

**Session Proposition: 5<sup>th</sup> Geography of Innovation Conference,  
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**Social Innovation in the Global South - theoretical and empirical insights into actors, processes and impacts**

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Social innovations are gaining stature in social and policy agendas as societies worldwide are faced by complex societal “mega challenges”. These issues are often accelerated by the globalization of economic activities and unsustainable styles and scales of production and consumption. In recent years, research on social innovation has considerably been advanced, underlining their multi-faceted and cross-sectoral nature (van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016; Peris Oritz et al., 2018). Social innovations are inherently different from technological innovations in that they are directed to changing and reconfiguring social actions and practices. Social innovation can take on a wide variety of forms. This makes it difficult to grasp their formation and scaling processes, and it remains challenging to measure their social impact (Havas 2016, Krlev et al 2014, Osburg & Schmidpeter 2013).

From a spatial perspective, there are currently limited insights into social innovation in the Global South. However, in the contexts of developing countries, social innovations seem to be particularly relevant but remain less understood (Bitzer & Hamann, 2015). Most of the research on social innovation has focused on local and national scales, demonstrating the contextual embeddedness of this type of innovation. How social innovations can be scaled and replicated in different institutional contexts and across spatial scales remains largely underexplored (Westley & Antadze, 2010). Moreover, even though most economic activities are linked across spatial and social scales, there is only little knowledge on the role of social innovation in global value chains and the influence of transnational networks on their formation processes (Strambach & Surmeier 2017).

Against this background, the session will provide a forum to present and discuss theoretical approaches as well as empirical and methodological contributions to enhance insights into social innovation processes in the Global South. In terms of geographical scope, the session wishes to attract papers from a wide range of geographical contexts in “the Global South” and from transnational perspectives.