



**Social Sciences and Humanities' role in Social Innovation –  
Some key observations from the experience of  
TU Dortmund University – sfs**

***Jürgen Howaldt & Dmitri Domanski***

***Rethinking the role of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) in Horizon 2020:  
Towards a reflective and generative perspective  
Brussels, 26 February 2015***

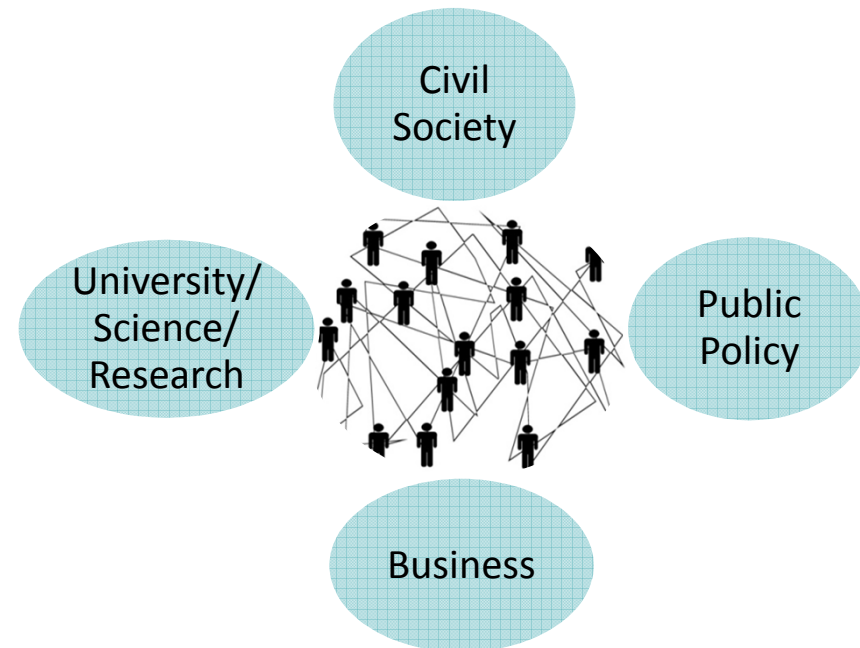


*“The most urgent and important innovations in the 21st century will take place in the social field. This opens up the necessity as well as possibilities for Social Sciences and Humanities to find new roles and relevance by generating knowledge applicable to new dynamics and structures of contemporary and future societies.”*

*Vienna Declaration: The most relevant topics in social innovation research*

# 1. Social innovation ecosystems are needed if we want social innovations to lead to social change

- Moving the focus away from loose individual initiatives towards a complex set of interdependent actors and relationships
  - Interdisciplinarity, heterogeneity and reflectivity of the processes of creation
  - Development of new alliances
  - Cross sector fertilization
  - Open Innovation
- Infrastructure to promote and support social innovation





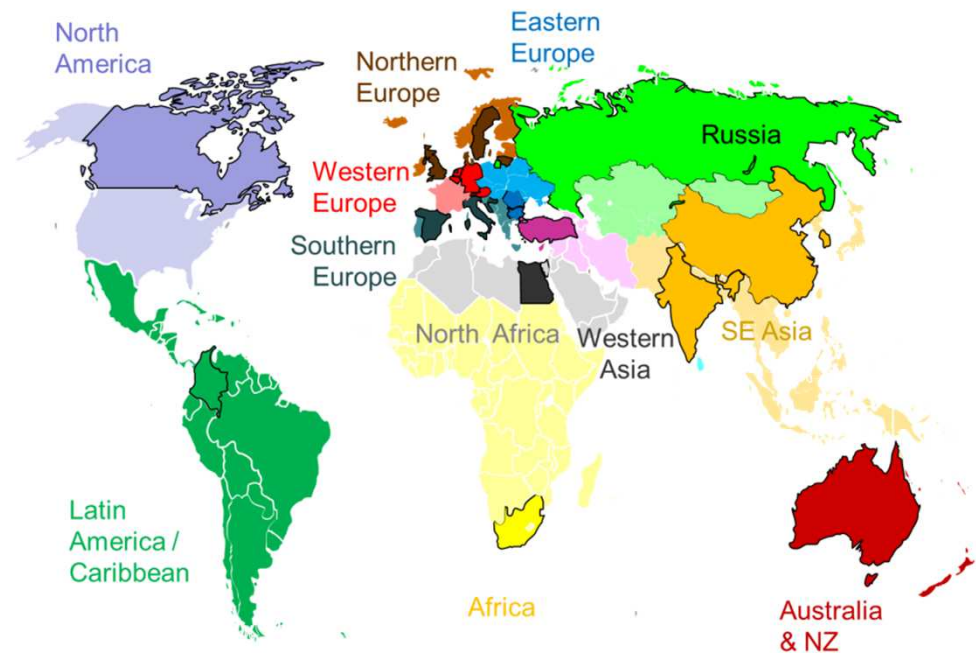
- **Combine the potential** of social innovation in the social economy, civil society, business firms and the state (multi-level governance)
- **Promote alliances** between universities, companies and the state around social innovation
- **Open the process of innovation to society** including all stakeholders in the development and diffusion of innovation
- **Empower and include people:** citizens, clients, social movements, communities in the process of social innovation
- **Innovate „bottom up“:** learning from experiences of innovation research and business and public service innovation

*Vienna Declaration: The most relevant topics in Social Innovation Research*



- FP7 large-scale project SI-DRIVE – Social Innovation: Driving Force of Social Change, co-ordinated by TU Dortmund University
  - Global mapping of social innovations in seven policy fields
  - Analysis of the conditions under which social innovations develop, flourish and sustain and finally lead to social change

SI Drive – Map of Global Regions



<http://www.si-drive.eu/>

## 2. Science plays a key role within social innovation ecosystems



- Declaration: “Social Innovations for Germany”
  - Voluntary commitment of stakeholders from business, science and civil society
  - Science
    - Research on social innovations and impulses for social change processes
    - Integrating social innovation into teaching
    - Involving (civil) society stakeholders at an early stage in research and transfer and increasing the innovation potential for SI in society
- Prof. Jürgen Howaldt, director of TU Dortmund University’s sfs: expert at the Chancellor Merkel’s Second International German Forum on innovation and society

### **3. But the potential of science is still largely underexploited in social innovation ecosystems**

- In Innovation Studies the function of science as a driving force of technological innovations is undisputed
- In social innovation, science should take a role similar to the one it plays for technological innovations (e.g. setting up knowledge transfer offices, establishing social innovation centres, labs and parks)
- Social Sciences and Humanities need to integrate social innovation in
  - Teaching (concepts and methods)
  - Research (on social innovation)
  - Transfer (production of social impact)

## 4. Social Sciences and Humanities need to adopt new forms of knowledge production

- Within social innovation ecosystems, they should perform as partners
- It's not about prescribing, but rather developing solutions under the perspective of social innovation together with other actors (partnership of equals)
- Advising, pointing out alternatives to social innovators
- Co-creation: active involvement of citizens in innovation processes
- Generating specific knowledge



**Thank you!**

**Prof. Dr. Jürgen Howaldt**  
[howaldt@sfs-dortmund.de](mailto:howaldt@sfs-dortmund.de)

**Dmitri Domanski, M.A.**  
[domanski@sfs-dortmund.de](mailto:domanski@sfs-dortmund.de)