



**Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund**  
Zentrale wissenschaftliche Einrichtung

**tu** technische universität  
dortmund



# **Social Innovation Networks**

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*Dmitri Domanski, M.A.*

*Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund – TU Dortmund University*

## Why networks?

- Typical incentives and advantages of network co-operation
  - better information
  - larger resources
  - a higher status
- What is special about **innovation** networks (Powell and Grodal, 2005)?
  - -||- etc.
  - But: better information is even more important as knowledge is crucial for innovation
- Buzzword
  - Maybe, but the problem is not in the buzz.
  - The problem is making things badly, as good networks prove useful.

## Why Social Innovation Networks? *Cross-sector collaborations*

*“Increasingly, innovation blossoms where the sectors converge. At these intersections, the exchanges of ideas and values, shifts in roles and relationships, and the integration of private capital with public and philanthropic support generate new and better approaches to creating social value. To support cross-sector collaborations we have to examine policies and practices that impede the flow of ideas, values, capital, and talent across sector boundaries and constrain the roles and relationships among the sectors.”*

(Phills et al., 2008: 43)

## Why Social Innovation Networks?

*“Complex challenges demand complex solutions.”*

*One critical question is “whether and how networks can help facilitate innovations to broad the seemingly insurmountable chasms that separate **local solutions** from **broad system transformation**: that is, how they help innovations to “cross scales”.*

(Moore and Westley, 2011)

## Institutional Entrepreneurs in Social Innovation Networks

- “One type of entrepreneurship may be the inventor of a novel norm, idea, or product (sometimes called the social entrepreneur).”
- “A second type is the **institutional entrepreneur**, whose job it is to manage the context, complex as it is, in such a way that the innovation has a chance to flourish, widening the circle of its impact.”
- “An institutional entrepreneur, therefore, not only introduces a certain innovation but also works to change the broader context so that the innovation has widespread appeal and impact.”

(Moore and Westley, 2011)

## Institutional Entrepreneurs in Social Innovation Networks

*Institutional entrepreneurs are key agents in effective social networks and rely on a “complex skill set”, which “enables them to recognize which types of relationships within the network are crucial at specific times and to mobilize those relationships in order for innovations to cross scales. In some cases, this means skillfully establishing strong bonds and weak links, where appropriate, as well as understanding the content of those relationships and whether the connections provide specific resources (information, financial support, access to new ideas) and ways to leverage those resources”.*

## Institutional Entrepreneurs in Social Innovation Networks

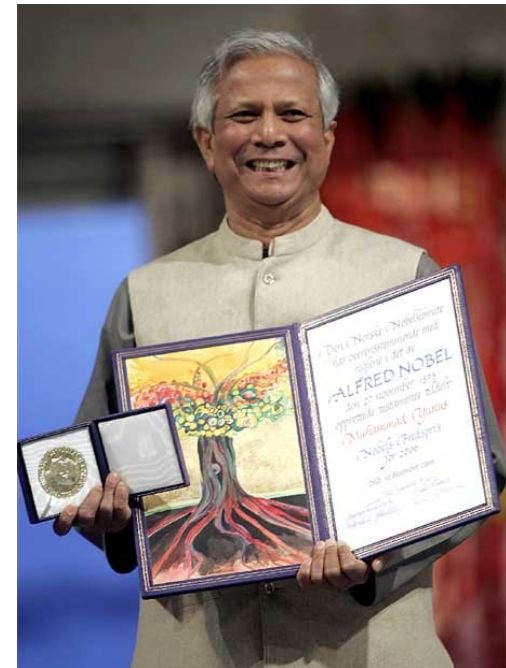
Findings by Moore and Westley (2011) indicate that some of the key entrepreneurial skills are:

- pattern generation (recognizing “the patterns causing a rigidity trap” → e.g. efforts “to change cultural, economic, and policy institutions”)
- relationship building and brokering (“working to ensure the purpose of a formal structure is replaced by the mission of an informal group”)
- knowledge and resource brokering (“ability to understand specialized knowledge and reframe the discourse about the subject so as to make it comprehensible, accessible, and engaging for others, particularly decision-makers”)
- network recharging (being “the visionary leaders who give form and direction to the network and its mission”)

## Focusing on social innovators as individuals?

*“Most social businesses are likely to originate with one person, or perhaps with a small group of people—friends, work colleagues, or people with a shared interest in a particular social problem. Within such a small group, you may not have all the expertise, experience, ideas and resources needed to make your social business idea into a reality. Don’t let that stop you! Look around for others you can partner with.”*

(Yunus, 2010: 79–80)



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## Relevance of Social Innovation Networks in scientific debate and for policy-making

- focusing on the single person of the social innovator does not cope with the reality of innovation processes, often characterized by multiple interactions and a systemic nature
- this perspective may raise false expectations regarding successful social innovations: if societies should benefit from social innovations, promotion and consultancy in this field should hardly concentrate on extraordinary personalities, but rather on systemic approaches with various actors involved

(Howaldt, Domanski and Schwarz, 2011)

## Social Innovation Networks in different areas

- Social Services in general
- Health Care Services for Elderly and Dependent Persons
- Modernization of Education Systems (LLL)
- Social Integration and Equal Opportunities
- Clean Technologies
- Sustainable Development
- Climate Change



<http://1.bp.blogspot.com>

## Social Innovation Networks – Climate Change

- developing a regional strategy for adapting to the consequences of climate change
- platform for collaboration and dialogue as well as think tank, knowledge repository and expert partner for the region
- applying a 2020 roadmap, the region expects to receive the support it needs to proactively anticipate and respond to the challenges of climate change

***“social-science-driven” cross-sector collaboration and fertilization***



Gefördert durch



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