

# Mapping the field (WP2)



This work phase serves as an intermediary step between theoretical reasoning and empirical investigation. Established perspectives on the Third Sector have to be complemented by new elements to move our understanding forward. For this purpose an update of approaches to measure the scale and scope of the Third Sector including: employment, revenues, service delivery, civic engagement etc. will be complemented by a new perspective: a policy analysis. Simultaneously, the synthesis of what we know will be used to fill knowledge gaps, which were pre-identified in the phase of hypothesis formation.

The research process will follow five major steps:

## **1. Theory and empirical capturing of the Third Sector**

What do we already know and what does theory tell us about different country specific configurations of the Third Sector? In this step we theoretically and methodically framed the approach that was going to be taken to structurally capture the Third Sector. The main theoretical frameworks at the macro level that were used to generate a comparative perspective on the Third Sector, on volunteering, and on social innovation in those nation states involved in the ITSSOIN project were: (1) welfare regimes, (2) social origins theory, and (3) the varieties of capitalism approach.

The research questions guiding the respective quantitative and macro-level investigation were inspired by the above mentioned different theories and focused on the way that size and scope of the Third Sector would be related to them when looking at social innovation. Given these questions, the structures and conditions in the different country contexts were then reflected against the theoretical concepts, thereby displaying country specific similarities and differences and providing a comparative empirical overview of country-specific settings of the Third Sector in ITSSOIN countries.

## **2. Data update**

Following up on the first step described above we initially had planned to gradually update the data on the countries involved, adding new information and structural data as needed. By this we intended to draw a concise picture of the nature of the Third Sector in the various ITSSOIN countries. However, as another EU project of the same framework programme turned out to be currently researching on this very issue (<http://thirdsectorimpact.eu/>), the objective was dropped.

In summary, the work step carried out can now be said to have advanced two issues. Firstly, we have presented an up-to-date picture of welfare and economic contexts in relation to social innovation. Secondly, we managed to illustrate where contradictions occur across classifications and their implications for social innovation. The task thereby contributed to the formation of hypotheses on the conditional factors to social innovation.

From here, we will go on to study social innovation in different fields in order to review potential reinforcing or counteractive effects of different levels in the field. All subsequent research will therefore start from the conditional factors such as welfare regimes or political economies at the macro level and extend to more specific conditions at the field level.

These theoretical and empirical reflection can be found in [ITSSOIN\\_D2\\_1\\_Theory and empirical capturing third sector\\_20140930](#)

### **3. Report on empirical profiles and policy discourses in the ITSSOIN countries**

By conducting a policy analysis we provided insights in policy discourses in the different ITSSOIN countries. This contributed to the development of a holistic understanding of the meaning and impacts of the Third Sector. As previous work steps on policies at EU level had revealed a lack of research in this field, our study was one of the first empirical approaches to consider in-depth insights into country specific policy approaches on social innovation.

We mainly based our work on a content analysis of policy documents. Nine policy documents on the EU level and in average 5 policy documents for each ITSSOIN country (the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the UK) were analysed. Based on earlier work steps on the theoretical embedding of social innovations, macro level hypotheses then were developed and tested.

The policy analysis detected differences as well as similarities across the countries analysed. A shared motive for fostering social innovation is the desire to let social innovations serve a growing economy. Beyond that, very different approaches can be found in regard to the objectives addressed by types of innovation and the level addressed in policies. Social innovation turned out to be a rather new topic to politics in most countries. In some, it was difficult to find social innovation-related policy documents at all. It can be concluded from these findings that the general attention in politics for social innovation is relatively low but when social innovations are discussed they are connected to high ambitions.

The policy analysis has to be regarded as an independent analytical step within the ITSSOIN project. It is, however, connected to the central empirical work step of the case studies. The expectations on the innovative capacity of countries in regard to policy approaches will serve as a background for the case study work.

The findings of the policy analysis are presented in detail in [ITSSOIN\\_D2\\_2\\_Profiles and policy perspectives](#)

#### **4. Images of the Third Sector**

This work step was conceptualized as an evaluation of perceptions of media and citizen attitudes towards the Third Sector. We hoped to combine these two perceptions and thereby produce images of the Third Sector in the different states. However, the results of both analyses showed little evidence of content related overlaps. It therefore had been decided to present both perspectives as distinct and independent papers.

##### **Media perceptions**

In the first part presented here, we carried out an explorative analysis of content and framing of 8463 items on third sector activities sampled from the year 2013 in leading national and regional newspapers from nine European countries. Our guiding question was: How are third sector activities and social innovation framed by European news media?

In general it turned out that little relevant media research had been published specifically on Third Sector activities related to social innovation policy and civic engagement up to the present and more empirical and comparative research is needed urgently, involving a broader variety of media platforms, including electronic- and social media.

However, major trends in the mediated discourse on Third Sector activities in the countries reviewed were detected. Social innovation policy streams are covered by the media only to a minimal extent and journalism tends to neglect innovative performances by the Third Sector. Those reports given are overwhelmingly loyal to government views and mainly frame the Third Sector in a generally positive way. Third Sector activities – in marked contrast to business and politics – do not have high priority as a news reporting beat in their own right and social innovativeness is less pronounced in press coverage than other civil society values such as voluntarism or civic engagement.

These insights gained from the media analysis suggest that mass media may not directly influence public opinion by telling people what to think, but rather indirectly by indicating to the decision makers what (not) to act upon.

The results of the media analysis can be found in [ITSSOIN\\_D2.3\\_Part 1\\_Media Framing of the third sector Activities in Europe\\_20150630](#)

### **Citizen perceptions**

In the second part of the perception analysis we reported empirical analyses of citizen perceptions of the Third Sector in Europe. Key dimensions of perceptions concerned the importance, confidence, impact, trustworthiness, innovation, legitimacy and efficiency of Third Sector organizations.

We sought to test hypotheses on perceptions of the Third Sector that had been formed in preceding work steps, spanning three levels of analysis: the micro-level of individual citizens, the meso-level of Third Sector organizations, and the macro-level of societies. By this, a major problem that we encountered was the lack of data on citizen perceptions of third sector organizations that cover relevant dimensions at all three levels of analysis. The data we have thus used covers three areas, that is to say: the question of trust in Third Sector organisations, the perceived impact of volunteering on the perceptions of the Third Sector and the relation between volunteering and perceptions of Third Sector organisations.

For our descriptive and comparative analysis we used data from various surveys, all of them being cross-sectional. Amongst other advantages and disadvantages of the data, this allowed us to tell how perceptions of third sector organizations have changed over time. Other questions addressed asked for the proportion of citizens in Europe who say they trust third sector organizations as well as the level of trust in Third Sector organisations as compared to trust in other institutions, and cross-national differences in trust.

The results and more details on the analysis can be found in [ITSSOIN\\_D2.3\\_Part 2\\_Empirical analyses of citizen perceptions of the third sector in Europe](#)

### **5. Country selection**

In this work step we selected the country field combinations for the case studies on social innovation that will later be conducted within the framework of the ITSSOIN project.

For each country, first 'vignettes' were prepared, giving a brief empirical description of the respective field in the national context. The 'vignettes' reflected on the main actors, key regulative characteristics and changes within the last ten years in each country field. The empirical description was further informed by previous knowledge gained from the policy analysis and the media analysis.

Summarizing the descriptions of the country-fields in a next step allowed in the following for an evaluation of the best country-field combinations based on empirical criteria. The final joint decision on the country selection has been elaborated on in a rationale on the country selection for each field.

Further theoretical considerations rooting from the application of the Social Origins theory, Welfare Regimes and the Varieties of Capitalism informed an evaluation of the innovative capacity of each selected country-field combinations.

Please follow this link for more details on the Country Selection [ITSSOIN\\_D2\\_4\\_Country selection](#)

## **5. Frameworks, the Third Sector and Social Innovation – Policy Brief**

This document clearly lays out the results of all preliminary work steps carried out within work package 2. Thus, the Policy Brief provides you with insights into the context of national regulations, policy frameworks, the role and perception of the media and citizens as well as with a general understanding of the why and how of context as a perspective of the ITSSOIN project. Policy recommendations are then given, relating for example to the national social innovativeness of a country or to policy formation around social innovations.

Summing up on the preliminary findings it can be stated that social innovation as a concept is still scarcely used by (national) policy makers and the media. Meanwhile, amongst those countries forming part of the ITSSOIN project there is a high probability of highly innovative developments that may not be called social innovation. Finding and analysing such particular innovation trends in the seven proposed empirical fields (arts & culture, social services, health, environmental sustainability, consumer protection, work integration, and community development) is the task that will be undertaken in the second year of the ITSSOIN project.

[ITSSOIN\\_D2\\_5\\_Policy\\_brief\\_on\\_updated\\_third\\_sector\\_perspectives](#)