Civil society roles in transition: towards sustainable food?

by

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The Sustainable Lifestyles Research Group (SLRG) is a multi-centre research network collaborating to further understanding of the opportunities and constraints on sustainable living in the UK. The SLRG is coordinated from the University of Surrey, and brings together project teams from Surrey's Centre for Environmental Strategy (CES) and Departments of Sociology and Psychology. It also includes teams at other internationally acclaimed research centres: the University of Sussex's Science Policy Research Unit; the Institute for Fiscal Studies; the University of Edinburgh; the University of Bath; and Brunel University.

SLRG is directed by Professor Tim Jackson, Professor of Sustainable Development at the University of Surrey, with Professor Andy Stirling of the University of Sussex as deputy director. The network is coordinated by Ian Christie, research fellow at CES.

Funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Scottish Government and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), SLRG builds on the pathbreaking research of the University of Surrey's previous Research, ESRC-funded programme RESOLVE – Research on values, lifestyles and environment, also directed by Professor Tim Jackson. SLRG works in partnership with its sister programme the Sustainable Practices Research Group (SPRG), funded by the ESRC and coordinated by Professor Dale Southerton at the University of Manchester.

SLRG and SPRG aim to document and analyse the complex links between lifestyles, consumption, everyday practices, values and the transition to sustainable ways of life. While SPRG focuses on particular consumption practices and technologies, SLRG's projects examine the lifestyles of households and communities and model the implications of consumption choices and values.

The working papers in this series reflect the outputs, findings and recommendations emerging from a truly inter-disciplinary research programme arranged around four thematic research strands:

Moments of transition: in-depth quantitative and qualitative research with households to understand the values, attitudes and habits informing their lifestyles, and to assess the impact of moments of major change - moving house, the arrival of the first child, and retirement - on habits and aspirations.

Community and lifestyle change: studies of sustainable lifestyle change and innovations at the level of communities, focusing on remote rural localities in Scotland and on civil society initiatives for food growing and local resilience in England.

Economic modelling of lifestyle change: studies focusing on the size and nature of rebound effects in energy use that could reduce or cancel out the gains from energy efficiency advances; and on the price responsiveness of consumption in relation to energy and sustainably produced foodstuffs.

Synthesis of research and implications for policy: workshops and papers seeking to integrate findings and concepts across the suite of SLRG and SPRG projects; and research into the relationship of research evidence on sustainable living to policy development.

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Abstract

Civil society organisations (CSOs) in the UK are currently engaged in attempts to make food systems more sustainable, i.e. greener, fairer and healthier. These efforts have been maintained over several decades, for instance the Soil Association was launched in response to concerns about modern agriculture and food in 1946. But more sustainable food systems remain marginal. Thus, the aim of this paper is to contribute towards an improved understanding of the important roles that CSOs can and do play within processes of large-scale social change (or 'transitions'). It does this by developing a typology of the distinguishable roles played by CSOs in transition, and relating this to empirical findings from three UK case studies. Through a mixture of field observations, documentary analysis and in-depth interviewing, it makes a number of relevant findings. First, it provides detailed empirical characterisation of the activities, relationships with other actors, and stated intentions of specific CSOs. Second, it finds that CSOs chart unique transformative pathways, both individually and collectively, which emerge from their interactions and strategic repositioning over time. Third, rather than being guided by a single shared vision of transition, CSOs are found to be engaged in a plurality of intended transformations that contend with, cross-cut and partially encompass each other. These findings contribute to scholarly knowledge about how civil society actors exert influence over much larger and better-resourced actors operating within mainstream food systems and raises important questions about the attribution of agency in studies of transition.

1   Introduction

Food is fundamental – as human beings, we all need to eat. And yet it is often held that current patterns of food consumption and production are unsustainable, leaving many of us vulnerable to grave environmental and social risks [4, 9, 27, 1, 5, 11, 21, 19, 25, 35].

In the context of this paper, 'sustainability' is understood to be constituted by 'the Brundtland triad' of environmental integrity, social equity and personal wellbeing [4, 36]. Nonetheless, how this manifests in practice will inevitably vary from place to place and time to time, looking and feeling different depending on the framing assumptions that underpin each instance when something – or someone – is conceived of as such, i.e. as

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either 'sustainable', or 'unsustainable', or even as somewhat, or partly or 'under some views', sustainable [17]. Moreover, this paper is not concerned with evaluating the extent to which sustainability is achieved, but with the extent to which it is striven for, and how this striving is done. Thus, the motivations, objectives and framings of different actors are as important as their actions, and sustainability is understood as a boundary term around which different actors operate.

With these initial considerations in mind, empirical research has shown that civil society organisations (CSOs) in the UK are currently engaged in attempts to make food systems more sustainable, i.e. greener, fairer and healthier. In fact, it is estimated that between £300-700 million is spent per year on activities related to food and farming by somewhere in the region of 10-25,000 CSOs [6]. Of particular interest within the context of this paper, these organisations have been found to adopt a variety of different approaches to achieving change, including "activities that make an immediate difference on the ground, such as community gardening or cookery classes", as well as those that are designed to "change the rules of the game, for example through campaigns or lobbying", and activities designed to "co-ordinate and facilitate the activities of other groups" [6].

Though these efforts have been maintained over several decades and awareness of sustainability has increased among many of the key stakeholders in food systems, it is widely agreed that large scale movement towards sustainability remains intractable and elusive. Nonetheless, policymakers are increasingly turning to civil society to provide solutions, for instance under the rubric of the 'Big Society', 'social innovation', and so on. Thus, the focus of this paper will be upon moving towards an improved understanding of the important roles that CSOs can and do play within processes of large-scale social change (or 'transitions') to sustainability.

2   Existing theory

Civil society is generally understood by scholars to be a distinguishable yet inherently open and changeable arena – defined in relation to state and market arenas and always intertwined with them in practice – in which people voluntarily form themselves into groups in order to connect around divergent notions of the public good [38, 7, 8, 12, 10]. In recognition of this conceptual complexity, operational definitions of civil society tend to characterise it as an unbounded space constituted by a collection of organisations that share some characteristics (but not necessarily all), out of a defined set. Key amongst these are: 'non-state', 'not-for-profit' (or 'non-market'), 'voluntaristic', and 'for public benefit' [18].

Thus, it is proposed by some academics in the field of Sustainability Transitions, that civil society actors (including CSOs), by virtue of being positioned outside of industrial regimes, are of prime importance in the societal reorientation of incumbent socio-technical systems of provision towards sustainability [14]. For, in contrast to the lock-in experienced within the confines of incumbent arrangements, it has been suggested that civil society is an arena within which radically more sustainable systems can be dreamt up, worked out, test-run and made ready for application writ large [29, 31].

One way that it has been suggested that CSOs might contribute to such shifts is by experimenting with alternative socio-technical configurations (or 'grassroots innovations') in the protective spaces of niches, which benefit from the shielding and nurturing influences of supportive communities [34]. By extracting general lessons and principles from local projects, sharing them between projects, and developing them within global networks, it has been suggested that CSOs can also play an instrumental role in improving the performance of promising innovations [15, 28]. Under this view, the transformative potential of CSOs is bound up with their capacity to drive change 'from the bottom up', reconfiguring food systems as they learn from their experiences, extend their networks, and grow their markets. Moreover, drawing heavily on Social Movement Theory [2, 23], some scholars from within the field have suggested viewing CSOs as sources of novel identities, new ways of framing societal issues, and alternative world views that complement the more sustainable systems of provision [16, 33].

In addition to this body of work that looks at 'bottom-up' change, scholars of technology and innovation have also begun to pay attention to the capacity of CSOs to drive change 'from the top down', e.g. through exerting influence over policies, institutions, business structures, social movements and so on. This work has revealed how CSOs become involved in discursive contests with incumbent state and market actors (Geels and Verhees 2011). In this view, the objectives of CSOs are around re-framing debates so that pressure is applied to unsustainable incumbent actors and practices, and public opinion falls in favour of more sustainable alternatives.

Part of this involves participating in and building social movements that encourage mass publics to adopt different ways of viewing the world and their place within it. Another aspect involves actively contesting unsustainable incumbent arrangements by giving voice to societal issues and bringing them into the public eye, and by pressurising industries to respond [22], e.g. through lobbying policymakers, staging direct actions and protests, engaging in framing struggles in the media, and mobilising resources and supporters [32, 14]. An additional aspect involves using this pressure to encourage and enable incumbent actors to apply incremental reforms to their practices, for instance by enrolling companies into voluntary certification schemes, such as organic and fair-trade [30, 31]. Moreover, through this mixture of approaches, it is argued that CSOs can at times create the initial conditions required for the destabilisation of incumbent industrial regimes and their replacement with more sustainable configurations [37].

3 The Roles in Transition framework

Based on the theoretical literature cited above, an analytical framework was developed for understanding CSO agency in the context of transitions. The Roles in Transition (RIT) framework takes the form of a typology of existing scholarly ideas concerning the distinguishable roles played by civil society actors within transitions to more sustainable systems. Thus, it provides a 'systemic view' of civil society agency.

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The following are definitions of those four roles (see also Figure 1):

1. Grassroots innovation role, i.e. experimentation, in the protective spaces of civil society niches, with novel, more sustainable configurations of food provisioning that respond to local situations and the interests and values of the communities involved.

2. Niche development role, i.e. facilitation of learning and capacity-building around grassroots innovations, thus aiding the strategic development (including up-scaling and replication) of alternative systems of food provision.

3. Normative contestation role, i.e. application of normative pressure to the public, policy-makers and food industry, which undermines existing unsustainable practices and shifts favour towards alternative systems – thereby destabilising incumbent food regimes.

4. Regime reform role, i.e. enablement of regime actors, including mainstream businesses and public bodies, to adopt and embed more sustainable configurations of technologies, practices and organisational arrangements, thus leading to the reform and re-orientation of incumbent food regimes.

The framework's utility lies in enabling both empirical characterisation of these theoretically defined, functional roles, and comparison of the 'systemic view' of civil society agency adopted by scholars of transitions with 'actor-level views' (i.e. empirically constructed and self-defined roles of specific CSOs). It is through the exploration of three UK case studies of CSOs and their networks that both of these aims are addressed.

4 Enactments of the roles

Despite important contributions made by the survey of UK-based CSOs working on food and farming that was cited in the introduction to this paper [6], little else is known about these actors. According to Renting et al. [24], "only fragmented information is available, especially on the basis of Internet sources and (field) expert knowledge, and only in exceptional cases (semi-) official data are published". Hence, in order to test the RIT framework within this empirical context, an exploratory multiple case study design was adopted (see Figure 1). Given that the RIT framework is comprised of multiple role-types, this allowed for both rich empirical characterisation as well as comparison of the roles.

4.1 Methods

The four roles in the RIT framework were used to inform the selection of cases, but these were not cases of 'roles' per se, as the concept lacks concreteness and simultaneously suggests both actor-level as well as systems-level (or "spectator") perspectives [26, pp. 97]. Instead, three cases of CSOs were selected according to the roles in transition that they appeared, from initial desk-based research and pilot interviews, to play. The cases were defined by first selecting three 'focal organisations' using the RIT framework, and

then subsequently identifying a small sample of other organisations with which they have substantial connections ('linked organisations' from herein), by snowballing. Hence, the focal organisation in case one – Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Community Farm – appeared from initial desk-based research and pilot interviews to play the grassroots innovation role, whereas the focal organisation in case two – the Fife Diet – appeared to play the niche development role, and the focal organisation in case three – the Soil Association – appeared to play both the normative contestation and regime reform roles (see Figure 1). The rationale for including one case that seemed to clearly embody two roles was that it opened up the possibility of exploring the consequences of combining multiple roles within a single organisation. In total, 18 individual CSOs were included in the study, the remaining 15 of which appeared as linked organisations (see Table 1).

In addition, the following basic criteria were also used as a filter for selecting both focal and linked organisations, in order to ensure a firm ground for comparison. Organisations must:

1. Seek change towards sustainability, however divergently construed

2. Spend a significant amount of their time working on food or farming (i.e. excluding groups that spend only a little of their time on food and farming)

3. Be situated within civil society, as indicated by these qualities:

   - Non-state (governed and managed independently)
   - Non-profit-distributing (not rent-seeking, no shareholders except in the case of cooperatives and mutuals)
   - For public benefit/interest
   - Degree of voluntarism

At the same time, maximum variety was sought during the sampling of linked organisations, in terms of 1) the kinds of relationships that they have with the focal organisation, and 2) the following dimensions, which are taken from the Food Issues Census segmentation framework [6]: longevity (indicated by the date founded), size (indicated by the value of incoming resources, number of employees, and number of supporters), geography (indicated by the remit of operations and location of HQ), and structure (indicated by the legal form, governance arrangements, and trading status). See Table 1 below, which gives an overview of all the individual CSOs in the study and indicates which case they belong to.

Over a period of two years from 2011-13, a range of empirical materials relating to each of these three cases was obtained through desk research, participation in sector events, key-actor interviews with staff and volunteers, retrieval of archival records, and selection of promotional and strategic publications. These materials were coded within Nvivo and used to (1) map the activities of each organisation onto the RIT framework and trace any changes over time, (2) characterise the substantial and formal relationships between the CSOs in each case and reveal the effects of synergies and tensions within
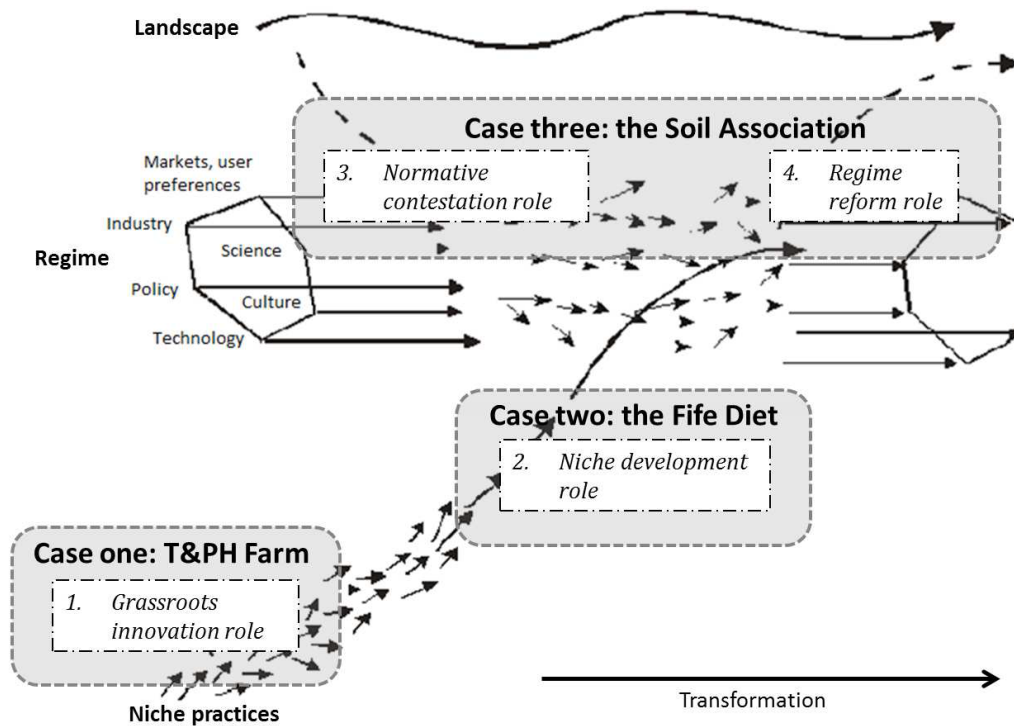
Figure 1: Theoretical basis for selection of focal organisations for the three cases

the networks, and (3) compare the mapping of activities with key-actors' own theories of change, intended impacts on food systems and visions of more sustainable futures.

4.2 Findings

This process led to a number of outcomes. First, the four roles now have an inductive as well as theoretical basis. Within the context of the three cases, the enactment of each role was found to be associated with distinctive activities, relationships with other CSOs, and styles of management (see Table 2). Furthermore, in-depth examination of these enactments revealed that the four roles can be distinguished analytically by (1) the specific elements in food systems through which transformation is sought, and (2) the specific actors involved (see Table 3, which presents an improved version of the framework that is grounded in the empirical situation of the food and farming sector).

This analysis also revealed that the CSOs in the study were coming together with other actors in ways that eschewed the easy analytical hierarchies implied by the levels of the MLP [13]. For instance, in all three cases the categories of actors carrying out practices associated with grassroots innovation – as well as those using and benefitting from niche development activities – included many different types that were enrolled and instrumentalised by the CSOs in question, making it difficult to know who was actually innovating and driving the change.

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Name abbr.	Date founded	Incoming resources	#Staff FTE	#Supporters	Supporter description	Remit	Location of HQ	Legal form	Gov. form	Trading status
TFR	2007	none	0	325	People with web profiles	Local	Forest Row, East Sussex	Uninc	Charity	No
BDAC	2011	n/a	4	150	Graduates	National-int'l	Forest Row, East Sussex	CLG	Charity	No
Nourish	2009	none	0	1,500	People with web profiles	National	Edinburgh	Uninc	Vol Assn	No
FD	2007	£155,596	2.4	3000	Members	Local	Burntisland, Fife	Uninc	Vol Assn	No
GK	2010	£219,327	4	700	Email subscribers	Local	Kirkcaldy, Fife	CLG	Charity	No
FEC	1998	£236,032	3.3	5000	Email subscribers	National-int'l	Brighton, East Sussex	CLG	Charity	No
BDA	1929	£265,300	6	1060	Licensees and supporters	National-int'l	Stroud, Glous.	Uninc	Charity	Yes
Grow Com	1993	£447,910	20	700	Households in box scheme	Local	Hackney, London	CLG	Soc Ent	Yes
M-CAN	2009	£555,244	25	189	Email subscribers	Local	Mo◁at, Dumfries and Galloway	CLG	Charity	Yes
T & PH	1995	£700,000	20	600	Shareholders	Local	Forest Row, East Sussex	IPS	Co-op	Yes
BDLT	2011	£1,050,000	0.2	30	Shareholders	National-int'l	Stroud, Glous.	IPS	Com Ben	No
Sustain	1999	£2,076,111	26	100	Organisations	National	Central London	CLG	Charity	No
GO	1954	£3,230,513	78	33,000	Members of the public	National-int'l	Coventry	CLG	Charity	Yes
Unicorn	1995	£4,126,788	40	40	Worker members	Local	Manchester	IPS	Co-op	Yes
CIWF	1967	£4,983,896	56.75	41,653	Active donors (donated in last 3yrs)	National-int'l	Godalming, Surrey	CLG	Charity	Yes
SA	1946	£11,416,000	185	24,000	Members and supporters	National-int'l	Bristol	CLG	Charity	Yes
MSC	1997	£12,794,336	74	600	Fisheries in MSC program	National-int'l	Central London	CLG	Charity	Yes
WWF-UK	1961	£57,756,000	300	530,000	Members, adopters, campaigners, supporters	National-int'l	Godalming, Surrey	CLG	Charity	No

Table 1: Longevity, size, geography and structure of all CSOs in the study (subset of criteria used for case selection). No shading indicates organisation in case I; ᵖale shading, case II; dark shading, case III; diagonal lines, multiple case association

Grassroots innovation

Alternative forms of production
Biodynamic/organic/low-carbon agriculture and horticulture, aquaponics, farm diversification, and growing trials for novel crops.
Peri-urban farming, urban market gardening, and food-growing on urban micro-sites.
Communal growing in gardens, allotments and orchards.
Garden-sharing and seed swapping amongst individuals.

Alternative forms of marketing, distribution and retail
Direct marketing through farm shops, box schemes and farmers' markets; co-operative retail operations.

Alternative forms of consumption
Local diet challenge, community dining events.
Food waste collection.

Alternative forms of social organisation
Community consultation.
Communal ownership by shares.
Co-operative governance.
Care-farming.
Anthroposophy.

Niche development
Developing personnel
Providing accredited horticultural and agricultural training programmes (including distance-learning and residential courses), un-accredited cooking and growing workshops/courses, apprenticeship schemes and volunteer and staff development programmes.

Developing alternative models
Improving knowledge of alternative models by commissioning research, collating case studies, co-ordinating trials and running breeding programmes.
Providing guidance and technical assistance for practitioners through helplines, online and printed resources (including toolkits and how-to guides), knowledge transfer programmes (peer-to-peer and expert-led), and formal standards and guidelines.

Developing networks and infrastructures
Establishing formal members' networks (place-based and nationwide) through online networking platforms, e-zines and network-building events.
Facilitating new partnerships between network members and networking local supply bases.
Providing secure land tenure at below-market rates, start-up funding, specialist inputs.

Normative contestation
Challenging citizens/consumers
Raising awareness and mobilising peoples' support through attention-grabbing stunts, story-telling, celebrity patronage, e-zines and online petitions.
Influencing consumption behaviour, educating and re-skilling people through the provision of information, guidance and advice in food outlets, at public events and through public institutions.
Promoting alternatives to people through advertisements, events and celebrations, public demonstrations and permanent displays.
Generating moralistic pressure by publicly championing and promoting 'good' businesses and practices, naming and shaming 'bad' businesses and practices, and opposing undesirable developments.

Challenging policymakers
Influencing policy-making processes by hosting policy development platforms, providing tools for decision-making, responding to government consultations and submitting evidence for planning procedures.
Advocating specific policy changes by publishing reports and political manifestos, giving public talks and media interviews, issuing press releases, and lobbying politicians directly.

Regime reform

Reforming incumbent industries
Certification and labelling of products, outlets and supply chains using alternative standards and assurance schemes Incorporation of alternative assessment systems into commercial standards

Reforming incumbent institutions
Incorporation of alternative criteria into procurement rules for public sector institutions and major public events Delivering commissionable service packages (including food service, food education, business development, and so on) for local authorities so they can meet their health and wellbeing obligations

Residual/landscape-oriented
Convening multi-stakeholder platforms to drive dissemination of alternative criteria beyond the UK

Table 2: The principal kinds of activities, relationships with other CSOs and state and market actors, and styles of governance and management that characterise the four roles in the RIT framework

Orientation	Role	Elements targeted	Actors involved
Niche	Grassroots innovation	Food production, marketing, distribution, retail and consumption, as well as food-related social-organisational and cognitive practices	Members of CSOs (individuals and households), CSOs themselves
	Niche development	Knowledge, networks and infrastructures	Members of CSOs (individuals, households and other CSOs), students, apprentices, staᵈ, licensees (farmers and food businesses)
Incumbent regime	Normative contestation	Cultural values, social norms and identities, political frameworks and policies	Citizens, consumers, campaign supporters, policymakers, politically influential individuals and organisations
	Regime reform	Evaluative criteria and practices of incumbent industries and institutions	Business leaders, entrepreneurs, firms, industry bodies, policymakers, civil servants, government departments, local authorities and public institutions

Table 3: Improved understanding of civil society roles in transition

Second, the mutually co-constitutive character of the four roles was reflected in the way that the CSOs in the study enacted them. Specifically, individual organisations tended to (1) enact multiple roles simultaneously, (2) work together in complex divisions of labour, and (3) shift positions over time, in ways that maximised synergies between the four roles.

For instance, in terms of *enacting multiple roles*, by campaigning and lobbying to influence consumer behaviours and apply pressure to business and policymakers through its Keep Britain Buzzing, Cottoned On, Food for Life Partnership and Not In My Banger campaigns (normative contestation), the Soil Association also helps to grow the market for organic produce (niche development), and facilitates changes to incumbent food systems through its production standards, catering mark and AssureWel projects (regime reform). In terms of *working together*, all of these activities were underpinned by the exchange of different kinds of resources (including infrastructural and financial; technical and cognitive; organisational and human; discursive and imaginary) between the SA and the other CSOs in its network. And in terms of *shifting positions over time*, the Soil

Association only came to this particular configuration of activities after more than 70 years of developments, during which time it shifted from role to role, building upon its own and other organisations' past achievements and continuously creating new starting points for future transformations. In fact, the CSOs in the study have all charted unique transformative pathways, at the same time as broader trajectories of transformation have emerged from their interactions over time. For instance, when the Fife Diet was launched on its own pathway in 2007, it capitalised on several decades of developments that were led by the Soil Association, Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Community Farm, and other pioneers of alternative food systems.

These findings are particularly interesting because they highlight specific properties of civil society that are crucial to understanding CSO agency in transitions, i.e. strategic multivalency, relational complexity and dynamism. But they also emphasise the fact that the roles must be viewed as component parts of a larger conceptual whole ('transition'), and should not be reified or taken out of context. This point is reinforced by the third major outcome of the research, which is the discovery that the involved actors' own understandings of the change they are trying to achieve did not generally correspond with the roles in the RIT framework. And this rather implies that, if the roles in transition are mutually co-constitutive of a whole, the whole is an emergent property of the system and does not correspond to a singular guiding intention or plan held in common by the actors involved.

Moreover, the way that individuals articulated their understandings varied considerably both between the 18 organisations in the study (inter-organisational variability) and within the three case organisations (intra-organisational variability). Whereas their accounts shared common themes, specific descriptions of sustainable food systems offered by individual people varied in their details, as did their views concerning how to drive change in their own particular contexts. Thus, to the extent that they share certain expectations about what a more sustainable future might be like and how to get there, these are shaped by "socially distributed rhetoric" (e.g. the Brundtland discourse on Sustainable Development), rather than "collectively endorsed visions of the end point of the transition process" [3, pp. 300].

Rather than seeing themselves as playing roles within a singular transition towards a more sustainable future, the empirically constructed and self-defined roles of the CSOs in this study were articulated with respect to a variety of broad social change processes, implying that they are engaged in a plurality of intended transformations.

5 Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to contribute towards an improved understanding of the important roles that CSOs can and do play within transitions. But what was achieved? First, the paper introduced a typology of civil society roles in transition, the RIT framework, which reflects different scholarly understandings of sustainability transitions. Second, the paper reported on the results of empirically testing the RIT framework by confronting the theoretically defined, functional roles with 'actor-level views' connected to

three UK case studies of CSOs and their networks. In doing so, an improved version of the framework was presented which distinguishes between the specific elements in food systems through which transformation is sought, as well as the specific actors involved, with respect to each of the four roles. Furthermore, this empirical testing led to the discovery of three specific properties of civil society that are crucial to understanding CSO agency in transitions and revealed that CSOs are – according to their own understandings – engaged in a plurality of intended transformations rather than a singular transition.

These findings contribute to scholarly knowledge about how civil society innovation operates at different structural levels, targets different elements within socio-technical systems, and engages different kinds of actors and practices. They also reinforce and extend existing understandings of how civil society actors exercise agency in the context of transitions, and reveal how systemic perspectives – such as underlie transitions theory – can obfuscate both the intentions and the activities of the actors involved, thereby raising questions about the attribution of agency in studies of transition and adding to existing calls for a better treatment of actors and agency in the MLP in particular [20, pp. 609].

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Grassroots innovation

Alternative forms of production
Biodynamic/organic/low-carbon agriculture and horticulture, aquaponics, farm diversification, and growing trials for novel crops.
Peri-urban farming, urban market gardening, and food-growing on urban micro-sites.
Communal growing in gardens, allotments and orchards.
Garden-sharing and seed swapping amongst individuals.

Alternative forms of marketing, distribution and retail
Direct marketing through farm shops, box schemes and farmers' markets; co-operative retail operations.

Alternative forms of consumption
Local diet challenge, community dining events.
Food waste collection.

Alternative forms of social organisation
Community consultation.
Communal ownership by shares.
Co-operative governance.
Care-farming.
Anthroposophy.

Niche development
Developing personnel
Providing accredited horticultural and agricultural training programmes (including distance-learning and residential courses), un-accredited cooking and growing workshops/courses, apprenticeship schemes and volunteer and staff development programmes.

Developing alternative models
Improving knowledge of alternative models by commissioning research, collating case studies, co-ordinating trials and running breeding programmes.
Providing guidance and technical assistance for practitioners through helplines, online and printed resources (including toolkits and how-to guides), knowledge transfer programmes (peer-to-peer and expert-led), and formal standards and guidelines.

Developing networks and infrastructures
Establishing formal members' networks (place-based and nationwide) through online networking platforms, e-zines and network-building events.
Facilitating new partnerships between network members and networking local supply bases.
Providing secure land tenure at below-market rates, start-up funding, specialist inputs.

Normative contestation
Challenging citizens/consumers
Raising awareness and mobilising peoples' support through attention-grabbing stunts, story-telling, celebrity patronage, e-zines and online petitions.
Influencing consumption behaviour, educating and re-skilling people through the provision of information, guidance and advice in food outlets, at public events and through public institutions.
Promoting alternatives to people through advertisements, events and celebrations, public demonstrations and permanent displays.
Generating moralistic pressure by publicly championing and promoting 'good' businesses and practices, naming and shaming 'bad' businesses and practices, and opposing undesirable developments.

Challenging policymakers
Influencing policy-making processes by hosting policy development platforms, providing tools for decision-making, responding to government consultations and submitting evidence for planning procedures.
Advocating specific policy changes by publishing reports and political manifestos, giving public talks and media interviews, issuing press releases, and lobbying politicians directly.

Regime reform

Reforming incumbent industries
Certification and labelling of products, outlets and supply chains using alternative standards and assurance schemes Incorporation of alternative assessment systems into commercial standards

Reforming incumbent institutions
Incorporation of alternative criteria into procurement rules for public sector institutions and major public events Delivering commissionable service packages (including food service, food education, business development, and so on) for local authorities so they can meet their health and wellbeing obligations

Residual/landscape-oriented
Convening multi-stakeholder platforms to drive dissemination of alternative criteria beyond the UK

Table 2: The principal kinds of activities, relationships with other CSOs and state and market actors, and styles of governance and management that characterise the four roles in the RIT framework