

## Call for Papers and Panels

12<sup>th</sup> International Social Innovation Research Conference 2020,  
Sheffield University Management School, Centre for Regional Economic and Enterprise  
Development  
1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020

**Theme:** *'Social innovation and enterprise for more prosperous, fair and sustainable societies'*

**Conference website:** <https://isirconference2020.com/>

## Reimagining social innovation through decolonisation

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### Stream description

*'Most theories and conceptual frames, including those that originate in Western Europe and the Anglo United States, can aim at and describe the global but cannot be other than local' (Walsh and Mignolo, 2018 p. 2)*

Social innovation (SI) has become increasingly popular within academic and policy making circles as a way to tackle grand societal challenges, including poverty, inequality and climate change. However, what is not always apparent and considered is that this growing popularity is underpinned by heterogeneous and often competing understandings of what SI is and ought to be. Significantly it has been noted that the dominant framing of SI which guides policy making of multilateral organisations, such as the EU and the World Bank, is profoundly shaped by neo-liberal assumptions and values, which put market-economic priorities at the core of SI agendas (see for instance Fougère, Segercrantz, & Seeck, 2017). This means that social business, economic efficiency and managerialist blueprints are often prioritised to position SI firmly within narratives of 'caring neoliberalism'. Discourses on SI in the Global South reflect these dominant framings by centring around strategies for transforming vulnerable and marginalised citizens into active and productive economic subjects. In this sense, rather than being emancipatory, SI can reinforce and reproduce neo-colonial relations, dynamics and practices.

With this stream, we aim to draw upon the decolonial turn in social sciences. The decolonial turn is variously informed by areas of research including post-colonial theory, critical development studies and critical management studies. Our intention is to liberate SI from modernist, universalist and colonial traps so that possibilities can be imagined to inform alternative understandings and practices of SI. As Maia (2018) suggests, if colonial

innovation concentrates on competition, survival of the fittest and economic success, decolonial innovation might focus on collaboration, partnership, bottom-up forms of organising and, more generally, on approaches that draw and elaborate on indigenous and marginalised ways of knowing.

We, therefore, invite contributions to the stream on the following (non-exhaustive) topics:

- the value of the decolonial turn for SI, including analyses of current research agendas
- the potential for new streams of theory and research to be drawn into the decolonial turn in the service of critically exploring and developing ideas about SI
- theoretical and empirical contributions that explore how SI can reproduce colonial relations, dynamics and practices
- the possibilities for epistemologies of the Global South, or alternative methodologies, to advance SI
- methodologies for decolonising SI
- theoretical perspectives that de-centre Western Eurocentric epistemologies to SI
- forms and experiences of SI which are alternative to dominant micro-economistic, managerialist approaches

The stream will be designed as a learning process that maximizes participation and facilitates inquiry and dialogue into these and other topics. Therefore, there will be an emphasis on discussing papers in small groups rather than on traditional, frontal presentations. The stream may also venture outside the conference room and engage with people and organisations external to the conference as part of the learning process, as well as use technologies to enable people who are not physically attending to participate in some sessions remotely. We have chosen to approach the stream in this way because we want to be innovative in how we come together and learn at conferences, and also create space for a multiplicity of ways of knowing to be reflective of aspects of decolonising debates.

## References

Fougère, M., Segercrantz, B. & Seeck, H. (2017). *A critical reading of the European Union's social innovation policy discourse: (Re)legitimizing neoliberalism*. *Organization*, 24. 819-843. 10.1177/1350508416685171.

Maia, F (2018) *Decolonial Innovation: Reclaiming the History of Social Innovation*. Decolonizing Social Innovation: An Introductory Discussion. Impact Hub Beverly, 17th May 2018 (retrieved from <https://medium.com/igniteinstitute/how-we-can-we-decolonizing-social-innovation-a03583780f19>)

## **Submission Guidelines**

You will need to submit an abstract to apply to be part of the stream (max. 300 words).

Paper abstracts should be submitted to [isirc2020conference@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:isirc2020conference@sheffield.ac.uk)

On abstract submission please ensure you **advise of the conference stream**.

If you are accepted to participate in the stream you can either prepare a short paper (max. 4000 words) for discussion, and/or develop other artefacts (such as writing, objects, videos, images and artwork) that can be explored as part of the stream.

If you wish to be considered for the conference prizes you will need to submit a full paper no later than **31st July 2020** (optional). Full papers should be submitted to: [isirc2020conference@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:isirc2020conference@sheffield.ac.uk)

Enquiries about conference administration and technical issues related to submission should be directed to the conference administration team:

[isirc2020conference@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:isirc2020conference@sheffield.ac.uk)

### Guidelines for full paper submissions:

Papers must be written in English and should be sent in Microsoft Word or PDF format.

Papers should be between 5000 and 8000 words in length including tables, figures and references. Tables and figures should be incorporated into the paper. Each table and figure should be given a title.

Please include an abstract and four to six key words.

To enable anonymity, the authors' names should not appear. Instead, a cover page giving the title of the paper and full identifying information of the author(s) (name, address, telephone and e-mail address) should be included as a separate Word or PDF document.

Harvard is the preferred referencing style.

## **Deadlines**

Abstract and panel proposals submission closes: **7<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

Decision on submissions notification: **30<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

Full papers submitted for consideration in best paper awards due: **31st July 2020**