

**Call for Papers and Panels**  
**11th International Social Innovation Research Conference**  
The Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health, Glasgow Caledonian University  
September 2-4, 2019  
Conference Website: <http://www.isircconference2019.com/>

## **Critical Perspectives on Social Innovation**

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We would like to highlight upfront that the 'critical' in the stream title is not intended to be directed at alternatives which social innovation might replace. The rest of the conference has sufficient space for papers critiquing bureaucratic public policy, dependency cultures perpetuated by philanthropy or business as usual. Instead, this stream turns attention towards the social innovation emperor and seeks to critique him (and it is usually him) for wearing no clothes. Social Innovation, by (most) definition(s), involves meeting new social needs and/or developing new solutions to social problems. What possible reason(s) could there be to develop a stream focusing on critical perspectives on social innovation? Well here we offer just three:

First, and perhaps most obviously, critical perspectives might focus on the hidden ideas and ideologies underpinning social innovation discourses. That is, not so much what social innovation is for, but rather what it isn't for. Who pushes social innovation discourses and policies and why? Which alternative approaches to meeting social needs are 'squeezed out' by social innovation?

Second, critical perspectives might interrogate social innovation less as an outcome and more as a process which involves bringing different groups together to devise new solutions to particular problems. Who are the winners and losers in such a process? Is there any evidence to show such a process 'works'?

Third, critical perspectives might usefully explore the history of social innovation(s). Previous social innovations documented in academic literature include 'the substitution of the West Indian plantation for the tribal and clan life of Africa' (Hoggan, 1909:351); or the vacuum cleaner as a means of transforming the gendered division of housework (Smeds et al. 1994). Academics have used theories of social innovation to explain why email would never replace fax machines. Clearly, social innovation has not always been enthused with positive connotations. Nor have academic experts always correctly predicted the positive social outcomes associated with social innovations. What are the benefits of returning to sociological understandings of the social as opposed to its current treatment as equivalent 'nice things'?

Importantly, however, the aim of this stream is not to direct people in how to perform critique. Instead, we seek innovative and thought provoking papers in any format that challenge popular understandings and taken for granted perspectives, of social innovation. Papers submitted to this stream will be considered for a forthcoming themed issue of Social Enterprise Journal imaginatively titled 'critical perspectives on social innovation'.

**Guidelines:**

Paper abstracts must be maximum 300 words, excluding references. They should articulate: the research objectives or questions being addressed; the conceptual or theoretical perspectives informing the work; where appropriate, the methodology utilised; and the contribution of the paper to knowledge in light of the conference themes.

Optional full paper submission for consideration in best paper awards is due no later than 31st July 2019.

A maximum of two abstracts may be submitted per presenter (joint papers to be presented by coauthors will also be considered).

All paper abstracts must be submitted to [isirc2019@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:isirc2019@gcu.ac.uk). On abstract submission please ensure you advise the conference stream.

Panel proposals must be maximum 400 words, excluding references. They should include: the panel purpose and its relationship to the nominated conference stream; details of (minimum) three and (maximum) four papers and paper presenters to be included in the panel; and the expected contribution to the panel.

All panel proposals must be submitted to [isirc2019@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:isirc2019@gcu.ac.uk).

Abstract and panel proposals submission: Closes 28th February 2019

Decision on submissions: Notification by 31st March 2019

Full papers submitted for consideration in best paper awards due: 31st July 2019

Enquiries about conference administration and technical issues related to online submission should be directed to the conference administration team at [isirc2019@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:isirc2019@gcu.ac.uk)