Social Innovation and the Great Societal Challenges

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Howaldt

Social Innovation and Interreg

*Online Conference, 10 December 2020*
„Innovation“ as a key concept of modern societies
Social Innovation: new social practices addressing the social, economic, political and environmental challenges of the 21st century (Howaldt/Schwarz 2010)
A long history of Social Innovation research

- Semantically, from the outset, the terms “Social Innovation” and “Social Innovator” were closely linked to processes of social transformation as specific forms of Social Change.

- At beginning of the 20th century, a new meaning of the term emerged:

Social Innovation as the **advent or adoption of a new behaviour or a new practice**. These practices encompass all areas of society, such as gender relations, formal and informal education, management, governance as well as everyday life, established habits and cultural customs. The term tends to become a universal label for describing any social phenomena and processes of change *(Godin 2012, pp. 21).*
Towards an autonomous research field...

Working on conceptual clarity and theoretical foundation of SI is becoming increasingly important for dealing with specific thematic areas, e.g. *(Domanski & Kaletka 2017)*

- Public sector innovation
- Digital social innovation
- Intermediaries
- Social economy
- Cities and regional development
- Collaborative and sharing economy
- Community-led innovation
- Corporate social innovation

https://www.siceurope.eu/sites/default/files/field/attachment/exploring_the_research_landscape_of_social_innovation.pdf

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SI-DRIVE Project

Mission: Extending knowledge about Social Innovation as a driver of social change

First global mapping of Social Innovation initiatives
1,005 SI Cases all over the world

Region, where the initiative was implemented

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## Case Studies (Policy Fields)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Practice Fields</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Disadvantaged groups, new learning arrangements, new digital environments, quality improvement, partnership education and economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Youth unemployment and vulnerable groups, social entrepreneurship, workplace innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environment</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Circular Economy, Alternative sustainable food production and distribution, Alternative sustainable food production and distribution, smart city context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Energy Supply</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Energy collectives, Providing examples and inspiration, Local production of energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport and Mobility</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Car-sharing, mobility of vulnerable groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Social Care</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Shift in care location, self-management, Integrated care delivery, E-health, m-health, New models of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poverty Reduction</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Micro financing &amp; safety nets, community capacity building &amp; advocacy, displacement &amp; refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Type of Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Partner</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NPO/NGO</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Body</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Company</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Education</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals, Networks &amp; Groups</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Enterprise</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 928
Cross-Cutting-Themes the Initiatives are Addressing

- Empowerment: 62.4%
- Human Resources/Knowledge: 53.2%
- Social Entrepreneurship/Economy/Enterprises: 42.1%
- ICT & Social Media: 34.1%
- Gender/Equality/Diversity: 32.9%
- Governance: 19.0%
- Demographic Change: 17.4%
- Migration: 10.9%
- Other: 5.7%

N = 2,647
Limited Transfer and Scaling

Transfer of the solution

- No transfer: 34%
- Transfer: 66%

Form of the transfer

- By project partners: 35.7%
- Adoption by new users: 25.4%
- Adoption by external organizations: 17.0%

Territorial transfer of the solution

- National Territory: 0%
- Local Territory: 5%
- Regional Territory: 15%
- International Territory: 20%

Scaling

- Increased Target Group: 34%
- Network Extension: 66%
- Organisational Growth: 0%
- Institutionalisation: 10%
- Multiplication: 20%
- Imitation: 30%
- Differentiation: 40%
- Extension to other Policy Areas: 50%
- Franchise: 60%
- Accreditation: 70%

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“Processes of diffusion and institutionalisation are very complex and cannot be seen as mere result of the intention of an actor or a group of actors. So while Social Innovation is associated with "planned and coordinated actions" (Greenhalgh et al. 2004, p. 1), the process of Social Change is much more complex.”

*Howaldt/Schwarz 2016, 56*
## Main Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding Challenges</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Personnel</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Gaps</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Restrictions</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Political Support</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of Participants</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of institutional access</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Media Coverage</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitors</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Opposition</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=765

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Increasing Importance and Undeveloped Potential

Like technological innovations, successful social innovations are based on numerous presuppositions and require appropriate infrastructures and resources. This includes a new role of public policy and government for creating suitable framework and support structures, the integration of the economy and civil society as well as supporting measures by science and universities (e.g. education for social innovation performance, know-how transfer).
Ecosystem of Social Innovation

Quadruple Helix

Government

Economy

Social Innovation

Academia

Civil Society

Sectors and actors
Social Innovation: A Challenge for Academia

Impulses for societal change

When researching social innovations and their preconditions, those approaches and constellations draw interest in which science active driver and stakeholder of the process. Therefore, new concepts and formats are required.

- Participatory Action Research
- Design-Thinking
- Transition Research and Design
- New Mode of Knowledge Production
- Citizen Science
- Responsible Research and Innovation
- Social Innovation Centres/Labs/Incubators
Infrastructure for Social Innovation

- MindLab, Dänemark
- Innovationloop, Schweden
- Sliperiet, Schweden
- Midpoint Center for Social Innovation, Niederlande
- Tilburg Social Innovation Lab, Niederlande
- Social Innovation Lab Kent, UK
- GovLab Austria, Österreich
- The Australian Center for Social Innovation (TACSI), Adelaide, Australia
- Center for Social Innovation, Toronto, Kanada
- MaRS Solutions Lab, Toronto, Kanada
Typology of Social Innovation Labs

Five key characteristics:

- provide institutionalised processes and spaces for experimentation (organisations or organisational units, structures & resources),
- facilitate innovation processes (use innovation methods, e.g. co-creation, collective intelligence, design-thinking),
- work on societal challenges and demands framed as specific questions,
- engage with cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder teams,
- create ‘practice inventions’ (socially innovative initiatives) as prototypes with high innovation potential.

*Wascher et al 2019*
High-Tech Strategy Federal Government – Innovations for Germany

„We employ a comprehensive term of innovation which covers not only technological but also social innovations, and we include society as main actor.“

„Especially, we need technological and social innovations leading to new services for new markets and which are characterized by societal benefit. Services require distinct patterns of innovation.“

„Social innovations can contribute to overcoming the challenges of societal and regional change.“

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Mission-oriented Innovation Policy

“To find a way to bring together the triple objectives of smart innovation-led growth, inclusion and sustainability, we must first answer the critical question of how to direct innovation to solve the pressing global challenges of our time” (Mazzucato, p. 2)

“To engage research and innovation in meeting such challenges, a clear direction must be given, while also enabling bottom-up solutions” (Mazzucato, p. 4)
New Innovation Paradigm

Process

Opening of the innovation process to society by co-creation, user involvement, empowerment of citizens, and cross-sector collaboration

Co-evolution of social innovation and social change

Content

New social practices, methods, processes, structures and regulations

Mission

New demands, social needs and societal challenges, social value creation
The Digital Transformation and the Consequences for Society

“We are witnessing profound shifts across all industries, marked by the emergence of new business models, the disruption of incumbents and the reshaping of production, consumption, transportation and delivery systems. On the societal front, a paradigm shift is underway in how we work and communicate, as well as how we express, inform and entertain ourselves…. New ways of using technology to change behaviour and our systems of production and consumption also offer the potential for supporting the regeneration and preservation of natural environments, rather than creating hidden costs in the form of externalities.”

Prof. Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, (pp. 1)
The Future of Innovation is about Social Innovation

‘In the European Union, we are going to put more money into social innovation, not because it’s trendy, but because we believe that the future of innovation is about social innovation.’

Carlos Moedas
The “Atlas of Social Innovation” offers a comprehensive overview of the world of Social Innovation in a lucid way. It gives insights into the various types of social innovations in different world regions and policy areas, delivering new intelligence on the diversity of approaches used by different actors involved.