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Key Figures in Spatial Development

Individual, Subject, Actor, Strategist - Analytical Dimensions

Urban Restructuring - The Pioneers of Demolition

Biotechnology - Innovative Entrepreneurs as Key Figures

Regional Energy Transitions - The Role of Individuals

Key Figures in Spatial Development

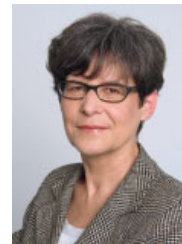
Researchers from all departments of the IRS encounter frequent similarities in their empirical work: their findings show that spatial development is often driven by specific individuals who contribute to such development, for example, by trying out new ideas in their social environment, by straying from the beaten path, or by developing new approaches to address socio-spatial problems. For research on society and space, it is therefore necessary to adopt a perspective in which the individual function of key figures is taken into specific consideration and examined in relation to an understanding of social and institutional structures, networks, and space.

Building on these experiences, the IRS launched the cross-departmental project “Key Figures as Driving Forces in Spatial Development” in 2013. Within this project, researchers from four research departments conducted case studies in their respective fields in order to explore in depth the influence of essential actors on processes of spatial development and to develop a typological model to identify them. Although the project was completed at the end of 2015, the line of research continues in the context of current lead projects within participating research departments. Over the course of the last years, this research has led to an extensive empirical foundation, providing a basis for an analytical and theoretical understanding of the function of key figures. “Inspired by case studies and the close examination of concepts and findings from various disciplinary contexts, we have identified the function of key figures, as well as their interactions with structures of social relations and the structural contexts of their actions,” states IRS Director Prof. Dr. Heiderose Kilper. The results of this research project are presented starting at page 3.

The contribution concerning the creation of the urban development promotion program “Urban Redevelopment in the New Federal States” focuses on the function of specific individuals (page 6). In his study, Dr. Matthias Bernt performs a detailed exami-

nation of three key figures within this process. In a more typological approach, Dr. Felix Müller conducts his case study on entrepreneurs in the bio-tech industry. Departing from the reconstruction of a wealth of innovation biographies, he identifies two further essential types of entrepreneur who act as key figures in addition to the ubiquitous founder type (page 9). A case study in the lead project of the research department “Institutional Change and Regional Public Goods” emphasizes individual action within collective constellations of actors in the context of the energy transition in the Wendland of Lower Saxony (page 12). ■

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Key Figures as Driving Forces in Spatial Development – Theoretical Considerations for an Analytic Model

Metaphors can be helpful guides for researchers as they endeavor to explore a territory they suspect to contain interesting and new forms of knowledge but without knowing the particular form such knowledge might take. For the IRS cross-departmental project “Key Figures as Driving Forces in Spatial Development”, the metaphor of “key figures” as an operative concept involves such an exploratory quality: A key opens and closes doors. It allows access to what has been previously closed off, or it can be used to prevent others from gaining such access. When transferred to the context of socio-spatial change, one could say: Key figures are exceptional personalities in the sense that they act as door openers. As instigators, masterminds, or *éminence grises*, such figures can use their function in a particular manner in order to promote or impede socio-spatial processes. Even the term “figure” appears to be deliberately open and understood in an overarching sense, says project director Prof. Dr. Heiderose Kilper. The term “figure” is favored over that of “actor” due to the fact that, within theoretical considerations of the dimensions of key figures, the latter has come to represent an important sub-concept for describing the dimensions of the actions of such figures.

The idea to turn the attention to “key figures” came from a number of reoccurring observations made by IRS researchers in various fields and projects; in a nutshell, what they noticed was this: In processes of spatial development it is often the actions of individuals that play a prominent and significant role and that have a decisive

degree of impact on the shaping of processes and initiatives of socio-spatial change. At times, multiple individuals contribute to such processes. In each particular context of activity, these individuals both stand out within the entire structural framework and are also considered by others to be important figures of the same processes.

In order to describe the phenomenon of key figures in an analytic and theoretical sense, the project team engages in an in-depth examination of the concepts and findings of various disciplinary contexts, particularly from the fields of politics and organization studies, business administration, and sociology. Previous attempts have

been made in these fields to identify leading figures in politics, organization, and business together with their (particular) abilities and to put their respective functions in the context of processes of social change. The central findings of these investigations are presented in summarized form by Prof. Dr. Oliver Ibert and Dr. Ludger Gailing. (Gailing, L., Ibert, O. (2016). *Schlüsselfiguren: Raum als Gegenstand und Ressource des Wandels. Raumforschung und Raumordnung*, 74(5), 391-403) “Based on these findings, we have identified that the function of key figures must always be considered in association with frameworks of social relations and the structural contexts, which they are both active in shaping and in which they are simultaneously also embedded,” remarks Kilper. “Our analysis of key figures thus proceeds between three cornerstones as poles of interest: that of the key figure itself (in multiple dimensions), that of the framework of social relations, and of the underlying structure.” The cornerstones are always viewed in relation to one another and within their particular spatial context.” This approach has led to the creation of an analytic model which researchers believe will provide a viable basis for further empirical research.

Analytic Dimensions of Key Figures

- The analysis approach developed in the cross-departmental process is distinguished by its focus on key figures themselves together with their defining characteristics. In analytic terms, the model differentiates between four dimensions:
- Individual Dimension. This refers to individual basic skills and personality traits, such as strong communication competence; authenticity; trustworthiness; and the ability to convince and/or motivate others.
- Subject Dimension. This (primarily cognitive) dimension serves to shift the attention to the specific world views that key figures develop and to the way in which they introduce new ideas using the back-

ground of their particular sorts of knowledge and interests, create new values, and conceptualize new problem definitions and new solution options.

- Actor Dimension. This dimension takes into account the fact that key



figures are distinguished by action and a strong sense of drive. They have the ability to implement their own ideas or those of others, to create specific procedures, to set trends for new practices, and to demonstrate tactful use of their social status within a framework of social and institutional relations, for instance as mayor or as a member of a board of directors.

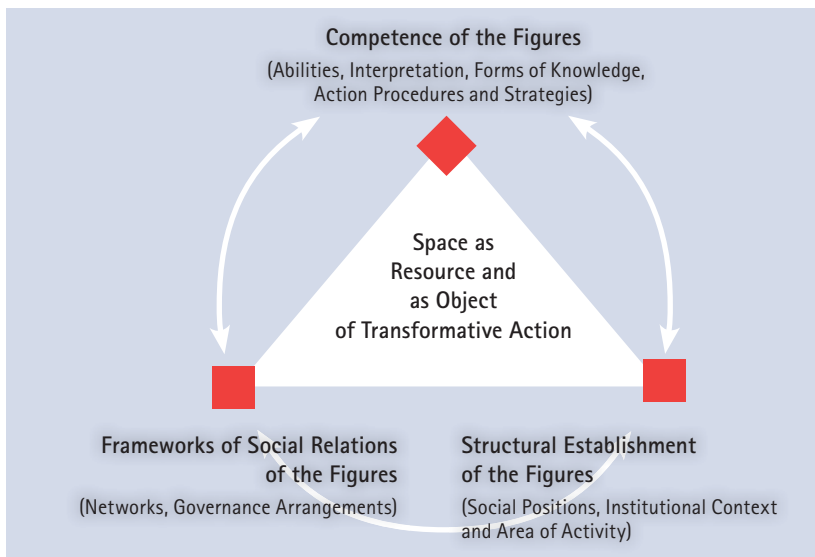
- Strategy Dimension. Key figures often exhibit a high degree of reflexive action. They prepare the implementation of their ideas in a highly systematic manner and with longer-term perspective. They form alliances and both recognize and utilize so-called windows of opportunity with great precision.
- In effect, key figures are comprised of all four dimensions: A key figure is at once an individual, subject, actor, and (at least partially) a strategy. In reality, the respective

dimensions can vary considerably depending on the various key figures of spatial development. The subject dimension can be predominant among one key figure, that is, he or she may demonstrate a particular ability to conceptualize new interpretations to problems and solution approaches, while the strategy dimension may not belong to his or her strengths; this means that the systematic and persistent implementation of those solution approaches considered to be correct may pose a particular difficulty for him or her. For another key figure, the exact opposite might be the case.

The individual dimension is based within the theoretical consideration of the core of the key figure. This refers to very individual and basic personality traits which can radiate throughout other dimensions of the individual. “Because of the high degree of communication skills that a key figure demonstrates in the individual dimension, it can be the case, for example, that the subject dimension, or the distinct ability to develop new methods of problem solving, can be coupled to a large extent with the ability to convince and attract others of the new solution model in a short period of time,” explains Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann, who also contributed to the cross-departmental project. “That notwithstanding, we consider the analytic separation of these dimensions to be appropriate for the identification of the specific profile of key figures and for an improved understanding of their function within the process of spatial development.”

Model for the Analysis of the Function of Key Figures in Processes of Spatial Development

In the context of processes of spatial development, key figures can be summarized in three cornerstones within their four dimensions (see model next page).



Model for the Analysis of the Function of Key Figures in Processes of Spatial Development

In this model, “space” is assigned a double function. On the one hand it is the object of both thought and action for key figures. They form their subjective spatial interpretations and conceptions for a specific space, whether it is an urban district, a rural region, or a region in which sectoral transformations of structure are taking place. They communicate and share these views with others and they create new collective identities beyond intersubjective interpretations of space. They develop concrete strategies of action for specific spaces and support their implementation efforts. On the other hand, space also constitutes a resource for key figures, for instance when they mobilize network relations in terms of space or when they utilize the territorial significance of formal or informal regulatory systems for their objectives, whether it is a public funding program or a promotional instrument of the joint task “improvement of regional economic structure.”

IRS researchers were able to systematize these findings for every form of action and each function of key figures. In this context, Kilper returns to the double function of the key: “When transferred to our working concept, this view is kept open to both sides, for innovative, forward-thinking and constructive action, and also a sort of

action that leads to disruptions and blockades in processes of spatial development, or all the way to the failure of collective action.”

“Key Figures” – A Relational Concept

The cross-departmental project brought to light one aspect with particular clarity: Key figures stand out from the entire framework of personal relations within their respective narratives of action; and at the same time, they are also considered by others to be significant figures. This means in other words: The concept of “key figures” is a relational one. For an understanding of the function of “key figures,” it is not enough simply to analyze those traits and abilities that belong in effect to personality. It is also necessary to analyze those who support them and who ascribe them such traits and abilities, including the framework of social relations in which they operate. Max Weber already indicates this in his study on charismatic leader personalities. From the perspective of the followers and supporters, he examines the individual personalities that are able to become leading powers because of the power attributed to them by their supporters. ■

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Pioneers of Demolition

In 2001 the Federal Government of Germany adopted the funding programme “Urban Redevelopment in the New Federal States.” The turn of the new millennium marked a significant turning point without which East-German cities and municipalities can hardly be imagined today: For the first time in German history, strategies for coping with shrinking cities became recognized as a new state responsibility and the systematic tearing down of residential buildings without replacement became a legitimate issue in urban development policy. In both politics and the housing sector, this sort of demolition was still considered an absolute taboo only a few years prior. How did it come to this radical change of course in just a few years? In a study, IRS researcher Dr. Matthias Bernt examines the chronological sequences of and actors involved in this political innovation. The conclusion: Despite the considerable sense of urgency for action, it is primarily due to the function of key figures that “Urban Redevelopment” has now become an unquestionable instrument of German urban development policy.

The origins of the programme “Urban Redevelopment in the New Federal States” can be traced back primarily to the crisis of the East-German housing sector that emerged from the challenges of the political transformation process in the 1990s. It was at this time that two opposing developments began to converge in East Germany: On the one hand, the resulting deindustrialization of eastern Germany following reunification had led to a significant population decline in all regions. At the same time, the supply of housing

experienced enormous growth due in part to strong support from both federal and state governments. Against this backdrop, increasing rates of residential vacancy began in the mid 1990s and would include roughly a sixth of existing housing in eastern Germany by the turn of the millennium.

This situation led to a number of problems that concerned various actors at once and created a sense of pressure to act: For urban planning, the mounting vacancies also resulted in growing dif-

ficulties with the restoration efforts of older buildings in need of renovation, as well as in the increasing challenge of dilapidation and problems with the profitability and viability of technical infrastructures. For the affected housing companies, the problem of vacancy was reflected in massive losses in revenue. “This was particularly problematic because the majority of housing companies at this time had incurred considerable expenses to cover the loans they had taken out for the renovation of their holdings – at a relatively

high interest rate compared to those of today – and to settle outstanding debts,” explains Bernt.

This also posed significant risks for municipalities in eastern Germany. Due to the fact that municipalities function as the main shareholders of municipal housing associations, they are liable in the event that the housing company is forced to enter insolvency. A wave of insolvencies in the municipal housing sector would therefore have led to a dramatic financial burden in a number of communities. “Last but not least, the massive housing vacancies were also a problem for the commercial banks dealing with mortgages,” according to Bernt. In the 1990s, these banks had extended massive credit to the housing companies now affected by vacancies.

“Although the facts of the situation became increasingly clear from the mid 1990s onward, the problem was not yet recognized by the public, trade associations, and in politics at this time,” says Bernt. This changed surprisingly quickly considering that Bernt observes the issue of housing vacancy to be regarded as common knowledge among experts as early as 1999. It was a mere two more years to the enactment of the programme “Urban Redevelopment in the New Federal States” - a short period of time considering the extensive paradigm shift of the programme. Bernt identifies the function of influential key figures as a part of the explanation for this, as well as for questions regarding the way in which key features of the programme made it into the final version as they did: “To reconstruct the course of events with respect to the role of single individuals is to quickly observe that the implementation of the programme can be traced back to the active involvement of a group of roughly 20 or 30 people.” Bernt analyzes the involvement of three remarkable individuals: a representative of the housing sector, a state politician from Saxony, and a political consultant with a well established network.

Ms. Reiter was Deputy Managing Director of the Gesamtverbandes der Wohnungswirtschaft (GDW, or Federal Association of German Housing) and director of the Berlin office of the GDW, which was particularly responsible for the new federal states. Prior to this, she held a similar position before German Reunification in a predecessor institute in the GDR.



Bernt summarizes his research on Ms. Reiter: “She knew everyone, was on a first-name basis with relevant state ministers and was professionally recognized in both the housing sector and politics.”

Both before and after 1990, she was well known and well connected in a network of political experts. She was considered resolute and dedicated, earning her the nickname “Mother Courage of the Eastern German Housing Sector.” She frequently called attention to the vacancy situation in the initiation phase of the programme between 1996 and 1999 in particular. “Insiders name her in connection with the appointment of the commission of experts in 1999,” says Bernt. How did she achieve this? According to Bernt, “one can see the interaction between structural factors, which focus on the essential role of the GdW, and the exceptional networking of Ms. Reiter and a series of her personal attributes.”

As a consultant in the political world with connections to parties and ministries as well as with a personal and professional interest centred on housing policy, Mr. Peter occupies an entirely different position as an actor of significance. In the 1990s he directed a consulting firm for economics and social

sciences which was at the forefront of research on the issue of housing vacancy. Bernt attributes the fact that Mr. Peter was ultimately commissioned for the arrangement and supervision of the commission of experts mainly to his comprehensive contacts within the Ministry for Building and Urban Development and to two fundamental studies on vacancy which his consulting firm carried out on behalf of a number of credit institutes in 1999. In this phase he exerted enormous influence; he selected the greater part of commission members practically by himself; and he was even granted voting rights within the commission. Peter also pursued his own interesting agenda in doing so: Home ownership promotion, which was his crucial introduction to the commission reports.



Nevertheless, he was still considered independent and professionally legitimate; he had exceptional contacts and impressive tactical skills; and he could quickly convert problem analyses into innovative solution approaches – characteristics to guarantee considerable influence in the second phase of the creation of the programme “Urban Re-development in the New Federal States.”

While vacancy became accepted and subsequently communicated within the housing sector in 1997, the taboo surrounding demolition remained pervasive in politics for several years. The Free State of Saxony was the first

* The names of individuals in question have been changed due to the at times very personal assessments mentioned in the interviews.

federal state to attend to this problem actively and to take up its own measures before the appointment of the expert commission.

This was the context in which Mr. Trautvetter assumed his role as a key figure. For more than two decades he was considered something of the unofficial “master builder” of Saxony; at the same time, he also worked at the central hub between the state, municipality, and federal government.



He was closely connected to the housing sector and was able to grasp the scope of the vacancy issue at an early stage.

This enabled him to discuss the issue within the political arena – at first in Saxony and soon thereafter throughout Germany as a whole. In the formal sense, Trautvetter was only an observer in the expert commission; yet, his emphatic participation in the talks was as great as that of any official member.

The three key figures are evidence for the extent to which single individuals have exerted great influence on the creation of the programme “Urban Redevelopment in the New Federal States.” Whether as “leader,” “multiple insider,” or “intermediary” – they operate with a particular set of structural conditions in the institutional framework of the housing sector and housing policy; they pursue specific personal priorities; and they perform above and beyond the previously established principles, solution approaches, and boundaries. “Their position within the power structure alone does not present a sufficient explanation for how they became key figures,” concludes Bernt. “It has always been the superior integration in networks, a high degree of professional understanding of problems, and not least personal-biographical attributes such as the assertiveness, closeness to the base, or tactical skills that constitute their special status.” ■



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BERNT, Matthias: Schlüsselfiguren bei der Entstehung des „Stadtumbau Ost“. Working Paper No 55, Erkner: Leibniz-Institut für Raumbezogene Sozialforschung, 2015, 32 p.
 :: www.irs-net.de/download/wp_Schluesselfiguren_Stadtumbau-Ost.pdf

THE CREATION OF THE PROGRAMME “URBAN REDEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW FEDERAL STATES” AND ITS KEY FEATURES.

- 1997 First Analysis Paper of the working group “Housing Vacancy in the New Federal States” of the Federal Ministry of Construction and the GdW (Federal Association of German Housing)
- 1998 – 2000 Strong Industry Demands Following a Government Programme
- 1999 Launch of a State Support Programme for the Promotion of Demolition Measures in Saxony
- 1999 Establishment of the “Expert Commission on Changes to the Housing Sector” by the Federal Government of Germany
- 2000 Five Meetings of the Expert Commission between February and November
- 2001 Adoption of the Programme “Urban Redevelopment in the New Federal States” by the Federal Government of Germany
- 2001 Award Announcement for the Federal Prize Competition “Integrated Urban Development Concepts”
- 2003 Administrative Agreement between federal and state governments on the promotion programme “Urban Redevelopment in the New Federal States”

It is the mission of the urban development promotion programme “Urban Redevelopment in the New Federal States” to strengthen inner cities and urban districts in need of preservation through targeted improvement measures, as well as to stabilize cities by tearing down vacant and permanently irredeemable housing. In addition to the demolition of residential buildings, the programme also includes the redevelopment of technical and social infrastructures as well as the creation of integrated concepts tailored to regenerating cities (INSEK) among others. Since 2002 the federal government has invested roughly 1.5 billion Euros in funding for urban redevelopment measures in nearly 500 municipalities.





Of Placemakers, Sherpas, and Enthusiasts

The function of key figures as driving forces of spatial development can be as multifaceted as the processes of spatial impact in which they are significantly involved. As a result, case studies in various fields are beneficial and informative for an analytic understanding of the phenomenon of "key figures." Within the cross-departmental project, Dr. Felix Müller conducted one such case study in the field of biotechnology. As a research subject this field is remarkable in many respects: It is characterized at once by radical, pragmatic innovation in the scientific context and by a strong degree of formalization and regulation in the economic context. The reconciliation of these sides is a major challenge for those operating within the industry.

In both the public context and in the biotech sector, innovation processes are strongly associated with successful projects and thus also with founding figures. As already evident in the descriptive term, such figures are affiliated with innovative undertakings through the highly conspicuous act of founding a company. They identify themselves greatly with the respective core idea of the undertaking; they are actively engaged in the outward communication of this idea; and they are considered accordingly as the architects of the particular innovation. "The contribution of such enthusiastic founders to the processes of innovation is indeed essential in that it defines innovation, and both isolates and accentu-

Biotechnology combines fundamental scientific research, start-up companies, industry, and the capital market.

ates its uniqueness, on the one hand, while including the first steps of its implementation on the other," says Felix Müller, whose dissertation also examines innovation in this sector. "Enthusiastic founders perform first and foremost the creative achievement of generating alternative courses of action for a concrete idea from the conditions and practices observed over a long period of time."

Yet, as Müller reports from his research, the ideas and enthusiasm of founding figures are not enough in themselves for the success of an innovation process, such as the development of a new active agent in medical research. He analyzes in detail the sequence of events of eight successful innovations, reconstructs the various phases of the processes, and identifies individuals with significant influence in a total of 38 interviews. In addition to the founders, he also looks at the "entrepreneurs of spatial creation" – so-called "placemakers" – and "entrepreneurs of transformation" – or "Sherpas" as generalized models of innovation actors. "Biotechnology combines fundamental scientific research, start-up companies, indus-

try, and the capital market,” says Müller with regard to the abilities needed to successfully realize an idea. In addition to this, such actors can also be characterized as key figures in terms of the concepts of “leadership” and “intermediaries” – the rare cases of success in biotech innovation can be traced to the actions of spatial impact by enthusiasts, placemakers, and Sherpas.

“A placemaker is a certain type of entrepreneur whose actions both shape and change the spatial and social environment for other actors,” Müller explains. They have a great deal of interest in the implementation of new ideas as a practice. Yet instead of pushing their own projects, they see a promising model of success in supporting and promoting others in their innovation initiatives. They achieve this, for instance, through involvement in mentoring relationships with young founders and in changes to the structure of innovation promotion in a specific region. In this sense they create spaces of innovation. Placemakers are usually older and experienced entrepreneurs who can usually demonstrate experience in academic careers and thus also include the knowledge base of various research areas.

The contribution of the “entrepreneur of transformation” demonstrates an equally supportive character. For Müller, the metaphor of “Sherpas” has its own allure: Sherpas, the people of a mountain tribe in the Himalayas, are internationally known as high-alpine mountain guides without whose help Western climbing enthusiasts could hardly manage peaks such as those of Mt. Everest,” states Müller. “The image is conveyed of



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„Sherpas“ are the experienced leaders who are called upon in an intermediate or advanced phase in innovation processes, or in terms of the respective biotech company, because those previously responsible are no longer able to make progress in achieving targeted goals.



The characteristic social resource of enthusiastic founders is their ability to recognize certain situations as opportunities for new ideas and to spark interest and excitement for these ideas in others.



the knowledgeable advisor and guide who is well acquainted with the dangers and uncertainties of the way, who can set realistic goals for each stage, and who also maintains a competent ability to act at great (falling) heights and amidst increasingly thin air.” Another aspect to expand the metaphor is that Sherpa mountain guides tend to be in the background in terms of public attention despite the fact that they perform an indispensable function for an ascent of Mt. Everest. In the innovation processes of biotechnology, Sherpas perform a similar function: They are the experienced leaders who are called upon in an intermediate or advanced phase in inno-

vation processes, or in terms of the respective biotech company, because those previously responsible are no longer able to make progress in achieving targeted goals. They have personal experience in manage-

ment and often the founding of companies and projects; they are familiar with the logic of product development and strategic marketing; and they know how to connect to the individual passions of enthusiastic founders.

According to Müller, it is particularly advantageous for the success of innovation when key figures of every sort participate actively in various phases of the process. The characteristic social resource of enthusiastic founders is their ability to recognize certain situations as opportunities for new ideas and to spark interest and excitement for these ideas in others. Placemakers are distinguished on the one hand by their ability to operate in extremely politicized arenas, to secure influence, reputation, and institutional resources, and on the other hand, to confine themselves to their own areas of responsibility, to give up control, and both tolerate and even support different ways of thinking and alternative approaches. The characteristic social capacity of Sherpas is the ability

to involve very different actors within a coherent process. In doing so, they must demonstrate an interest in those members of the founding team whose mode of thinking is often rooted in the scientific world, as well as in finance investors, regulators, strategic partners, and potential clients.

As Müller also observes, the narrowed focus on founders is an indicator of the political innovation. Support at individuals, such as the Start-Up Program and the EXIST program, are direct measures of the Federal Ministry of Research, are directed to those who would like to

based on their idea. "This is understandable considering the degree of formal visibility involved; however, it is also necessary to consider other ways with which both types of key figures can be addressed in terms of political innovation." ■

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WORKING PAPER



Innovative Entrepreneurs as Key Figures of Spatial Impact. Findings of the Examination of Innovation Processes in Biotechnology

In a working paper, Dr. Felix Müller summarizes the results of the case studies in the field of biotechnology. In the publication he takes a differentiating look at key figures in innovation processes within the biotech sector. The agency of various types of key figures is understood as both integral to the success of innovation on the one hand, and yet also as interdependent and limited in a specific sense on the other. The spatial-temporality and process orientation of the innovation process functions in this sense as the content-based frame that binds the two aspects together: the nexus of innovation and spatial development on the one hand; and on the other, the specific challenges within the innovation processes which can only be overcome by actions that go beyond the implementation of institutional logic.

In such terms the field of biotechnology is extreme. It is unique in its combination of fundamental scientific research, start-up companies, industry, and the capital market. Operating at the intersection of these institutional environments are individuals designated as key figures. These figures are depicted here in terms of exemplary models. They are identified with recourse to the concepts of "leadership" and "the intermediary." Additionally taken into consideration are their strategic actions of spatial impact, their contributions to innovation processes, and also their limitations. The figure of the founder is ubiquitous in research concerning innovation and entrepreneurship. However, the result is that, within innovation processes, founders represent but one type of key figure whose efficacy depends to a large extent on the actions of other key figures.

MÜLLER, Felix: *Innovative Unternehmer als raumwirksame Schlüsselfiguren. Befunde aus der Beobachtung von Innovationsprozessen in der Biotechnologie. Working Paper No 54, Erkner: Leibniz-Institut für Raumbezogene Sozialforschung, 2015, 51 p.*

∴ www.irs-net.de/download/wp_Unternehmer-als-Schluesselfiguren.pdf



How Can Key Figures Influence Regional Energy Transitions?

The energy transition in Germany is a process of transformation felt at every level in society. It is governed by regulations enacted centrally at federal level and gains much of its momentum from innovative technical and technological developments. At first sight, it does not appear to be the kind of process that could be significantly influenced by individuals. But the energy transition has enormously diversified the range of stakeholders involved in the production, distribution and utilisation of energy at the local and regional levels. Farmers can now become local electricity producers. Village residents can establish energy cooperatives in which they are both producers and consumers. And district administrators can force the pace of infrastructural change. Not everyone involved in processes of this spatial impact is necessarily a key figure, but some individuals play such a central role that they are enormously significant for the new action arenas of the energy transition at regional level. A case study within the wider context of the current lead project in the research department "Institutional Change and Regional Public Goods" is providing insights into this differentiated process.

The Wendland region in the north of Germany occupies a prominent place in recent German energy production history. Regional initiatives were founded in the 1970s in the district of Lüchow-Dannenberg to campaign against the storage of atomic waste in Gorleben. Images of protests against Castor transports and of farmers opposed to the intermediate storage site in Gorleben have been seen around the world. By the mid-1990s, efforts to develop renewable energy had already emerged as offshoots of these movements. Farmers embarked

on experiments with biogas plants, and civil society actors began setting up community wind turbines. These pioneer activities were both economically motivated and inspired by the desire to develop alternatives to nuclear power, and they set the Wendland region on a new development path towards becoming an energy region able to meet its own energy requirements entirely from renewable resources. This target set by the Lüchow-Dannenberg District Assembly in 1997 had already been met with regard to electricity production by 2011.

As part of the lead project "New Energy Spaces – Dimensions of Sociospatial Relations in Regional Energy Transitions", Andreas Röhring is carrying out a case study in the Wendland. "The establishment and stabilisation of new decentral action arenas of the energy transition are at the centre of this investigation," Röhring reports. As he delves into the factors behind the successful establishment of the new development path, he is looking at the key figures and collective actors involved and at the nature of their activities. To say this much is already to point towards the local action constella-

tions that exist in the Wendland, where developments have been driven partly by towering individuals – like the farmers who can be identified as key figures in the regional energy transition because so many other actors ascribe a central role to them – and partly by associations, companies, political institutions and institutions of local government. Some of these collective stakeholders are also decisively influenced by individuals.

The former dairy farmer Manfred Ebeling is, however, an example for the first kind of key figure. Ebeling has not only switched from producing milk to producing energy; he has also contributed to regional development processes in the area of renewable energy as an innovative entrepreneur in the Wendland. He runs his own biogas plant and provides balancing power to the electricity transmission grid, and he has set up a local heating network that has increased the acceptability of bioenergy at local level by providing a cost-effective heat supply. He is involved in the creation of wildflower strips to compensate for the negative ecological consequences of maize cultivation. He is a committed advocate for bioenergy, but also promotes electromobility in the context of the cultural festival “Kulturelle Landpartie” that takes place year on year in the Wendland. He is also intensely involved in regional networks. These include the “Bäuerliche Notgemeinschaft gegen die Lagerung von Atommüll”, a group of farmers opposed to the storage of nuclear waste, and the association “Region Aktiv Wendland/Elbetal” that initiated the development of the Wendland as a bioenergy region and in the process made a major contribution to its development as an action arena for renewable energy.

Dr. Ludger Gailing, who is directing this lead project in the research department, sees the key figures analysed by Röhring as an apt example of “governance pioneers” in regional change processes and comments that “these specific key figures pick up on topics in unclear situations and link them with majorities that have the clout to get things done, or they influence complex

action contexts in such a decisive way that the creation of new development paths is sparked.” These governance pioneers are characterised by their individual actions in collective actor constellations. These actions can, as Gailing remarks, take different forms. One facet sees governance pioneers acting as “change agents” who question traditional patterns of action in the context of change processes, formulate models for the implementation of change, make connections between allies, and change the overall conditions for collective action in this fashion. Röhring observes that “the case study in the Wendland region has revealed how important the actions of individual farmers and civil society actors were for the establishment of the new development path. Networking between actors and the reshaping of regional governance in the form facilitated by the creation of the Wendland bioenergy region were necessary prerequisites for the constitution of the new action arena.” Gailing adds that the ability to create new paths is another possible facet of the governance pioneers phenomenon and remarks that the political science concept of “policy entrepreneurs” with its emphasis on political networking and fine-tuned negotiation skills is also relevant. In the Wendland, committed district administrators form examples for this latter type of pioneer.

So do key figures abound in the Wendland, then? Most certainly not, says Ludger Gailing: not every representative of a collective actor performing a given role is a key figure in the regional energy transition. Investigations of individual and collective actions have, however, revealed just how multifaceted and multidimensional the actions of key figures can be (see also the contribution on conceptual considerations for developing an analytical model starting on page 3 of this issue). Röhring considers that new regional action arenas for the energy transition emerge only when key figures with visions and persuasive power seize the initiative and mobilise other actors with their innovative ideas and projects. ■

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Discoveries in Space and Time Acclaimed Scholars and Junior Researchers at the IRS Spring Academy 2017

Between May 2nd and 5th 2017, the IRS and Technische Universität Berlin jointly hosted the first “IRS Spring Academy: Investigating Space(s): Current Theoretical and Methodological Approaches”. Over the course of four days, 26 German and international junior researchers with backgrounds in geography, political science, history and sociology came together to explore novel theoretical concepts and methods in spatial research. In particular, this year’s Spring Academy focused on the interrelation between time and space. The junior researchers were joined by leading scholars to discuss theories and methods of spatial research that reflect on variegated aspects of temporality – whether conceptualised as models of spatial processes, or as social constructs of standardised time. The event also provided a platform for IRS scholars to present, modify and further advance their ongoing research on spatio-temporal dynamics.

In the past two decades the interdisciplinary field between spatial and social sciences has undergone an extraordinarily dynamic development. Many social-scientific disciplines underwent a ‘spatial turn’ and became more interested in integrating spatial concepts and terminology. Disciplines like geography and spatial planning gradually moved away from regarding space as their exclusive research subject and instead as one of interest to many different disciplines as well. This has extended the ontological foundation of spatial research to many social-scientific disciplines. It has allowed for the development of new,

interdisciplinary concepts of space and spatiality.

Against this background, the IRS together with several academic partners launched a series of three successive Spring Academies entitled “Investigating Space(s): Current Theoretical and Methodological Approaches”. The event series, which is supported by VolkswagenStiftung, provides a forum for junior researchers and internationally acclaimed scholars to discuss theoretical and methodological approaches to spatial research, and for junior researchers to present their projects to an international audience.

On Friday, May 5th 2017, IRS director **Prof. Dr. Heiderose Kilper** gathered all participants of the Academy for a late afternoon feedback session. The junior researchers, workshop organisers and other guests were looking back on three and a half intense days spent listening to three evening lectures, attending paper pitch sessions, co-teaching seminars, doing-research workshops, individual consultations, an excursion and a ‘Meet the Editors’ session. A busy schedule, by all means. Despite, or rather because of the busy programme, participants said they were highly satisfied with the event. Three aspects were highlighted in particular:

Firstly, many participants welcomed the interdisciplinary nature of the Spring Academy which had allowed them to broaden their horizons regarding their own research. One attendee said that “I was not fully aware of the many invaluable additional perspectives that scholars from other disciplines can bring to my own research”. Secondly, junior re-

searchers engaged in animated discussions with each other and senior scholars. These were held informally in the context of sessions and discussions, as well as in pre-arranged one-on-one consultations designed for senior scholars to counsel junior researchers on dissertation projects. Many personal meetings and lively exchanges over the internet also occurred in the wake of the workshop. It is important for junior researchers who are branching out into new ac-

ography” which builds on established approaches in time geography. Time geography combines spatial and processual perspectives. Yet Schwanen argues that this traditional perspective must become more dynamic if it is to adequately capture large-scale transition processes unfolding over long periods of time. It is essential, he said, to consider the uncertainty and improbability inherent in complex developments alongside planning processes and interventions when



ademic fields to sense that they are not alone in these research areas. Looking back on the Spring Academy, one participant said: “I used to perceive my research as rather specialised and isolated but got to meet many like-minded people with a similar perspective on spatial research.” Thirdly and lastly, junior researchers welcomed the input on theories and methods provided by experts, deeming it highly relevant to their own research efforts. The novel ‘doing-research workshop’ format, which illustrated methodological know-how by drawing on concrete research examples and methodological considerations of field research, rather than ideal-typical textbook cases, was seen as very instructive.

studying “transitions”. This links the uncertainty inherent in socio-spatial development processes resulting from the influence of complex interrelated factors, with the objective of reliable planning, for instance in urban development processes or adjustments to social welfare systems. A day after his talk, Schwanen held a co-teaching seminar together with Prof. Dr. Oliver Ibert (IRS) in which concepts from traditional time geography (space-time prisms, paths, projects and dioramas) were introduced and discussed in terms of their utility. The two experts then debated with junior researchers about which kinds of criteria concepts must meet to adequately capture and describe gradually developing processes. These cutting-edge insights from spatial and temporal research were invaluable to all participants.



Evenings lectures by **Dr. Tim Schwanen** (University of Oxford), Prof. Dr. Mike Crang (Durham University) and Dr. Vanessa Ogle (University of Pennsylvania) formed the main pillar of this year’s instalment.

In his talk, Schwanen introduced a new conceptualisation of “transition ge-



Prof. Mike Crang’s lecture on “Transience,

Endurance and Temporal Ecologies of Value” delivered insights from the

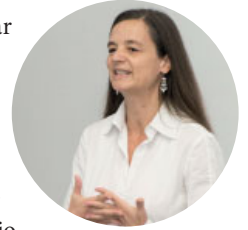
disciplines of geography and sociology. He drew on his research into the way economic value is derived from used clothing and ships retired from service to illustrate how (ascribed) values, and concomitant work processes, regularly stabilise and destabilise. Crang traced the spatio-temporal processes from the donation of clothing, and ship breaking, to the recycling of resources, to show that the stabilisation and destabilisation of values ascribed to these goods directly impact local economies. From this Crang concluded that methods used to analyse spatio-temporal processes must be able to account for and describe temporally and regionally specific ascriptions of value to material objects. Following his lecture, Crang held a co-teaching seminar together with Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann (IRS) on the way in which such temporally and regionally specific life cycles may be analysed. Participants drew on social theory, social and communicative constructivism, and ethnography to think about possible approaches to analysing large quantities of complex processes data. “Multi-sited ethnography” was identified as a particularly promising approach, though one that is also demanding in terms of data gathering and analysis.



Dr. Vanessa Ogle's lecture on the “Global transformation of time” showed that time, which we deem objectively measurable with the aid of clocks and calendars, is in fact the product of elaborate socio-technological constructs and protracted power struggles. Ogle recalled the great efforts that were made throughout the 19th century in many different places to establish what we today consider the naturally given globally standardised time. It was a complicated process involving many politicians, scientists and economists. Time zones – that is, concrete manifestation of time and space – needed to be agreed. This was done over a longer period of time in an iterative process fraught with power

asymmetries and conflicting interests. Ogle added that the introduction of time zones, compatible calendars and standardised times also had significant spatial implications in that some cities, regions and states thereby gained and others lost influence.

A co-teaching seminar jointly held by **Prof. Dr. Susanne Rau** (University of Erfurt) and Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt (IRS) similarly drew together historical and socio-spatial perspectives. They emphasised that combining historical and contemporary takes on the co-construction and co-production of space and time can yield invaluable insights. Against the backdrop of Tim Schwanen's lecture, Rau, Bernhardt and the participants reflected on the significance of long cycles in historical developments and more recent political and social processes. The lively discussions dealt with methodological and conceptual aspects but also put the notion of linear temporality under scrutiny. Yet again it became clear that interdisciplinary viewpoints can produce entirely new perspectives on these issues and, by extension, carry altogether different implications. By reflecting on the limits to constructivist conceptions of time, and on the irreversibility of human action, seminar participants became attuned to the state of the art and to research lacuna in this area.



This first instalment of the IRS Spring Academy was entitled “Current Theoretical and Methodological Approaches: Temporality and Procedurality”. In addition to lectures and seminars, methodological workshops by Dr. Johanna Hautala (University of Turku), Prof. Dr. Nina Baur (Technische Universität Berlin) and Prof. Dr. Susanne Rau further deepened theoretical and methodological thinking by examining the intricacies of various methods and procedures of empirical research. The junior researchers were given an opportunity to detail challenges encountered in their own work and to receive feedback from fellow seminar participants as well as acclaimed senior researchers. Participants agreed that interdisciplinary approaches can enrich



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research projects, while simultaneously broadening the scope of available research methods.

Empirical research projects were not only the subject in various seminars and talks. From the outset, the “IRS Spring Academy” event series was designed to facilitate theoretical and methodological input to help junior researchers working on their own projects (most of them dissertations). This is why the paper pitch sessions formed an essential part of the event. Participants were able to showcase their research projects at one of three paper pitch sessions. The broad range of presented projects illustrated the wide thematic scope of the Spring Academy. Projects showcased included research into long-term scenarios for politics and planning in the context of climate change and aquatic biodiversity, work on the role of venture capital in innovation processes, studies on urban development on remote islands, the export of GDR planning and architectural practices, and urban energy transitions. The projects investigate processes all over the globe, thereby highlighting the relevance of spatio-temporal approaches within many different research contexts.

back from renowned IRS scholars and guests. Workshop attendees also valued Prof. Crang’s, Prof. Dr. Baur’s and Dr. Matthias Bernt’s (IRS) “Meet the Editors” session for candidly discussing how publishing processes differ depending on national and disciplinary context, and for detailing how journals operate. Session participants were able to take away useful hints that may help getting published in reputable journals.

Spatio-temporal dynamics, which were discussed from many different conceptual and methodological angles at this first instalment of the “IRS Spring Academy”, play a significant role in the IRS’ research on society and space. This is evident from the institute’s conception of space, which is continually re-evaluated and enhanced by IRS scholars. It is also clear from the institute’s manifold research projects which for instance investigate the spatial dimension of innovations, or processes of place-making in the context of Germany’s “Energiewende”. The “IRS Spring Academy” therefore not only serves as a forum for supporting junior spatial researchers, but also as a means of advancing the institute’s social science-based spatial research. Insights gained from animated discussions with international experts, for example, will have an influence on the institute’s new Research Programme which is currently under development and will come into effect in 2019. All future IRS-financed departmental lead projects will build on spatio-temporal concepts. In this way, the worlds of theory and of empiricism, of supporting junior researchers and conducting basic research, and of academia and practice interlink and benefit one another. ■



At the concluding feedback session, **Prof. Dr. Heiderose Kilper** asked workshop participants to name the events they found most useful. Aside from lectures, seminars and workshops, attendees identified the smaller one-on-one consultations and “Meet the Editors” session as especially helpful. The hour-long consultations allowed junior researchers to discuss their research projects with and received in-depth feed-

IRS a Part of Newly Launched
Scientific Network
"Temporary Organizing"



Prof. Dr. Suntje Schmidt is a member of the newly formed DFG network "Temporary Organizing under Tension: Between Stability and Change". The scientific network was initiated by Prof. Dr. Timo Braun, Junior Professor for Project Management at Freie Universität Berlin. It is formed by twelve German early career researchers and is also supported by internationally renowned senior researchers. The network was inaugurated with the first of a series of four intensive workshops from July 10 to 12 in Berlin. Upcoming workshops will be held in Cologne, Tilburg and Berlin. The aim of these meetings is to initiate joint interdisciplinary projects on the topic (e.g. publishing of an anthology, preparation for collective sessions).

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The network is funded by the German Research Foundation ("Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft" DFG) and working on the topic "Temporary Organizing under Tension: Between Stability and Change". Temporary organizing in the form of projects, events or temporary work is a widespread empirical phenomenon which is still gaining relevance in research and practice. It reflects both the uncertainty as a result of intensified competition in globalized markets as well as the social mindset in times of acceleration and time limitation. Temporary organizing offers high potential to organizations striving for flexibility

and is, not only because of that, the predominant organizational form for implementing innovative and transformative activities.

The research on temporary organization is analyzed from the perspective of different disciplines (e.g. management research, organizational sociology, innovation research, economic geography), which makes the research rather fragmented due to the lack of an integrated view and the combination of sometimes even contradictory findings. Thus, the aim of the network is to illuminate temporary organization from the perspective of different disciplines and therefore to promote transdisciplinary theory development. ■

How Small and Medium-Sized Social Enterprises Can Benefit from EU Funding

The European Union has launched numerous funding programmes to support small and medium-sized businesses including social enterprises. There are, however, big challenges for the entrepreneurs to benefit from



presented a comprehensive overview of EU funding schemes and programmes and their regional implementation in the Federal State. Her colleague Dr. Matthias Kirbach (WFBB) showed possibilities that regional actors like the German



these funding opportunities due to obligations to pre-finance parts of the expenses, due to a lack of compatibility of funding structures and entrepreneurial goals and procedures and due to knowledge deficits on funding opportunities. On November 30, 2017, a workshop jointly organized by the IRS-led EU project „RurInno“, „Brandenburg Invest“ (the business development agency of the Federal State of Brandenburg) and Enterprise Europe Network Berlin Brandenburg addressed these challenges.

Twenty-four Researchers, Social Entrepreneurs, Representatives of business development agencies, and intermediaries from networks and associations participated in the workshop. In the first section Dr. Ralph Richter, head of the research project “RurInno” introduced the project and thereby put the work of the social entrepreneurs in the context of structurally weak rural regions. Social, economic and spatial research perspectives on one hand and direct exchange between research and practice on the other hand build the focus of the project work. Richter’s introduction offered first insights into the manifold challenges the social enterprises face when they want to participate in EU-funded projects. Offering a different perspective, Dajana Pefestorff from “Brandenburg Invest” (WFBB) and head of the Enterprise Europe Network Berlin Brandenburg pre-

Federal States have in the implementation of European Programmes: Referring to examples in the field of social innovation and labour market integration he showed how Brandenburg imposes individual priorities in its funding strategies.

Central to the second part of the workshop was the exchange on EU funding opportunities for SME among all participants. Using the “Open Space” format that combines the collection of topics and issues with focused discussions on the identified topics in small groups, a comprehensive collection of problems and challenges as well as coping strategies could be compiled. Among the most pressing challenges that the participants identified were the problem of co-financing and pre-financing of parts of projects by the enterprise, experiences with stakeholders supporting writing a proposal or implementing an EU project, and the tension between rigid conditions of the funding schemes and the desired freedom of the entrepreneurs to shape projects along their goals and processes. The participants reflected their previous experiences and institutional practices in connection with these challenges, exchanged possible solutions and formulated ideas for improvement. The results of the Open Space exchange will be brought together by WFBB and disseminated among the participants, in the RurInno consortium and in the Enterprise Europe Network. ■

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Perspectives on Social Enterprises on Rural Europe: Academia and Practice at the RurInno Symposium

The out-migration of young and well-qualified people and the assumed lack of innovation are only two of the multiple challenges that many rural regions in Europe face. Persistent structural weaknesses disconnect them



more and more from economic processes. Social Entrepreneurs have the capacity to reconnect the regions with economically dynamic centres and key figures. Rooted within rural communities and targeting local and regional problems they have vital networks with actors on all spatial scales and foster the exchange of ideas and concepts, researches in the EU-funded project “RurInno” found out. The project team discussed its results with experts from academia and practice on the project’s final symposium on December 7 and 8, 2017, in Poznań.

Compared with urban and sub-urban areas many rural regions lack important resources for economic success. They

out-migration and further disconnection from key economic processes are working against the prospects of rural communities. In this situation established governance approaches carried out by actors like local administration and traditional businesses are often not able to stop the interdependent processes of decline and new ideas are much needed.

RurInno acknowledges social enterprises as promising but often neglected drivers of social innovations in structurally weak rural regions. Social enterprises strive to tackle social problems and to stabilise and improve the living conditions in these regions. However, reports show that social entrepreneurs still lack specialised trainings and education, a supporting infrastructure and recognition. Against this background, RurInno aims at strengthening the skills and the innovative capacity of social entrepreneurs operating in rural regions, improving the knowledge of how social innovations are implemented in rural regions and raising awareness of social entrepreneurship in rural regions in order to foster enabling environments for their activities. The project is funded in the MSCA-RISE scheme and combines research with training elements and communication measures that include the whole consortium of two research organisations and four social enterprises.

Preliminary research results suggest that social enterprises effectively



provide only few possibilities for higher education research, and can only supply basic public and private infrastructure like public transport, business networks and medical supply. Together with severe financial problems of rural municipalities and weak bonds of young people to their communities downward spirals of

address social challenges with their entrepreneurial approach to social aims. They proved to be able to interconnect remote regions with networks and institutions at other places and other spatial scales. In doing so they provide new ideas, extended resources and support to rural communities that would otherwise

be hardly available. One project partner for example, the social enterprise Otelo in Upper Austria, established open technology labs in villages and small towns. These labs provide open spaces and technical equipment for experimenting, skill training and inspiring people. This idea originated in bigger cities and was adjusted for rural communities by Otelo. This example shows that innovation in rural regions is often based on re-contextualisation and adaptation and uses the social entrepreneurs' networks as a resource. For this reason the RurInno researchers conducted egocentric social network analyses. These investigations revealed that the social entrepreneurs have specific assets that are scarce with other local actors. For example they have close relations to both economic and political actors at all scales which enable them to bypass certain actors or directly transfer ideas into their local ecosystem. Another observation is that they often network actors that have not been connected before. This means the social entrepreneur is not only integrating in existing networks but extending it significantly by establishing all-new connections. They serve as embedded intermediaries by bringing together local and supra-regional actors.

The symposium "Intermediaries in the Countryside: Social Enterprises as Drivers of Social Innovation in Rural Europe" was held on 7th and 8th De-

ment and the trainings provided in the corresponding RurInno project, the second day focused on the state of research regarding social enterprises and innovation in rural Europe. The symposium was led by the overall question of how rural social enterprises foster social innovation and contribute to rural change. Starting point of the discussion were the outcomes and findings of the EU funded research and training project RurInno.

First day's core were the social entrepreneurs' reflections on the benefits they received through their involvement in the RurInno project. Martin Hollinetz from OTELO (Austria) stated that the RurInno trainings provided time and opportunity to reflect on one's own work and on sometimes diverging approaches presented by the other involved social enterprises. To him, this was very valuable as possibilities for reflection are rare in the day-to-day business. The interactive format of a "story-telling café" enabled the participants to share their personal experiences and meanings of rural regions and social enterprises that paved the way for subsequent discussions.

The second day of the event was dominated by the exchange of scientific outcomes generated in a number of research projects and studies around social enterprises and innovation in rural regions. The contributors were Robert Lukesch (SIMRA project, ÖAR Regionalberatung Austria), Bettina Bock (studies on social



cember 2017 at the Adam Mickiewicz University Poznan in Poland. The attendees from across Europe experienced an event that brought together perspectives from research and practice. While the first day of the symposium was dedicated to social enterprise practitioners and their perspectives on rural develop-

innovation in rural regions, Wagenin- gen University, Netherlands), Jennifer Eschweiler (Solidus project, Roskilde University Denmark), Richard Pfeilstetter (FAB-move project, University of Sevilla, Spain) as well as Gabriela Christmann (IRS, Germany), Matthias Fink (Johannes-Kepler University Linz, Aus-

tria) and Ralph Richter (IRS, Germany) – all members of the RurInno project. The talks and discussions revealed similarities of positions and perspectives but also an understanding about topics that call for further discussions.

Gabriela Christmann, coordinator of the RurInno project, summarised three common insights. First, the symposium showed that there is not a single type of social enterprise but a variety of organisational forms which are subsumed under the term social enterprise. Social enterprises can be described by means of three criteria which are – according to the EMES network – entrepreneurial thinking, social mission and participatory governance. Second, ru-

ral social enterprises can be described as intermediaries, which interconnect rural communities with supra-regional networks and support structures. The connectedness of social enterprises enables them to identify and re-contextualise new ideas and to mobilise resources, which is crucial for fostering social innovation. Third, according to Bettina Bock, social innovation can be regarded as a term that comprises three aspects: the social action of the innovation, the social responsibility of the innovation and the innovation of the society. Referring to this, Gabriela Christmann called for an analytical rather than a normative understanding of “social innovation”. ■

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