

# Early Career Research Conference (ECC) 21 – 23 September 2022, Dortmund / Germany



<https://www.innovation-next-door.de/en.html>

## Social Innovation Policy: Concepts, Methods and Policy Practices

### Call for papers

In recent years, a new understanding of innovation has been discussed worldwide. This understanding focuses on the importance of innovations in overcoming major societal challenges. Furthermore, there is a growing conviction that social innovations make an important contribution to overcoming these challenges (cf. Howaldt et al. 2019), claiming that only through the change of social practice can necessary transformations succeed. But what does the term social innovation mean, and how can they best be conceptualised? Why are social innovations increasingly becoming the focus of attention, and what opportunities and challenges do they pose for scientific research and innovation policy? How can social innovations be supported in the context of much needed broader transformations? What is the meaning of social innovation for recent ambitions in STI policies (mission and transformation)?

Since the Second World War, Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy has been largely focused on technological innovations for economic growth. This situation has changed in recent years (Schot and Steinmueller 2018). With a growing awareness of ‘limits to growth’

and concerns about climate change, sustainability concerns have become more and more prominent in STI policy and a broader understanding of innovation has emerged. The recent 'Guidebook for the preparation of science, technology and innovation (STI) for SDGs roadmaps' prepared by the United Nations Task Force, for instance, underlines the importance of a broad understanding of innovation beyond techno-economic innovations (United Nations Inter-Agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs und European Commission, Joint Research Centre 2021).

Therefore, political interest in social innovation is growing worldwide (e.g. Geels et al. 2019). Social innovations and socially innovative initiatives are omnipresent. Studies of social innovations are booming and cover the entire globe (Howaldt et al. 2019; van der Have and Rubalcaba 2016). Due to the broad understanding and usage of the concept, one finds social innovations – understood as deliberate changes of social practices with the intention of reaching a certain goal (cf. Howaldt and Schwarz 2010) – in a large variety of contexts, ranging from topics of climate change research to urban development and urban agriculture, from health to social inclusion and education. This broad thematic range underlines the importance of better understanding social innovations and social innovation ecosystems for sustainable development.

Since the 1980s, new concepts have emerged in international innovation research that consider social innovations as an independent type of innovation and make them accessible as an object of empirical investigation. The conceptual debate has intensified ever since, and progress has been made in developing a concept of social innovation grounded in social theory and elaborating the significance of the concept in the context of processes of social change (Howaldt and Schwarz 2021; Pel et al. 2020). Similarly, the topic has been linked to the overarching discussion on the fundamental reorientation of innovation policy (Larrue 2021; Wanzenbröck et al. 2020; Wittmann et al. 2021; Schot and Steinmueller, 2018; Edler and Fagerberg 2017; Mazzucato 2018). In this context, the contours of a new understanding of innovation are becoming discernible (Howaldt and Schwarz 2021). The opportunities and challenges of introducing social innovations into the framework of a comprehensive innovation policy will be discussed at the conference.

Accordingly, this ECC offers the opportunity to discuss the future role of social innovation in STI policies from different angles. In particular, we welcome submissions that address (but are not necessarily limited to) the following areas:

- *State of the art of social innovation research*
- *Social innovation and transformation*
- *Social innovation and new strands of STI Policy*
- *Diffusion mechanisms of social innovations and the role of STI Policy*
- *Interactions between social innovation policies from different policy fields (environment, energy) and STI*
- *Innovation ecosystems, governance models and infrastructures for social innovation (science, society and policy interface)*
- *Evaluation, assessment and impacts of social innovation and social innovation policies*
- *Interaction between social and technological innovations to address 21st century challenges*

## **Conference structure and formats**

The conference will offer a varied programme, including paper presentation sessions, keynote talks, policy and practitioners panel, a conference award, networking sessions, social activities and conference dinner.

Early career researchers can choose one of the two following options to present their work: 1) full paper presentation (15-minute presentation followed by a discussion) or 2) speed talk or poster presentation (5-minute pitches, followed by discussion in break-out groups). The audience is expected (and encouraged) to actively participate in the discussion. For each full paper, a senior and a junior (early career) discussant will prepare direct feedback to the presenter.

This Early Career Conference addresses the guiding theme “Social Innovation Policy: Concepts, Methods and Policy Practices”. The conference is organized in streams according to the above thematic fields.

The conference will take place in person in Dortmund, Germany (if possible).

## **Anticipated list of speakers/ teachers**

Jakob Edler / Katrin Ostertag (Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI, Karlsruhe)

Jürgen Howaldt / Christoph Kaletka (TU Dortmund University, Faculty of Social Science, Social Research Center sfs)

Julia Wittmayer (Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences ESSB, Rotterdam)

Klaus Schuch (Centre for Social Innovation ZSI, Vienna)

Judith Terstriep (Institute for Work and Technology IAT, Gelsenkirchen)

Mike Asquith (European Environmental Agency, Copenhagen)

## **Registration, Fees and Accommodation:**

- Registration:
  - free for EU-SPRI/ESSI members
  - 250€ for non-EU-SPRI/ESSI members
- Accommodation (2 nights), lunch and dinner included
- Travel expenses will not be covered (a limited number of grants for widening countries' participants will be provided upon request)

## Paper submission (instructions & deadlines):

Early career researchers interested in participating in this ECC must submit an extended abstract (750 to 1,000 words, including key references) as well as a short motivation letter (1-2 paragraphs, max 1 page) no later than 1 May 2022 via email to

**Rick Hölsgens:** [henricus.hoelsgens@tu-dortmund.de](mailto:henricus.hoelsgens@tu-dortmund.de)

The decision will be communicated to the authors by the 7th of June 2022. If accepted, (draft) full papers must be submitted 3 weeks prior to the conference, i.e. 31st of August (speed talk submissions only need to submit their presentation as pdf).

Evaluation and selection criteria of submissions is based on academic quality, thematic relevance and motivation.

## Time table

May 1, 2022:	Deadline for extended abstracts (750 – 1,000 words)
June 7, 2022:	Notification of acceptance
August 31, 2022:	Deadline for (draft) full papers (5000 – 7000 words) (or slides in the case of speed talks)
September 21-23, 2022:	Conference

## Contact

In case of any question, please contact the local organising team: Dr. Rick Hölsgens at: [henricus.hoelsgens@tu-dortmund.de](mailto:henricus.hoelsgens@tu-dortmund.de).

Scientific and organising committee	Prof. Dr. Jakob Edler Prof. Dr. Jürgen Howaldt Dr. Rick Hölsgens Dr. Katrin Ostertag Tanja Kaufmann Dr. Karina Maldonado-Mariscal Dr. Klaus Schuch Dr. Judith Terstriep Dr. Julia Wittmayer Marthe Zirngiebl
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