# Discussant Intervention on the Presentation
## "*What is Social Innovation in Practice?*

*AN EXPLORATION OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL INNOVATION DATABASE (ESID)*"

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RISIS2 – 9th Policymakers Session

Dec. 03, 2021

# Outline of Input

- Need for ESID & its approach

- Relation to own research on Social Innovation at ZSI

- Comments on selected results

- Possible future developments

# Why have I been invited?

- ZSI part of the KNOWMAK project and responsible for the development of the technological platform interfacing with its users

  - part of the humble beginnings of ESID

- SI-Drive project to map SI projects (precursor to and benchmark for ESID)

- ZSI has long been part of the conversation and an interest in advancing research

# Need for ESID & its approach

Need given because we want to

- better understand where social innovation occurs;

- better understand the factors that lead to SI;

- improve the framework conditions for SI; or

- understand links with other types of innovations.

Chosen approach keeps proving that it is feasible and sustainable.

# Relation to own research on Social Innovation at ZSI

- Currently working on a study for the SNSF – Swiss National Science Foundation

- Topic: *Social Innovation as Valuation and Outcome Category of SNSF Funded Research*

- SNSF

  - Funds basic science in all academic disciplines
  - Takes seriously
    - its independence from the government
    - bottom-up or curiosity-driven research
- In this project: motivated to consider the value of their funding from different angles

# Relation to own research on Social Innovation at ZSI

- Study approach: multi-method but focus but exploratory in nature

- Topic: *Social Innovation as Valuation and Outcome Category of SNSF Funded Research*

- Research questions:

  - *How often and how is social innovation as a research topic approached in SNSF-funded projects?*

  - *What is the contribution of SNSF funded research to the development of SI?*
    *How far does it go and where are the limits? What role do productive interactions play within the research process?*

  - *Is SI a suitable starting point for the valuation of, in particular, but not only SSH research?*

# Relation to own research on Social Innovation at ZSI

- Study works on sampled data across

    - Scientific disciplines

    - Age

    - Academic age

    - Gender

    - Programme type

    - Organisation type

# Challenge when studying SI in research projects

- Lack conceptual clarity

- Operationalising SI not trivial

- More meaningful to cluster *properties* given in definitions of SI

- Examine the data along those clusters/dimensions

- Understand and support the approach chosen by ESID

- ZSI follows a similar approach in its current research endeavour

# *Elements* of SI

| ESID | ZSI |
|------|-----|
| Objectives | Solution-orientation |
| Actors and actor interactions | Actors & Networks |
| Innovativeness | Novelty in Context |
| Outputs / Outcomes | Outputs / Outcomes |

⇨ Main difference: ZSI approach contains more criteria

⇨ Caveat: yet unclear whether they are significant (analytical efforts ongoing)

# Comments on selected results

- **"Types" of SI beyond SI definitions**

- Scoring idea corresponds with ZSI's current research efforts

  - **broadens the discussion what accounts for SI**

  - **opens a discussion on measuring the "degree" of SI**

- Results on regional differences is enlightening – *policy pull* a possible reason but needs more research

  - Interest in CH: exception in Europe / correspond with e.g. US?

- Similarly interesting regarding topics but possibly heavily depending on used ontology

# Comments on selected results
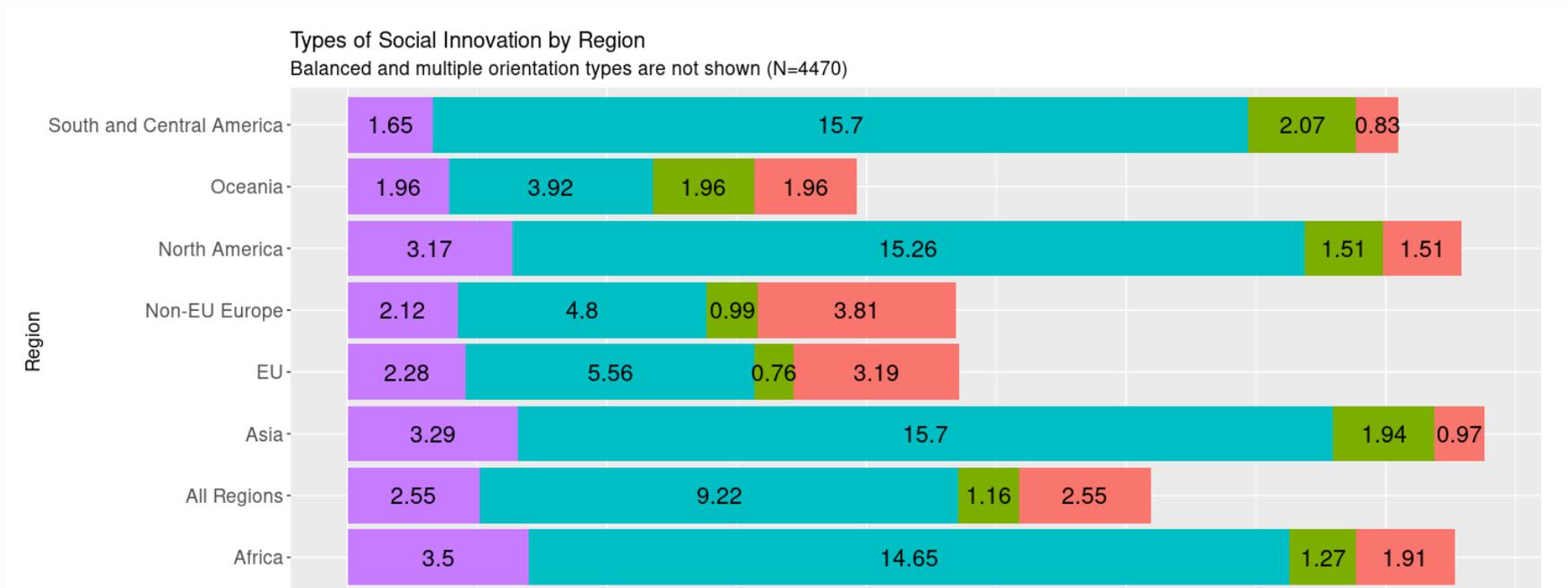


Types of Social Innovation by Region
Balanced and multiple orientation types are not shown (N=4470)

| Region | outputs oriented | objectives oriented | innovativeness oriented | actors oriented |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| South and Central America | 1.65 | 15.7 | 2.07 | 0.83 |
| Oceania | 1.96 | 3.92 | 1.96 | 1.96 |
| North America | 3.17 | 15.26 | 1.51 | 1.51 |
| Non-EU Europe | 2.12 | 4.8 | 0.99 | 3.81 |
| EU | 2.28 | 5.56 | 0.76 | 3.19 |
| Asia | 3.29 | 15.7 | 1.94 | 0.97 |
| All Regions | 2.55 | 9.22 | 1.16 | 2.55 |
| Africa | 3.5 | 14.65 | 1.27 | 1.91 |

actors oriented   innovativeness oriented   objectives oriented   outputs oriented

# Comments on selected results – Switzerland



Social Innovation Projects in Practice
Stratified by scores for each criteria (N=56)
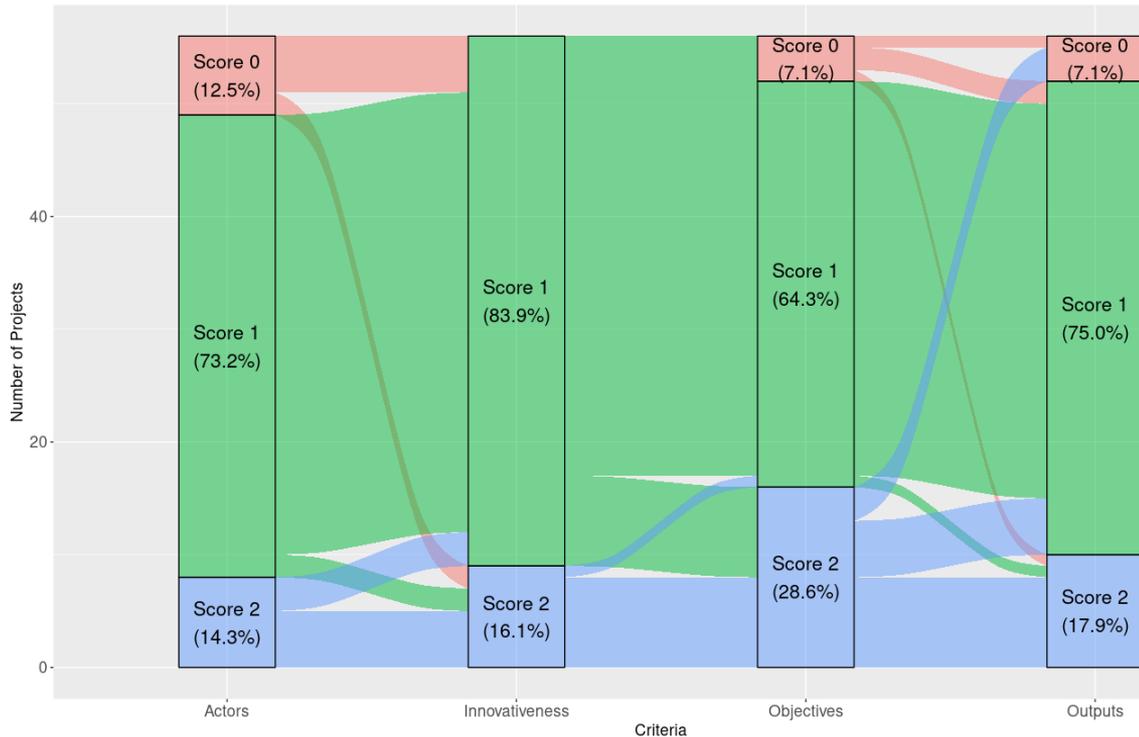
# Possible future developments

- Bring-your-own-data – possibility to tailor to custom data sets

- SI projects without a web presence – identify "offline" sources where they are catalogued (national/regional funding, foundations, societies, etc.)

- Selected social media channels/platforms

- Beyond limitations of KET and SGC (H2020) – ontology tailored to the thematic scope

    - alternative ontologies – possibly be able as user to choose an ontology

- Further features of ESID in terms of functionality and usability

# Closing words

- Tipping my hat to you for this huge leap forward

    - ESID's potential was considerable in the beginning but now it does offer exciting results

- Interested in

    - benchmarking our findings with the capabilities of ESID and

    - triangulating the results of our model / theory-building with yours;

    - opens a new discussion on types of SI and the "degree" of SI in projects

- Achievements allow many development possibilities – which ones will you pick up?

# THANK YOU!

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