revival of social economy organisations which appeared as a direct result of the economic shocks of these decades. Historically, social economy organisations tend to grow in number and relevance whenever there are social or economic crisis that create situations which the market or the public institutions are unable to address or solve by themselves. In the last decades, the difficulty of European states to guarantee an ideal provision of welfare services to society has demonstrated this recurring pattern, especially in years of financial cutbacks, as we have seen in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis (Lévesque, 2013).

For the same reason, the private sector has been having a more active role in the social sector. In the last two decades, *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*, a concept which encourages a social-accountable relationship between businesses and society (Blowfield, 2005), has been the subject of

debate in academic forums as much as in the corporate and entrepreneurial sectors. In short, Corporate Social Responsibility:

> *(…) encompasses not only what companies do with their profits, but also how they make them (…) and addresses how companies manage their economic, social, and environmental impacts, as well as their relationships in all key spheres of influence: the workplace, the marketplace, the supply chain, the community and the public policy realm (Jane Nelson, cit in Kytle & Ruggie, 2005: 9).*

Social innovation creates bridges between public and private actors, facilitating Corporate Social Responsibility amongst private organisations to enable CSR-minded private sector enterprises to develop better socially-conscious and sustainable business models to ensure the creation of social as well as economic value from private entrepreneurship.

Table 1. *Paid employment in the social economy (2014-2015)*

Country	Cooperative and similar	Mutual Societies	Associations Foundations	Total SE Employment	Total employment	% of total employment
Austria	70 474	1 576	236 000	308 050	4 068 000	7,57%
Belgium	23 904	17 211	362 806	403 921	4 499 000	8,98%
Bulgaria	53 841	1 169	27 040	82 050	2 974 000	2,76%
Croatia	2 744	2 123	10 981	15 848	1 559 000	1,02%
Cyprus	3 078	(n/a)	3 906	6 984	350 000	2,00%
Czech R.	50 310	5 368	107 243	162 921	4 934 000	3,30%
Denmark	49 552	4 328	105 081	158 961	2 678 000	5,94%
Estonia	9 850	186	28 000	38 036	613 000	6,20%
Finland	93 511	6 594	82 000	182 105	2 368 000	7,69%
France	308 532	136 723	1 927 557	2 372 812	26 118 000	9,08%
Germany	860 000	102 119	1 673 861	2 635 980	39 176 000	6,73%
Greece	14 983	1 533	101 000	117 516	3 548 000	3,31%
Hungary	85 682	6 948	142 117	234 747	4 176 000	5,62%
Ireland	39 935	455	54 757	95 147	1 899 000	5,01%
Italy	1 267 603	20 531	635 611	1 923 745	21 973 000	8,76%
Latvia	440	373	18 528	19 341	868 000	2,23%
Lithuania	7 000	332	(n/a)	7 332	1 301 000	0,56%
Luxembourg	2 941	406	21 998	25 345	255 000	9,94%
Malta	768	209	1 427	2 404	182 000	1,32%
Netherlands	126 797	2 860	669 121	798 778	8 115 000	9,84%
Poland	235 200	1 900	128 800	365 900	15 812 000	2,31%
Portugal	24 316	4 896	186 751	215 963	4 309 000	5,01%
Romania	31 573	5 038	99 774	136 385	8 235 000	1,66%
Slovakia	23 799	2 212	25 600	51 611	2 405 000	2,15%
Slovenia	3 059	319	7 332	10 710	902 000	1,19%
Spain	528 000	2 360	828 041	1 358 401	17 717 000	7,67%
Sweden	57 516	13 908	124 408	195 832	4 660 000	4,20%

EU (27)	**3 975 408**	**341 677**	**7 609 740**	**11 926 825**	**215 722 000**	**5,53%**

Source: Recent Evolutions of the Social Economy in the EU (2017).

Social Innovation and Welfare Services

The history of the European Union can be told from many perspectives, but one common thread is the rise of the welfare state and its pivotal role in the European project. Despite its first appearances dating back to the late XIX century in Germany and Scandinavian countries, the modern welfare state truly began to materialise in the years that followed the second World War (Baldwin, 1990).

Defining the welfare state is difficult at best. While we can point to its solidary principles and social providence aspects, these are but two dimensions of what a welfare state is. In fact, these aspects have been rejected by the likes of T.H. Marshall or Beveridge, who played a crucial role in the theoretical and practical implementation of post-war modern welfare states, arguing that this designation equates to the idea of getting something for nothing (Marshall, 1950).

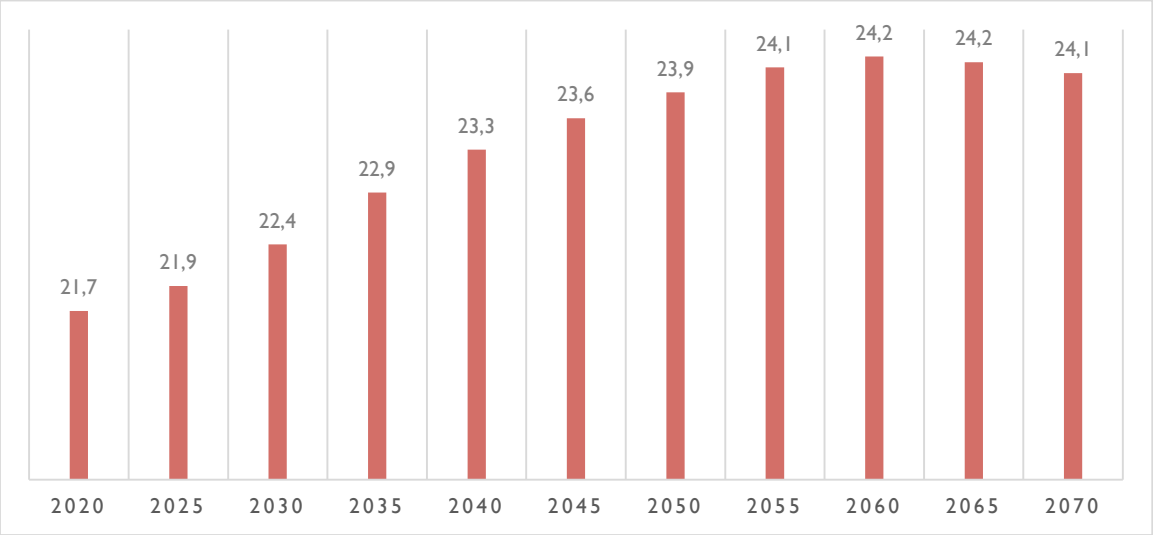
There are three predominant welfare state conceptions, that can be summarised as: 1) welfare for the poor, vulgarly referred to as handouts, more popular with those who stand against the idea of the welfare state; 2) welfare based on social insurance, social rights and social services, spanning services such as national health and education systems, social security and other forms of social provisions; and 3) state intervention on the economic and private spheres, in the form of regulations or policies that promote the welfare of the citizens of the state (Garland, 2016).

The state and public institutions are crucial to the promotion, diffusion and integration of social innovation into practices and public policies (Backhaus *et al.*, 2018), especially in the EU, where both national and EU programmes have played an active role in the promotion of social innovation solutions to social issues (Berzin, Pitt-Catsouphes & Peterson, 2014). Social innovations offer solutions to societal challenges at all levels of welfare and for the welfare state but are vulnerable to the vagaries of state-defined regulation and policies (Henderson, 2019)

As instrumental as social policies were in aiding the European continent in the post-war period, the financial needs of such policies eventually proved to weight too much on public finances in the awake of the 1973 and 1979 oil crisis, which paved the way for neoliberalism in Northern Europe and the crisis of the welfare state (Habermas, 1986). Since then, the welfare state has gone through a series of challenges, with 2008 subprime crisis and ensuing sovereign debt crisis having been particularly devastating for welfare policies in the European Union (EU).

The changes in the population structure also proved to be equally harmful for the maintenance of welfare states. The increase in life expectancy combined with lower fertility and mortality rates have greatly affected national budgets over the last decades as the total cost of an aging population rises (see Figure 6). As the EU population continues to age, the expenses of medical care and pension benefits will continue to increase (European Commission, 2018). Therefore, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the states to support social services and benefits that once were taken for granted. Further, whenever economic turbulence ensues such as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, cutbacks with a high social toll on the most vulnerable are inevitable (Bell, Codreanu & Machin, 2020).

Figure 6. *Projected total cost of ageing as percentage of the gross domestic product (AWG reference scenario)*



Source: European Commission 2015 Ageing Report (EU 27)[2].

Indeed, welfare policies frequently bear the consequences of austerity measures, usually considered adequate to once again find the equilibrium in public expenditure when public deficits increase. As a result, welfare policies have changed a great deal over the last decades in the EU, with alternatives to the state provision being studied. This is tightly related to the rise of social innovation research and social innovation-driven policies over the last 15 years (Lévesque, 2013).

If the states can no longer support the public spending required to assure a level of welfare that meets its citizens' demands, alternatives had to be found in order to ensure the provision of social services. The private market and not-for-profit organisations have become a staple of this new form of welfare state, with the social economy market meeting many of the existing needs that were once directly answered by public services (Henderson *et al*., 2018, 2019; Kerlin, 2006).

This tendency has received some criticism by authors who labelled it as a form of "caring liberalism", arguing that it is but another neoliberal strategy to minimise the role of the state in the social economy, while promoting for-profit entrepreneurial alternatives to social problems once under the care of public institutions (Henderson *et al*., 2018, 2019; Moulaert *et al*., 2013). Whether the increasing role of the private sector in welfare provision is deliberate or a policy consequence is debatable, but it remains the fact that new approaches to social problems are indeed necessary and social innovation can play a major part in both their discovery and implementation.

[2]These values reflect the United Kingdom leaving the EU.

THE ATLANTIC SOCIAL LAB PROJECT

These theoretical and conceptual premises serve as assumptions and basis to frame the work done by the Atlantic Social Lab (ASL) partners through their pilot actions. Social innovation was the tool used by the participants in ASL to improve their response in the four thematic areas with existing pressing social needs.

In the next section, the Working Group Discussion method will be presented. It is the participatory approach used to guide the work of the ASL partners and whose purpose was to create a debate capable of identifying problems and possible solutions for the Atlantic region. The Working Group discussion was deemed an appropriate approach for this multi-area and multi-partner project because of its shared knowledge and transnational experience of social innovation development. It also resulted in the classification of consistent pilot actions to implement in a local but scalable scope.

Working Group Discussion

The Working Group Discussion method, undertaken by the ASL project in the four thematic areas of action related to social innovation, was part of Work Package 5 (WP5), led by Cork City Council. WP5 contemplated the creation of four Working Groups, one for each thematic area of the project. They were composed of at least one representative of every project partner. Each Working Group was led by one ASL partner, and the group then met as a team to discuss the technical issues regarding the implementation of the project pilot actions. The summary of the tasks of the working groups is stated below:

- Propose innovative solutions and information to tackle common social challenges;
- Report on the implementation of the pilot actions;
- Inform each of the WG members concerning the actions being undertaken by the Atlantic Social Lab project stakeholders in the respective regions;
- Keep each member of the WG up-to-date on the progress of the Atlantic Social Lab project actions in the respective regions;
- Report/discuss the progress of the measurement of each pilot action's impact indicators;
- Share information on how to tackle the common social challenges;
- Investigate the transferability of successful regional initiatives across regions;
- Manage and discuss the risk and/or management issues encountered in the work carried out during the implementation of the pilot actions.

The working groups met both in person during the project coordination meetings and by videoconference. Each meeting saw the development of a social innovation trend report by the working group responsible for each of the four thematic areas. The reports focused on the latest

developments and trends to deliver social innovation and are able to provide practical guidance on social innovation issues, thus enabling the exchange of knowledge and peer-review discussions among the partners. The outcomes of these reports are presented in the last section of this document, where the related pilot actions are compiled.

Pilot Actions

The ASL project partners came up with a series of pilot actions which were intended to be used for social innovation solutions to deal with pressing problems within their territories. Seven (see Table 1) out of the 9 partners implemented the pilot actions while the other two partners were responsible for the research aspect of the project.

These actions were conducted either at a regional or municipal level, often described as the most adequate level for social innovation initiatives (Pinto *et al.*, forthcoming).

Table 2. *ASL partners that implemented the pilot actions.*

Country	Partner
Spain	- Avilés Municipality - Santiago de Compostela City Council
United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)	- Enterprise North West
Ireland	- Cork City Council
France	- Regional Chamber of Social and Solidarity Economy of Bretagne - Agglomeration Community of Pau- Pyrénées
Portugal	- CIM do Ave
Total	- 7 PARTNERS

Source: Pinto at al. (2018)

The pilot actions of the ASL project are at different stages of implementation, so information about their results will vary. In the specific case of green and inclusive economy, giving the nature of these initiatives, results will be produced in a longer-time frame and hence results for this group are limited at this time. Understandably, impacting a region's economy, developing new industries and changing the recycling and consumption patterns of a population are commendable goals whose contribution can only be fully understood in the years to come.

In the technical files that follow, a general overview of the pilot actions within the different areas of the project will be presented, together with some conclusion. More specific information about the pilot actions of the ASL project can be read in greater detail in the original document available online (Pinto *et al.*, 2019).

DOMAINS FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

Social Innovation and Active Public Engagement

The Social Innovation & Active Public Engagement Working Group of the Atlantic Social Lab project was composed by the Intermunicipal Community of Ave Region (Portugal), who serves as group leader, the Cork City Council (Ireland) and the Municipality of Santiago de Compostela (Spain). This group met in person three times during the project duration to update the members on pilot actions' progress that had been made and to discuss experiences.

The three partners implemented the pilot actions that follow in an attempt to promote public engagement and public participation in their respective region.

Enhancing Public Engagement in Cork, Ireland

Ireland put in place a Public Participation Networks (PPN) in 2014, thanks to the work of local authorities. Cork has one such network, consisting of groups and organisations from the community and the voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors that run across the city. Currently, Cork's PPN comprises almost 100 members and ensures that these communities have an active voice and are heard regarding how government works, playing an important role in civic engagement.

The pilot action carried out by Cork City Council had the goal of improving civic engagement throughout the city by encouraging the formation of new groups and communities, thus enabling them to participate in local policy making activities and local democratic processes. In order to accomplish this goal, Cork City Council decided to work with local businesses, community groups and the PPN in general to distribute information and reach the community, particularly some groups which were difficult to involve.

This was done, through their "Shape Your City" initiative, by hosting voter information and registration stands in local businesses, libraries and migrant events, informing the public on voting rights, where to register and how to participate in democratic events; by providing mentoring sessions to community groups on how to engage with government about planning issues; and by creating an animated video explaining the consultation with local government and promoting the different methods of engagement.

The Cork partner ran a participatory budgeting campaign as part of the ASL project. Entitled the "Cork Voices Campaign", it was a participatory grant making scheme carried out in conjunction with Cork City PPN. Applicants for the grants were videoed outlining why their particular project should be funded. The public had the opportunity to view these videos and vote on how the grant funds should be allocated. Over this very successful campaign, 2,555 public votes allocated a total of €5,000 to 9 community groups and the Cork Voices social media pages had over 50,000 hits. While participatory budgeting and grant-making have been growing across Europe, they have not been tried in Ireland yet, so this was a first for the city and country.

Cork City Council funded as well the development of an area-based plan for a district in the city using Planning for Real approaches. This facilitated a process whereby people living in local communities identified issues of their concern and were central in leading out and generating solutions.

It was expected that these activities would increase the participation of the population in the political life of Cork, leading to the transfer of knowledge to community groups, the formation of a stronger civic engagement, the implementation of innovative methods to promote such engagement and the development of a better understanding of the needs of the population.

Workshops and training included topics such as procurement, governance, storytelling and measuring social impact amongst others, facilitating learning and collaboration amongst social enterprises and support organisations. Towards the end of the project and in the context of COVID-19, Cork City Council also ran support webinars and mentoring clinics for social enterprises to help them through the pandemic.

Between September 2018 and May 2019, approximately 35 venues including businesses, libraries, language schools and other spaces, held voter information and registration stands, engaging over 5 000 additional participants, mostly from new groups or communities and resulting in over 500 new voter registrations. These recent members also informed a much larger audience of their voting rights and brought awareness to civic participation in government and democratic processes.

Public Engagement and Participatory Budgeting in Santiago, Spain

The Municipality of Santiago de Compostela is the local authority that governs the city of Santiago, Spain. In the last few years, the municipality has implemented participative budgeting for fiscal policy and social redistribution. This was part of a broader strategy enacted by the Municipality to promote public engagement, but it had less success than expected.

In fact, Santiago had low levels of participation and involvement in the region. A lack of knowledge about the participation mechanisms available to the public and the lack of interest among citizens were considered causes of the low civic participation. The pilot action aimed to address these issues through the implementation of participatory budgeting in public areas, which also intended to provide local agencies with a better understanding of the population's needs.

The three objectives of the pilot action were 1) to promote a more cohesive and balanced society, with a deeper level of trust between citizens and public institutions, as well as reaching all population groups, especially the most vulnerable ones; 2) to empower citizens to voice their needs and proposals; and 3) to answer the need for services and jobs that are not routinely identified by making use of the participatory budget, which received increased funding for this purpose.

To meet these aims, Santiago is currently promoting four specific activities: literacy seminars for senior citizens, actions to raise awareness of participatory budgeting among the community, the dissemination of information regarding the participatory budgeting process and the establishment of a participation mechanism through telematic means. The municipality expects that these activities will lead to greater civic participation and engagement in public administration issues.

Trends and final remarks

This report highlights some of the issues of promoting public engagement that countries currently face and how social innovation can contribute to the resolution of such problems. Being a process that makes use of plural contributions from actors and organisations while focusing on restructuring

power relations as well as capacitating and empowering actors, it can itself be part of the engagement strategy.

Table 3. Current status and future trends within the area of Social Innovation and Public Engagement

	Public Engagement	
	Current status	**Future trends**
Civic education	Marginalised groups and youths have insufficient civic information about their rights and how to exercise them.	People understand their power and develop interest and a critical awareness of the information they collected on their own, transferring civic knowledge autonomously within the community.
Social budgeting	Citizens are not aware of their influence on the political choices of their community and feel that their needs are not taken in consideration.	The society is cohesive and balanced, with a deeper level of trust between citizens and public institutions and every segment of the population is engaged in democracy. Services and jobs are provided according to the needs of the community.
Local community groups	Some groups are difficult to involve and/or hard to reach and to get informed.	New groups and communities are formed and they are empowered and engaged, participating in local policy-making activities and local democratic processes.

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 3 summarises the future trends of the main aspects identified by the pilot actions of the project in the area of Public Engagement.

Even when minority, vulnerable or excluded groups participate in democratic and political processes and public institutions actively try to include them in the democratic and policy-making processes as in these Pilot Actions, there are still many obstacles to overcome in contemporary European societies, especially with the rise of populism and extremist groups becoming more popular (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

The lack of information possessed by the public about their own rights is one of the greatest challenges, as the public digestion of such information is often assumed and fails to consider how individuals from different cultures might find such rights and guarantees alien to begin with, let alone engage with them. Difficulty in properly integrating immigrants to avoid exclusion or segregation cannot happen without a conscientious effort to engage them on a civic level.

On the other hand, the newer generations are less interested in political processes than ever before and have exhibited a reluctance to vote or participate in assemblies or forums (Chareka & Sears, 2006). In some cases, the youths have as little knowledge civic participation as marginalised groups, as they suffer from the same lack of information and awareness of civic rights.

Working closely with local community groups and organisations to gain a better grasp of the situation in the field and promoting initiatives that allow for the active participation of such groups have produced positive results and can lead to the improvement of many social issues closely linked to excluded groups.

Social budgeting as pilot actions not only facilitated these achievements by letting communities and neighbourhoods decide what is more important for the development of their areas and cities, but also fostered the culture of civic debate and public participation in political processes that then translate into a more participative and civically engaged territory.

Social Innovation and Green Inclusive Economy

The Social Innovation & Green Inclusive Economy working group of the Atlantic Social Lab project was composed by the Enterprise North West (Ireland) and CRESS Bretagne (France), who acted as group leader. The group met three times in person and two times by videoconference. These group reunions had the purpose of updating the members on pilot actions' progress, discuss experiences and share ideas.

The following pilot actions were implemented by the two partners of this WG and are examples of how social innovation can be used to create or improve existing industries and business sectors that operate in the green economy area, while also creating added social value.

Social and Green Inclusive Economy in Enterprise North West, Ireland

Enterprise North West (ENW) is an organisation that supports programmes for local Small and Medium Enterprises, develops social enterprise and social innovation projects and gives support to communities, voluntary groups and cooperatives across Northern Ireland. They also offer services such as feasibility studies, business plans, strategic planning and evaluations for the public, private and community sector.

Their pilot action aims to address the low recycling levels in the Derry Region by raising awareness of recycling and reuse as sustainable practices, involving schools and youths in the green and inclusive circular economy. For this purpose, ENW intends to design educational programmes and projects on local recycling issues for selected groups of young people, namely in the form of collaborative workshops conducted in schools, of the creation and development of a mobile application and of the empowerment of ideas on circular economy from regional school students.

The expected results of this initiative are: a document compiling the results of the case studies selected; an online tool kit with materials and resources on recycling; and educational recycling apps. Among them, the latter in particular is expected to increase the competences of youths in social responsibility towards the environment.

Green and Circular economy in Bretagne, France

CRESS stands for Regional Social Economy Chamber (*Chambre Régionale d'Économie Sociale et Solidaire de Bretagne*) and acts like a shared tool between actors to "animate" the development of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) in the region. Currently, CRESS coordinates a regional network of stakeholders of the social economy that are engaged in recycling and reuse of materials.

Reuse and recycling centres are quite recent in Bretagne, dating back to 2010. Given their value, they have attracted a great interest, especially by partners involved in waste production and management, but their business models have proven to be fragile. After identifying this issue and the potential of the area related to the green and circular economy, CRESS aims to support and professionalise these centres.

Therefore, its pilot action has the objectives of: clarifying the economic model and business plans of the reuse centres; better involving local authorities; helping reuse centres to develop new activities; providing management support; sharing a view on the economic model and the evolutional perspectives of reuse centres with local authorities, SSE, companies and other stakeholders; and creating a territorial coverage map with reuse solutions available for everyone.

This pilot action is expected to increase the rates of reuse and recycling in Bretagne, thus promoting the green and inclusive economy of the region.

Trends and final remarks

Of all the challenges the world faces today, finding sustainable means of production and consumption are among the most important for the prosperity of human societies. Climate change and environmental degradation may only recently have attained the status of global threats, but the problem dates back to the 70s and 80s.

Table 4. *Current status and future trends within the area of Social Innovation and Public Engagement*

	Green and Inclusive Economy	
	Current Status	**Future trends**
Circular economy	Low recycling levels.	New resource efficient model of production, based on eco-conception, property sharing, longer service life of objects, and recycling.
Environmental education	Lack of awareness about recycling and reuse as sustainable practices, especially among young people.	Empowerment of ideas on circular economy by regional schools' students.
Reuse and recycling centres	Reuse centres have a great potential but their business model is fragile.	Solid economic model and business plans for reuse and recycling centres, able of developing new activities and offering reusable solutions to everyone.

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 4 summarises the future trends of the main aspects identified by the pilot actions of the project in the area of Green Inclusive Economy.

Public consciousness has changed lately and the wider public became more receptive to alternative means of consumption and different products while often welcoming legislation and regulations that promote environmental and ecological principles.

Nonetheless, the green economy as an academic subject is still vastly under-researched and while there's a consensus on the goals, the means to reach those goals often vary, especially because of the difficulty to conjugate their achievement with inclusive and equitable policies that not only aren't harmful to vulnerable groups, but actually empower and capacitate them, thus improving their lives.

The pilot actions of the ASL project depict how regions and local organisations can develop social innovation initiatives that have a positive impact in promoting green economy. The inclusivity element is stronger in Enterprise North West pilot action, since it addresses the recycling habits of school students in an attempt to raise awareness on the importance of waste reduction.

While it is too early to draw a conclusion from these pilot actions, they both show how social innovation comes together with green growth and how institutions can combine both of them in a framework that intends to improve individuals' lives while promoting economic development, with very important sustainability principles in mind.

Social Innovation & Social Economy and Social Responsibility

The Social Innovation & Social Economy and Social Responsibility in the Private Sector group of the Atlantic Social Lab project was formed by the Municipality of Avilés (Spain), the Cork City Council (Ireland), the Intermunicipal Community of Ave (Portugal), and by the leader of the group, the Enterprise North West (Ireland). This working group met four times in person and two times by videoconference.

The following pilot actions were carried out by Cork City Council and CRESS (*Chambre Régionale d'Économie Sociale et Solidaire de Bretagne*), drawing lessons on how to deal with issues related to this area using social innovation and presenting a cooperative modality that involves different actors at different levels.

Strengthening Social Enterprises in Cork, Ireland

Recent data identified that social enterprises have the potential to create 40 000 jobs and contribute 2 000 million euros to the economy in Ireland. This has motivated Irish authorities to further invest in the sector by creating a specific framework, launched in July 2019, for social enterprises. This opportunity was taken by Cork City Council to strengthen the social enterprises working in the region.

The objective of the social innovation pilot action created by Cork's City Council was to develop and strengthen the relationship between social enterprises, local government and private sector in Cork. To achieve this, specific steps were identified: map the social enterprises in the city, with the intention of developing links between them and other organisations that can support them; promote the benefits of the employment of social enterprise workers; organise training and networking activities for social enterprises, as well as conferences and other events that will involve local and national stakeholders.

Workshops and training events were held between September 2018 and October 2019, intended on providing information for social enterprises, promote networking and learning about the challenges faced by these organisations in the city. These events put considerable effort into learning and

sharing activities, in an attempt to develop bonds between organisations in the hope that the shared knowledge and strengthened relations would lead to an overall improvement of the sector.

Cork City Council expects that these activities will contribute to fostering the social enterprises sector of the region in the long run, increasing the expertise of the field and making these organisations more viable by strengthening the ties between them and the private and public sectors.

Developing New Industries in Bretagne, France

This pilot action expands upon the other pilot action enacted by CRESS (*Chambre Régionale d'Économie Sociale et Solidaire de Bretagne*), that consisted of improving the business model of reuse and recycling centres in order to foster the circular economy in the region.

With this social innovation initiative, CRESS intends to create a Social and Solidarity Economy recycling industry in the region, capable of solving the employment needs in the region and to further improving the recycling and reuse processes, thus strengthening the green and inclusive economy of the region.

After the industry has been created, the pilot action aims to identify participants with similar projects, so that synergies can be created and cooperation promoted. All willing, this should result in the consolidation of a modern recycling industry that follows green and inclusive economic principles and positively contributes to the region of Bretagne.

For this purpose, specific activities were held, such as the constitution of a working group to create a new mutualised sorting unit for unsold clothes, training and information that were offered to public entities regarding the subjects of circular economy and social and solidarity economy, studies and meetings about material reusing initiatives and interviews with local stakeholders willing to develop businesses, or with entities that help people develop new businesses.

Trends and final remarks

Private organisations are becoming more common in the social economy sector. As welfare states continue to struggle with the provision of social services, the social economy becomes more important. Local enterprises and other private for-profit organisations are expected to pay more attention to the creation of social value in their territory and to participate in local initiatives and programs that seek to address social problems and promote the wellbeing of its citizens.

Table 5. *Current status and future trends within the area of Social Economy and Social Responsibility*

	Social Economy & Social Responsibility	
	Current status	**Future trends**
Social enterprise sector	Weak relationship between social enterprises, local government and private sector, thus compromising the survival of social enterprises.	Social enterprises sector is fostered in the long run, increasing the expertise of the field and making these organisations more viable by strengthening the ties between them and the private and public sectors.
Circular and social economy	Lack of employment and scarce adoption of reuse and recycling processes.	Consolidation of a modern Social and Solidarity Economy recycling industry that follows green and inclusive economic principles.
Employment in the social economy	Workers in the social economy are rising in number but still do not have consistent benefits and protection.	A specific framework for social enterprises is provided in every country in order to support the workers and award them the same benefits that exist in other sectors.

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 5 summarises the future trends of the main aspects identified by the pilot actions of the project in the area of Social Economy and Social Responsibility.

The idea that private organisations should not concern themselves with the social impact of their work and instead focus on the economic output, as Friedman put it, is a thing of the past. Never have enterprises and businesses had a more important role in the promotion of social inclusion, sustainable development and local development as they do today. At the same time, many debates have been held about the accountability of transnational corporations and their business models that exempt them from the responsibility or from the blame for transgressions (Valor, 2005).

Nonetheless, social corporate responsibility often fails to meet the expectations of policy makers. Sometimes it is due to the fact that the past or coming crisis affecting the public sector and often resulting in austerity measures that limit the provision of social services, equally affects the private sector and their capacity to help or support local organisations or solidary initiatives. Other times, it is because the notion of private institutions using their profits to the benefit of society rather than for personal gain is still foreign to many investors and owners of such enterprises (Amin *et al*., 2002).

Change is a slow process and, while legislation can try to push and promote it, only time can see this change actually happen. With that said, the role of the state in promoting the social economy is not a passive one. From key pieces of legislation, to fiscal frameworks or social innovation programs, much can be done to promote and support the social economy. The examples provided in this report, even if at an earlier stage of implementation, allow us to see how public institutions can have an impact in some regions by helping specific sectors or by creating close working relations between communities, local institutions and private actors, in order to create solutions for local issues together.

Social Innovation and Welfare Services

The Social Innovation & Welfare Services Working Group of the Atlantic Social Lab project was formed by the Municipality of Avilés (Spain) and the group leader, Agglomeration Community of Pau-Béarn-Pyrénées (France). They met in person four times and by videoconference two times.

These two project partners implemented the following pilot actions which make a case for how social innovation can contribute to both improving welfare services and allow the public institutions to better deal with social problems by implementing innovative approaches while also encouraging public institution, local actors and third sector institutions so to promote the welfare of citizens.

Social Clauses in Public Procurement in Avilés, Spain

This action was conducted by the Municipality of Avilés (Spain). The 2008 financial crisis was particularly harsh for Spain, with unemployment rates reaching 26,1% in 2013. While greatly reduced since then, Spain still has one of the highest unemployment rates of the OECD and the second highest of the EU (13,6%)[3], more than twice the EU average.

High unemployment rates are particularly nefarious for groups such as migrants, woman, young people and disabled individuals. The Municipality of Avilés decided to promote the professional inclusion of these individuals by enacting a regulation that established an annual percentage of the marketed jobs reserved for vulnerable groups while improving the working conditions of these individuals. Furthermore, the hiring of these individuals by private enterprises that directly work or ave contracts with the Municipality of Avilés was also sought.

To oversee these efforts and adapt the regulations to the European guidelines and Spanish laws, a Municipal Work Commission was created, which was charged with the elaboration of the new regulatory documents and the creation of indicators to evaluate and monitor the implementation of this initiative.

This initiative was built upon a similar one enacted in the awake of the 2008 financial crisis. The Municipality of Avilés used this opportunity to develop existing regulations and develop them further by adding environmental and sustainability clauses, as well as devising an impact monitoring method. Partners were also asked to participate in the evaluation of the initiative and in the documentation created, in order to detect weaknesses and add input regarding its evaluation and monitoring.

Wellbeing of isolated senior citizens in Pau, France

This action was conducted by the Agglomeration Community of Pau-Béarn-Pyrénées, France. Like most European countries, France faces several social problems stemming from the rapid aging of its population, with provisory numbers from 2018 pointing towards 110,2 individuals above 65 years of age for every 100 individuals below 15 years[4]. The number of older people is expected to increase from 101 million in 2018 to 149 million by 2050[5]. Besides the financial and economic consequences of this rapid ageing, the proportionally larger number of senior citizens will require new policies and approaches to ensure their wellbeing, quality of life and inclusion.

[3] Eurostat: Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted, February 2020 (%).

[4] PORDATA: Ageing index (The ratio of the number of elderly (aged 65 and over) to the number of young persons (from 0 to 14).

[5] Eurostat: Ageing Europe - statistics on population developments.

The 31 municipalities that constitute the Agglomeration Community of Pau-Béarn-Pyénées elaborated an action called ENSEMBL', in order to deal with the social isolation of the elderly and their growing loss of autonomy. This action was designed to set up a social network of interactions at a neighbourhood level, through the incorporation of an online platform. The ENSEBML' objectives are the management of volunteers, communication facilitation and the provision of information regarding the services for the elderly, thus granting answers to the needs that the elderly might express and coordinating all the involved partners.

While results will take some time to be successfully measured, this social innovation action intends to make use of digital technologies to promote the creation of local support networks and the diffusion of relevant information. It is expected that any citizen, elderly or not, will be able to access the platform in order to look for support or information. The formation of ties in the community is the primary goal, as a means to fight isolation and promote community-based bonding between citizens. It will also help the authorities and organisations to better understand the needs and problems that these individuals experience in their daily lives.

Trends and final remarks

European states face difficult times. Many changes have occurred and nothing indicates that we should expect a slowdown in the near future. Of all of these changes, the demographic transformations of the structure of the population will certainly affect how countries govern themselves and force many more changes related with the social policies that have been the pillars of the welfare state.

Table 6. *Current status and future trends within the area of Social Economy and Social Responsibility*

	Welfare Services	
	Current Status	**Future trends**
Professional inclusion	High unemployment, particularly for groups such as migrants, woman, young people and disabled individuals.	Quota regulation for inclusion in the labour market with the addition of environmental and sustainability clauses.
Aging population	Socially isolated senior citizens with lack of autonomy.	Volunteering and information about services for the elderly to support issue of the rapid aging of the population.
Local support networks	People in the community are detached and there is no mutual support and awareness of vulnerable situations.	Community-based bonding between citizens to create a self-sustained helping network at local level.

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 6 summarises the future trends of the main aspects identified by the pilot actions of the project in the area of Welfare Services.

The provision of social services, public healthcare and education systems together with unemployment assistance and retirement pensions, are but a few services that are facing hardships as the active population dwindles, the job quality decreases and life expectancy increases. Public spending associated to these services is likely to increase, but there is only a limited amount of resources that can be spent before social services collapse.

Currently, many countries already struggle with underfunded social services and troubling times are expected to follow in the near future, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Now, more than ever, innovative solutions and alternatives to social issues are paramount, so that the most vulnerable social groups do not find themselves excluded or without support. While criticism can be made at how social services are being transferred to the social economy market, where for-profit social enterprises are becoming more prevalent and in competition with public services and not-for-profit organisations, many countries lack State resources to fully support the social sector, which is why social innovation can pave the way for viable and sustainable alternatives.

While social innovation research is still in an early stage of maturity, results have been positive and impacts of social innovation initiatives at the territorial scale have shown to be particularly effective at dealing with local issues and creating support networks amongst organisations, private sector and public institutions. Large-scale results still require more time and effort and are likely to be impossible to measure in a short time scale. Not only that but transposing social innovation experiences from a micro, territorial plane to broader, national level policy has proven to be a difficult task, which requires more research and investigation, as it does social innovation in general.

CONCLUSIONS

This report presented a brief overview of the Atlantic Social Lab project results, breaking them down into each thematic domain, while providing the theoretical framework for the pilot actions carried out during the project and that will keep on going for the foreseeable future. The intention of this project was not only to create social innovative solutions to complex social projects that had proven to be difficult to solve or address, but create solutions that would continue to exist beyond the timeframe of the project.

Another key aspect of the project was to bring awareness on social innovation and how it could be brought into play when dealing with social issues. We can confidently say that the experience of the Atlantic Social Lab project provided the partners involved with helpful advice and examples of projects in the years to come, as the key elements of the project will keep on being as relevant as ever in the future. The partnerships between public, private and third sector organisations, the networks created, and the international cooperation will remain invaluable and provide the foundations for new initiatives that, like ASL, intend to promote citizen engagement and their active involvement in decision-making processes.

At a time of great environmental vulnerability, the emphasis put on sustainability also proved to be insightful, as the need for alternative means of production and new ways to think about consumption and the relationship between society and the natural world are pressing like never before.

To achieve these results, information proved to be the one major common element across all four thematic areas. In fact, the access to information was imperative for excluded and minority groups to learn about their rights and become interested in active participation, thus favouring the reinforcement of ties in the community and promoting the inclusive development of the territories; information also proved to be necessary to develop a public consciousness about the need for the adoption of green policies and to make the wider public more receptive towards alternative means of consumption. It was also invaluable for private organisations to learn how to assist the community and promote more sustainable activities, while fostering ties with public and social sector entities; and it was paramount for the creation of new policies and approaches capable of providing welfare services in today's Europe, which is going through its second hardest crises since the end of World War II.

Atlantic Social Lab has thus demonstrated how scientific knowledge and approaches can be used in everyday contexts by public, private and third sector organisations to deal with social problems and produce change that ultimately leads to the improvement of the lives of individuals. Knowledge is only useful when open and democratic, and the knowledge we obtained during this project will certainly help social innovative solutions in the future, as well as further develop the scientific field of social innovation.

REFERENCES

Amin, A.; Cameron, A. & Hudson, R. (2002) *Placing the Social Economy*, London, Routledge.

Arnstein, S.R. (1969) The Ladder of Citizen Participation, *Journal of American Planning Association*, 35 (4), 216-224.

Asenova, D., & Damianova, Z. (2019) The interplay between social innovation and sustainability in the CASI and other FP7 projects, in Howaldt, J., Kaletka, C., Schröder, A & Zirngieb, M. (eds.) *Atlas of Social Innovation: New Practices for a Better Future*, Dortmund, Sozialforschungsstelle, TU Dortmund University, 44-46.

Ayob, N.; Teasdale, S. & Fagan, K. (2016) How Social Innovation 'Came to Be': Tracing the Evolution of a Contested Concept, *Journal of Social Policy*, 45 (4), 635-53.

Backhaus, J.; Genus, A.; Wittmayer, J.M. (2018) Introduction: the nexus of Social Innovation, sustainable consumption and societal transformation, in Backhaus, J., Genus, A., Lorek, S., Vadovics, E., Wittmayer, J.M. (eds.) *Social Innovation and Sustainable Consumption: Research and Action for Societal Transformation*, Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 1-11.

Baldwin, P. (1990) *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Bell, B.; Codreanu, M. & Machin, S. (2020) What can previous recessions tell us about the Covid-19 Downturn?, Centre for Economic Performance Paper No.007, available at: http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cepcovid-19-007.pdf

Berzin, S.C.; Pitt-Catsouphes, M.; Peterson, C. (2014) Role of State-Level Governments in Fostering Social Innovation, *Journal of Policy Practice*, 13, 135-155.

Blowfield, M. (2005) Corporate Social Responsibility – The Failing Discipline and Why it Matters for International Relations, *International Relations*, 19 (2), 173-191.

Cajaiba-Santana, G. (2014) Social Innovation: Moving the Field Forward. A conceptual framework, *Technological Forecasting & Social Change*, 82, 42-51.

Chareka, O. & Sears, A. (2006) Young People's Conceptions of Voting as a Means of Political Participation, *Canadian Journal of Education*, 29 (2), 521-540.

Davies, A. & Simon, J. (2013) Engaging Citizens in Social Innovation: A short guide to the research for policy makers and practitioners, *A deliverable of the project: "The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe" (TEPSIE)*, Brussels: European Commission, DG Research.

Einsiedel, E.F. (2013) Rethinking "Publics" and "Participation" in New Governance Contexts, in O'Doherty, K. & Einsiedel E.F. (eds.) *Public Engagement and Emerging Technologies*, Vancouver, UBC Press, 279-292.

Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2014) Towards the Circular Economy: accelerating the scale up across global supply chains. Isle of Wight, Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

European Commission (2017) *Social Innovation as a Trigger for Transformations – the Role of Research,* Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union.

European Commission (2018) *The 2018 Ageing Report: Economic & Budgetary Projections for the 28 EU Member States (2016-2070)*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union.

Fung, A. (2015) Putting the Public Back into Governance: The Challenges of Citizen Participation and Its Future, *Public Administration Review*, 75 (4), 513-522.

Garland, D. (2016) *The Welfare State: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Ghisellini, P., Cialani, C., & Ulgiati, S. (2016) A review on circular economy: the expected transition to a balanced interplay of environmental and economic systems, Journal of Cleaner Production, 114 (15), 11-32.

Goodhart, M. (2007) Europe's Democratic Deficits through the Looking Glass: The European Union as a Challenge for Democracy, *Perspectives on Politics*, 5 (3), 567-584.

Guerreiro, J.A. & Pinto, H. (2020) Social Innovation, in *MDPI Scholarly Community Encyclopedia*, Available at: https://encyclopedia.pub/3335.

Habermas, J. (1986) The New Obscurity: the crisis of the welfare state and the exhaustion of utopian energies, *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 11 (2), 1-18.

Haxeltine, A.; Pel, B.; Wittmayer, J.; Dumitru, A.; Kemp, R.; Avelino, F. (2017) Building a middle range theory of Transformative Social Innovation: theoretical pitfalls and methodological responses, *European Public and Social Innovation Review*, 2 (1), 59-77.

Hazelkorn, E. (2009) Community engagement as Social Innovation, in Weber, L.E. & Duderstadt, J.J. (eds.) *University Research for Innovation*, London, Economica, 63-76.

Henderson, F. (2019) Enacting Social Innovation in Scottish Welfare: Regional Challenges, in Howaldt, J. & Kaletka, C. (eds.) *Atlas of Social Innovation: A World of New Practices*, Vol. 2, Munich: Oekom Verlag, 122-124.

Henderson, F.; Reilly, C.A. & Whittam, G. (2018) From charity to social enterprise: The marketization of social care, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 24 (3), 651-666.

Henderson, F.; Hall, K.; Mutongi, A. & Whittam, G. (2019) Social enterprise, social innovation and self-directed care: lessons from Scotland, *Social Enterprise Journal*, 15 (4), 438-456.

Hickel, J. & Kallis, G. (2019) Is Green Growth Possible? *New Political Economy*, DOI: 10.1080/13563467.2019.1598964

Hulgard, L. & Ferreira, S. (2019) Social Innovation and Public Policy, in Howaldt, J.; Kaletka, C.; Schröder, A.; Zirngiebl, M. (org.), Atlas of Social Innovation. New Practices for a Better Future, Dortmund, Sozialforschungsstelle, TU Dortmund University.

Kerlin, J.A. (2013) Social Enterprises in the United States and Europe: Understanding and Learning from the Differences, *Voluntas*, 17, 247-263.

Kytle, B. & Ruggie, J.G. (2005) Corporate Social Responsibility as Risk Management, *Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative Working Paper No. 10*., Cambridge, MA, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Le Blanc, D. (2011) Introduction: Special issue on green economy and sustainable development, *Natural Resources Forum*, 35, 151-154.

Lévesque, B. (2013) Social Innovation in governance and public management systems: towards a new paradigm? In Moulaert, F.; MacCallum, D.; Mehmood, A.; Hamdouch, A. (eds.) *The International Handbook on Social Innovation*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 25-39.

Loiseau E.; Saikku L; Antikainen R.; Droste N.; Hansjürgens B.; Pitkänen K.; Leskinen P.; Kuikman P. & Thomsen, M. (2016) Green economy and related concepts: An overview, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 139, 361-371.

Lukkarinen, M. (2005) Community development, economic development and the social economy, *Community Development Journal*, 40 (4), 419-424.

Marques, P.; Morgan, K.; & Richardson, R. (2018) Social innovation in question: The theoretical and practical implications of a contested concept, *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 36 (3), 496-512.

Marshall, T.H. (1950) *Citizenship and Social Class and other essays by T.H. Marshall*, London, Cambridge University Press.

McGowan, K.; Westley, F. & Tjornbo, O. (2017) The history of social innovation, in Westley, F.; McGowan, K. & Tjornbo, O. (eds.) *The Evolution of Social Innovation: Building Resilience Through Transitions*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 1-17.

Moulaert, F. & Ailenei, O. (2005) Social Economy, Third Sector and Solidarity Relations: A Conceptual Synthesis from History to Present, *Urban Studies*, 42 (11), 2037-2053.

Moulaert, F.; MacCallum, D.; Hillier, J. (2013) Social Innovation: intuition, precept, concept, theory and practice, In Moulaert, F.; MacCallum, D.; Mehmood, A.; Hamdouch, A. (eds.) The International Handbook on Social Innovation, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 13-24.

Moulaert, F.; Mehmood A.; MacCallum, D. & Leubolt B. (2017) Social innovation as a trigger for transformations - the role of research. Accessed 18 March 2019. Available at: https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a7b4de0a-1070-11e8-9253-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

Mudde, C. & Kaltwasser, C.R. (2017) Populism: A Very Short Introduction, Great Britain, Oxford University Press.

Nicholls, A.; Simon, J. & Gabriel, M. (2015) Introduction: Dimensions of Social Innovation, in Nichols, A.; Simon, J. & Gabriel, M. (eds.) *New Frontiers in Social Innovation Research*, United Kingdom, Palgrave Macmillan, 1-26.

OECD (2011) Towards Green Growth: Monitoring Progress - OECD Indicators, DOI:10.1787/9789264111318-en

Pinto, H. & Guerreiro, J.A. (2019) Resilience, Innovation, and Knowledge Transfer: Conceptual Considerations and Future Research Directions, Almeida, H. & Sequeira, B. (eds.) *The Role of Knowledge Transfer in Open Innovation*, IGI Global, 281-299.

Pinto, H; Nogueira, C.; Guerreiro, A. & Sampaio, F. (forthcoming) Social Innovation and the Role of the State: actor's perspectives for a paradigm shift.

Pinto, H.; Sampaio, F.; Carrozza, C. & Nogueira, C. (org.) (2018) *Atlantic social innovation mapping: a multilevel perspective*, Atlantic Social Lab and Centro de Estudos Sociais: Coimbra.

Pinto, H.; Sampaio, F. & Nogueira, C. (2019) *Social Innovation Pilot Actions in the Atlantic Area: A Proposal for Monitoring Impacts*, Coimbra, Atlantic Social Lab and Centro de Estudos Sociais.

Reeves, A., Lemon, M. & Cook, D. (2013) Jump-starting transition? Catalysing grassroots action on climate change, *Energy Efficiency*, 7 (1), 115-132.

Rowe, G. & Frewer, L.J. (2005) A Typology of Public Engagement Mechanism, *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 30 (2), 251-290.

Schumpeter, J.A. (1983 [1934]) *The Theory of Economic Development*, New Jersey, Transaction Publishers.

The Young Foundation (2012) *Social Innovation Overview: A deliverable of the project: "The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building Social Innovation in Europe" (TEPSIE)*, Brussels, European Commission, DG Research.

UNEP (2011) Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication - A Synthesis for Policy Makers: www.unep.org/greeneconomy

Valor, C. (2005) Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship: Towards Corporate Accountability, *Business and Society Review*, 110 (2), 191-212.

World Bank (2012) Inclusive Green Growth: The Pathway to Sustainable Development, DOI: 10.1596/978-0-8213-9551-6

Wynne, B. (2006) Public Engagement as a Means of Restoring Public Trust in Science: Hitting the Notes, but Missing the Music? *Community Genetics*, 9, 211-220.