

# Social Innovation Design

Subjects: Architecture And Design

Contributor: SHYH-HUEI Hwang

Social innovation design uses social resources and knowledge to meet the needs of society and put forward innovative schemes.

Keywords: social innovation design ; sustainability ; Sustainable Development Goals

---

## 1. Introduction

Eleanor Shaw pointed out that the practice of social innovation began in Britain in the 19th century when a few charitable entrepreneurs noticed that the improvement of the working environment, education, and cultural life helped enhance the well-being of employees <sup>[1]</sup>. In 2003, the OECD considered that social innovation aims at social and economic problems and improves the quality of life of the people and the general public by rediscovering and giving new services and solutions <sup>[2]</sup>. Social innovation is an innovative model with scientific and technological needs, platforms, and organizations <sup>[3]</sup>. Schumann et al. divided organizational innovation into product innovation, process innovation, and program innovation <sup>[4]</sup>. Additionally, economist Harvey Brooks stated that organizational innovation should come first <sup>[5]</sup>.

In 2007, British economist Geoff Mulgan and others believed that "Social innovation" is defined as "innovative activities or services motivated by meeting social needs, whose main purpose is to affect the entire society." <sup>[6]</sup> Defined by James Phillips, Professor of Stanford Social Innovation Organizational Behavior in 2008, "*A novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals*" <sup>[7]</sup>. Social innovation involves the interplay of resources, environmental factors, and interactions between actors <sup>[8]</sup>.

The characteristics of social innovation <sup>[9]</sup>: (1) comprehensiveness; (2) openness; (3) pluralistic participation; (4) decentralization. The so-called decentralization is to give full play to the initiative and creativity of the bottom-most organization and distribute the decision-making power to the subordinate organizations <sup>[10]</sup>; (5) super social responsibility; (6) relevance <sup>[11]</sup>. Social innovation is the combination and recombination of social practices <sup>[12]</sup>. Putnam believes that social capital includes networks, norms, and trust in social life so that participants can act together and achieve their goals effectively <sup>[13]</sup>. Onyx and Bullen pointed out that social capital includes participation, trust, network, reciprocity, and norms <sup>[14]</sup>. Many companies with little infrastructure, regulatory authority, or money to respond to newcomers' immediate needs or make longer-term integration investments <sup>[15]</sup>.

Victor Papanek deemed that designers should pay attention to the needs of society, the environment, and design for 90% of the general public in the world <sup>[16]</sup>. Tim Brown of IDEO, a design innovation company, emphasized that design thinking is optimistic, constructive, and experiential in nature, which can meet people's needs for products and services <sup>[17]</sup>. Social innovation is to apply knowledge and meet the needs of the public. Meanwhile, the operation method can obtain social resources, social support, and promotion <sup>[18]</sup>. As the concrete implementation of social innovation is through social design, it can be seen that social innovation design uses social resources and knowledge to meet the needs of society and put forward innovative schemes.

Dr. Ezio Manzini stated, "Social innovative design is all the activities that professional design can implement to activate, maintain and guide society towards sustainable development". Only on the basis of establishing contacts can small local organizations have a large-scale impact. Under the positive influence of the network age, there is another possibility to avoid structural bureaucracy; that is, through horizontal and vertical connections <sup>[19]</sup>. In the connection strategy stage, it is necessary to achieve scale improvement through connection, where design schools play an important role. He argued that the emerging trend in design is gradual networking <sup>[20]</sup>, which shows that design schools can become cultural institutions for social innovation. The potential of design schools may be a collaborative social resource, becoming an active key, and having a creative role in sustainable development <sup>[21]</sup>. The development and popularization of the internet provides a new channel for rural service innovation, showing the following characteristics <sup>[22]</sup>: (1) diversified service roles

[23]; (2) localization of service content and resources [24]; (3) network communication of service vision. At present, villagers lack willingness and have a weak perception of the value of rural culture. Economic development has become the biggest factor in guiding villagers to participate in cultural revitalization [25], which is necessary to spread the vision [26]. A spike in community solidarity and a resurgent appetite for cross-stakeholder solutions based on multidisciplinary know-how could make this a historic opportunity for social innovation to strengthen community resilience [27].

## **2. Social Innovative Design and Sustainability**

Sustainable development is defined as a development model that can meet our present needs without damaging future generations' ability to meet their needs [28]. In September 2015, the United Nations issued Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the agreement of SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). This policy plans 17 sustainable development goals, taking into account three major aspects: economic growth, social progress, and environmental protection [29]. In 2004, Dr. Hua-Shan Guan sorted out the essentials and practices of a sustainable community mentioned by many scholars (Kline, Hancock, Roseland, Barton) and summarized them as follows: (1) economic sustainability: having the ability to maintain its own economic development, green business, create new products, update the operation mechanism of the community, and achieve its own economic balance operation; (2) social sustainability: paying attention to the organization and operation of the community, establishing the consensus of residents for the community, establishing the mutual benefit mechanism of neighboring areas, and improving the local autonomy and social responsibility of the community; (3) environmental sustainability: the management and application of community environmental practices, including waste reduction, recycling, local resource management, etc. [30]. The DfSS framework specifically encourages designers to create solutions that are not just user-focused, but are systems-focused. Rather than focusing on how products can solve people's needs, we draw attention to how the entire product lifecycle (including design, manufacture, use, and maintenance) can maximize social impact [31].

The shift to a low-carbon community needs the transformation of government functions, improvement of a community system, and citizens' participation [32][33]. Social innovation realizes the harmonious relationship among people, the environment, and society through pluralistic participation [34]. People and designers design together and participate in constructing a low-carbon community, which can not only meet residents' needs to the maximum, but also promote community development [35]. Designers should re-understand their value, understand the inner spirit and meaning of culture, fully communicate with the locals, and jointly develop necessities suitable for local life, circulating commodities, and even international products with a high added value [36]. Chang Wenshan, a design scholar in Taiwan, believed that SDGs correspond to USR in Taiwan, and through the companionship and squatting of university teachers and students in the community, it will produce a closer sense of connection and carry out social practice programs for local problems. These will form a testing ground for sustainable management that practices commercial, social, cultural, and ecological values [37]. Chris Ryan, an expert in the field of social innovation, stated that "the distributed system model has attracted increasing attention, and it is regarded as a way to build a sustainable economy" [38]. He further remarked that "distributed models place and arrange infrastructure and critical service systems near resource and demand points. Individual systems can operate independently and adjust themselves, while also connecting with larger local, regional, or international networks" [39]. Distributed systems learn from problems and are more resilient than mainstream vertical systems [40]. Moreover, the necessary condition for a sustainable society is recoverability [41].

---

## **References**

1. Shaw, E. Marketing in the social enterprise context: Is it entrepreneurial? *Qual. Mark. Res. Int. J.* 2004, 7, 194–205.
2. OECD. *The Non-Profit Sector in a Changing Economy*; OECD: Paris, France, 2003.
3. Hwang, Y.S.; Wang, D.; Chang, S.W. *Innovative Innovation: How Social Innovation Models Lead the Era of Crowd-Creation*; Zhejiang People's Publishing House: Hangzhou, China, 2016; pp. 15–20.
4. Schumann, P.A.; Prestwood, D.; Tong, A.; Vanston, J. *Innovate: Straight Path to Quality, Customer Delight, and Competitive Advantage*; McGraw Hill: New York, NY, USA, 1994.
5. Brooks, H. *Social and Technological Innovation*; Lundstedt, E., Colglazier, W., Jr., Eds.; Managing Innovation; Pergamon Press: Elmsford, NY, USA, 1982; pp. 9–10.
6. Mulgan, G.; Tucker, S.; Ali, R.; Sanders, B. *Social Innovation: What it Is, Why it Matters and How it Can Be Accelerated*; University of Oxford: Oxford, UK, 2007.
7. Phills, J.A.; Deiglmeier, K.; Miller, D.T. Rediscovering social innovation. *Stanf. Soc. Innov. Rev.* 2008, 6, 34–43.

8. Oosterlynck, S.; Novy, A.; Kazepov, Y. *Local Social Innovation to Combat Poverty and Exclusion*; Policy Press, University of Bristol: Bristol, UK, 2020; pp. 5–28.
9. Liu, B. Corporate Social Innovation: A New Paradigm of Corporate Innovation. *Technol. Prog. Countermeas.* 2011, 28, 87–92.
10. Fagerberg, J.; Mowery, D.; Nelson, R. *The Oxford Handbook of Innovation*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 2005; pp. 102–130.
11. The Analysis of Social Innovations as Social Practice. Available online: [https://www.academia.edu/18385585/The\\_Analysis\\_of\\_Social\\_Innovations\\_as\\_Social\\_Practice](https://www.academia.edu/18385585/The_Analysis_of_Social_Innovations_as_Social_Practice) (accessed on 5 March 2021).
12. Social Innovatio: Concepts, Research Fields and International Trends. Available online: [https://www.asprea.org/imagenes/IMO%20Trendstudie\\_Howaldt\\_englisch\\_Final%20ds.pdf](https://www.asprea.org/imagenes/IMO%20Trendstudie_Howaldt_englisch_Final%20ds.pdf) (accessed on 8 October 2020).
13. Putnam, R.D. Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America. *Political Sci. Politics* 1995, 28, 664–683.
14. Onyx, J.; Bullen, P. Measuring social capital in five communities. *J. Appl. Behav. Sci.* 2000, 36, 23–42.
15. Patuzzi, L. *European Cities on the Front Line: New and Emerging Governance Models for Migrant Inclusion*; Migration Policy Institute Europe and International Organization for Migration: Brussels, Belgium; Geneva, Switzerland, 2020; pp. 85–102.
16. Papanek, V.; Fuller, R.B. *Design for the Real World*; Thames and Hudson: London, UK, 1972; pp. 38–62.
17. Brown, T.; Wyatt, J. Design Thinking for Social Innovation. *Stanf. Soc. Innov. Rev.* 2010, 8, 28–35.
18. The Sociology Imagination from Design to Social Design. Available online: <http://www.seinsights.asia/story/257/13/1590> (accessed on 23 April 2016).
19. Manzini, E. *Design, When Everybody Design: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*; MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, USA; London, UK, 2015; pp. 76–80.
20. Manzini, E.; Rizzo, F. Small Projects/Large Changes: Participatory Design as an Open Participated Process. *Codesign* 2011, 7, 199–215.
21. Leadbeater, C. *We-Think*; Profile Books: London, UK, 2008; pp. 122–130.
22. Ji, T.; Pan, Y. Community and Network Based Design and Social Innovation: From UCD to CCD. *Zhuangshi* 2012, 12, 109–111.
23. Zhao, X. *Order Changes and Value Reconstruction of Rural Culture*. Master's Thesis, Hebei Normal University, Shijiazhuang, China, 2012.
24. Zhang, L.; Lin, X.; Yang, G. Cross-culture Thinking in Sustainable Service Design of Social Innovation: Case Comparison between Milan, IT and Wuxi, China. *Creat. Des.* 2015, 3, 66–70.
25. Ran, X.M. Thinking and Suggestion for the Revitalization of Rural Culture. *Think Tank Era* 2019, 3, 24.
26. Li, X.L.; Gong, M.S.; Xiao, D.J. Study on Service Design for Sustainable Lifestyle in Mobile Internet Society. *Design* 2015, 22, 122–123.
27. Gostoli, Y. *Coronavirus in Italy: Solidarity in the Time of Disease*; Deutsche Welle: Bonn, Germany, 2020.
28. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs*; UNDP: New York, NY, USA, 2015.
29. United Nations. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Available online: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda> (accessed on 3 February 2021).
30. Kuang, H.S. A preliminary Study on the Planning, Design and Restoration Guidelines for the Aborigines' Sustainable Villages in Taiwan. *Tunghai J.* 2004, 45, 33–62.
31. Corsini, L.; Moultrie, J. Design for social sustainability: Using digital fabrication in the humanitarian and development sector. *Sustainability* 2019, 11, 3562.
32. Liu, S.H. Study on the Construction Feasibility of Citizen Participation of Low-carbon City. *J. Natl. Taichung Univ.* 2015, 2, 135–163.
33. Sun, C.-G.; Zhang, Z.-Q. Analysis on Current Situation and Influence Factors of Community Residents' Participation during the Process of Low-Carbon City Construction: On the Basis of an Empirical Investigation in Chengyang District, Qingdao, Mainland China. *J. Urbanol.* 2015, 1, 29–62.

34. Wang, G.Y. Sustainable Development and Technological Innovation. *Development* 2007, 12, 19–20.
35. Yu, S.H.; Ruan, R.F. The Experience of International Low Carbon Community Public Participation. *Beijing City Plan. Constr.* 2011, 5, 74–76.
36. Ji, T.; Yang, Y.Y.; Zhao, J.H. Regional Intangible Culture and Native Design System. *J. Hunan Univ.* 2009, 1, 143.
37. Chang, W.S. The Second Phase Report of Nantou County Design and Reversal of Local Creation and Entrusted Professional Services; National Development Council, Nantou County Government: Nantou, Taiwan, 2018.
38. Ryan. DESIS Theme Cluster Distributed and Open Production. Climate Change and Ecodesign (Part II). Available online: <http://design-network.org/dop> (accessed on 5 September 2014).
39. Biggs, C.T.B.; Ryan, C.J.R.; Wiseman, J.R. Distributed Systems: A Design Model for Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure. *Veil* 2014, 3, 10–15.
40. Manzini, E. Error-Friendliness: How to Design Resilient Sociotechnical Systems. In *Architecture in an Age of Depleting Resources*, Architectural Design Profile; Goofbun, J., Ed.; Wiley: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2012; p. 218.
41. Walker, B.; Salt, D. *Resilience Thinking: Sustaining Ecosystems and People in a Changing World*; Island Press: Washington, DC, USA, 2006.

---

Retrieved from <https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/history/show/32620>