Chapter 5
Territorial Development Perspective of Social Innovation

ABSTRACT

The objective of this chapter is to summarize the patterns of, and links between, social innovation and territorial development research. A clear growth of territorial development research with a social innovation perspective can be seen after 2014. Territorial development research recognizes social innovation as an alternative perspective of development and territorial transformation underpinning social relations to empower communities. Social innovation in the territorial development context satisfies human needs, empowers social actors and their involvement in governance, and modifies power relations within spatial levels and contexts. The integrated area development model pioneered by Moulaert and Seika has gained significant attention in both research and practice as a consistent approach to neo-endogenous development and growth strategies going beyond the traditional innovation models such as innovation milieus and industrial districts. Such social innovation approaches can either be bottom-up or top-down, are path-dependent, process-oriented, and contextual.

INTRODUCTION

Social innovation is necessary for territorial development (Estensoro 2015) and it lays the foundations for new paradigm shifts in regional and territorial development through diverse forms of actions co-producing urban services and public goods to interven in the resolution of social needs (Massari 2018). Specifically, social innovation addresses local area development challenges including skills and capability dispersion to support urban and local development policy; lack of integration among national, regional and local spatial levels; and the needs of disadvantaged groups in the urban cohort (Moulaert 2000). This association with social and territorial issues places social innovation in the context of place related organizational forms connected to governance (Massari 2018). Territorial innovation research builds on social economy and social relations perspectives to define social innovation. Hence, social innovation satisfies human needs by transforming social relations in to improved governance systems guiding and regulating the allocation of goods and services by establishing novel governance mechanisms such as discussion forums, political decision-making systems, organizations, interfaces and allocation systems (Moulaert 2009). Further, social innovation may take the forms of novel ideas for products or services satisfying social needs and establishing new social partnerships (Grisolia and Farragina 2015). Thus, social innovation is considered as a driver of urban transformation (e.g. Galvan and Hamdouch 2019).

Territorial, economic and social cohesion are main European regional policy focuses which have placed a strong emphasis on innovation focused models as change agents of regional development and economic growth (Pires, Polido, Teles, Silva, and Rodrigues 2019). As a result, territorial innovation models and integrated area development (IAD) have become key concepts within territorial development research in recent years. Territorial innovation models are regional industrial agglomerations (Moulaert and Sekia 2003) which are crucial in explaining the development trajectories followed by sub-national levels territories (Doloreux et al. 2019). IAD is a mechanism to address and organize social innovation (Moulaert 2009) and an innovative alternative to extend local community development (Moulaert and Sekia 2003). However, in their recent bibliometric analysis and review Doloreux et al. (2019) recognize the presence of social innovation discussions in the territorial innovation literature with little theoretical content thereby concluding that territorial

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