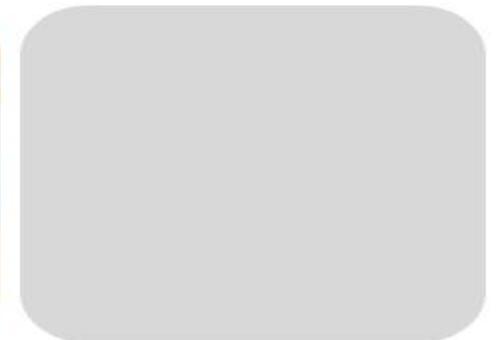


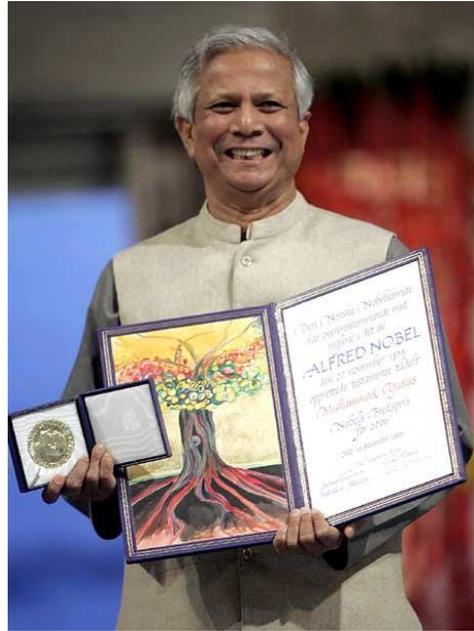
Introduction

Jürgen Howaldt/Christoph Kaletka/Antonius Schröder

ESSI Webinar : A Research Agenda for Social Innovation

April 5th, 2022





We see countless approaches and successful initiatives that illustrate the strengths and potential of social innovations in manifold areas of social integration through education and poverty reduction, in establishing sustainable patterns of consumption, or in coping with demographic change



Seperated Research Fields

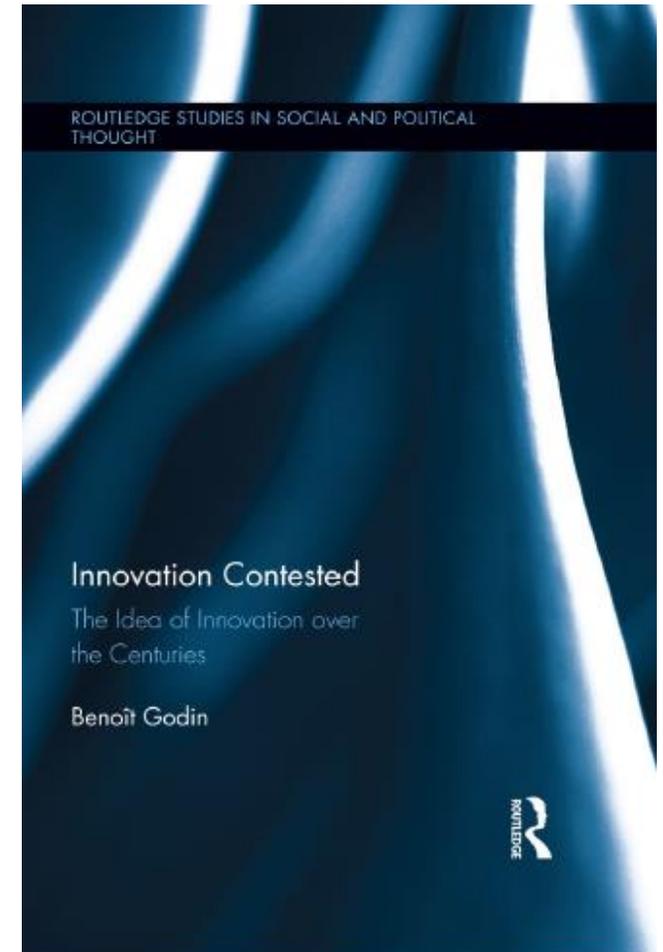
Since the 1980s, the term Social Innovation has been increasingly used in a number of research fields. In each of these fields, as well as in many others, research networks and communities have emerged.

The conceptual discussion around the term – if conducted at all – remains largely confined to the respective *research communities* in these specific fields. In each of these fields are found specific emphases, questions and, aligned with these, different definitions and understandings of Social Innovation.

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*).



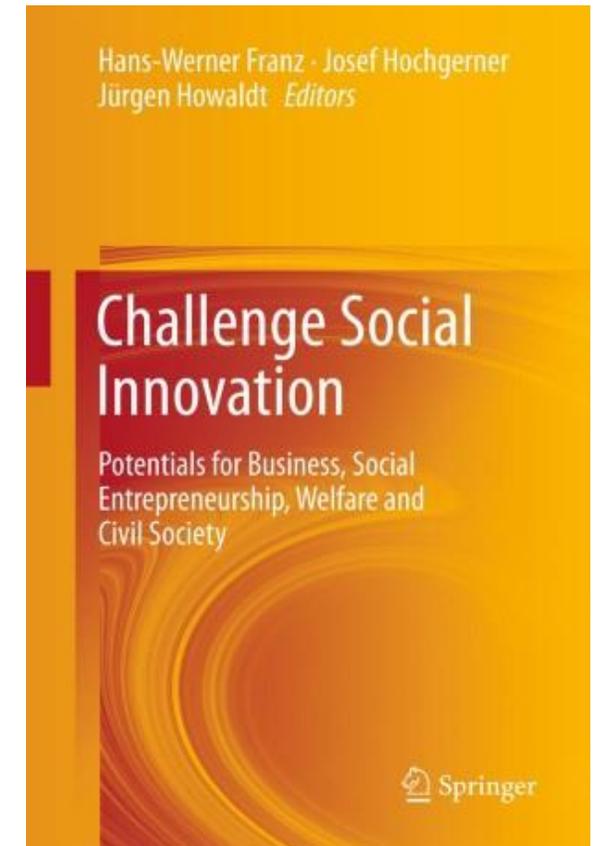
Challenge 1:

We have to develop a clear concept of social innovation

Overall scientific advancement required to meet expectations and developments in social innovation practices

- Elaboration on the particular features of the concept and clarification of definitions
- Embedding the concept of social innovation in a comprehensive theory of innovation
- Development of coherent methodologies to identify and measure social innovations

Vienna Declaration: The most relevant topics in social innovation research



Theoretical Foundation of Social Innovation Research

In Europe, a new generation of EU funded projects has contributed to theoretical foundation of Social Innovation Research with a special focus on its relation to social change and its transformative potential.

“The evaluation of various FP funded projects [...] reveal[s] that the intellectual capital constructed through the concepts, approaches, policies and practices of SI has matured to an extent whereby we can no longer demote SI to a vague, confusing, half-baked or conflictual concept without theoretical or practice grounds.”

(Moulaert et al., p. 43f)



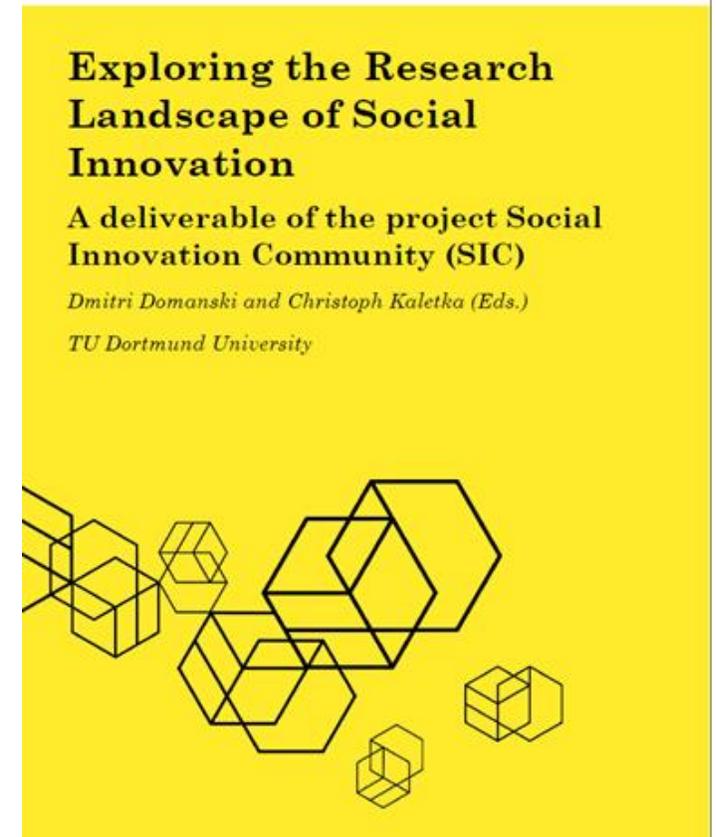
The Emergence of a Research Community



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



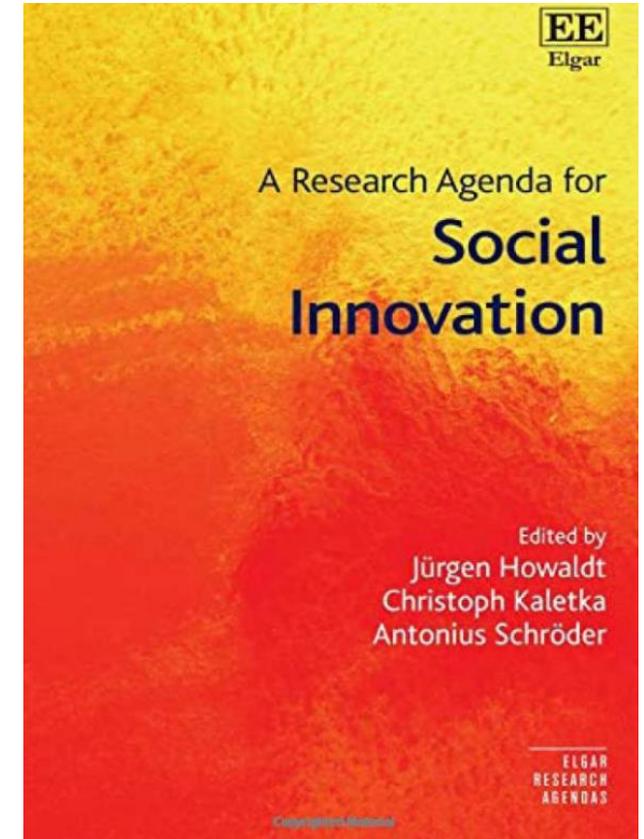
https://www.siceurope.eu/sites/default/files/field/attachment/exploring_the_research_landscape_of_social_innovation.pdf

Objectives

What are the objectives of the Research Agenda?

- Give an overview of the state of the art in different strand of Social Innovation Research
- Move forward by covering new topics
- Creating new impulses and
- Outline future research pathways

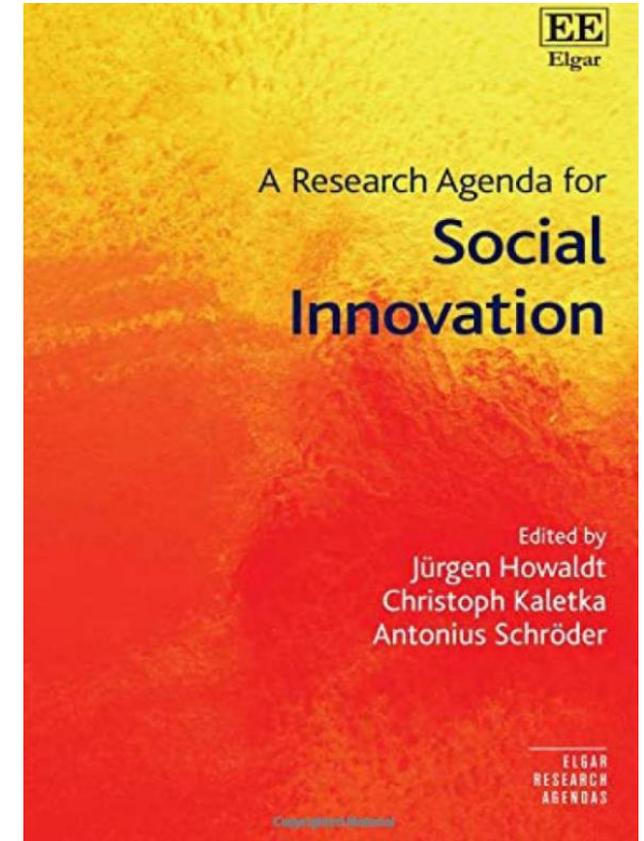
This collective effort will help to further develop the theoretical foundations of the field and highlight research questions and demands for the upcoming years.



Why do we need a Research Agenda

The **multidisciplinary nature** of Social Innovation Research offers an important potential for development of new research perspectives that can help to advance towards new responses to societal challenges. At the same time, such new perspectives can facilitate new approaches to social innovation practice.

The efforts to develop a **cross-field discourse** are increasing, as are the differentiation of the field that has taken place, to give the term a **more theoretical foundation** as an analytical concept with a clearly defined object of investigation and related epistemological interest.



The Research Agenda's thematic structure

I) History and theoretical foundations

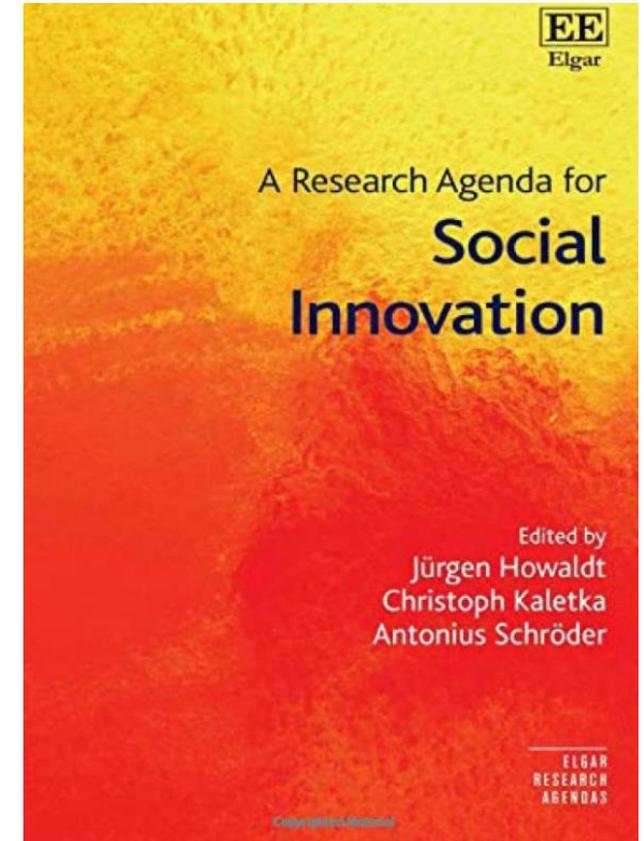
SI and social change; systems thinking; sustainable development; workplace innovation; ...

II) Governance, actors and ecosystems

Capabilities approach; grassroots SI; power and conflict; social innovation ecosystems; ...

III) Framework conditions and infrastructures

SI research and policy; collaborative spaces; role of design research; measurement of SI



Today's thematic structure

I) History and theoretical foundations

#1 Looking back to move forward: History of SI

Presenter: Cornelius Schubert; Discussant: Klaus Schuch; Moderator: Jürgen Howaldt

II) Governance, actors and ecosystems

#2 Looking around: Social innovation ecosystems

Presenters: Carolina Andion, Graziela Dias Alperstedt; Discussant: Bonno Pel; Moderator: Antonius Schröder

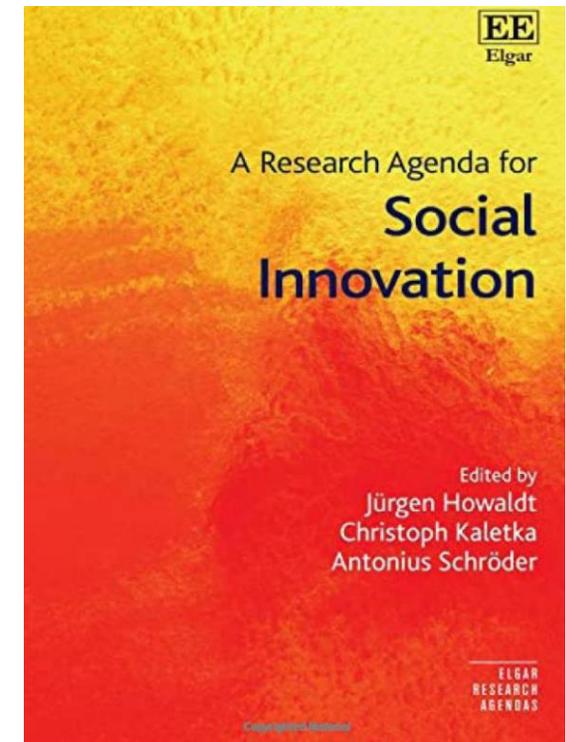
#3 Looking inside: Capability Approach and Social Innovation

Presenter: Rafael Ziegler; Discussant: Jeremy Millard; Moderator: Julia Wittmayer

III) Framework conditions and infrastructures

The Research Agenda's conclusions and collective outlook

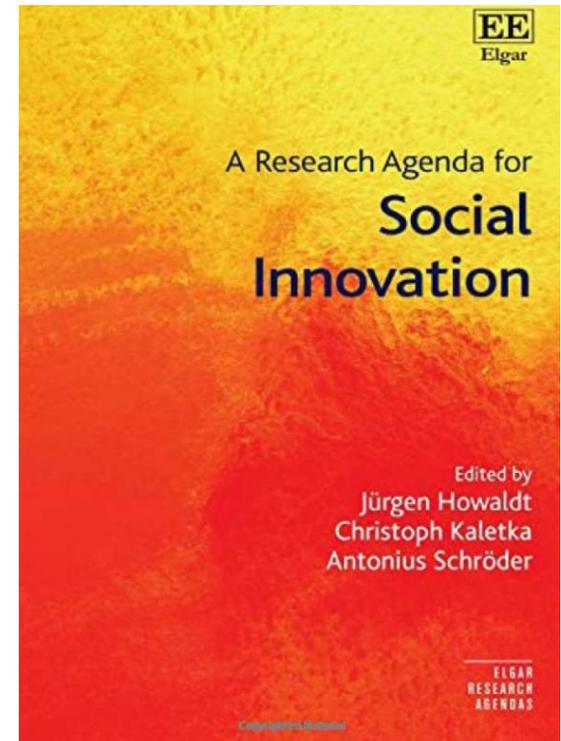
The chapters of the book reflect the progress made; they particularly highlight unresolved issues and gaps and indicate directions for further exploration



The Research Agenda's conclusions and collective outlook

Building on the presented status quo and recent progress in the research fields, major topics for intensified future research were elaborated, e.g.

- Better understanding the **regional, cultural and social context** of Social Innovation
- Better understanding **outcomes and impacts** of concrete new practices (e.g. improved living and working conditions of vulnerable groups)
- Development of **indicators / KPIs** for social value and economic impact (Societal Relevance instead of Technological Readiness)
- Exploring the **links of SI and technological and business innovation** in processes of transformative change (e.g. in the 'socio-digital transformation', or the socio-ecological transition)
- Examining **long-term and ambivalent impacts** on existing practices and institutions



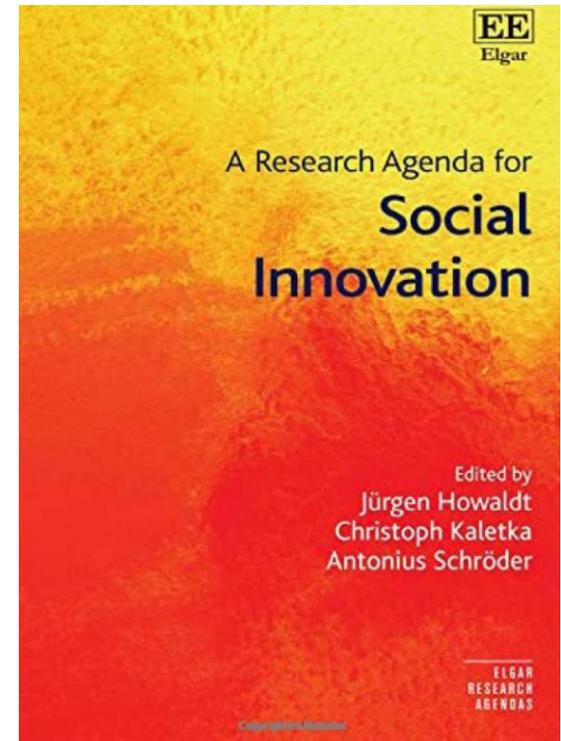
The Research Agenda's conclusions and collective outlook

Synergies and blurring boundaries with adjacent fields of research, e.g.

- Transformation and sustainable development research
- Transition research and transitions in practices (advancing sustainable lifestyles and economic practices)

An overall aim is to (further) develop a theoretically sound concept of Social Innovation as a precondition to elaborate an integrated theory of innovation

→ social, business, public sector and technological innovation under one umbrella concept of innovation



Next step: Encyclopedia of Social Innovation

Diversity of research perspectives and disciplinary approaches

Wide range of thematic fields of importance for social innovation research and practice

80+ articles

Editors: Jürgen Howaldt, Christoph Kaletka

Editorial team: Marthe Zirngiebl, Daniel Krüger, Karina Maldonado-Mariscal

To be published in early 2023

Questions for the plenary discussion

- Are there topics you would like to add? What is missing?
- What are the main challenges for future social innovation research *in your view*?
- What are the most important neighboring research fields from which we can receive impulses for our research *in your view*?