

Call for Papers

Social Innovation: Global Challenges and Opportunities

30-31st July 2022

International Online Conference

Organizers:

Institute of Social Innovation, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan

Sun Yat-sen Research Center for Social Sciences, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan

Innovation in the Social Sciences

- Online Conference Dates: 30-31st July 2022
- Abstract and Panel Submission Deadline: 1st April 2022
- Notification: 15th April 2022
- Full Conference Paper Submission Deadline: 1st July 2022
- Language of this conference is English. All abstracts and full papers should be written in English and please email to: iss@mail.nsysu.edu.tw

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Social innovation is known as new ideas or practical solutions that tackle unmet social needs. Bottom-up initiatives and social movements of localized communities and NGOs blossom into practices of social innovation. Local-scale initiatives incubate many more diverse forms of social innovation that addresses social challenges in a global context. For instance, social innovations regarding energy transition have proliferated in many countries since sustainability became a globally shared value. In recent years, many global challenges arise and simultaneously affect humans and more-than-human species with different forms of violence and inequality. Worsening the situation, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused millions of deaths and deeply disrupted economic activities in every continent. How do we develop solidarity in the face of global challenges when unemployment, discrimination, and uneven access to medical, digital, cultural, and educational resources exacerbate social inequality and exclusion? In this conference, we

would like to bring theoretical discussions together with empirical cases to critically examine social innovation in two key aspects:

1. to present comparative analysis of social innovation practiced in a variety of contexts to show how social innovation provides solutions to similar challenges surfacing in different regions or continents.
2. to explore the structural transformations of social innovation by looking into how the initiatives organized by local communities and the private sector have been expanded through their collaborations with the public sector and a broader range of actors and activities.

Spreading among Europe, America, and Asia in recent years, multiple initiatives organized by local communities exemplify the diversity of social innovation. This diversity demands in-depth discussions and alternative theorizations that reflect on the established concepts of social innovation. For example, Initiatives of regional revitalization developed in Asia and Latin America are often rooted in local heritage with a focus on creating dynamic relations between places and residents by building place-based networks that are able to present and pass on local heritage to future generations. Regional revitalization in Japan has bloomed in forms of art festivals and artist residences, which embrace creative approaches to utilizing abandoned infrastructure. Similar examples have emerged in Taiwan, Brazil, Colombia, to name but a few. Since 2014, numerous empowerment programs have been launched in remote towns and cities of Taiwan. These programs aim to sustain and translate local heritage into art festivals and cultural activities. In Brazil and Colombia, multiple cases of regional revitalization exemplify how social innovation engages in the complexity of social challenges. In these cases, the city government collaborates with the academia, NGOs, and enterprises in order to foster innovation of local economy. The increase of capital influx allows these cities to re-position and re-brand their historic significance by refurbishing heritage buildings, adding new business communities to the local culture, and renovating local infrastructure.

Another significant case of social innovation, university social responsibility (USR), focuses on how universities redefine their roles as active contributors to local sustainability and thus innovate the higher education. Moreover, another important thread of social innovation, grassroots innovation, has unfolded significant relations between activists, local communities, and sustainable development. Grassroots innovation embraces social, cultural, and ethical values. In the Netherlands, the initiative, Taste before You Waste, promotes awareness of food surplus and waste. It creates new values of the food that is running out of its shelf life by using it at Community Dinner and

workshops of circular cooking. Similar initiatives that prevent food waste also pop up in Canada and Thailand. Also, grassroots innovation plays an important role of developing local sustainability in Taiwan. When local communities encounter social issues, such as pollution and land expropriation, grassroots activists who focus on environmental justice and promote local sustainability initiate dialogues between residents and the (local) government. These dialogues have contributed to policy-making as well as sustainable development of agriculture and energy reform in severely polluted cities of Taiwan. In brief, social innovation has been shaped by co-creation and co-production between academia, local communities, bottom-up initiatives, NGOs, and public sectors.

This conference provides an international platform for social innovation researchers and practitioners to share their experiences and findings. Participants will be invited to submit their full papers for consideration to be included in the first or second issue of this newly established international journal, *Innovation in the Social Sciences*, which is published by the distinguished publisher Brill.

We welcome paper and panel submissions from different areas with topics related (but not limited) to:

- Reflections on the epistemology and methodology of social innovation research
- Digital technologies for social innovation
- Regional revitalization and community development
- The role of (cross-)cultural collaboration and creativity in social innovation
- Local sustainability innovation
- University social responsibility (USR)
- Innovative mechanisms for civic engagement and empowerment