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Master Thesis

Concepts for Systems Change

An Application for a Social Entrepreneurship Think Tank

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Statutory Declaration

"I herewith formally declare that I have written the submitted thesis independently. I did not use any outside support except for the quoted literature and other sources mentioned in the paper.

I clearly marked and separately listed all of the literature and all of the other sources which I employed when producing this academic work, either literally or in content. I am aware that the violation of this regulation will lead to failure of the thesis."

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List of Abbreviations

ASC	Academy for Systems Change (Case Study 8)
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Security (Case Study 6)
IMF	International Monetary Fund (Case Study 14)
MGI	McKinsey Global Institute (Case Study 5)
OTT	On think tanks (Case Study 4)
RSA	The Royal Society of Arts (Case Study 1)
SCC	Systems Change Coalition: Group of institutions aiming to solve the same root problem
SCL	Systems Change Leader: A person or organization leading the change process
SCN	Systems Change Network: Network which consists of the people/institutions that have to power over the possible change
SESO	The name of the social entrepreneurship organization, explained in 3.1.
ToC	Theory of Change explained in 3.4. ToC are also created by other think tanks to create communication strategies (e.g. New America)
TT	The name of the affiliated think tank, explained in 3.1.

Abstract

Current challenges are a result of complex and multi-layered factors. They require systemic solutions: problems must be solved holistically by identifying interconnections between the different problems which are results of the same root cause. Social entrepreneurs are agents of change, their mission is to generate societal impact. I investigated how a social entrepreneurship think tank can be conceptualized to support systems change. Think tanks can conduct in-depth research to inform about the systems and share knowledge. Entrepreneurs can make strategic interventions based on the research findings. To create a framework of how social entrepreneurship think tanks can promote systems change I conducted 14 case studies. The framework is created based on the method of Theory of Change, it displays how different activities can contribute to succeeding in systems change. I outline eleven activities which include strategies in capacity building, research and collaboration with the other actors in the field. In the end, the framework is applied to the evolving case of a think tank founded in 2018.

Zusammenfassung

Aktuelle Herausforderungen sind das Ergebnis komplexer und vielschichtiger Faktoren. Sie erfordern systemische Lösungen: Zusammenhänge zwischen den verschiedenen Problemen, die auf die gleiche Ursache zurückzuführen sind, müssen erkannt werden. Sozialunternehmer haben das Ziel, gesellschaftliche Veränderung zu erreichen. In dieser Masterarbeit untersuche ich, wie ein Think Tank, der mit Sozialunternehmern arbeitet, konzipiert werden kann, um das systemische Lösen von Problemen zu fördern. Think Tanks können Systeme untersuchen, Wissen teilen und somit andere Akteure unterstützen. Sozialunternehmer können auf Basis der Forschungsergebnisse strategische Interventionen vornehmen. Auf der Grundlage von vierzehn Fallstudien habe ich ein Konzept erstellt, das Think Tanks im Bereich Sozialunternehmertum nutzen können, um den Systemwandel zu fördern. Das Konzept baut auf der Methode „Theory of Change“ auf und zeigt, wie verschiedene Aktivitäten gemeinsam zum Erfolg des Systemwandels beitragen können. Ich habe elf Aktivitäten herausgearbeitet. Diese umfassen Strategien zur Methodenvermittlung an Sozialunternehmer, Forschung und Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Akteuren, die Systemwandel erreichen wollen. Am Ende der Arbeit wende ich das Konzept auf den konkreten Fall eines Think Tanks, der im Jahr 2018 gegründet wurde, an.

1. Introduction

Current challenges like homelessness, global warming, disease and national healthcare are systemic, which means that they are a consequence of complex and multi-layered factors (Abercrombie et al., 2018, p. 4). “To take on systemic problems, we need systemic solutions” (Draimin et al., 2014, p. 3). Existing mechanisms fail to solve root problems. Instead, solutions are found for symptoms - they succeed in the short term, but in the long term their impact is undermined or negative consequences occur. This result is in the increased growth of the complexity of systems (Stroh, 2015, p. 13).

According to the VUCA[1]-worldview the modern world is characterized by increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Bendel, 2020, p. 1). The World Economic Forum reports a “fundamental change in the way we live, work and relate to one another” (2020, p. 1): artificial intelligence, automation, biotechnology, robotics and 3D printing are just some of the fields that have emerged with enormous growth due to technological advancement. This transformation is more complex than ever before and influences everyone (World Economic Forum, 2020, p. 1). Strategies and concepts to engage in this more complex world are required (Bendel, 2020, p. 1).

The European Commission identifies social innovations as a “mechanism for achieving [systems] change” (2014, p. 8). However, Howaldt comments that many innovations do not reach the “hoped-for impact on society” (2018, p. 91). Their level of impact maintains within experimental and local structures. It does not, however, reach a fundamental change “in practice formations [or] the institutional structure of society” (Howaldt, 2018, p. 91).

To reach systems change, entrepreneurs do not need to just design innovations which meet the root problem (Massey, p. 1, 2018), it is as important to create conditions which promote systems change. The complex challenges of today can’t be faced by individuals alone - these changes require strategic approaches and new forms of collaboration (Scharmer, 2010, p. 8). A new understanding of change is required and ultimately a new standard of approaching current challenges must be implemented. Individuals as well as institutions need to realize their power and role within the system and act upon it. This requires new forms of leadership, collaboration, funding and research (Scharmer, 2010, p. 8).

[1] VUCA: "volatility", "uncertainty", "complexity" and "ambiguity" (Bendel, 2020, p. 1).

Think tanks are in a unique position to promote change. These organizations conduct research to strengthen other institutions, open spaces for exchange and build issue networks (Abelson, 2013, p. 898).

There are already concepts explaining how think tanks can achieve systems change. For instance the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (True et al., 1999), the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier et al., 1999) and the Power Elites Theory (Mills, 1956). Concepts explaining how social entrepreneurs can reach systems change also exist. For example using different tools and methods in the six stages of innovation (Murray et al., 2010) or the concept of "think like a system, act like an entrepreneur" (Conway et al., 2017). These theories identify social entrepreneurs and/or think tanks as agents of systems change.

The main research question of this thesis is to find out how a social entrepreneurship think tank[2] can reach systems change. In order to answer that research question,

1) I conducted a literature review on systems change and completed 14 case studies (including interviews, observations and desk research) in the field of think tanks and systems change in the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom.
2) Based on the data, from theory and the case studies, I created a framework for systems change for a social entrepreneurship think tank.
3) In the end of this thesis, I apply this framework to the evolving case of a think tank which was founded in 2018 by one of the leading social entrepreneurship networks worldwide (detailed information in chapter 5) and make specific recommendations for them.
4) Finally, I conclude with defining learnings, opportunities and challenges for think tanks and systems change and also suggest future research.

The thesis builds on two hypotheses:

1. This thesis assumes that
    - systems change can be promoted in praxis
    - an enabling environment can be built up

[2] In this thesis a "social entrepreneurship think tank" is defined as a think tank working with entrepreneurs. The think tank is affiliated to a fellowship organization or department, which has a network of social entrepreneurs and has already a program to interact with their fellows/social entrepreneurs. Including events, workshops and communication mechanisms (like newsletter, group in a network, regular meetings, etc.).

2. This thesis assumes that
    - think tanks can create conditions for systems change
    - social entrepreneurs can be agents of systems change
    - tools and methods can be utilized to promote systems change

Identifying ways and approaches to promote systems change, can lead to transformative change in multiple sectors. If the think tank collects experiences and knowledge about how social entrepreneurs reach systems change as well as how to support them on their journey, these findings can be applied to help other social entrepreneurs reach systems change in their fields as well.

To build a theoretical frame I first outlined the idea of systems thinking (2.1). The approach of looking at challenges from a systemic perspective gains momentum. Foundations like McConnel integrate systems thinking in their work, leading design firms like IDEO use systemic approaches, social entrepreneurship networks like Ashoka define systems change as their final goal.

Thereafter, I explain how systems change takes place based on two theories (2.2): The Multi-Level Perspective by Geels (2.2.1) is used to describe the process and interactions leading to systems change. Latest research about social innovation and systems change uses the Multi-Level Perspective to understand systems dynamics in change (Holtgrewe et al., 2018; Westley, 2018).

The Theory U by Scharmer (2.2.2) creates an understanding of how change can expand from an individual to an institutional and systems level. Organizations in the field of social change increasingly apply its principles to approach challenges holistically (Helmutoutdoor, 2012).

In section 2.3 I illustrate the role of social innovation in systems and focus on how they initiate systems change (2.3.1). Then I explain the role and approaches of social and systems entrepreneurs (2.3.2). “Social entrepreneurship represents one of the most notable innovations in global civil society in recent times” (Nicholls et al., 2018).

Then I define think tanks and their role in enacting systems change (2.4). There is enormous untapped potential of think tanks to contribute to systems change. “They are the beginning of an intellectual revolution that is setting the stage for the policy debates of this century” (Goodman, 2019). After giving the theoretical background, I summarize and connect the different topics I illuminated in the chapter.

The theories and approaches I use in this thesis already deliver valuable concepts for systems change. In this thesis I create a complex framework for systems change which can be applied by social entrepreneurship think tanks.

- It combines main thoughts of the theories and makes them applicable in practice
- It builds on existing cases from organizations working in the field of systems change
- It illuminates how different activities can be aligned to reach change.

In chapter three I outline the methodology in order to make the research procedure comprehensible to the reader. In chapter four I create the framework for the social entrepreneurship think tank, utilizing the methodology of the "Theory of Change". After defining the desired impact (4.1), I outline the current situation (4.2) and the desired situation (4.3). In a between conclusion (4.4) I define the domains to reach systems change (4.4.1) and create the objectives of a social entrepreneurship think tank (4.4.2). Based on the case study data, I then recommend activities (4.5) and close each activity with a short conclusion for social entrepreneurship think tanks. Based on the data I inductively divided the activities into three main pillars: the **fellowship** department, which works with the social entrepreneurs; the **research** department, which includes the core think tank activities and the interaction with the **field of systems change**. Finally, I outline concepts to fund and evaluate the work of think tanks (4.6 and 4.7). In section 4.8 strategies to decide on research topics are illustrated. In Chapter five I apply the framework to the evolving case of a think tank affiliated to the biggest social entrepreneurship network worldwide and give recommendations for action. In chapter six I summarize the results, give recommendations for the field, reflect on the research process and make suggestions for future research.

2. Theory

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of what current research has discussed regarding systems thinking, systems change and how think tanks and social entrepreneurs influence change. At first, I focus on the idea of systems thinking (2.1). Then I explain the Multi-Level Perspective (2.2.1) which outlines patterns of how systems have changed in the past and the Theory U (2.2.2) to illustrate how systems change can be promoted. I choose these theories because both illuminate the topic of change from a systems perspective. Thereafter I describe the role of social and systems entrepreneurs in change (2.3). Then I illustrate the operations of think tanks in change (2.4). Finally, I summarize how the different theories relate (2.5).

2.1 Systems Thinking

> *"A system is a perceived whole whose elements "hang together" because they continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose. […] Examples of systems include biological organisms (including human bodies), the atmosphere, diseases, ecological niches, factories, chemical reactions, political entities, communities, industries, families, teams—and all organizations. You and your work are probably elements of dozens of different systems" (Senge, 1994, p. 90).*

"In simplest terms, systems thinking is a way of seeing and talking about reality that helps us better understand and work with systems to influence the quality of our lives. In this sense, systems thinking can be seen as a perspective" (Kim, 1999, p. 2). The aim is to understand the connections between the causes of an event, the characteristics of the systems structure and the resulting behavior (Meadows, 2009, p. 89). When change makers initiate change, they often realize that unintended consequences evolve within the system. This is because one action links with another which is linked to a multitude of influencing elements. As a result, it is hard to ensure that the desired goals of an intervention are achieved (Van Es et al., 2015, p. 7). Based on a deep understanding of a system both possible negative long-term consequences and high-leverage actions can be identified (Stroh, 2015, pp. 1). Stroh argues that "applying system thinking principles and tools [in the field of social change] helps [...] to achieve better results with fewer resources in more lasting ways" (Stroh, 2015, p. 1).

The iceberg (Illustration 1) helps to differentiate between the events level and the underlying trends and patterns that are the result of multiple events over time. This model can also be used to identify the deep systems structure which encompasses "pressures, policies and power dynamics that

shape the performance" (Stroh, 2015, pp. 36). Only the upper ten percent of the iceberg is visible and thereby merely functions as an indicator of the root causes underneath (Stroh, 2015, pp. 36).

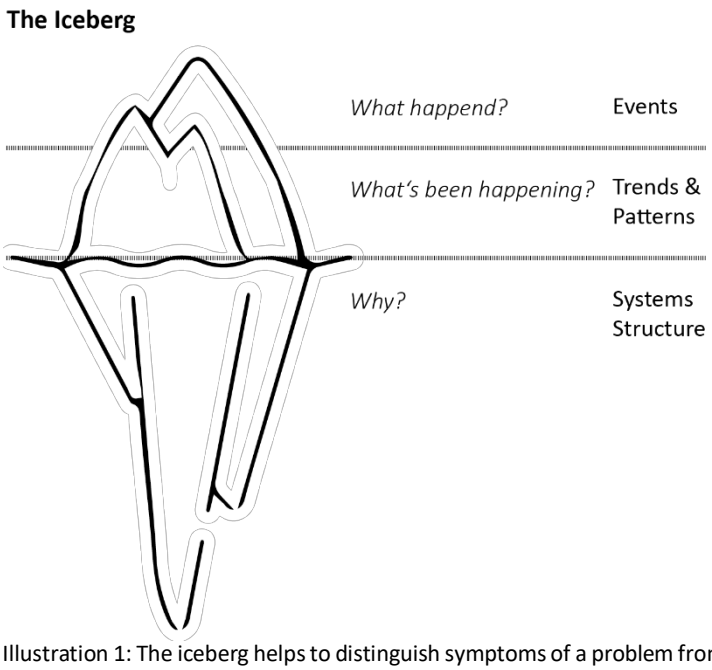

Illustration 1: The iceberg helps to distinguish symptoms of a problem from its root causes.
Source: Own design. Inspired by Stroh, 2015, p. 37.

"We live in an event-oriented world, and our language is rooted at the level of events" (Kim, 1999, p. 2). In order to be able to identify patterns and describe a system's behavior a range of vocabulary, definitions and techniques are needed (Kim, 1999, p. 2). In the following, I explain the common definitions to describe systems mechanisms, while in 2.3.1.3 practical tools are described.

All systems have a *purpose*, which is displayed by the combined behaviors of the different parts of the system (Meadows, 2009, p. 188). Understanding the purpose of a system encourages people to notice the gap between their desired purpose and the purpose they are currently creating (Stroh, 2015, p. 7). Systems are divided into sub-systems. For the harmony of the whole system it is important that the purpose and the different sub-purposes are compatible with one another. Otherwise, single purposes and consequent actions of different parts may add up to unintended behavior of the system (Meadows, 2009, pp. 15). Systems consist of *elements*, which are the different units identified within the system (Meadows, 2009, p. 13). These elements are held together by *interconnections*. They transport the information that lead to actions within the system (Meadows, 2009, p. 15).

The elements, the purposes and the interconnections of a system, are all equally important as all of them interact. However, changing them leads to varying degrees of impact. Changing elements of a system leads to the slightest change of a system's behavior (Meadows, 2009, pp. 15). Changes

in the interconnections can cause major transformations and systems become unrecognizable. Though the elements remain, the system would be greatly altered and the behavior changes due to the elements changing relation. Changing the purpose of a system is fundamental (Meadows, 2009, pp. 15). Though the purpose is most difficult to identify, it holds the greatest influence on the system's behavior (Meadows, 2009, pp. 15). Senge agrees "small changes can produce big results - but the areas of highest leverage are often the least obvious" (2004, p. 63).

Moreover, automatic mechanisms take place in a system. These are defined as feedbackloops (Dangerfield, 2014, p. 28). *Reinforcing* and *balancing feedbackloops* (Illustration 2 and 3) are the general two circular structures that explain how systems evolve in the course of time (Stroh, 2015, p. 46).

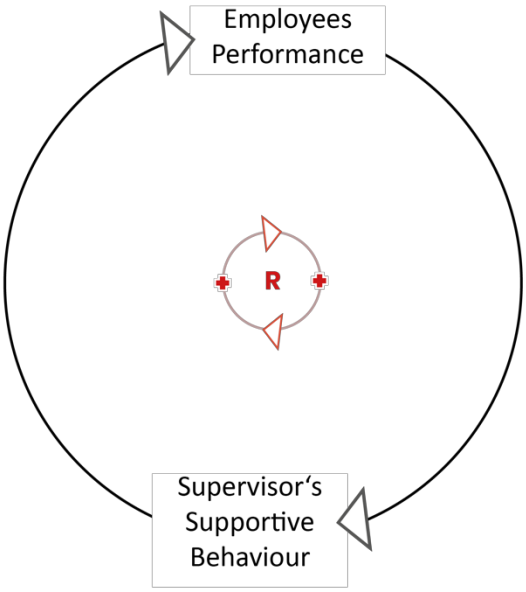

Illustration 2: Reinforcing Feedbackloop. Source: Own Design. Inspired by Kim, n/a, p. 1.

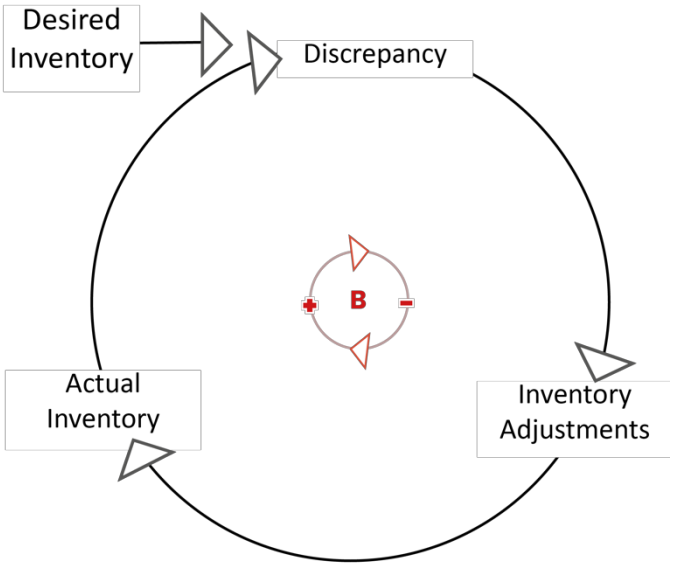

Illustration 3: Balancing Feedbackloop. Source: Own Design. Inspired by Kim, n/a, p. 1.

Reinforcing feedbackloops*,* as displayed in Illustration 2, are created by links: one effect triggers another (Meadows, 2009, p. 30f.). They are "the basis for what we know as virtuous and vicious circles" (Stroh, 2013, p. 46), they produce growth, explosion, erosion or collapse in systems (Meadows 2009, p. 155). The reinforcing feedbackloops are either produced by the link of two positive mechanisms, i.e. when positive reinforcement from the supervisor motivates the employee to maintain a high performance. Or, adversely, when negative reinforcement produces low employee performance in the course of time (Kim, n/a, p. 1).

Balancing feedbackloops, as displayed in Illustration 3, arise from the combination of a positive and negative link. Inventory can be considered as an example; the level remains the same over time by adding and taking elements for regulation (Kim, n/a, p. 1, Illustration 3). The result of balancing

feedbackloops is that the system remains approximately the same (Meadows, 2009, pp. 27). “Balancing feedbackloops seek to correct or reverse a current state by bridging the gap between actual and desired performance” (Stroh, 2015, p. 50). Dangerfield identifies a balancing source that maintains the equilibrium (Dangerfield, 2014, p. 31). This explains why systems despite great efforts are oftentimes resistant to change – the system is already in an equilibrium fulfilling its purpose (Stroh, 2013, p. 50f.).

2.2 Systems Change

“Systems change is about understanding why difficult social problems persist, and an effective challenge to our own role in tackling them” (Abercrombie et al., 2018, p. 4). Solving systems problems requires collaboration and perceiving other domains on a deep level in order to identify interrelations (White, 2015, p. 1). To approach challenges systemically does not predicate anything about the level of social change. Systems thinking can be applied to small problems as well as big visions. Having the bigger picture in mind gives guidance in approaching big change strategically. This mind frame allows decision-makers to split the big vision into smaller targeted systems changes (Muehlenbein, 2018, p. 1). However, Schenk et al. point out, that the higher the level of change, the harder it is to realize the change (2007, p. 1509).

Creating sustainable change requires a goal-oriented process, instead of open-ended. Furthermore, it must serve the collective good. Sometimes it does not need to be a new product but rather an innovation of a regulation or a behavior change in the public which causes benefit (Hörisch, 2015, p. 290).

I outline two main theories about systems change in the following section. The Multi-Level Perspective defines patterns of how systems change (2.2.1) and Theory U explains how systems change can be promoted (2.2.2).

2.2.1 Multi-Level Perspective

Originally the Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) was developed by Arie Rip and René Kemp and further refined by Frank Geels and Johan Schot (El Bilali, 2019, p. 2). The MLP descriptively displays patterns based on how change occurred in the past (Angheloiu, 2017, p. 1). It explains change in considering the nature (2.2.1.1) and timing (2.2.1.2) of interactions between three different levels (Geels et al. 2007, pp. 399). The theory initially focuses on socio technical transitions (Lawhon et al., 2011, p.

355), however, it is now applied to social and societal change (Holtgrewe et al., 2018, p. 72; Westley, 2018, p. 22; Birney, 2016, p. 1).

I focus in this thesis on the MLP for multiple reasons. The MLP makes it possible to summarize complex structures and factors on different levels in a "single framework that strikes to explicate the interdependencies and interactions between them" (Lawhon et al., 2011, p. 356). This highlights the importance of deeply understanding multi-level collaboration (Heiskanen et al., 2009, p. 421). It promotes long-term thinking (+25 years) and therefore gives a framework for decision-making (Kemp et al., 2007, p. 321). The MLP also allows a heuristic view on the development of innovations and social practice, considering the time and overlapping levels on which changes take place (Howaldt et al., 2016, pp. 38). This broader perspective can help decide to innovate whole systems, test approaches or apply short term solutions in urgent cases (Heiskanen et al., 2009, p. 412).

2.2.1.1 The Nature of Interactions

The MLP estimates the interplay of three levels: micro, meso, and macro, as displayed in Illustration 4. "Each 'level' refers to a heterogeneous configuration of elements; 'higher' levels are more stable than 'lower' levels in terms of number of actors and degrees of alignment between the elements" (Geels, 2011, p. 26).

Multi-Level Perspective

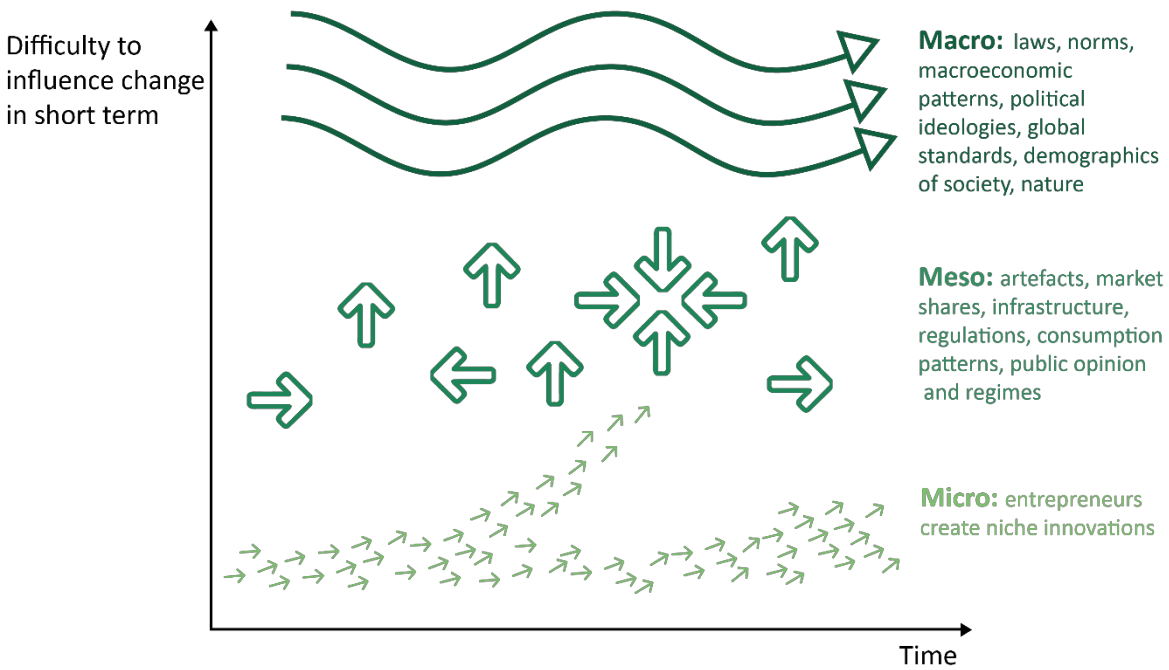

Illustration 4: Multi-Level Perspective. Source: Own Design. Inspired by Geels, 2011, p. 28.

Macro level: The macro level[3] creates the broader context: It includes changes in societal and cultural values (i.e., social movements), laws, norms, macroeconomic patterns, political ideologies, global standards, the demographics of society as well as nature (i.e., drought, natural resource depletion) (Angheloiu 2017, p. 1; Geels, 2011, pp. 28; Immink et al., 2013, p. 153; Kennedy, 2020, p. n/a). A destabilization in this level is a source of pressure for change in the meso level and creates opportunities for innovations to spread (Smith et al., 2010, p. 441; Geels et al., 2007, p. 400). Within the macro level no determinations take place. Rather, it provides the conditions for change, which facilitate some changes more than others (Geels et al., 2007, p. 403). As a result, it determines actors in the meso and micro level to a certain degree. These actors are not able to influence that level in the short-run (Geels, 2011, p. 28), however, the dynamics in the landscape level can be identified as early as possible to prepare and create alternative ways to operate in the system (Bauknecht et al., 2015, p. 30).

Micro level: In the micro level[4], niche actors such as social entrepreneurs work on innovations that challenge existing dynamics and function as seeds for systems change (Geels, 2011, p. 27). These innovations can be "new technologies, new rules and legislation, new organizations or even new projects, concepts or ideas" (Lorbach zit. n. El Bilali, 2019, p. 5). They "build up internal momentum, through learning processes, price/performance improvements, and support from powerful groups" (Geels et al., 2006, p. 400). Their aim is to integrate their concepts in the existing subsystems, or even replace them. Their challenge is to break down the existing "lock-in mechanisms" (Geels, 2011, p. 27) which stabilize current systems (Geels, 2011, p. 27).

Geels (2011, p. 28) highlights three processes in the micro level:

- developing and defining expectations or visions in order to communicate with external actors and to envision the final goal
- building up networks to pool resources
- learning and articulating in multiple ways, for example, "technical design, market demand and user preferences, infrastructure requirements, organizational issues and business models, policy instruments, symbolic meanings" (Geels, 2011, p. 28).

[3] Called „social-technical landscape" in the visualization by Geels 2011, p. 28.
[4] Called „niches" in the more complex visualization by Geels 2011, p. 27.

Meso Level: Connecting the two is the meso level[5], which Geels also defines as "system" (2019, p. 4). In this level lie the regimes which are linked in such a way to control the societal processes (Schermer, 2015, p. 35).

> "*[The] regimes refer to intangible and underlying deep structures (such as [...] heuristics, rules of thumb, routines, standardized ways of doing things, policy paradigms, visions, promises, social expectations and norms). So 'regime' is an interpretive analytical concept that invites the analyst to investigate what lies underneath the activities of actors who reproduce system elements" (Geels, 2011, p. 31).*

These actors are from state, civil society and business (Smith et al., 2005, p. 1504), such as "firms, […] social groups, such as users, policy makers, special-interest groups and civil society actors" (Geels, 2012, p. 55). Changes in this level are a result of the increasing pressure to adapt new ways of behavior due to changes at the macro level in combination with developments in the niches (Schermer, 2015, p. 37). Often, the macro level changes but the pressure is too weak to push the meso level to change (Smith et. al., 2005, p. 1495). In this case actors in the meso level must articulate and translate the pressure in order to initiate change (Kennedy, 2020, p. n/a.). These actors are the ones that reproduce the regimes (Smith et al., 2005, p. 1504) and at the same time are the key players creating pressure to initiate change (Kennedy, 2020, p. n/a.).

The actors in the meso level oftentimes belong to several regimes at the same time. The core members of the regime are the ones that engage the most and need to be involved in change. Though some play a more important role in the function of the system, they are interdependent, and no one actor has the resources to control the regime alone (Smith et al., 2005, p. 1505). In the end

> *"the crucial determining factor in the effective operation and development of the regime lies not simply in the agency of individual core members, but in the norms and procedures governing their structured relationships and interdependencies" (Smith et al., 2005, p. 1505).*

Weber et al. agrees that successful long-term change requires not just innovations at an organizational level (2012, p. 1037). Instead, wide-ranging system innovations such as new configurations of actors, organizations and practices that cause "a new mode of operation of entire sectors or systems of production and consumption," (Weber, 2012, p. 1037) are required (Weber et al., 2012, p. 1037). It is a "co-evolutionary process on various levels, which includes technological change as

[5] Called "socio-technical regime" in the more complex visualization by Geels 2011, p. 27.

well as changes in regulation, consumer practices [...], cultural significance, infrastructure, and supply and delivery networks" (Howaldt et al., 2016, p. 39).

The regimes have their own dynamics and "interpenetrate and co-evolve" (Geels, 2011, p. 27). By observing the meso level, the interdependencies between the actors become apparent. Since they are closely entangled, change is always a consequence of the interplay between regimes and can never be fully accountable to just one regime (Savaget et al., 2019, p. 887). Therefore, it is recommended to include multiple stakeholders when initiating long term change processes (Savaget et al., 2019, p. 887). The interconnections between the regimes cause unintentional and unforeseeable consequences (Schenk et al., 2007, p. 1509) triggered by feedbackloops, hierarchies, self-organizing patterns (Savaget et al., 2019, p. 887) and their alignment leads to stability within the system (Geels, 2011, p. 27). Systems change is also difficult to achieve because lock-in mechanisms prevail and the current system is determined by past developments (Schenk et al., 2007, p. 1509). To understand and then break out of these mechanisms, change makers must intervene in the meso level (Schermer, 2015, p. 37).

2.2.1.2 The Timing of Interactions

Systems change takes place when the old system or parts of it are replaced by an innovation and "become institutionalized and anchored in regulatory programmes, user habits, views of normality, professional standards, and technical capabilities" (Geels, 2019, p. 6). This is a result of "interlinked developments on different levels" (Howaldt et al., 2016, p. 39). Though each pathway of change is unique, alignment of these three processes can be identified in past systems changes (Geels, 2019, p. 4). As displayed in Illustration 5 mechanisms between the macro and micro level lead to the change of the current system:

> *"(a) niche-innovations gradually build up internal momentum, (b) niche-innovations and landscape changes create pressure on the system and regime, and (c) destabilization of the regime creates windows of opportunity for niche-innovations, which then diffuse and disrupt the existing system" (Geels, 2019, p. 4, Illustration 5).*

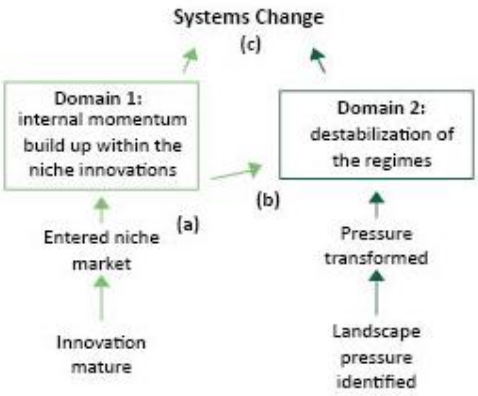

Illustration 5: Timing of Interactions. Source: Own illustration based on Inspired by Geels, 2019, p. 4.

Niche innovations build up momentum: For a niche innovation to be integrated into the meso level it needs to be mature and resistant (El Bilali, 2019, p. 8, Illustration 5). If an organization has "experience, in-depth knowledge of the field, and [an] established reputation" (Westley et al., 2014, p. 23) it is more likely to have the power to influence the meso level (Westley et al., 2014, p. 23). First, the innovations build up. This phase is shaped by uncertainty and possible failures. Then innovations are established in one or two niche markets and the innovation stabilizes. This includes several iterations of learning, improving and adapting (Geels, 2019, p. 6). Pursuing the objective of systems change includes identifying "variable and invariable elements" (Pitt et al., 2016, p. 12) of the innovation and might lead to the fact that original ideas need to be adjusted (Westley et al., 2014, p. 23).

The next step for the innovation is the diffusion into mainstream markets in the meso level. This is fueled by "price/performance improvements, economies of scale, development of complementary technologies" (Geels, 2019, p. 6). Political and cultural influences, economic competition and tensions between the existing system and the niche innovation characterize this phase. Though supporting conditions can be created, it can't be guaranteed that niche innovations succeed in this phase (Geels, 2019, p. 6). Pitt et al. point out that a consistent partnership with other players in the field plays a distinctive role (2016, p. 12). In this way, the organization can take advantage of the expertise of different players and ensures the access to their knowledge throughout the process. When collaborating it is important to understand the motivations of the actors. Collaborating with actors who care about success, makes the innovation more likely to influence change on a larger scale (Pitt et al., 2016, p. 12).

If the innovation succeeds in this phase the old system or parts of it are replaced by the innovation (Geels, 2019, p. 6).

Destabilization of regimes: Smith et al. point out that "impulses for change, especially major, long-term shifts, will often fail because they represent uncoordinated interactions between shifting, poorly articulated selection pressures and struggling adaptive capabilities" (2005, p. 1498). Often pressure exists in the macro level but it is too weak to cause change due to a lack of articulation. Institutions in the meso level do not realize the importance or do not feel the pressure to change (Smith et. al., 2005, p. 1495). If the dynamics in the macro level are identified, ways to operate in the system can be created (Bauknecht et al. 2015, p. 30). In order to transform the power of macro level changes into enduring pressure on the regimes, it must be articulated in a way that it requires a change of behavior within the regimes in order to circulate in their environment (Hermwille, 2016, p. 243). In literature, different ways in which change makers can intervene within the meso level to transform pressure are outlined:

1. *Address the public:* Kennedy points out that change makers in the meso level can mobilize and support social movements (2020, p. n/a). Smith et al. underscore the fact that "debates in wider civil society serve to frame [...] functional reproduction and change" (2005, p. 1494). The public can put pressure on companies (Smith et al., 2005, p. 1497) and support initiatives to push new regulations (Kennedy, 2020, p. n/a). Also civic debates about a possible future and promoting participation are other ways to engage with the public (Smith et al., 2005, p. 1496).
2. *Approach politics:* Smith et al. articulates that the pressure on the regime can be operated through policies in the form of taxations, agreements or regulations (Smith, 2005, p. 1494).
3. *Engage with businesses:* Change makers can support the collaboration of prime movers, who have the technical, financial and political power to influence the process of diffusion and development (Smith et al., 2005, p. 1497).

Networks and collaboration play a distinctive role in the meso level. They consist of regime members as well as other actors aiming to influence change (Smith et al., 2005, p. 1498).

> *"Change might be sought by a specific coalition of actors, but it will need to be carried through within networks of actors possessing the wherewithal to adapt the incumbent regime or create alternatives. By 'carried through' we mean that successful change will require the coordination of resources across diverse interdependent actors" (Smith et al., 2005, p. 1508).*

Therefore, change makers need to guide change in this level (Smith et al., 2005, p. 1505). Contrasting visions and expectations must be analyzed, coalitions created, and common interests defined (Smith et al., 2005, pp. 1503).

2.2.2 Theory U

Multiple theories are explaining the process of change. The traditional model introduced by the social scientist Lewin (1951) identifies three phases of change: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. Rogers and Lippitt develop theories of change that refer to the same idea of change as a process with several phases (Mitchell, 2013, pp. 32). In his eight-stage change model, Kotter emphasizes the importance of leading change, especially when taking into consideration that new chances and risks occur due to the growing structures of the global economy (Kotter, 2011, pp. 15). In Theory U, Scharmer considers approaches of systems thinking and innovation as well as an "evolving human consciousness" (Scharmer, 2018, p. ix) beside the concept of leading change (2018, p. ix). The approach of Theory U is changing the inner position, which is "the source of level from which our attention and our actions originate" and which entices to unconscious behavior (Scharmer 2019, p. xii). The idea is to shift from acting and thinking based on past experiences and assumptions into perceiving the present, and ultimately into receiving the emerging future (Scharmer, 2014, 0:30).

I use the Theory U in this thesis for several reasons. First, Theory U allows practitioners to understand change from a systems perspective (Scharmer, 2018, p. xi), it aims to expand the awareness from a silo view[6] to a whole ecosystem view (Scharmer, 2018, pp. 16). Second, Theory U offers a methodology which helps practitioners to anticipate the future to make proactive rather than reactive decisions (Scharmer et al., 2013, pp. 19) and act in emerging situations (Hall, 2008, p. 8). Third, the theory highlights the importance of every individual in the change process (Scharmer, 2018, p. xii). When individuals in the system realize their impact a crucial shift takes place (Scharmer, 2018, pp. 16). Scharmer sees the role of leaders in creating conditions for individuals, groups or systems to go through that shift of awareness and change how they "sense and relate to each other, to the system and to themselves" (2018, pp. 16). Just having good ideas is not enough, the qualities of a leader are distinctive (Richter, 2014, p. 2).

[6] "According to the silo view, the cognitive mindset of the actors leads them to look only at one aspect of the reality in complete isolation to the other. In fact, the members of silos view the opinions of those outside the silo as being of no value and therefore deem them negligible" (Capasso, Dagnino, 2012, p. 930).

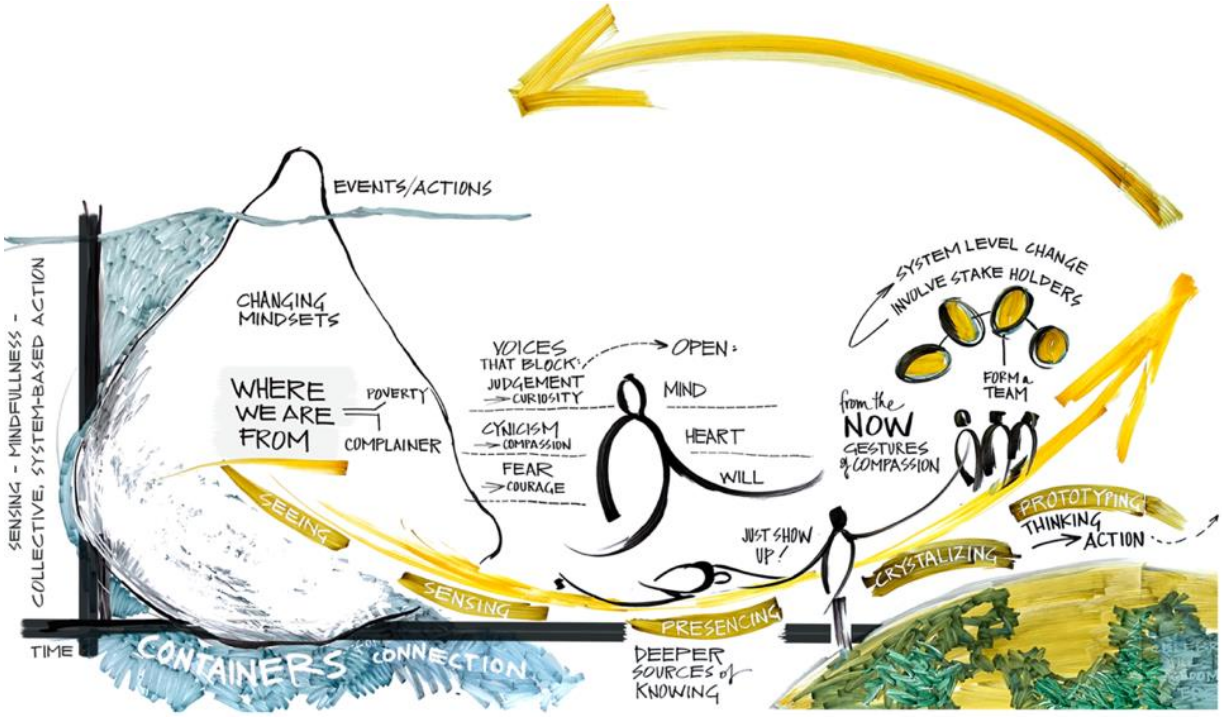

Illustration 6: Theory U. Scharmer, 2015, p. 1.

Scharmer identifies three different levels of awareness. The “open mind” is the capacity to view the world without old habits of thought, an “open heart” refers to empathizing with people to see the world through their eyes. “And an open will is the capacity of letting-go and letting-come: letting-go of old identities (like “us versus them”), and letting-come a new sense of self and what that shift can make possible” (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1).

Theory U is modeled as a U (Illustration 6, the yellow lower arch). While going down the left side of the U it is about questioning existing mental models by directly interacting with the system to get a more holistic understanding of the reality (Senge, 2006, p. 401). As displayed in Illustration 6, it is about observing the different layers of the iceberg, in order to profoundly understand the structure of the system. Practically, during this phase the leader talks to the people ingrained in the current system structures: people struggling with the system’s outcome as well as decision-makers from business, government and NGOs (Senge, 2006, p. 402). At the bottom of the U, the aim is to create a personal and shared vision based on an in-depth understanding of reality including multiple perspectives (Senge, 2006, pp. 401). The source of inspiration and ideation at this phase is the inner wisdom and creativity (Scharmer, 2009, p. 173). In praxis, workshops can be organized to create a space for the joint process (Senge, 2006, p. 402). Going up the U, new ways of interacting with the system are prototyped and implemented. During this phase people discover further pieces of information about the system. Based on this information they create alternative ways to operate in the

current system. Then equally important the shared vision needs to be revisited, deepened and clarified (Senge, 2006, pp. 402). Team learning, constantly reflecting on mental models and applying systems thinking are fundamental to this process. New team members need to undergo the Theory U process as well (Senge, 2006, p. 402). “The real point of moving up the U, and of the hole U process, is building capacities in large communities to see “what is” and to enact new social systems” (Senge, 2006, p. 403).

Levels of Attention

Structure of Attention	Individual: *ATTENDING*	Group: *CONVERSING*	Institutions: *ORGANIZING*	Global Systems: *COORDINATING*
Level 1: habitual awareness *I-in-me*	**Listening 1** Downloading: more of the same	**Downloading** Talking nice: speaking from what they want to hear	**Centralized** Machine bureaucracy, silos	**Hierarchy** Central plan, regulation
Level 2: ego-system awareness *I-in-it*	**Listening 2** Factual: taking in something new	**Debate** Talking tough: speaking your mind	**Decentralized** Divisionalized	**Market** Competition
Level 3: stakeholder awareness *I-in-you*	**Listening 3** Empathic: walking in someone else‘s shoes	**Dialogue** Inquiry: speaking from seeing self/ whole	**Networked** Relational	**Negotiation and Dialogue** Mutual adjustment
Level 4: eco-system awareness *I-in-now*	**Listening 4** Generative: connecting to the source of the emerging future	**Collective Creativity** Flow: speaking from what is moving through	**Eco-System** Cross-institutional co-creation	**Awareness-Based Collective Action** Acting from the whole

Table 1: Levels of Attention in Theory U. Source: Own design. Scharmer, 2014, 5:10.

According to Scharmer change impacts several dimensions: individual, group, institutional and global systems (Scharmer, 2014, 5:10, Table 1).

Individual: Individuals are part of the behavior patterns they currently don’t question. They do not see the construction they created themselves and therefore are not able to change it (Richter, 2014, p. 25). Individuals must open themselves to the emerging future (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1) and start listening with an inner attitude of openness towards the future rather than being captured by the past (Scharmer, 2014, 1:30). The Theory U process on the individual level is explained in Appendix A (1.1 Theory U- Example Listening).

Group: Relational inversion is about “conversing”: to shift from “a focus on conformity and defensiveness to generative dialogue, so that groups can enter a space of thinking together, of collective

creativity and flow" (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1). The role of a leader is to build "containers"[7] (Scharmer, 2014, 5:10), opportunities and conditions for exchange. The goal is to enable the team to see its actions within the system and to transform conversations into dialogues based on collective creativity (Scharmer, 2014, 5:44).

Institutions: The leader is obliged to bear the institutional complexity (Scharmer, 2014, 6:20). Applying Theory U in the institutional sphere it is done by moving toward co-creative stakeholder networks which aim to generate wellbeing for the system and therefore break down "centralized hierarchies and decentralized competition" (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1).

Global Systems: The last stage is building an ecosystem that transcends all organizational boundaries and has an awareness for the system as a whole (Scharmer, 2014, 6:30). The power is not within a single organization but instead it is in the relationships with others. This enables organizations to take collaborative action (Scharmer, 2014, 7:50). Scharmer emphasizes the importance of networks (2011, p. 37). People, institutions, and sectors must learn together, co-develop innovations and collaborate in order to manage the emerging challenges (Scharmer, 2011, p. 37). Stakeholders from politic, public and business backgrounds must convene and work together. These stakeholders have to address root problems as collectives (Scharmer, 2011, p. 37).

Leading change collectively demands the broadening of the concept of leadership "from a few people at the top to all change makers across all institutions in a system" (Scharmer, 2010, p. 8). That shift impacts those at every level: the individual, the institutional and the whole system (Scharmer, 2010, p. 8). Senge et al. point out that the aim is that change leaders "shift the conditions through which others—especially those who have a problem—can learn collectively to make progress against it" (2015, p. 1).

> *"The shift from ego- to eco-system awareness requires a journey that involves walking in the shoes of other stakeholders, and fine-tuning the instruments through which consciousness is created: namely an open mind, an open heart, and an open will" (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1).*

Scharmer states that there is no lack of ideas or policy proposals that are better than the ones that yet exist. Instead, new infrastructures that "enable groups to move from their habitual thinking and practices to co-create an eco-centered economy" (Scharmer 2013, p. 1) are necessary (2013, p. 1).

[7] Building a container is explained as building a good holding space or space for interactions (cf. https://susannawesleyfoundation.org/conversations/essentials-of-theory-u-book-review/ (accessed: 24.02.2020)).

This infrastructure needs to include new spaces and channels for stakeholders to "co-initiate systems" (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1). These places will provide others with the capability to see the whole system with their minds and hearts ("co-sensing" (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1)). These types of spaces for creativity and connection are necessary for both people and institutions to "co-inspire" (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1). Moreover, mechanisms for prototyping and interacting with the possible futures by testing solutions in the present need to develop. For these prototypes to evolve spaces need to be "co-shaped" (Scharmer 2013, p. 1). In the current society, especially "co-sensing" (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1) and "co-inspiring," (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1) are underdeveloped (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1).

> *"Trying to advance societal innovation through prototyping and scaling-up alone is like building a house without foundations. That's why so many current efforts fail, because they ignore the deeper conditions of the social field (the mindsets, attitudes and intentions), and focus only on the superstructure of incentives and institutions. Without a fundamental shift in consciousness it will be impossible to sustain an eco-centered economy. [...] What's needed to underpin these renewals are change-makers who are willing to lead from the emerging future: leaders who are willing to open up, learn about and practice the journey from ego-system to eco-system thinking. We already have much of what we need to hand in the form of living examples, tools and frameworks. What's missing is the co-creative vision and the common will to make this revolution a reality" (Scharmer, 2013, p. 1).*

2.3 Innovations in Systems Change

Systems change starts with an innovation. As described in the MLP, the change process begins with the creation of a niche. The Theory U process can be applied in to develop innovations that solve root causes. In the following, I explain the term "social innovation" (2.3.1) and describe the role of innovations in systems change (2.3.1.1). I then illustrate the six stages of innovations (2.3.1.2) and present methods to promote social innovation (2.3.1.3). Social entrepreneurs are the main driver of social innovations. Due to their effect on these social innovations, I outline the characteristics of both social and systems entrepreneurs (2.3.2).

2.3.1 Social Innovation

Social innovations overcome challenges that the government or the market cannot or does not solve on their own. The problems are often limited resources, priority placement or the inability to act due to their silo situation (Murray et al., 2010, pp. 3). Social innovation is now "expected to

combine the efficiency of private firms with the social commitment of public services" (Avelino et al., p. 48, 2018).

Westley et al. define social innovation in relation to systems change:

> *"In the context of changing the system dynamics that created the problem in the first place, a social innovation is any initiative (product, process, program, project or platform) that challenges and, over time, contributes to changing the defining routines, resource and authority flows or beliefs of the broader social system in which it is introduced. Successful social innovations reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience. They have durability, scale and transformative impact" (2012, p. 5).*

De Vries et al. identify four innovation types: **Process innovation**, when developing new types of organizations or working methods. **Product and service innovation** or designing **conceptual innovation**, like new frameworks to develop a new understanding of problems and/or their solutions. And finally, **governance innovation** such as new approaches and processes for specific social issues (p. 5, 2014).

2.3.1.1 Innovations and Existing Systems

Social innovations interact with the existing systems in different ways: repairing, modernizing, transforming and separating (Appendix A, Illustration 19). It is important to observe the reactions when a social innovation enters the system to identify social change and unintended consequences (Rabadijeva, 2018, p. 86).

"Transforming" describes a radical change in the system. For this change the environment must be open for change. For example reaching a critical amount of people and implementing new practices. When "modernizing" the system, its core is not influenced, instead its structures are analyzed and improved. When social innovations only improve subunits of the systems it is called "repairing" (Rabadijeva, 2018, p. 86). For those issues which are not successfully addressed by the economy or government, social innovations take on the function of "repairing" without profoundly changing the underlying structures (Howaldt, 2018, p. 91). Another type of social innovation is "separating". Outside of one system, another system with an innovative approach builds up. This system can co-exist and even lead to repairing, modernizing or transforming the whole system. However, if the innovation provides no added value, it may be destroyed by the larger system (Rabadijeva, 2018, p. 86).

2.3.1.2 Stages of Social Innovation

Murray et al. identify six stages of innovation (Illustration 7). The depicted stages do not always proceed in the rigid sequence because some innovations can skip stages, while feedbackloops and processes concur simultaneously (2010, p. 12).

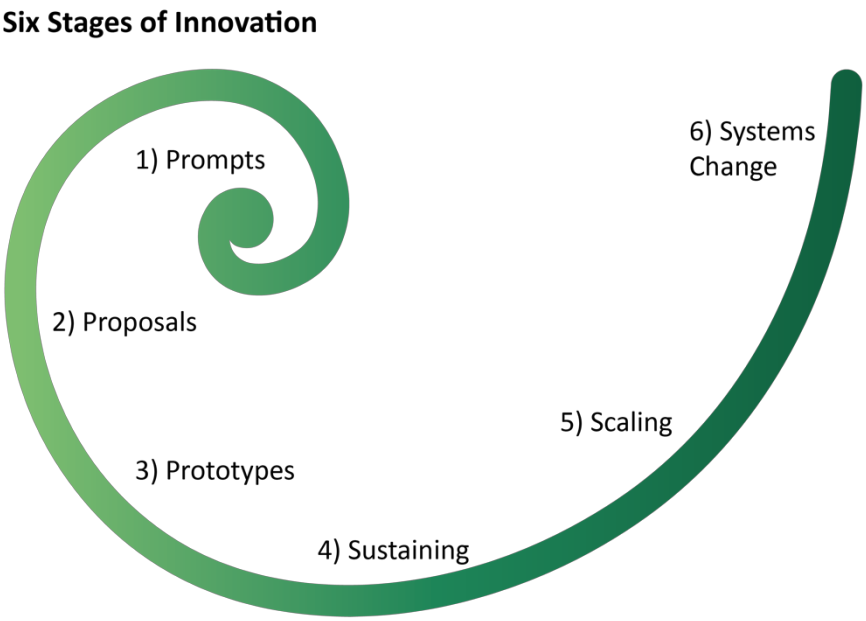

Illustration 7: Stages of Innovation. Source: Own Design. Murray et al., 2010, p. 11.

In the first stage, **prompts**, problems are identified. The goal is to frame a question that provides a context to tackle the root causes of a problem (Murray et al., 2010, p. 12). Based in the ideation phase, **proposals,** ideas are generated. In the **prototyping** phase, the ideas are tested in the practical field in an iterating process of improvement (Murray et al., 2010, p. 12). In the **sustaining** phase the solution is integrated into the practice. The aim of the next stage, **scaling** is to increase the impact by reaching new markets (Murray et al., 2010, p. 12). The goal of social innovation is to reach the stage of **systems change**. This is oftentimes is a result of multiple social innovations creating social movements, building up collaborations to break down old barriers, tackling laws and regulations and thereby causing shifts in mind-sets and behaviors of society (Murray et al., 2010, p. 12).

2.3.1.3 Instruments to Support Social Innovation

The stages form a frame to identify opportunities and improve the innovation by using design tools, creativity methods, research and systems approaches (Murray et al. 2010, pp. 12). There is a wide range of proven methods and approaches in the field of social entrepreneurship, which are explained in detail by Murray et al. (2010). In the following I outline only three central instruments to

foster systems innovation because they relate to the context of systems change, social innovation and think tanks.

Systems Mapping: System maps "provide an exploration of the system, communicate understanding, and allow for the identification of knowledge gaps, intervention points, and insights" (Acaroglu, 2017, p. 1). People use systems maps to define the different parts of a system and explore their interconnections to plan system interventions (Eoyang, 2014, p. 1).

There are online tools like Kumu, where maps can be designed (Acaroglu, 2017, p. 1) or analog mapping, using paper, stickers and pens of different colors can be recommended (Eoyang, 2014, p. 1). To include different perspectives (Eoyang, 2014, p. 1) and capture the wisdom, knowledge and assumptions of different stakeholders the map should be created in a group process. This way new information will be elaborated, and a common understanding is developed (LEO, 2016, p. 1). Stroh emphasizes the importance of defining a focusing question instead of mapping the whole system (2015, p. 84). A range of different types of maps can be created, those are further outlined in Appendix A (1.7 Systems Maps).

Design Practices: Design practices are applied to the social sector to frame problems and find common solutions with different stakeholders. Actors in the social sector already acknowledge "the role of design and its potential in facing societal challenges and helping social innovations [...] flourish" (Deserti et al., 2018, p. 65). Human-centered design is an approach to solve problems by putting the human, the innovation is designed for, at the center. Design thinking is strongly related: it is a human-centered approach which aims to create innovations, involving the needs of people, the business requirements and newest technology (IDEO, 2020, p. 1).

The process as well as the mindset of design thinking is used in the social innovation sector (IDEO, 2019, p. 1). "It encourages organizations to focus on the people they're creating for, which leads to better products, services, and internal processes" (IDEO, 2019, p. 1). The Skoll Centre sees the potential in

> *"the process of analyzing an existing situation through the perspective of different people who are involved in it, understanding how it could be improved and quickly prototyping designed solutions in order to adopt the most effective one. One of its benefits is the in-depth analysis of the issues of key stakeholders and the inclusion of their opinions and suggestions in the creation of a solution" (2018, p. 1).*

Research: Innovations are often provoked by new research and data (Murray et al., 2010, p. 17). Conducting research for social innovation, Moulaert et al. recommend to focus on the "institutional (meso) and individual (micro) levels and not the societal level" (2017, p. 30). In the institutional and individual level engage actors who can implement the research findings. Practice orientated research especially has high relevance for social innovators (Seelos et al., 2014, p. 1). Seelos et al. highlight the importance of connecting research more with the work of practitioners (2014, p. 1).

> *"Interventions in the real world are the main ways in which opportunities, solutions, and potential desired and undesired outcomes are discovered. Research mainly observes and explains why and how things work or don't work. […] Researchers can help organizations learn more systematically and objectively" (Seelos et al., 2014, p. 1).*

Moreover, they encourage cross-level projects to promote exchange among different actors. They also emphasize the importance of including stakeholders as "co-producers of knowledge" (Moulaert, 2017, p. 30). The accessibility of research plays an important role. To make findings easily accessible, it is recommended to publish the research on the internet so as to have a wider reach for the results (Seelos et al., 2014, p. 1).

2.3.2 Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurs create and implement social innovations (Portales, 2019, p. viii). A whole field around social entrepreneurship has been built by "foundations, fellowship programs and networks. As well as by governments, international organizations (e.g. The European Union) and many academic institutions" (Nicholls et al. 2018, p. 29). The term social entrepreneurship is complex as it describes many different activities and approaches in combining business, social and public sectors. This variety makes it difficult to find a common definition due to the risk of excluding innovative models and projects (Nicholls et al., 2018, p. 30). As a result, there is not a general definition for "social entrepreneurship" in the science yet (Nicholls 2010, p. 611; Dacin et al., 2011, p. 1204; Short et al., 2009, p. 161).

In this thesis, a definition combining the main characteristics is used:

> *Social entrepreneurship describes the actions of passionate mission-driven personalities who identify societal challenges and the underlying dynamics and solve them by using market-driven strategies to create sustainably funded organizations (based on Abu-Saifan 2012, p. 25; Zimmer et al., 2018, p. 1; Mair et al., 2006, p. 37; Christie et al., 2006, p. 2; Appendix A, 1.4 Social Entrepreneurship).*

Social entrepreneurs face challenges when targeting complex societal challenges through interventions on the market level. In order to facilitate change, entrepreneurs need to scale the systemic impact instead the organizational impact (Milligan et al., 2017, p. 1). Those entrepreneurs who are able to look at the bigger picture and scale change to a systemic level are defined as "systems entrepreneurs" (Milligan et al., 2017, p. 1; Balfour, 2016, p. 1). While social entrepreneurs' approach single problems in the system and create a positive impact in a few places in the framework, systems entrepreneurs aim to operate holistically with a systems perspective (Balfour, 2016, p. 1).

The following definition of systems entrepreneurship is used in this thesis:

> *Systems entrepreneurship is about leveraging change on a systemic level. System entrepreneurs are social entrepreneurs who act as networkers and facilitators. They learn to see the whole system and are committed to solving root causes of problems by interacting with different players in their field and thereby creating a momentum for change. (based on Balfours, 2017, p. 1; Westley, 2018, p. 2; Sautet, 2011, p. 393; Muehlenbein, 2017, p. 1; Appendix A, 1.5 Systems Entrepreneurship).*

2.4 Think Tanks

In this thesis I consider the example of a think tank as an organization to promote systems change. The combination of their strong connection to influential stakeholders and high level of expertise puts think tanks in a privileged role in the non-governmental organizations field and enables them to engage in important activities (Abelson, 2013, p. 898). Their independence allows think tanks to build up "issue networks" (McGann, 2018, p. 86) and execute several roles in the political and policy processes: First, they can function as a mediator between the government and public (McGann et al., 2018, p. 7). Second, they contribute to debates as an informed and independent voice (McGann, 2019, p. 4). Last, they can open a field for stakeholders to constructively exchange thoughts and knowledge (McGann, 2019, p. 4; Abelson, 2014, p. 129).

> *"At their best, think tanks possess the ability to capture the political imagination by brokering ideas, stimulating public debate, and offering creative yet practical solutions to tackle the world's most pressing problems" (De Boer, 2015, p. 1).*

In the following I define the term think tank (2.4.1). Thereafter I outline the relation and interaction between think tanks and other actors such as media, politics, business and the knowledge field (2.4.2). Then I illuminate different organizational structures and strategies of think tanks (2.4.3). Last, I present a strategy to create think tanks (2.4.4).

2.4.1 Definition

When defining think tanks there is often an inconsistency in literature (Hauck, 2017, p. 1). Medvetz states the core problem to this inconsistency is due to "the central concept [being] fuzzy, mutable, and contentious" (2008, p. 1), which makes it difficult to understand what a think tank is (Medvetz, 2008, p. 1). Still, there are certain points of agreement in the definitions of think tanks which I point out to be used as a common understanding of think tanks in this thesis.

Thinks tanks can be characterized as non-profit (Thunert, 2008, p. 33; Abelson, 2010, p. 1, Rich, 2004, p. 11) and non-governmental organizations (Pautz, 2011, p. 423; Abelson, 2010, p. 1). They generate research (Pautz, 2011, p. 423, Abelson, 2010, p. 1), analysis and advice (McGann, 2016, p. 5) to influence public policy (McGann, 2016, p. 5; Abelson, 2010, p. 1; Pautz, 2011, p. 423; Rich, 2004, p. 11), public opinion (Pautz, 2011, p. 423) and decision-makers to make informed choices (McGann, 2019, p. 12). Goodman highlights the think tanks role as "idea factories" (2019, p. 1) who encourage the discovery of solutions (Goodman, 2019, p. 1). They "vary enormously in size, financial resources, [and] areas of specialization" (Abelson, 2010, p. 1). They can be affiliated and thereby funded by governments, universities, organizations or they can be publicly funded and operated independently (Poguntke 2016, p. 9, McGann, 2019, p. 12). Workshops that generate ideas are also called think tanks. This is when thought leaders, managers, researchers and representatives of diverse companies come together (Thunert, 2012, p. 20) to analyze and generate ideas in an efficient and goal-oriented way (Poguntke, 2016, p. 16). However, this thesis focuses on a think tank in an institutional form.

The term "think tank" was coined during the Second World War as a secure environment for military and civilian experts to develop strategies. After the war the term was used to describe researchers who executed deep thinking and evaluations for the military. In the 1960s the definition was applied to associations of experts who aimed to develop policy recommendations, investigated internal relations and strategic issues. Since the 1970s the term includes research about present political, economic, and social matters (McGann et al., 2011, p. 3). The number of think tanks has increased during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries due to globalization, rising complexity of policy problems and changes in government and state structures. Recently the number of think tanks established worldwide has declined due to lack of funding and increasing competition "from advocacy organizations, for-profit consulting firms, law firms, and 24/7 electronic media" (McGann, 2019, p. 15). Recently, the global go to think tank report counts a total of 8,248 think tanks worldwide, more than half of them are in North America (25%) and Europe (26,9%) (McGann, 2019, p. 35).

2.4.2 Think Tanks and other Fields

Think tanks are boundary workers in the fields of media, politics, universities and business (Mendizabal, 2016, p. 1). Though a think tank's independence is one of their key characteristics Medvetz claims that they are still dependent "on the same institutions for their resources, personnel, and legitimacy" (2012a, p. 24). This puts them in a complex juggling act which includes multiple ties and relations of exchange with organizations in various fields (Medvetz, 2012b, p. 121 f.). As a result, think tanks find themselves in the conflict of "autonomy versus heteronomy" (Medvetz, 2008, p. 10) with multiple actors. They constantly strive to maintain themselves as a process of "distancing and affinity" (Medvetz, 2008, p. 5). They clearly differentiate from other players in the field while aiming to associate with these organizations in order to receive the same influence and authority (Medvetz, 2008, p. 5).

Think Tanks and Media: Think tanks need "media capital" (Medvetz, 2012b, p. 122), the power of reaching the public through direct and indirect channels as well as the ability to merge into the work of media (Medvetz, 2012b, p. 122).

To strategically communicate experts are hired and communication guidelines are formulated for the ideas they promote (Hauck, 2017, p. 19). Many think tanks have units to not just disseminate studies but also build and maintain relationships with media channels (McDonald, 2014, pp. 852). Many think tank directors conclude that the amount of public visibility they achieve through those channels indicates their level of influence on policy. As a result, media exposure is monitored most within these organizations (Abelson, 2013, p. 898 f.). McGann noted that when more resources are put into the numbers of "mass media appearances, legislative testimonies, and news coverage citations [...], fewer resources were allocated for generating new policy solutions" (2016, p. 31). However, Abelson points out that these measurements do not indicate how influential think tanks are (Abelson, 2013, p. 899, 2010).

Media is also interested in the collaboration with think tanks. Media "seeks out expertise of the think tanks to understand and explain policy debates and clarify technical issues" (Rashid, 2013, p. 178). Journalists quote think tanks as experts in print media or refer to them in television programs (Rashid, 2013, p. 179). Think tanks also conduct research like interpreting policies for electronic and print media, in order to facilitate public comprehension of policy initiatives (McGann et al., 2018, p. 8). Rashid observers that the media tends to spread short and superficial information. This brings

the think tank into a position of real time production of research about current events, as a result the quality may suffer under that pressure (2013, p. 180).

Think Tanks in the Knowledge Field: Think tanks need "academic capital" (Medvetz, 2012b, p. 122), which is indicated by a high level of academic competence, proven by academic degrees and titles (Medvetz, 2012b, p. 122).

Some think tanks are university affiliated or funded (McGann, 2016, p. 14), the affiliation can be organized in different ways. Involving students through research or study programs and collaborating with professors, researchers or visiting scholars. These think tanks often receive financial support from individuals, foundations and governments, as well as being partly funded by the respective university. Universities also share facilities such as libraries, research labs and workspaces (McGann, 2016, p. 52). Another model of collaboration can be short-term partnerships with universities, research centers or interest groups (McGann, 2016, p. 52).

However, think tanks also compete with universities and individual researchers for funding and must prevail against the institutions they cooperate with. The different players in the market of conducting research find themselves in the same struggle for hearing, ideas and resources (Thunert, 2008, pp. 48).

Medvetz identifies think tanks as a subject of tensions. This can result in a decrease of intellectual rigor. Due to their limited financial resources, think tanks are often forced to decide where to allocate these resources. They want to provide rigorous policy research but at the same time they need to maximize their political and economic influence to stay relevant and to continue receiving support for their research. Often it

> "*exacts a particular cost on the think tank's intellectual production, curtailing its ability to do long-term research, to gather background knowledge, to incubate ideas – in a word, to think" (Medvetz, 2008, p. 10).*

Think Tanks and Business: "Economic capital" (Medvetz, 2012b, p. 122) is essential to think tanks. Medvetz describes economic capital as financial resources and dives into detail the capacity to acquire these resources. This requires skills to fundraise and to position the think tanks intellectual wares effectively in the market (2012b, p. 122). This is especially necessary due to the increasing number of issues, actors, competitors and conflicts (McGann, 2019, p. 16) which then increases the significance of management skills.

Think tanks also interact with the private sector in different ways due to their dependency on the financial resources of "private foundations, wealthy individuals, and business corporations" (Medvetz, 2008, p. 4). Some think tanks are founded by business leaders. This leads to a risk of losing self-determination or even intellectual independence which negatively affects their credibility. As a solution, think tanks aim to receive funding from multiple resources, including businesses, government and others (Helguro, 2011, p. 1).

Think Tanks and Politics: Think tanks are dependent on "political capital" which Medvetz understands as the ability to express their positions in a political form, including the competences to produce knowledge products and place them through effective statements to compete in influencing the politics (2012b, p. 122). "Asian Development Bank, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have recently come to recognize the significant role these institutions play in the policy-making process" (McGann et al., 2011, p. 3).

Decision-makers make decisions rapidly and simultaneously which creates a demand for external support (Assefa, 2015, p. 38). Think tanks are able to provide them with the expertise and information they need (Abelson, 2014, p. 129). Policymakers also seek better approaches to administer and filter policy ideas to react more effectively to a permanently changing policy making environment. Through "proliferation, physical expansion, and networking" (McGann et al., 2011, p. 1), think tanks can leverage their power to contribute to the resolution of the challenges public policy faces. As think tanks begin to scrutinize policy issues, they apt to transcend borders (McGann et al., 2011, p. 1). Thunert identifies an advantage of think tanks working closely with the government (2008, p. 48). These think tanks often times research in party or coalition cross-cutting questions for the government. Often these topics are important but off the public agenda or they deal with trials about possible options. Sometimes think tanks also function as sounding boards in policy idea development by supporting decision-makers or governments (Thunert, 2008, p. 48). Medvetz highlights the independence of political candidates, interest groups or single parties must be guaranteed to maintain their credibility, even though accessing specific political networks is tempting (2012b, p. 121).

Medvetz opens the field wider and sees the power of a think tank in generating effects in larger fields beyond policy outcomes. He notes some of these other fields as interceding between parties, politicians and other political experts, as well as working within the array of public institutions (2012b, p. 119).

Think tanks play an important role as a bridge between the public and politics (McGann, 2019, p. 20). Through human and digital networks information spreads faster than ever before, pressing issues become omnipresent and inescapable. This leads to a rising of uncertainty and insecurity: people are worried about their well-being in the short and long term (McGann, 2019, p. 20). McGann points out seven factors which concerned citizens and governments have failed to approach successfully in recent years: economic insecurity, physical insecurity, loss of national and personal identity, the new world disorder, information insecurity, revolutionary change in science, technology and society and the lack of answers (2019, pp. 18). This opens a critical field for think tanks to analyze, develop and promote policy solutions in these times of change. This is also challenging think tanks to "adapt and innovate by transforming their organization to be smarter, better, faster and more mobile" (McGann, 2019, p. 20).

2.4.3 Organizational Structure

> *"Over the last 89 years, several distinct organizational forms of think tanks have emerged that differentiate themselves in terms of their operating styles, patterns of recruitment, and aspirations to academic standards of objectivity and completeness in research" (McGann, 2019, p. 12).*

Based on their characteristics different typologies of think tanks can be outlined. Academic think tanks are one example. They hire strong academic staff, create their research agenda internally, based on the researcher's expertise, and receive donations from corporations, individuals and foundations (Weaver et al., 2017, p. 7). Another form is advocacy think tanks, they promote a certain worldview. They receive their donations from resources linked to their mission. Their research products are more likely to be short briefs and their agenda is more dependent on current needs (Weaver et al., 2017, p. 7). Hybrids of these types or organizations similar to think tanks also exist (Weaver et al., 2017, p. 7). Think tanks interact with the fields of media, politics, knowledge and business. It is important to distinguish between the institutions in these areas (Ladi, 2015, p. 1).

> *"The distinctions between think tanks and organizations such as interest groups, professional associations, consultants, and university institutes can be blurry, with the result that it is not always easy to identify an organization as a think tank" (Ladi, 2015, p. 1).*

Though think tanks are similar to universities, there are some characteristics in which they differ greatly. While think tanks generally conduct goal-oriented research on specific topics and aim to develop ideas for well-defined problems, the research of universities pursues broader goals and more general topics (Goodman, 2019, p. 1). The use of media to publish their research is not as

important for universities as it is for think tanks and interest groups. This is due to two main reasons: the first is that political access is not the main goal of universities. The second is that universities are not as reliant on media visibility for their funding (Hauck, 2017, pp. 20). Think tanks need to be distinguished from government advisory organizations since think tanks provide "more independent intellectual support to, or new alternatives for, public policy" (Ladi, 2015, p. 1). There is also a difference in the purpose of philanthropic organizations and think tanks. Philanthropic organizations often focus more on the funding of actions than on the funding of research (Ladi, 2015, p. 1). Think tanks are also different from interest groups. Interest groups conduct research in order to investigate specific topics and identify action steps. Their goal is to reach maximal impact through their interventions while they focus less on the ideas that underlie them. Furthermore, they work to address funders who are interested in promoting their topic and position, rather than willing to support the general debate (Hauck, 2017, pp. 20). However, as think tanks try to learn from the lobbying strategies of interest groups to communicate their research, the differences between these institutions "become increasingly blurred" (Abelson et al., 2017, p. 38).

In the following, I outline the main characteristics and subtypes of think tanks. The categories are inspired by (Axyonova et al. 2018, p. 216).

Scope of expertise: Think tanks can either specialize on certain topics or research on multiple diverse topics (Axyonova et al. 2018, p. 216). Think tanks must define their scope to become active (Mendizabal, 2016, p. 1). Especially when building up a think tank Mendizabal recommends focusing on specific problems or projects to specialize and build up expertise (Mendizabal, 2016, p. 1). Just focusing on one topic can lead to a loss of funding and attention when the topic loses salience (Weaver et al., 2017, p. 22). Connected to that, the think tank must choose an image which it wants to represent. Think tanks can be seen independently and not aligned to a certain view. That way a broader range of funders, policy makers and media might refer to them. On the other hand, think tanks can establish a clear image and that way attract specialized funders and media (Weaver et al., 2017, p. 25). An image is hard to change afterwards, therefore the decision needs to be made consciously (Weaver et al., 2017, p. 25).

Think Tanks and do tanks: Poguntke also differentiates between think tanks, do tanks and think-do tanks (2016, p. 13). Think tanks focus on analyzing activities and creating knowledge products (Poguntke, 2016, p. 13). Do tanks also aim to advocate to implement their ideas (Thunert, 2012, p.

20). Thunert observes that the traditional role of think tanks to mainly produce knowledge products, increasingly blurs with the goal of acting upon the ideas (2012, p. 20). Goodman argues that "the most important sources of political change are not politicians, political parties or financial contributions, rather they are ideas generated on college campuses, in the think tanks and in other research organizations" (2019, p. 1). This emphasizes the fact that the connection between research and generating ideas is valuable. Goodman describes ideas as "powerful engines of change" (2019, p. 1). Goodman observes that

> *"ideas tend to filter through a hierarchy. They start in the realm of intellectuals. Through conferences, speeches, briefings and reports written for lay readers, their audience expands. The ideas begin to appear in newspaper editorials. Special interests may sometimes help an idea along. Gradually, more people become aware; politicians are often the last to climb on board. It is a process that has been repeated again and again" (2019, p. 1).*

McGann et al. note the challenge in the numerous amounts of ideas which can become lost in an environment of increasing diversity and information access (2011, p. 1). In this marketplace of ideas, building networks and creating innovative platforms to share their solutions with their target groups of policy makers, businesses and citizens, can be the key to successfully promoting their ideas (McGann, 2019, p. 16). In order to trigger change, ideas must be prepared to mobilize and engage on them in the right moment. For that they need sufficient resources and perseverance to continually cultivate (De Boer, 2015, p. 1).

Institutional Affiliation: Think tanks can either be autonomous and independent, quasi-independent, university based or affiliated to the government, a political party or a business (McGann, 2019, p. 13; Appendix A, Table 3). A think tank which is affiliated to a business or an organization needs to be cross-linked with the decision-making structures in the institution, in order to reach the full potential. Managers who believe in the potential of the think tank and enthuse others about the idea are the key to success (Poguntke, 2016, p. 59). It is important to integrate the think tank into the business strategy and delegate responsibilities for implementing the elaborated strategies (Poguntke, 2016, p. 60).

Funding: Think Tanks are either funded by *diverse donors* such as organizations, government, individuals or the funding can be dominated by *a few resources* from government, business, a party or/and interest group (Axyonova et al. 2018, p. 216). McGann notes a development toward more

short term and project specific funding instead of long-term support for general research (2005, p. 23). Due to the change to a more short-term funding structure, the influence of donors on the research design and outcome increases (Troy, 2012, p. 1). This can also lead to "donor pressure" (Troy, 2012, p. 1), when think tanks tailor their massage based on the funders interest or are even hindered to publish a study that could be unfortunate for the donor (Troy, 2012, p. 1). This also leads to think tanks beginning to adapt business models to fund their work (Ralphs, 2016, p. 1).

> *"The essence of a business model is that it defines the manner by which the think tank delivers value to stakeholders, entices funders to pay for value, and converts those payments to research with the potential to influence policy" (Ralphs, 2016, p. 1).*

When integrating a business model, Ralphs emphasizes the importance of three essential characteristics. First, aligning the business model to the think tanks strategy. Second, ensuring that it reinforces the think tank's mission. And last, that the business model makes the think tank more robust and enables the think tank's activities to sustain (Ralphs, 2016, p. 1).

Agenda setting: The agenda setting of think tanks is influenced by the donors, by the think tank's employees, especially key experts and researchers, and dependent on the think tank's ideology (Axyonova et al. 2018, p. 216). Depending on the type of think tank, the manners of setting the agenda can differ. In academic-oriented institutions the researchers have more control to set their agenda than the more advocacy focused think tanks (McGann, 2005, p. 15).

Staffing: In hiring researchers, think tanks can choose to focus on their academic credentials or their ideological views (Axyonova et al. 2018, p. 216). Depending on the think tank's characteristics, they vary in which people they recruit. Even the standard of the depth and degree of academic research varies (McGann, 2016, p. 12). McGann points out that in today's society think tanks do not just need scholars but also managers in order to sustain against competitors through strategical positioning (2019, p. 22). Often, professionals from the field of marketing and public relations are employed to disseminate the research (McGann, 2005, p. 15).

Think tanks often create boards of directors:

> *"These board members serve on a voluntary basis and are responsible for appointing the president and approving the budget, developing long range plans, and ensuring that programs conform to the mission of the organization and that the independence of the institution is maintained" (McGann, 2005, p. 13).*

Many think tanks also build up a board of advisors, which may consist of eminent people from business and politics (McGann, 2005, p. 13). In conducting research think tanks can collaborate with associates or senior fellows, who engage in single research projects (Mendizabal, 2016, p. 1). Or they can hire "in-house staff" (Weaver et al., 2017, p. 26) with longer contracts, which might limit the organization's flexibility in changing the focus of topics and strategies (Weaver et al., 2017, p. 26).

Research products: Think tanks produce traditional publications and also generate multimedia publications (McGann, 2005, p. 16). Think tanks present their research online on their website (McGann, 2005, p. 16). They write blogs, use social media, initiate online forums and design infographics. Think tanks also publish research in analogue formats (McGann, 2005, p. 16). They print books as well as short research briefs (Weaver et al., 2017, p. 26). In addition to this they often organize outreach activities like events and speech workshops, hold seminars or operate through other action formats (McGann et al., 2018, p. 7). Managers consider different factors when choosing the research product. Often, they must decide whether they want to produce research, which is relevant today but has a minor lasting impact or conduct research with a longer impact which might not be immediately relevant (Weaver al., 2017, p. 27). In the end the decision is influenced by the funding, the staff and the general strategy of the think tank (Weaver et al., 2017, p. 27).

2.4.4 Innovative Think Tank Models

Dan Selee investigated the work of four leading think tanks to find out how successful think tanks operate. Believing their "ideas had power to shape public policy in innovative and meaningful ways" (Dan Selee, 2014, p. 23), being "committed to ensuring that their efforts would have profound impact on the issues they work on" (Dan Selee, 2014, p. 23) and having the "desire to generate impact" (Dan Selee, 2014, p. 23) were the keys to success. In addition, the institutions had a clear strategy to achieve the desired change. They engaged key stakeholders in the process and included evaluating mechanisms to reflect on their work and systematically tackle new challenges (Dan Selee, 2014, pp. 23).

Practically Dan Selee recommends starting by setting a clear goal and based on that decide on strategic partners, needed resources and target audiences. He notes that it is also essential to track the progress along the way (2014, p. 29). He elaborated a set of five strategic questions. First, the organization has to define what they want to achieve (Dan Selee, 2014, p. 44) and formulate an

"inspiring and results-driven mission" (MacDonald et al., 2014, p. 1). For example, to develop a new type of think tank which "would not just write reports—it would work aggressively for practical, real-world changes" (Scott, 2014, zit. n. MacDonald et al., 2014, p. 1).

In the next step the think tank has to identify the overlap of what is needed to bring the desired change in the field and how the think tank can contribute by employing its extraordinary strengths and unique assets. This is their unique contribution (Dan Selee, 2014, pp. 45).

The third question is to identify the key audiences and how to reach them. Depending on the audience, different strategies and channels can be used to target them most effectively (Dan Selee, 2014, pp. 46).

After these steps the required resources have to be identified and a strategy about how these resources can be developed needs to be created. The main resources are: human and financial resources, partnerships and reputation (Dan Selee, 2014, pp. 47). MacDonald et al. recommend hiring great people and allowing them as much freedom as possible while also employing junior staff in order to create fresh ideas, instill a new energy and build up the future network (2014, p. 1). Ideas should be shared in an early stage. Researchers can get feedback from their team, from a broader audience through informal meetings or through sharing working papers (MacDonald et al., 2014, p. 1). The last point to consider is the evaluation and learning, this allows managers to adapt strategies based on past experiences (Dan Selee, 2014, pp. 49).

2.5 Summary Theory

In Illustration 8 is displayed how the different theories outlined in chapter two are linked. The MLP displays how systems change happened in the past by describing interactions between the macro, meso and micro levels. The theory highlights the importance of a mature niche innovation ready to enter the mainstream market in the meso level and a network within the meso level which forces the system to change by translating the pressure from the macro level. As a result, change maker have the biggest leverage when intervening in the meso level (2.2.1, Illustration 8).

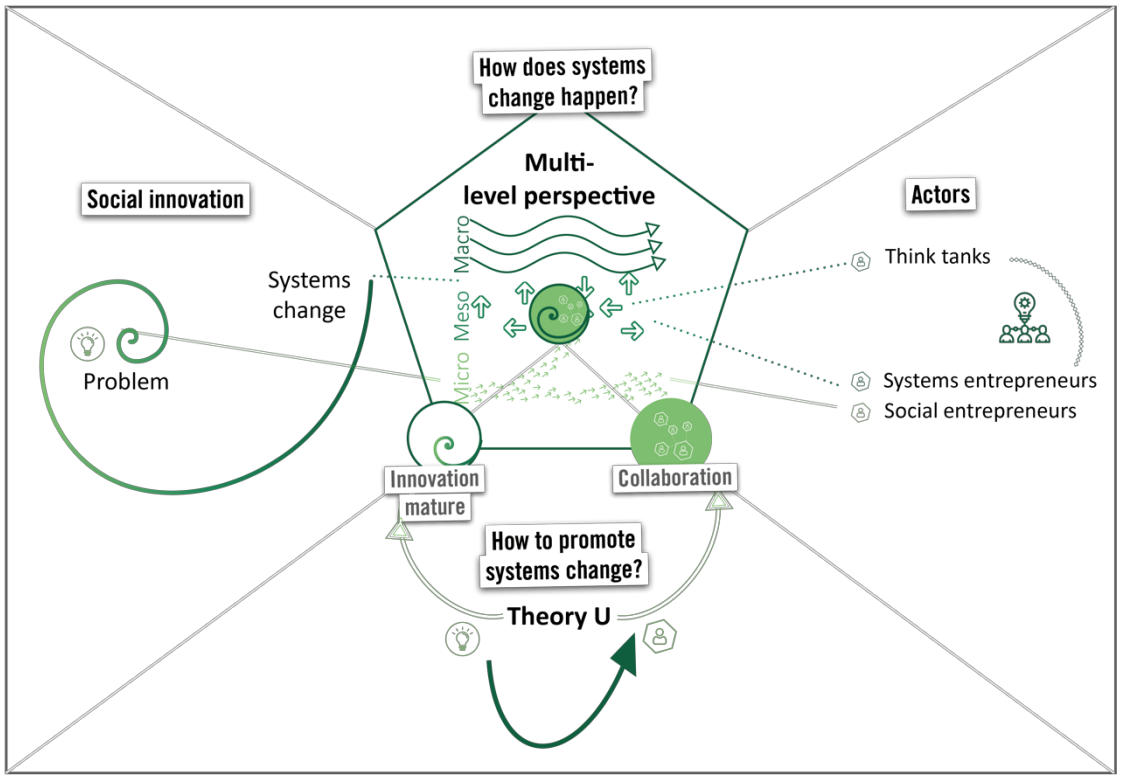

Illustration 8: Interlinked Theories. Source: Own Illustration.

The stages of social innovation explain how social innovations lead to systems innovations. These steps can be identified in the MLP: it starts with defining a problem in the micro level and the goal is to find a solution which replaces the current system in the meso level (2.3.1.2). Social and systems entrepreneurs are the actors promoting social innovation (2.3.2).

The level of action of think tanks and entrepreneurs can be identified in the MLP. The social entrepreneurs start out in the micro level while systems entrepreneurs interact in the meso level (2.3.2). Think tanks are also in the institutional (meso) level as they engage with media, politics and businesses (2.4.2). There is also a connection between think tanks and social entrepreneurs: think tanks conduct research (2.4) and research can also promote social innovation (2.3.1.3). Also think tanks convene important stakeholders (2.4) and social entrepreneurs aim to build up networks with the key players in a system to reach systems change (2.2.2, 2.2.1).

While the MLP describes how systems change takes place, Theory U explains how system change can be promoted by providing a theory to see the whole system based on the change of the individual, team, institution and eco-systems level. To reach change Theory U combines the idea of collaborating with other actors as well as prototyping an idea (2.2.2). Both theories highlight the importance of collaboration and a mature innovation.

3. Methodology

Chapter three is dedicated to explaining the methodology of the qualitative research about concepts for systems change. Explaining the study design as well as the methodological procedure used in the research allows readers to "judge the validity of the study and the conclusions that are drawn from it" (Fox et al., 2014, p. 137). First, I describe the process of data collection (3.1). Thereafter, I illuminate the criteria and procedure of selecting the cases (3.2). Then I explain the data analysis (3.3). Based on the data from the interviews, observations and desk research[8], I create the framework for systems by using the methodology of "Theory of Change". I explain this methodology in section 3.4.

I worked in a social entrepreneurship think tank, which is called TT[9] in this thesis, for five months and therefore gained an understanding for the operation as well as the strategic work. In this thesis I create a concept for systems change and, in chapter five, I reflect whether this concept can be applied to the specific think tank, TT. Near the end of my time working for that think tank I had the chance to conduct an evaluation (Appendix E) about its pilot phase.

3.1 Data Collection

Based on the evaluation I conducted in TT (Appendix E)[10] and the latest "Global Go To Think Tank Index Report"[11], which compares think tanks worldwide in different categories, I approached organizations to conduct case studies. For the empirical investigation of strategies for working in the field of systems change I conducted eight case studies of organizations working in the field of systems change. In order to investigate how think tanks are organized, I carried out six case studies with think tanks. Thereafter, I analyzed the data based on the qualitative content analysis by Mayring to create the framework for systems change explained in chapter five based on that.

[8] Also called "Documentation" by Yin, 2018, p. 115.

[9] For privacy reasons the exact name of the think tank will not be published, I will refer to it as TT throughout this paper. The concept and ideas can be applied to any kind of think tank being active in the field of systems change.

[10] Even though I create that concept in this thesis not just specifically for TT, I referred to the evaluation of TT when selecting the case studies. Since the "models" (Evaluation, p. 5) named in the evaluation were suggested by employees of TT, which are experts in the field.

[11] https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1017&context=think_tanks (accessed 20.01.2020).

"Case study research is [...] a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (Creswell et al., 2018, p. 98). Case studies offer an in-depth understanding of the context and processes, as well as a comprehension of the interactions between causes and outcomes (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 314). To answer the research questions and receive comprehensive insights, I used three sources of evidence for think tank case studies: interviews, desk research and investigations. This is defined as a "data triangulation" (Yin, 2018, p. 126), relying on multiple sources of data collection which then lead to a higher level of validity and reliability of the evidence (Yin, 2018, p. 126). For the organizations active in systems change I used interviews and desk research. The broad database, allowed me to investigate the institutions from different angles and perspectives:

- Interviews give insights in the interviewee's perspective (Yin, 2018, p. 118). This study uses Interview guidelines, which enables the investigator to ensure a comparability of the different cases and also leaves room for individual aspects due to the interviewee's expertise and perspective (Vogl, 2011, p. 45). The questionnaires were adjusted for think tanks (Appendix B 1) and institutions active in systems change (Appendix B 2). I investigated the organizations beforehand based on their websites of the organizations and the "Global Go To Think Tank Index Report"[12]. This allowed me to ask some questions adjusted to the field of action and expertise of the specific organization (Appendix C, Table 4). The adjusted guidelines will not be reproduced in the Appendix; however, they will be available upon request.
- Desk research, like reports and websites, can deliver specific and detailed information as well as insights about general structures and appearance (Yin, 2018, p. 115).
- Observations can add another dimension by providing additional information about the practical implementation (Yin, 2018, p. 122). For this study I conducted all observations as a "complete participant" (Creswell et al., 2018, p. 167).

For a high standard of case study research, it is recommended to test the validity and reliability of the research design (Yin, 2018, p. 42). In order to ensure quality of the research, it is recommended to secure high standards of validity and reliability when conducting the case studies (Yin, 2018, p. 42f.). To secure construct validity, I used multiple sources of evidence as outlined above (tactic named by Yin, 2018, p. 43.). In order to generate internal validity, I used the logic model (tactic

[12] https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1017&context=think_tanks (accessed 20.01.2020).

named by Yin, 2018, p. 43.) "Theory of Change" (further explained in 3.5). To generate external validity, I choose the case studies respecting the logic of replication (Yin, 2018, p. 59). I selected multiple cases to illuminate the topic of systems change from different perspectives. To ensure reliability I documented the research procedure (3.2, 3.3, 3.4) (tactic named by Yin, 2018, p. 43.).

3.2 Selection of Case Studies

To answer the first research question "*How can Systems Change be promoted?"* different organizations in the field of systems change were selected (Appendix C, Table 5) to investigate multiple perspectives and concepts of organizations in the field of systems change (Creswell et al., 2018, p. 99). To answer the second research question "*How can a think tank that creates conditions for system change be organized?",* I investigated think tanks which different strategies and focal points in their work (Appendix C, Table 4). Reviewing the data, I realized that all the case studies deliver valuable information for both questions. This is due to the fact that think tanks also aiming to contribute to changing systems (Shallowe, 2017, p. 1) and other organizations in the field of systems change also, deliver approaches think tanks can apply to their work. In the end I used all case studies to answer both research questions.

More than half of the world's think tanks are based in North America and Europe (2.4.1; McGann, 2019, p. 35). The global forefront of think tanks are especially found in North America and the United Kingdom (Thunert, 2012, p. 19). Two case studies were selected based on the evaluation document of TT and one based on a recommendation from an interviewed think tank. To find out how the most successful think tanks are organized, I approached three think tanks which were in the ranking of the top think tanks in the "Global Go To Think Tank Index Report"[13] (categories: best worldwide and best for profit) (Appendix C, Table 4).

When selecting organizations active in the field of systems change, my aim was to examine systems change from different angles. As illustrated in Table 5 (Appendix C) the organizations have different approaches to promote change, for example through design, capacity building and philanthropy.

As important as the selection of the cases is the selection of the interview partners, since the expertise about the operations lies within them (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 312). All the interviewees are in a position where they have insight into the strategic work of a department of the organization or the

[13] https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1017&context=think_tanks (accessed 20.01.2020).

organization. Most of the interviews were conducted in English, with two exceptions. All but one were recorded.

3.3 Data Analysis

All recorded interviews were transcribed; for the interview with Eckart Windhagen a thought protocol was made. Appendix C provides an overview of the data. Furthermore, observatory protocols were created based on the sample of Creswell et al. (2018, p. 171). The desk research (Appendix C) providing links for websites, social media accounts, media articles and reports as well as further documents, such as newsletters, protocols and evaluations can be found.

The combined data of interviews, observations and desk research was analyzed, by using the qualitative analysis by Mayring. This method is used in order to structure large data volumes by building an abstract system of categories (Mayring et al., 2014, p. 543). In the qualitative content analysis two basic procedures to define categories are used: inductive and deductive category building (Mayring, 2014, p. 104). Deductive category building means that the "category system is established before coding the text. The categories are deduced from theory, from other studies, from previous research" (Mayring, 2014, p. 97). Inductive category formation is the main approach of the grounded theory (Mayring, 2014, p. 104) and new categories are formulated out of the material (Mayring, 2014, p. 12). To define the categories I mixed the basic procedures of inductive and deductive category-building (Mayring, 2014, p. 104). In Appendix D I outline the category system, give anchor examples and illustrate the category formation for each category.

To create the framework for systems change I used the methodology "Theory of Change" (ToC) (Van Es, 2015; explained in 3.5). The main categories for section 4.1-4.3 were defined through a deductive category formation based on the steps in that methodology (Appendix D). In the between conclusion (4.4) I point out how systems change takes place (4.4.1) and how a think tank can contribute to systems change (4.4.2) are defined. In section 4.5, I explain the eleven activities to promote systems change. Each section about one activity ends with a short conclusion about the activity and a recommendation for social entrepreneurship think tanks. I defined the three main categories for the activities already in the first round of reviewing data (fellowship, research and field-building). I screened the data again and identified categories for each activity through an inductive process. Furthermore, I came across three other main topics: evaluation, research topics and funding. Since those are not activities that lead directly to systems change, I decided to create separate chapters for these topics (4.6, 4.7, 4.8; further details in Appendix D).

3.4 Theory of Change

In order to create the framework to promote systems change, I used the methodology of a ToC. A ToC is a “guiding framework for all stages of thinking, action and sense-making when we intervene intentionally in change processes” (Van Es, 2015, p. 12). While developing a ToC the whole system is taken into consideration. The aim is to understand how it functions and how different factors intervene in order to derive concrete and actionable recommendations (Van Es, 2015, p. 20). In this thesis I used the data from the case studies as a broad data base to apply the methodology of the ToC.

As the ToC, the logical framework approach (Logframe) is a method to plan, monitor and evaluate projects. In this thesis I use the ToC instead of the Logframe for several reasons. The Logframe approach is depicted as a matrix showing input, activities, output, outcome and impact. This entices one to think about change as a linear model. This does not leave space for intermediate steps. Contrary to this, the ToC assumes that social change processes are unforeseeable, and compound. Also, the concept considers that analyzing the context of change processes is distinctive and that the understanding of how change works varies to the stakeholder's perspective. Therefore, it leaves room for complexity and deep questioning (Van Es, 2015, p. 14). Additionally, a Logframe can be designed based on a ToC because it zooms into the project level. Detailed information about how activities are being executed, how processes proceed and the exact inputs, are part of a Logframe (Brown, 2016, p. 1). Though it is recommended to create a ToC in a workshop format (Van Es, 2015, p. 14), the underlying principles will be applicable and used in this thesis for elaboration.

To apply the ToC of change in this thesis I conducted several steps. First the desired change is described, which represents the “conditions and relationships in society that we wish to see occurring in the years to come and to contribute to by our actions” (Van Es, 2015, p. 41). I defined systems change (4.1) and which activities of social entrepreneurs (4.1.1) and think tanks (4.1.2) can lead to systems change based on the case study data. The next step is to analyze the circumstances the framework aims to change (Van Es, 2015, p. 44). In this step, I defined the current and desired situation (4.2, 4.3) based on the case study data. Thereafter, the domains of change need to be identified “to make the complexity more manageable” (Van Es, 2015, p. 48) and to decide what matters to reach the desired change (Van Es, 2015, p. 48). I defined the domains of change (4.4.1) based on the MLP and chapter four. Next (4.4.2), I identified objectives of social entrepreneurship think tanks to find out where and how to intervene to reach the domains of change (Van Es, 2015, p. 52). Then change pathways must be defined. They display the envisioned change process (Van

Es, 2015, p. 55). I identified the pathways based on the case study data and explain them in section 4.5 (A-F, Illustration 12). Using the case study data, I designed the activities and how they play into the bigger goal of systems change (4.5). It is also important to define an evaluation process to reflect on the think tank's use of the framework and its contribution to the long-term desired change. Evaluation also helps to constantly improve and adapt the framework (Van Es, 2015, p. 68). I summarized recommendations based on the case studies on evaluation in section 4.7. The last step of the ToC is to defined how the framework can be applied in practice (Van Es, 2015, p. 71): in chapter five I reflect on how TT can use the framework for systems change and in the conclusion I illuminate how other thinks tanks and organizations can apply the framework.

4. Framework for Systems Change

Chapter four is dedicated to explaining the framework for systems change. Based on empirical data from the interviews and the theoretical overview on systems change, I developed this framework that illustrates what social entrepreneurship think tanks need to take into account when aiming to enact systems change. After creating this framework I apply it to the concrete case of TT and formulate recommendations for the future development of this particular think tank and its work on systems change in chapter five.

Considering the methodology of ToC (3.4), I first describe the desired impact (4.1), the current situation (4.2) and the desired situation (4.3). Systems mapping is used to define the desired situation. Alford recommends using systems mapping in order to gain a deep understanding and build a ToC based on that (2017, p. 1). Therefore, the actions of a SCL as well as the actions of a think tank are displayed in a systems map. In the between conclusion (4.4) I define the domains to reach systems change (4.4.1), these are concluding the results of the section 4.1.1 and 3.1 in relation to the MLP. Thereafter I conclude the results of 4.1.2 and 4.3 to formulate objectives of social entrepreneurship think tanks to reach systems change (4.4.2). In section 4.5 I outline the activities (1-11), which I elaborated using the data of the case statues. Based on the evidence of the case studies this concept assumes that these activities lead to seven intermediate outcomes (A-F) which feed into the objectives of the think tank (Illustration 12).

4.1 Desired Impact: Systems Change

Systems change means changing the context around a problem (Mendizabal, l. 2-4; Hogan l. 3f.) “so that [the system] doesn’t continue reproducing this same problem” (Draimin, l. 5f.). Similarly, Ceroni describes systems change as “changing the conditions that hold the problem in place” (l. 5f.). Winslow points out, that this leads to asking the question “what are the conditions we want to create?” (l. 17), instead of “what's the problem we are trying to solve?” (l. 16). Systems change aims to achieve sustainable change (Mendizabal, l. 2). It is about tackling the root causes (Nee, l. 4; Ceroni; l. 7; Draimin, l. 3) and creating a strategy with multiple activities involved to bring positive change (l. 2-6). Mendizabal agrees, systems change means "all the bits that have to change into a new state” (l. 2f.). If just one thing changes and other factors remain the same, the change might reverse to its original state (Mendizabal, l. 2-8).

4.1.1 Systems Change through Change Leaders

Leaders who work in the field can be the lever to reach change (Shallowe, l. 114; Ames, l. 131). In this thesis, the person who manages the change is defined as the Systems Change Leader (Appendix F, SCL). The Systems Change Leader (SCL) is a leading organization or/and entrepreneur who has a guiding ambition to "mobilize a cohort, a group of people that is on the same journey as you and to walk on that […] journey and […] support them […] and use continuous feedback" (Burbidge, l. 48f.). Larkin observes that it always requires at least one organization, a team, or a person who is fully committed to the problem and envisions the possible change in the world (Larkin, l. 270f.). The SCL needs a strong vision (Zaner, l. 120f.) and the ability to understand the system, lead the change and to adapt the solution to solve the root causes (ASC, Desk Research 4d). Ames recommends that a leading organization coordinates the work with others and builds a container for systems change (120f.). Since single organizations mostly do not have "the resources or the ability to facilitate change on their own" (Ames, l. 96f.).

Illustration 9 displays how SCLs change systems. This systems map is inspired by the ASC (Desk Research 3). Based on the data of the case studies, I identified eight steps SCLs accomplish to facilitate change using the inductive category formation. SCLs do not always proceed these steps in the rigid sequence, they can skip steps or do them in a different order. This map just aims to give a simple overview.

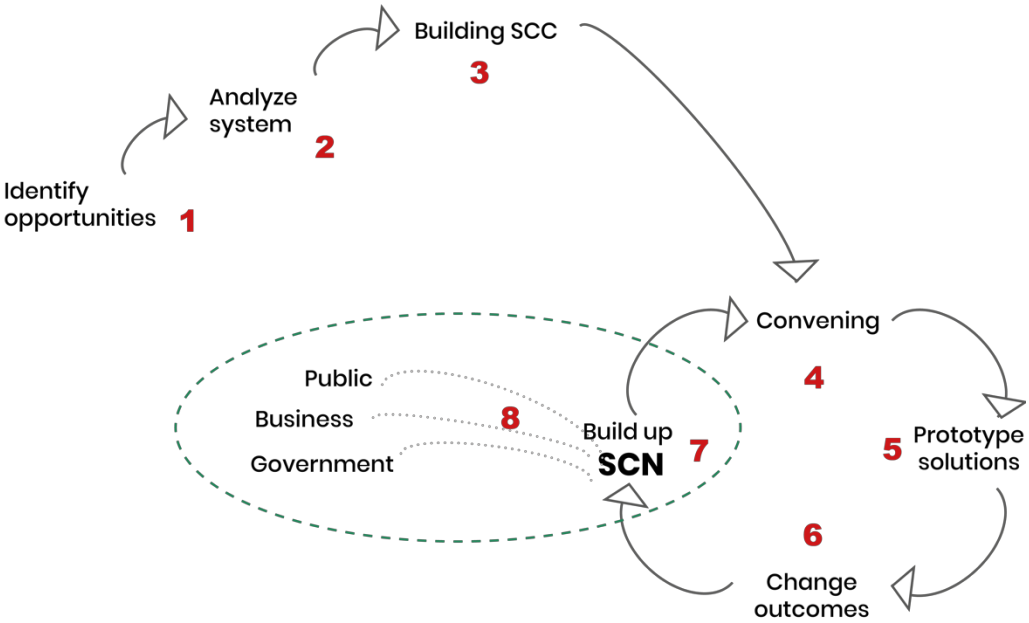

Illustration 9: Systems change process for SCC. Systems Map inspired by ASC (Desk Research 3).

(1) Societal dynamics and norms around topics can be observed (Larkin, l. 189-210) to identify an opportunity for change and a system that is ready to change (Nee, l. 14f.).

(2) Then SCLs need to identify a subsystem which they are able to influence and effect change at (Nee, l. 14f.). Mendizabal highlights the importance of understanding existing systems before creating a strategy (l. 204f.). Next SCLs can define the scope of the problem and decide if cross institutional or cross sectoral collaboration is needed (Draimin, l. 129f.).

(3) Draimin points out that values must shift from an individual perspective to a collaborative position (l. 85f.). A cohort of like-minded people or institutions can be built to tackle the issue (Ames, l. 199-201). Collaboration with organizations who have the same interest and share a vision are the key (Burbidge, l. 46f.). The network of like-minded institutions is defined as the Systems Change Coalition (Appendix F, SCC; 4.5.1.3) in this thesis.

(4) The organizations need to develop a common shared goal (Zaner, l. 120f.). To change a system it is crucial to develop a "long-term vision of how all the different actions and activities that one is involved [in] contribute to a more material and substantive reorganization of the system" (Draimain, l. 4f.). As a collective the SCC can frame a tactic to tackle the root causes of a problem (Draimin, l. 2-6). It is recommended to have regular meetings to identify next steps (Zaner, l. 115).

(5) An innovation must truly improve the system in order to bring about systems change (Ames, l. 175). The role of the SCC is to prototype, test and optimize innovations (Ames, l. 177-179).

(6) In the next step the innovation is implemented (Larkin, l. 182) and the change outcome can be identified (ASC, Desk Research 3). To further improve the innovation it is crucial to observe the system's reactions (Ott, l. 68f.).

(7) Ames recommends approaching other stakeholders and key players using the observed outcome as a proof of concept (Ames, l. 177-179). The extended network of stakeholders is called Systems Change Network (Appendix F, SCN; 4.5.1.3) in this thesis.

The SCN is not just important to connect with people who have the influence to change the system (Larkin, l. 13-17), it is also important to build up and maintain the relationships within the SCN to receive feedback and learn from key players (Larkin, l. 135-145). Ames recommends to "[check] in with the key stakeholders to see how the system is working or not working and then bringing together a collaborative group of people who are representative […] of all of that so look at how we can make it enhancing the system by making the changes that will make it better" (l. 70-73). The SCC can discuss the Insights from collaborating within the SCN in the regular meetings (Hogan, l. 305) **(4)**.

(8) The aim is to "shift and act [...] directly at [...] power points within the system [...] through all the people that are holding control over change that could happen" (Larkin l. 13-17). Either these stakeholders can be approached directly, or movements can be created that force them to change their behavior (Larkin l. 13-17). Those actors are members of the government, industry or the population. The dynamics between these players can be influenced (Larkin, l. 46-50):

- *Through public:* Movements force the current system to shift (Larkin, l. 16f.), when the public sets a new standard of what is socially acceptable (Larkin, l. 51-53). The example of climate change shows a current change of values in the public (Larkin l. 48; Draimin l. 69).
- *Through politics:* Winslow points out that contributing to a network with different policy makers who influence international regulations can be the vehicle to add pressure on the current system and open the opportunity for systems to change. Strategic cooperation can be a key in order to reach policy change (Winslow, l. 179-185).
- *Through business:* when changing systems, it is necessary to work with the business sector, just talking to the civil society and politics is not enough, these sectors are all intertwined (Nee, l. 139). SCL can also engage with business by creating business concepts that fit the purpose of the desired change (Winhall, RSA, Observation, 24:40).

4.1.2 Systems Change through Think Tanks

There are multiple institutions working in the field of systems change: foundations, think tanks, academies to support change leaders, etc. (McConnel, Desk Research 1). In the following I outline possible roles and fields of the operation of think tanks to promote systems change.

Traditionally, think tanks have two main pillars of operation: conducting research and convening people (Hogan, l. 73). Think tanks are in a unique position as they have a long-term perspective - they can look back and understand the historical perspective of what created the current system (Hunter, l. 53-57). They are also able to look forward and identify trends to come (Hunter, l. 53-57). Furthermore, due to their independence, they can investigate the different perspectives within one system about one issue (Hunter, l. 53-57) and operate as a neutral convener to host conversations about interesting or difficult issues (Burbidge, l. 120f.). Also, they can

> *"build coalitions and to try to mobilize people around ideas and narratives. This is to bring NGOs, universities, think tanks, business associations, work associations, and governments around the same table to see you can play a convening role around issues, around an idea. [...] That is why they are good at: creating narratives, they are good at creating objectives" (Mendizabal, l. 63f.).*

Hogan explains that change can be divided into three different levels: knowledge change, attitude change and behavior change (l. 22, Illustration 10). Within this framework the main traditional role of think tanks in change is contributing to “knowledge change” (Hogan, l. 53).

Illustration 10: Knowledge, Attitude and Behavior Change. Source: Hogan, l. 22.

As displayed in Illustration 10 think tanks can promote a “ripple effect” (Mendizabal, l. 327) by working on knowledge change through reporting “what [they] see in the world” (Hogan, l. 55f.), explaining the system, and identifying levers (Mendizabal, l. 66-68). Think tanks can create narratives which might be picked up by people and initiate attitude and behavior change (Mendizabal, l. 309f.). Hunter highlights that change rarely happens just because of a good idea (120f.). To ensure ideas generate impact Shallowe recommends to fully think an idea through for the short and long term and create a strategy (l. 32-34). Think tanks can build momentums for change (Hunter l. 121). Especially collaborating with practitioners who do the implementation of these ideas (Mendizabal, l. 131 f.) and strengthening other institutions to make informed decisions are keys to success (Mendizabal, l. 221f.). Therefore, it is important to conduct research tailored to timing, target group and the issue (Swan, l. 65-67). Since every system works differently, changing systems requires different research products and stakeholders involved (Hogan, l. 273-275). However, Mendizabal claims that think tanks should not shift their focus from conducting research to mainly advocating and disseminating their worldview (l. 76f.). Burbidge recommends maximizing its impact, a think tank must identify and leverage their unique assets instead of “doing what everybody does” (Burbidge, l. 284f.). Generating the highest impact, is the key variable for the RSA when making decisions (Shallowe, l. 246), comparably the MGI aims to maximize their “reach and relevance” through their research products (Windhagen, l. 8).

Organizations can also promote systems change through capacity building and thereby helping SCLs to bring about change (Winslow, l. 24). Ott emphasizes that interventions either target the underlying structures, for example creating an innovative environment, or aim to create an actual output, like an innovation. However, both interventions promote each other (l. 312f., further outlined in Appendix F, 2 Innovation and innovative Environment).

4.2 Current Situation

In the following I illuminate the challenging conditions in the process of systems change, which were mentioned by the interviewees and identified through the desk research.

Fellowship (Prototyping, Building Network and Leading Change): Changemakers approach current challenges isolated from other problems and try to fix them out of silos (Ott, l. 32; Winslow, l. 13-15). They are dealing with symptoms rather than root causes (Nee, l. 22). Sometimes the approaches are even so narrowed to one problem that they compete with solutions to other problems and therefore hinder the overall change (Ott, l. 33f.). Similarly, many mechanisms within a system are designed in a past system, and therefore don't apply to the current world (Hunter, l. 58f.). In order to generate sustainable impact, innovations must meet the needs of the target group and truly improves the current system (Ames, l. 175). It is recommended to develop solutions in cross-institutional and cross-sectoral collaboration with users and other important stakeholders through several iterations (Zaner, l. 56f.).

Research: Often, research is not implemented (Shallowe, l. 30f.). Think tanks do not have the expertise and resources to conduct research, communicate it, convene people and push a topic on their own (Mendizabal, l. 70). At the same time, practitioners do not have a research base to act upon. The broader view of the system is often left missing in the practical work: even though people are experts of the specific topic they are involved in, they struggle to produce the desired outcome because they don’t see the entire system (Hunter, l. 44-48). Draimin points out that people who are working practically in the field often make decisions led by their gut feeling and instinct rather than by research (l. 99f.). Instead, they should be able to access information about how the systems work and integrate systems thinking into their daily work (Draimin, l. 104f.).

Also, research can support to build the field[14]. Currently there is a lack of case studies. The available knowledge needs to be captured and shared for the field to further develop. Then funders and other institutions need to be approached to see the potential of investing money and time in systemic solutions (Ceroni, l. 111f.).

Field of Systems Change: Currently the field of systems change is disconnected and is not functioning as an enabling ecosystem (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 14f.). There is a need for tools, methods and strategies that are proven to work (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 14f.). To create enabling

[14] Field Building “means creating a field of support for those working on systems change so they can more readily access the tools, relationships, knowledge, partners, resources and inspiration they need to do the work of systems change” (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 8).

conditions for systems change the current funding system needs to change for the think tank sector (Mendizabal, l. 14f.) as well as the social innovations sector (Ceroni, l. 105-110). Traditional funding models for think tanks are not designed to promote systems change (Mendizabal, l. 16). Think tanks need to select their research topic dependent from funders, this wastes time (Hunter, l. 180-190) and obstructs agility of discovering unobvious issues (Swan, l. 13). Having the pressure to raise funds to pay salaries can dictate think tanks to select research favorable to their donors (El Khawaja, l. 4f.). Additionally, the current funding structures impedes collaboration, since potential cooperation partners compete for the same resources (Mendizabal, l. 129f.). In addition, long term, in-depth work is underfunded because donors expect to see intermediate results, which are hard to identify in long term systems projects (Ceroni, l. 106f.).

In the field of social innovation, funders often search for quick successes instead of addressing issues in a systemic way (Ceroni, l. 103-113). There is a need for networks of change makers to be funded for long term investments, financing capacity building and collaboration between different foundations (Ceroni, l. 103-113). Currently most funders support a small number of potentially high growth social enterprises out of a wider selection. This model searches solutions tailored to the current market conditions, leading social entrepreneurs to neither address the root cause nor open to more collective opportunities (Winhall, RSA, Observation 2, 31:05). Even though entrepreneurs realize that changing systems conditions produces the biggest social impact, they state that it “is the most consistently underfunded part of their work” (Winhall, RSA, Observation 2, 30:20). New ventures, institutions, movements and leaders who think differently are needed (Winhall, RSA, Observation 2, 30:20). There is not just a need for entrepreneurs who aim to change the whole system (Winhall, RSA, Observation 2, 30:20), but even more important is a “new model of venture development that makes that system changing activity part of the mainstream way of doing things” (Winhall, RSA, Observation 2, 30:20). However, the applicability of systems change thinking to the social sector has been recognized (Draimin, l. 38f.) and is gaining more attention and momentum (Nee, l. 78f.). Similarly, more foundations are approaching challenges systemically, like the McConnel foundation. This foundation applies systems thinking in their strategic work and invests into building up the field of systems change (Draimin, l. 14-21).

4.3 Desired Situation

Based on the data of the case studies, I present possible contributions of a think tank to promote systems change.

Fellowship: Systems change can be promoted through capacity building for entrepreneurs (Ceroni, l. 25f.). To reach systems change, innovations must truly improve the current system (Ames, l. 175). Learning about human centered design, helps the SCL to improve the innovation (ASC, Desk Research 4a). Learning how to lead systems change includes learning to analyze the system, convene and collaborate with like-minded institutions (SCC) and build up a network of stakeholders (SCN) (ASC, Desk Research 5a).

Think Tank: Research has the potential to strengthen other institutions (Mendizabal, l. 221f.). It can help practitioners to make decisions based on evidence (Ames, l. 137). Research can describe the system and identify intervention points (Mendizabal, l. 66-69) as well as the key stakeholders that need to initiate change (Larkin, l. 327). Practitioners can apply the main ideas in their work, which can be a strategy for think tanks to implement their findings in the field (Shallowe, l. 68). Practical research and case studies about how systems change takes place can support practitioners in the field of systems change (Ceroni, l.66f.). Through convening activities think tanks provide space for exchange and dialogue (Hunter, l. 75) and mobilize people to engage on a certain topic (Mendizabal, l. 62f.).

Field of Systems Change: To build the field of systems change means creating a field of support for change leaders. This includes building up capacity within the field, sharing knowledge and insights and collectively addressing funders (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 8f.). The venture model must change so it funds in a more systemic way through long term and network funding (Ceroni, l. 106). It is important to raising the awareness about how problems are connected (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 8f.). The think tank can contribute to improve the work of the whole field by sharing insights about methods and tools which promote systems change (Draimin, l. 53-55).

Conclusion

To facilitate systems change, spaces to co-create and co-initiate change are needed (2.2.2). Think tanks, fellowship organizations and the field of systems change can engage in systems change. In the following I complete the Illustration 9 with possible contributions to promote systems change, this is displayed in Illustration 11. I add reinforcing feedbackloops (Illustration 2) which might evolve (based on Stroh, 2015, p. 179; Appendix A, 1.7.1 Feedback Systems Maps). The arrows can be understood as information transfer. The arrows going away from the think tank can lead to knowledge

change. The incoming arrows represent insights which the think tank can transform into knowledge products.

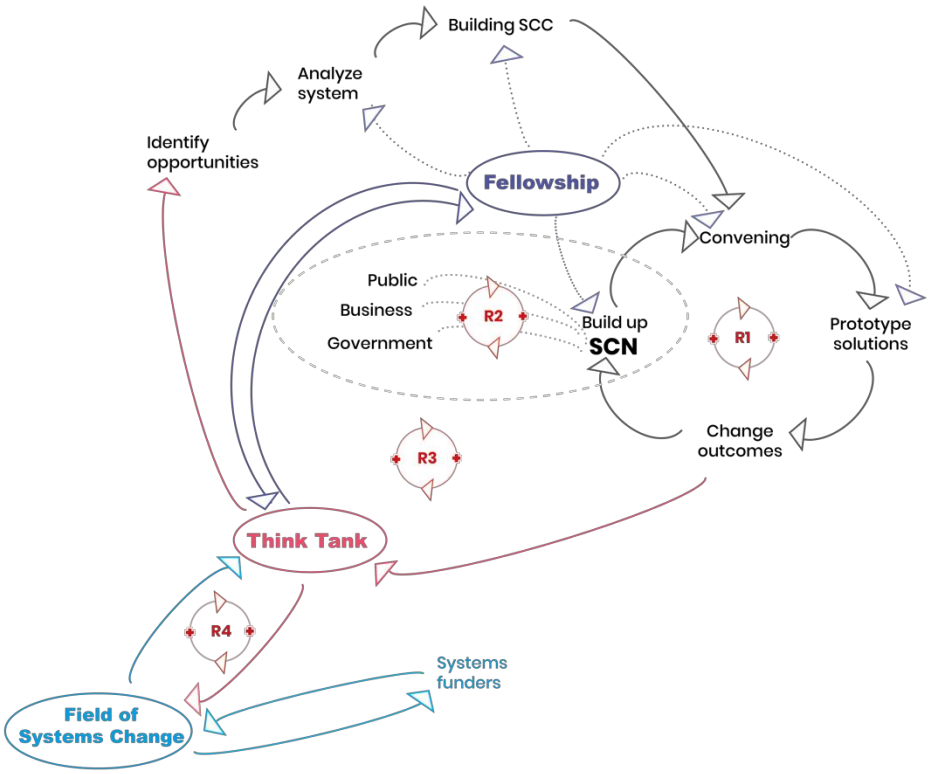

Illustration 11: Contributions to promoting systems change by think tank with feedbackloops. Systems map inspired by ASC (Desk Research 3).

R1: The fellowship supports the SCC through capacity building. When the SCL learns methods to optimize the innovation, a reinforcing feedbackloop of improving the innovation and getting feedback can occur.

R2: Building up a network with actors from the public, business and politics, can lead to an increasing relevance of the whole topic (R2) and a societal discussion can start (Draimin, l. 73).

R3: Think tanks can supports SCLs to reach systems change by identifying opportunities for change. The learnings of the SCL can be captured by writing case studies which explain how the SCL reaches change outcomes.

R4: Think tanks can collaborate with other actors in the field and share insights about systems change work and thereby contribute to building up the field. A Social entrepreneurship think tank benefits from a higher relevance of the topic of systems change and a better infrastructure. Based on research that proves the importance of systemic approaches funders can be collectively approached.

4.4 Between Conclusion

Section 4.4 is dedicated to summarizing and practically applying results on the first hypothesis, that systems change can be promoted in praxis and an enabling environment can be built.

In the following I identify the domains of change (4.4.1), as displayed in Illustration 12. They need to be in place for a SCL to succeed systems change. Thereafter, I define how a think tank can support SCLs (4.4.2) in reaching the domains through its objectives. In the lower part of Illustration 12 the activities and the pathways of change are displayed. I will describe them in section 4.5 where I focus on the second hypothesis, how a think tank that promotes systems change can be created.

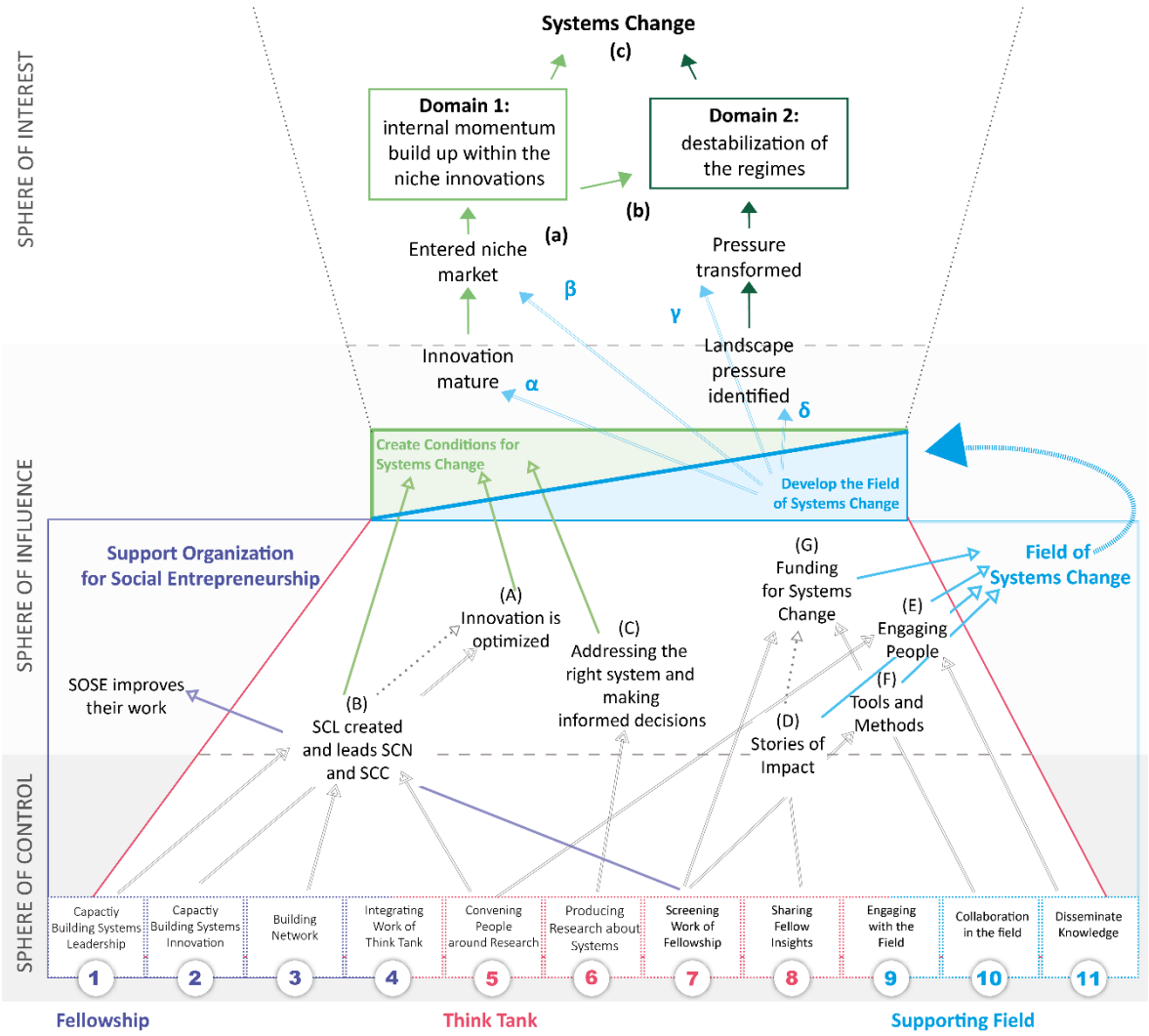

Illustration 12: Framework for Systems Change. Source: Own Illustration. Upper part: based on Geels. Lower part, own Illustration based on Case studies.

4.4.1 Domains of Change

Concluding the results of section 4.1 and section 2.2.1 (MLP), I define the two domains of change and conditions that need to be in pace for SCL to reach the domains. If the domains of change are succeeded it is most likely for systems change to happen. Two examples are outlined in the Appendix F (Examples for Systems Change).

System changes happens when an old system or parts of it are replaced by an innovation and it "becomes institutionalized and anchored in regulatory programmes, user habits, views of normality, professional standards, and technical capabilities" (2.2.1.2, Geels, 2019, p. 6). Multiple factors need to be changed at the same time (Mendizabal, l. 2-8). The different actions and activities must align with one another (Draimin, l. 2-6). According to the MLP systems change is the result of the alignment of creating internal momentum within the niche innovations and destabilizing the regimes (2.2.1.2). Illustration 5 is integrated in Illustration 12 and the domains of change are displayed.

Domain 1: Internal Momentum build up within the Niche Innovations

According to the MLP an internal momentum must be built up. This happens when a niche innovation is ready to enter the market (2.2.1.2). SCLs then must optimize the innovation (**(5),** Illustration 9; R1)

Domain 2: Destabilization of the Regimes

In order for a niche innovation to reach the systems level, opportunities for change need to present themselves by placing pressure on the current system (2.2.1.1). SCLs can translate existing pressure from the macro level to the actors in the meso level[15] (2.2.1). Actors in the meso level hold the power over the regimes which control the societal processes and therefore have the power over the existing system (2.2.1). To translate the pressure SCLs must interact with these stakeholders, which have the control over the possible change (**(8),** Larkin, l. 13; Illustration 9, R2), they are actors from the public, business and politics (2.2.1.1; Larkin, l. 46-50).

Conditions for Domains 1 and 2: Developing the Systems Change Field

To facilitate the process of reaching domain one and two the field of systems change must evolve to build a supporting infrastructure. Winhall claims addressing problems in a systemic way should be the new standard of approaching problems (RSA, Observation 2, 31:05). Conway concludes

[15] Example: Pressure on the macro level: Climate change. Translating this to the meso level means, putting pressure on institutions and the public to change their behavior, by creating movements or pushing regulations.

that the same amount of energy is needed to build the field itself in order to create an enabling environment which is ready to receive (RSA, Observation 2, 35:20).

If this environment is further developed,

- SCLs can access tools and methods and build capacities to lead change (Draimin, l. 53-55, 2.2.2). This helps them to create innovations that address root causes (α).
- Institutions can view whole systems from an eco-systems perspective (2.2.2). If all actors (public, business and government) in the field have a higher awareness that multiple societal challenges are deeply connected (McConnel, Desk Research, 1, p. 8f.) it is easier for SCLs to implement systems changing innovations which address multiple sectors at the same time (β).
- If the current funding model changes (Ceroni, l. 106), SCLs receive funding for translating the pressure from the macro level to the actors in the meso level (2.2.1). Donors fund collaborations and long-term projects (Ceroni, l. 106) which aim to tackle root causes (γ).
- Through knowledge exchange within the field of systems change (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 8f.), the organizations in the field learn about systems and get better in identifying pressure on the macro level (δ).

4.4.2 Objectives of the Think Tank

Think tanks should define their scope of action (2.4.3). I created this framework for social entrepreneurship think tanks, which aim to reach systems change by working with social entrepreneurs. I identified two specific objectives a think tank can pursue based on section 4.1.2, 4.3 and 4.4.1.

The relation between the two objectives of the think tank can be compared to creating innovations and an innovative environment (Ott, l. 312f.). The two objectives are pursued simultaneously:

1) supporting entrepreneurs to succeed systems change which results in the **actual output, "systems change."**
2) Developing the **systems change field** which includes changing mindsets and helping the system to further develop.

The objectives promote each other and happen simultaneously. However, any intervention is always targeted more towards one objective than another.

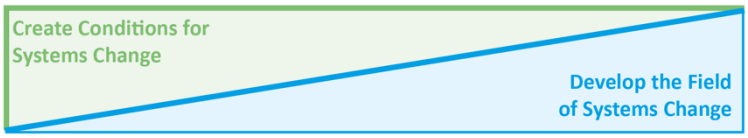

Illustration 13: Main objectives of the social entrepreneurship think tank. Source: Own Illustration, inspired by Ott, l. 312. Full Illustration: Illustration 12.

Think tanks can be differentiated in think and do tanks, while think tanks focus on creating knowledge products, do tanks aim to implement their ideas through action formats (2.4.3). The framework (Illustration 12) is conceptualized as a hybrid between these forms. Social entrepreneurship think tanks can support SCLs and build the field through knowledge products and thereby enable others to advocate for the ideas. The fellowship activities (1-3) as described in the concept, can be executed by the affiliated fellowship entrepreneurship organization.

4.5 Activities

In this chapter I describe the activities a social entrepreneurship think tank can execute to pursue the defined objectives. To reach the first objective of supporting entrepreneurs in **creating conditions for systems change** a social entrepreneurship think tank can conduct the following activities (Illustration 12):

A. Support SCLs to optimize the innovation so that it solves root problems (ASC, Desk Research 4d) - Activity 2
B. Encourage collaboration (Shallowe, l. 74), connect SCLs with stakeholders (Shallowe) and support building up their leadership capacities (Ceroni, l. 25-27) - Activity 1, 3, 5
C. Identify levers of change (Mendizabal, l. 86). Inform SCLs as to how the system works, as a resource for their decision-making (Draimin, l. 101f.) - Activity 6.

A social entrepreneurship think tank can pursue the second objective **developing the systems change field**, through the following activities (Illustration 12):

D. Sharing stories of impact (Winslow, l. 73) and “ways to understand systemic impact” (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 13) - Activity 8
E. Engaging people (Draimin, l. 62f.) - Activity 11
F. Collecting the most efficient tools and methods for systems change (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 13) – Activity 7
G. Contributing to promote funding for systems change (Ceroni, l. 106) - Activity 7, 10

To generate exclusive and valuable insights for practitioners and the field, it is a key to align activities of research and the practice (Windhagen, l. 12) – Activity 4

To change the field of systems change, it is important to align the work of one organization with the work in the field, in order to learn from each other and collaborate (Draimin, l. 19-21)- Activity 10.

In the following I illuminate the eleven activities displayed in Illustration 12. These activities are divided into three main sections. The work of fellowship (4.5.1), which aims to support fellows through capacity building (cf. ASC). The research section (4.5.2) which provides content-related support (RSA) and shares insights with the field (cf. RSA). The field building section (4.5.3) which contributes to building an infrastructure for systems change (cf. McConnel and ASC).

4.5.1 Fellowship

Every system works differently, and the role of a change maker is different in every system (Hogan, l. 274), therefore there is not one detailed plan that a SCL can follow to change systems. The best way to support a SCL is by mobilizing people behind an approach, to help them understand the broader context and equip them with knowledge, tools and capacities to figure out strategies (Burbidge, l. 310). The entrepreneurs need to engage with the system to frame their interventions in a way so that they have systemic impact (Draimin, l. 64-66). The Fellowship aims to provide capacity building activities and helps to build up networks with like-minded people and important stakeholders. Activity one (4.5.1.1) supports SCL in developing skills in systems leadership. Activity two (4.5.1.2) helps SCL to optimize the innovation. Activity three (4.5.1.3) helps to build up the CSN and CSC.

4.5.1.1 Capacity Building Systems Leadership

Larkin points out that “sometimes we are not in a position to directly tackle a system, but [...] to [...] understand that system in a way and be [...] smart about how we work within it and how we leverage it” (Larkin, l. 18-20). Learning systems change thinking helps the SCL to make strategic decisions (Draimin, l. 92), learn about root causes and see the long term (Draimin, l. 96). Understanding the entire system helps the SCL to identify the key player to initiate change (Larkin, l. 12-15) and also to learn “how to create a container that includes all voices in order to be able to have the impact, that they would like to have” (Winslow, l. 25-27).

The ASC supports their fellows in building up systems leadership qualities (Winslow, l. 25f.). The role is defined as

> *"someone who brings people and groups together to collectively make progress on a common challenge. Rather than ignoring the differences that threaten to undermine the initiative, a system leader helps participants to address those tensions head on. They then guide people in leveraging the knowledge that comes from bringing all parts of the system together" (ASC, Desk Research 5a).*

The Systems Fieldbook by the ASC refers to several tools and methods that support SCL in their work (ASC, Desk Research 4).

Systems Mapping: Ames recommends using systems mapping in the beginning of a project, in order to get a broad understanding as early as possible (l. 56-61). IDEO.org also uses a form of systems mapping to understand dynamics and how different actors effect the current situation (Larkin, l. 130f). Only through engaging with the system can one develop, understand and analyze the best way to frame interventions since there is no simplistic formula to reach change (Draimin, l. 64-66).

Habits of a systems thinker: To bring about change existing dynamics within a system must be understood (Mendizabal, l. 86-90). A SCL can apply systems change thinking not just in their strategic planning but also into the everyday thinking (Draimin, l. 92). The "habits of a systems thinker" (ASC, Desk Research 4b) can be integrated in their daily lives to solve problems and reflect on the status quo (ASC, Desk Research 4c). "They help people to build flexible thinking and an appreciation of emerging insights and multiple perspectives" (ASC, Desk Research 4c, l. 11-13).

Theory U: The ASC sees a great leverage in supporting leaders of systems change in developing the capacity to see the system and "create a container that includes all voices" (Winslow, l. 26f.). Thereby leaders increase their influence within their organization, community and their environment (Ceroni, l. 22-23). "We start with the self, and the awareness-based aspect of systems change and recognizing the importance of understanding how each of us influences [...] the systems around us, that we live in, that we work in. So we start with the self and then work at the team, organizational and then ultimately system or network level" (Ceroni, l. 22-27). To address big issues like climate change a societal conversation has to start. "Everybody" (Draimin, l. 69) needs to realize their role in the system and shift their mindset and their behavior (Draimin, l. 69-73).

Understanding MLP: In order to change systems, it helps to think on all three levels defined in the MLP: realizing that the own innovation in the micro level is part of the bigger change system, building networks in the meso level that challenge the current discourse and questioning existing values in the macro level (Winhall, RSA, Observation 2, 24:40). This perspective gives the SCL a chance to

expand their scope from thinking about maximizing their impact within the market to impacting the whole system (Winhall, RSA, Observation 2, 15:45). For instance, the RSA runs a program for collaborative entrepreneurship and supports entrepreneurs to understand their role within the system and identify their possibilities to influence (Winhall, RSA, Observation 2, 24:40).

Training sessions about these topics can take place through workshops (Winslow, l. 181), online events (Shallowe, l. 64) or webinars (OTT, Observation 4.2).

Conclusion Activity 1

To succeed change, SCLs need to collaborate (Illustration 8). They must develop a new form of leadership, to engage on the group, institutions and ecosystem level (2.2.2). They need to understand and see the system, guide people and organize the change (ASC, Desk Research 5a). The definition of a systems entrepreneur equals the described characteristics, since reaching systems change and connecting people are the main qualities of systems entrepreneurs (2.3.2).

Through this activity, fellowship organizations support SCLs in reaching systems change (objective one). This is done by providing different tools that support them in passing the stages of social innovation (2.3.1.2) and offering materials and workshops about Theory U, MLP and Systems Thinking. Applying these theoretical approaches can leverage their work (ASC, Desk Research 4). Through engaging with the field (Activity 9) organizations also learn about further recommended methods as they emerge from other players.

4.5.1.2 Support Idea Testing

The ASC supports fellows through capacity building in the field of human-centered design (Desk Research 4a). “To make meaningful, lasting shifts, you and your partners need to work together to design and test interventions that benefit the whole” (ASC, Desk Research 4d). Larkin describes the design as the “the catalysts […] [to] play with to create that change” (l.40). An innovation stands in between creating something new while respecting the current structures, that must shift in the end. The SCC must find ways to work in that space (Larkin, l. 34-38). In order to create an mature innovation to reach systems change Larkin recommends applying human-centered design (**(5)**, l. 69) which cannot just be used to design products or processes, but also to design systems (Zaner, l. 62). Designing a separate system allows the SCL to shift the focus from solving a problem in the current system to creating conditions for a better future system (Winslow, l. 17). In order to create,

prototype and optimize innovations, IDEO.org uses a process divided in three phases: inspiration, ideation and implementation (Larkin, l. 154).

Inspiration (1,2,3,4): During the inspiration phase the aim is to understand the system by using research, approaching experts and interviewing individuals who are affected by the problem in the current system (Larkin, l. 165-168). Interviews, mini co-designs, and activities can be conducted (Zaner, l. 146f.). Also, multiple methods such as reading body language, photo journals and "the five whys" help to gain deeper insights. The "recruiting tool" can be used in order to decide which people to interview in the current system (IDEO.org, Desk Research 2b). Ott recommends integrating stakeholders in different ways: as an example, by organizing workshops or asking people to write diaries about their experience within the system (Ott, l. 140f.). The RSA designed a concept combining design and systems thinking with the entrepreneurial attitude.

> *"While design thinking alone provides a compelling process for idea development, it fails to recognize that without due consideration of systemic complexity and power dynamics, even the best ideas can lie on the shelf unused, and thus without impact" (Burbidge, RSA, Desk Research 5a, p. 8).*

The collected information must be synthesized in order to create opportunities to design change in the next phase of ideation (Larkin, l. 168).

Ideation (5): During that phase prototypes are created for the end users[16] and tested in the field. It requires multiple iterations of learning, redesigning new prototypes and testing them until a well-developed innovation is created (Larkin, l. 180). Ott recommends to also zoom out on the strategic level to reflect on the solution in relation to the overall vision (l. 76f.). In this phase methods to create ideas, design concepts, journey maps, frameworks, or storyboards, and tools to receive feedback, visualize and brainstorm can be used (IDEO.org, Desk Research 2b). Based on the evidence of a pilot project showing the benefit of the innovation, people supporting the change, can be addressed (Ames, l. 180).

Implementation (6): When entering the market, the product can be further improved because of the high level of validity when testing it in the field (Larkin, l. 184). It is important to observe the systems reactions on the implemented change (Ott, l. 67-69) and receive feedback from key players on the institutional level about what works (Larkin, l. 33f.). Tools for live prototyping, to continue iterating, to build partnerships and to pilot the innovation can be applied (IDEO.org, Desk Research 2b). Meanwhile the change maker must engage with the field to create opportunities for the

[16] In this case people affected by the current system conditions.

innovation to be adapted (Larkin, l. 30f.). Generally, the bigger the approached systems and the more actors involved, the longer takes the change process (Ames, l. 209-211).

Zaner sees a big leverage in designing new ecosystems, roles and responsibilities to replace systems that are broken down in the public sector (Zaner, l. 42f.). Cross-sectoral, diverse and collaborative systems can be created (Ceroni, l. 32). In order to successfully create new systems, people must collaborate and share the mindset "that change [...] [and] progress [are] possible, that no one solution will make the change happen and [...] that we have to read across domains and sectors" (Zaner, l. 54-57). As an example, IDEO works on community design in the education sector: people from business, government and the community collectively design a new system for life-long learning within the community (Zaner, l. 62f.) while integrating multiple interests and perspectives.

Conclusion Activity 2

Social innovations need to be mature to enter the meso level and reach systems change (Illustration 8). Applying design principles can lead to great success when developing solutions for complex problems (Zaner, l. 19f.). It helps to define the problem and test the solution from multiple perspectives (2.3.1.2). According to Theory U, SCLs must create containers to include different voices (2.2.2), this can be done in the process of inspiration when talking to people affected by the current system (Larkin, l. 166-170). Ames recommends to approach stakeholders based on the evidence gathered in the ideation phase (Ames, l. 180). The SCL can build up their SCN using that data **(7)**.

Looking at the MLP, during the inspiration and ideation phase the innovation is in the micro level (2.2.1.2). When the innovation enters the mainstream market and the implementation takes place it enters the meso level (2.2.1.2).

In activity two fellowship organizations support the SCL and SCC in integrating design principles in their work and optimizing their innovation to reach systems change (objective one). A fellowship organization can offer capacity building and provide them with tools and methods (IDEO.org, Desk Research 2b) in the phases of inspiration, ideation and implementation. However, it can be considered to build up partnerships with design firms to collaborate in some cases.

4.5.1.3 Building Network

"No individual, organization, sector, or even country can fully address complex problems alone" (ASC, Desk Research 4e). A network is not just needed in the process of optimizing the innovation

but also in organizing change (**(3,4)** Larkin, l. 91-97). It is important for the SCL to understand their own contribution in the system in order to pursue objectives in a systemic way (Shallowe, l. 75).

Systems Change Coalition (3,4): A key activity to promote systems change is to build up a coalition (SCC) with like-minded organizations who have the same interest and share a vision (Ames, l. 199f.). These organizations can come from business, politics and the public who have already tried to change the current system and people who suffer under the current conditions created by the system (Zaner, l. 125f.). Ames points out that single organization mostly do not have "the resources or the ability to facilitate change on their own" (Ames, l. 96f.). Targeting, for example, the government as a collective of ten organizations makes it more likely for the government to listen, than showing up alone (Ames, l. 201). To reach systems change, often times institutions need to be targeted multiple times over a long period of time (Mendizabal, l. 79). Collectively change maker have more resources to target multiple institutions (Mendizabal, l. 37f.) and engage with actors who might be able to reach the broader public in a more effective way (Draimin, l. 80-83).

In the process of collaboration one of the device factors is the constellation of people working together (Hunter, l. 84-88). It is important to conclude who needs to be involved in the conversation (Hunter, l. 85) and who should be left out (Ott, l. 149f.). It needs to be deliberated who has relevant information or equity perspectives to contribute to the conversation (Hunter, l. 87f.). Gathering diverse people from different sectors and with different expertise is recommended (Zaner, l. 52f.). Larkin underscores the importance of including experts about the topic, the system and the geographical place (l. 140-143).

Systems Change Network (7,8): The aim is to initiate change through addressing the people that hold "control over change that could happen" (Larkin, l. 14). Ames considers approaching the right people to be the "hardest piece" (l. 183). To promote change SCLs needs to build up and maintain relationships with these actors (Ames, l. 87).

> *"So if you did a good study of that system you find out, who are the key players in that system and you end up with the usual suspects of everything from government, private sector, civil society, grassroots, citizens, everybody" (Mendizabal, l. 155-158).*

To successfully engage with other actors SCLs need to understand the motivation, (Mendizabal, l. 80) values and culture of different institutions (Mendizabal, l. 86-90). This understanding allows SCLs to approach them on a level of cooperation by communicating how collaborating feeds into their common mission (Larkin, l. 306f.). When targeting the government, current policies, the

different actors and the current system must be understood on a deep level to find a solution which makes sense to the government (Ames, l. 121). When engaging with the public, the SCL has to empathize with the person to see the network around them and what influences their choices (Larkin, l. 7f.).

There are two different strategies to build up a network. One way is to identify the system that needs to be addressed, find out who the key players in the system are[17] and directly approach them. The other way is to address the boundary partners, this is who an organization works with directly and is therefore able to influence. These can be institutions, other organizations or people who might be able to influence others. The aim is to influence and change their behavior so that they influence others (Mendizabal, l. 151-164).

To create opportunities for social entrepreneurs to build up their network and tackle root causes as a collective, the RSA has a program for collaborative entrepreneurship (RSA, Observation 2, 25:20). Moreover, learning communities of SCLs can be created, to enable exchange with other SCLs facing similar challenges while striving for systemic impact (Ceroni, l. 29). As an example, the ASC builds up cohorts of entrepreneurs who support each other through peer-to-peer work (Ceroni, l. 36f.).

Depending on the addressed system, it can also be expedient to build cross-sectoral collaborations. Collectively it is possible to achieve change that would be inconceivable in isolation (Draimin, l. 87-89). Ames underscores the importance of maintaining the relationships with key stakeholders, in order to be able to make future changes or adaptations easier (Ames, l. 88-90).

Conclusion Activity 3

To reach systems change SCLs must collaborate (Illustration 8). This is to ensure that the multiple activities are aligned to build momentum for change (Hunter, l. 90f.). As stated in the MLP a network is needed when creating an innovation (2.2.1.2) and relationships to different stakeholders in the field can support the process of entering the mainstream market (2.2.1.2). According to the Theory U, the aim is to support other people and organizations to see the whole system and envision change collaboratively (2.2.2).

Concluding, a social entrepreneurship think tank can function as a boundary organization (Mendizabal, l. 151-164) to support SCLs building up relationships with like-minded organizations as well as important stakeholders in the field (objective one). Since a change process takes longer, the more

[17] Like government, private sector, civil society, grassroots or citizens.

actors are involved (Ames, l. 209-211), it is recommended to support SCLs to build up a smaller coalition (SCC) of like-minded institutions **(3)**. And then growing the network through boundary partners (Mendizabal, l. 162) to reach the people who have the control over change (**(7,8)**, Larkin l. 13-17).

4.5.2 Research

Research has the ability to influence change (Burbidge, l. 18). Mendizabal points out that it is important to ensure high standards of academia. The audience, for example policy makers, should understand the research and methodology. That way they can formulate arguments based on research in their own words. Mendizabal sees otherwise the risk of using power and money instead of reasonable ideas to reach change (l. 234-237). The goal of think tanks should be that others make informed decisions because they are accountable to their research (Mendizabal, l. 222f.).

To leverage the impact of the research, existing systems need to be understood so a strategy can be curated of which actor needs to change in which way to reach change (Mendizabal, l. 204f.). The aim is to produce research when the system is able to act (Hunter, l. 91) and to choose topics which truly matter and have lasting significance (Hunter, l. 208-210). For example, the RSA does not just motivate fellows to “think like a system, act like an entrepreneur” (RSA, Desk Research 5a) but also integrates this approach in their own operational and strategic work. “It means thinking deeply about the system as a whole, about where our intervention will land and understanding where there are opportunities and energy for change” (RSA, Desk Research 5b). Ceroni defines research as not only capturing knowledge but also reaching the people who need to hear it (l. 66f.). To receive the most impact from research it is typically combined with a convening activity (El Khawaja, l. 65).

Considering the order of the activities in the framework (Illustration 12) in the following the main activities of the research work of the think tank will be outlined. Activity four (4.5.2.1) is about aligning the work of fellowship and the research department. Activity five (4.5.2.2) helps to convene people before, during and after the research project. Activity six is about the actual creation of research products to generate systemic impact (4.5.2.3). In activity seven (4.5.2.4) the aim is to screen the work of SESO and share the insights. Activity eight (4.5.2.5) helps to share fellow insights. Activity nine (4.5.2.6) is about aligning the research work with the field of systems change.

4.5.2.1 Integrating the Work of a Think Tank

The MGI, as an affiliated think tank to McKinsey, uses the knowledge of McKinsey to create fact-based practical research (l. 50-52). The MGI covers a space between research and practice (l. 83). Their research aims to use their internal knowledge about microeconomics within companies and sectors and display it on a macro perspective (Windhagen, l. 18). They conduct research in cooperation with consultants, MGI partners, senior fellows and academic advisors. This allows them to include the practice, academic and strategic perspective (MGI, l. 65-67).

The iLab is the department for innovation in the IMF. The target of the iLab is to create a culture of innovation within the IMF, which includes changing mindset and behavior (Walker, l. 4). To integrate the iLab in the existing structure and culture of the IMF, the iLab team systemically tackled power points of change in the organization (Walker, l. 40): such as the director of the fund, other decision-makers and internal policies. Innovation is now included as well in leadership trainings and requirements as well as in management frameworks. Employees have the possibility to invest 20% of their time in working with the iLab for an innovation using their specific background knowledge (Walker, l. 38-40). Additionally, the IMF built up a community of supporters, who work as ambassadors. In each of the departments the iLab collaborates with a direct partner, who implements and spreads their work (Walker, l. 50f.). They also motivate early adaptors, “people you don’t need to convince” (Walker, l. 59) to realize their innovative idea and to exchange ideas (Walker, l. 48-53).

To pursue systems change Draimin recommends to integrate systems thinking into the everyday work of the different programs and in the strategy development. He also suggests beginning projects with a systems lens (Draimin, l. 92). The RSA uses systems thinking as a diagnostic to determine key organizations and people in the system as well as identify energies or blocks within it (Burbidge, l. 6-8). Draimin recommends taking the systems perspective and thereby learning from the system and improve the work (l. 65).

Conclusion Activity 4

It is distinctive to integrate the activities of an affiliated think tank in the business structure. Connecting with decision-makers who also enthuse others is especially important (2.4.3). Employees of the fellowship organization can get the chance to conduct research with the think tank as part of their work for a period of time (cf. IMF). And a network of ambassadors who work in the different departments can be built up (cf. IMF). To capture knowledge of multiple actors in their network, a think tank can work with employees, experts and fellows (cf. MGI). In order to share knowledge within the organization, it is important to collaborate with decision-makers (2.4.3) and/or a network of ambassadors (Walker, l. 50).

4.5.2.2 Convening People around Research

Systems change can be promoted through providing a space for dialogue and thereby offering a safe space to conversate, and exchange ideas (Burbidge, l. 117-121; Hunter, l. 75f.). One main ability of think tanks is to "play the convening role" (Mendizabal, l. 63-65) and bring "NGOs, universities, think tanks, business associations, work associations and government around the same table" (Mendizabal, l. 63-65). Think tanks can also empower the convened stakeholders to put the research into practice (Hogan, l. 74f.).

When convening people, many different conversations come up (El Khawaja, l. 79). Thus, think tanks must consider well whom to connect at their events (Hunter, l. 8). The Chatham House tries to convene people that normally don't share a room, for instance people from European and local governments as well as business and public figures (El Khawaja, l. 74f.). The RSA aims to reach a diverse audience: practitioners, policy makers and the public (Shallowe, l. 93f.; RSA, Observation 3). However, "it very much varies from issue to issue, who those stakeholders are, [and] how long it takes them to […] reach a point where change becomes possible" (Hunter, l. 84f.).

Different types of events can be conducted before, during or after knowledge products are created:

Before conducting research: Hunter recommends identifying the key stakeholders in a system and convene them in order to define the problem together (l. 228). He recommends "a workshop setting: small, private, extended, longer multi hour session" (Hunter, l. 228). Zaner recommends including the human-centered design approach when starting a new research project. The aim is to include the experiences of the people affected by the current system as well as the experts estimates early in the process (Zaner, l. 217f.).

During the research phase: The RSA organizes workshops during the research project in order to receive feedback. They use the current state of their research to seed the conversation (Burbidge, l. 217f.). As an example, they hosted an event in Washington DC (RSA, Observation 3), which around 40 selected people attended in order to discuss the research topic. The workshop included feedback sessions asking people from different backgrounds and various perspectives (RSA, Observation 3).

After the research: Events can be organized in different ways: roundtables (RSA and Chatham House, Desk Research 2), chair dinners where different decision-makers are invited (l. 86), conferences and public report launches (CSIS, Observation). The RSA also organizes lunch events for one

hour (Observation 1.2.1) or Facebook live events[18] of panels. Moreover, events like book launches[19] (Observation 3.2) and movie presentations[20] are set up to inform the public. OTT utilizes public webinars[21] to engage with their target group (Desk Research 2, Observation). The RSA, New America as well as the CSIS record their public events, stream them live online and publish them on YouTube or on their website (RSA, New America & CSIS Observations). Furthermore, different event formats can be combined. For instance, the RSA had an event about "impact entrepreneurship" (Observation 2), the researchers did not just present their study findings, but also invited entrepreneurs to present their work and afterwards a panel discussion took place. After the main event the audience and the presenters were invited for drinks and snacks (RSA, Observation 2). Another example is an event of the CSIS (Observation). They first presented their research and then had a panel discussion with representatives from different countries who talked about their strategies (CSIS, Observation). New America aims to initiates collaboration through their research. They convene for example people in Phoenix who are concerned about the future of work and education, e. g. business leaders and university members, and equip them with the research to work on solutions (Hogan, l. 62-66).

Membership organizations typically organize events which are only open to their members. The Chatham house, for instance, organizes exclusive events for their members whenever they launch a report (El Khawaja, l. 65). An example is the event about a study one department conducted within a year. The event took 90 minutes and 60 people from embassies, NGOs, businesses and politics were in the audience. Those people had the chance to ask questions, connect and exchange afterwards (Chatham House, Observation). The RSA sets up networking events and private online events in order to engage with their fellows (Desk Research 2). They also promote collaboration by connecting stakeholders with fellows to understand each other's perspective (Shallowe, l. 89-91).

Ott emphasizes the importance of not just communicating but also allocating responsibilities afterwards (Ott, l. 85). Larkin claims people need to go beyond defining problems into an action mindset (Larkin, l. 228). Therefore, workshops can be opened by creating future scenarios in order to have a common learning experience and underscore the relevance of acting today (Ott l. 209, Dark Horse,

[18] RSA Facebook Life Event: https://www.facebook.com/rsaeventsofficial/videos/1479316428887866/ (accessed: 24.01.2020).

[19] New America Book Launch: https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/events/tonight-we-bombed-us-capitol/ (accessed 24.01.2020).

[20] New America Film Presentation: https://www.newamerica.org/nyc/events/clemency/ (accessed: 24.01.2020).

[21] On Think Tank Free Webinars: https://onthinktanks.org/initiatives/school/free-webinars/ (accessed: 24.01.2020).

Desk Research 2). He also highlights the importance of a well-organized preparation and follow up in order to maximize the impact (Ott, l. 378-380).

Conclusion Activity 5

Due to their independence, think tanks can take up a position of convening people (2.4) and promote change through creating a space for dialogue and exchange (Hunter, l. 75). Also, think tanks can build issue networks (2.4) and mobilize people behind and approach (Mendizabal, l. 62f.).

A think tank affiliated to a fellowship organization can leverage its network of entrepreneurs, organize workshops and events about specific topics the social entrepreneurs are working on as well as share their insights to build narratives and connect people to act upon research findings (Mendizabal, l. 63). These actions play into objective one. To pursue objective two, a think tank can organize events about social entrepreneurship and systems change and interact with other organizations in the field of systems change. In both cases it can be considered to convene people to define a problem together (Hunter, l. 228), reflect on the current stage of the research (Burbidge, l. 217f.) or share insights (El Khawaja, l. 65).

4.5.2.3 Producing Research about Systems

Think tanks can explain the current system (Mendizabal, l. 65) and identify the levers of change (Mendizabal, l. 57f.), thereby strengthening other institutions in making informed decisions (Mendizabal, l. 220f.).

> *"We see our role as developing a fact base that can inform our leaders as they make policy and other decisions. Based on our research findings, we do try to highlight the biggest problem for leaders to solve" (MGI, l. 104-106).*

The RSA conducts research to address practitioners who are working in those areas and "actually have an account of how it shows out in people's life" (Burbidge, l. 21f.). Mendizabal points out, that people need to respond with simple interactions to complex problems. These simple interactions need to strategically target the leverage points in a system (l. 321-326). Research helps practitioners to identify the best intervention points (Larkin, l. 146), it can confirm or refute assumptions (Ames, l. 137f.) and support a cohort of people in guiding the direction of their work (Burbidge, l. 49f). Think tanks can also support fellows in researching about their own topics and areas. For example, the Chatham House supports fellows in investigating a topic, and putting it into action afterwards. In the end they should know "this is the issue, this is what should change, this is the next step" (Swan, l. 313f.).

The RSA encourages their fellows[22] to engage on their main ideas (Shallowe, l. 68f.). “Fellows have the ability to help bring about great improvements in society and we recognize that they have a range of skills, experience and networks that can be of great value and extend our reach” (RSA, Desk Research 5d). The Chatham House[23] as well as the New America[24] also build up a network with practitioners.

Conclusion Activity 6

The traditional role of think tanks to merely inform decision and policy makers blurs more and more with the aim of supporting and implementing ideas (2.4.3). Innovative think tanks build a strategy around the ideas, to maximize the impact of their research (2.4.3). However, it is important to maintain independence and create research on a high standard (Mendizabal, l. 234f.). Considering the unique assets (2.4.3) of social entrepreneurship think tanks they can leverage their fellowship network to generate impact in the field, like the RSA does (Burbidge, l. 117-121). While the think tank enables knowledge change the fellows can promote behavior and attitude change (Illustration 10, Hunter, l. 29).

Depending on the stage of innovation (2.3.1.2) the SCL is on, research can support in different ways. Research can help to identify problems in the phase of prompts or to analyze the system and market in the phase of scaling (2.3.1.2). Innovations are often created based on new data and research (2.3.1.3), so research can identify “starting points” (Larkin, l. 146). Research about systems can identify changes in the macro level, in order to mobilize innovators to put pressure on the meso level (2.2.1.1). Furthermore, researchers can investigate the institutional and individual level and foster exchange between sectors (2.3.1.3). As a conclusion, a think tank can provide content-related support for the fellows and thereby pursue objective one.

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[22] “The RSA Fellowship is a global community of 30,000 proactive problem solvers who share our vision and values. Working together to share ideas, build networks and create opportunities for people to collaborate, influence and demonstrate practical solutions to resolve the challenges of our time” (https://www.thersa.org/fellowship).

[23] “Fellows come to the Academy seeking personal and professional development with an aim to drive forward their ability to have impact. They are open-minded, collaborative and solution-oriented individuals who come from a wide range of cultural and professional backgrounds. They want to explore innovative solutions to the complex, interconnected challenges facing the world today and value the ability of an Academy fellowship to inform and test their thinking” (https://www.chathamhouse.org/academy/fellows).

[24] New America's Fellows Program invests in thinkers—journalists, scholars, filmmakers, and public policy analysts—who generate big, bold ideas that have an impact and spark new conversations about the most pressing issues of our day. Fellows advance ideas through research, reporting, analysis, and storytelling (https://www.newamerica.org/fellows/our-blog/class-of-2020-call-for-applications/).

4.5.2.4 Screening Work of Fellowship Organization

Ceroni recommends investigating which activities of an organization impact fellows most and how the support influences fellows in the course of time (l. 187-195). Feedback about which tools and methods are most and least important enables a fellowship organization to learn, adapt and improve their work so that the fellows can generate more impact (Swan, l. 87-93).

The field of systems change can also benefit from these insights. Organizations who want to contribute to creating an enabling environment for systems change, can ask "what are the learnings we need to share with others and how do we […] align what we are doing with others [so] […] there is more of a critical mass […] working in the same direction" (Larkin, l. 97-100). A high amount of new methods and tools are used in the field of social change (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 14). However, these resources need to be identified and rated in order to structure them and scrutinize which are the most efficient instruments to leverage the work of change leaders (Draimin, l. 53-55). Organizations in systems change as well as changemakers themselves gain profit from receiving information about methods and tools (McConnel, Desk Research 1). The aim is to equip people involved in systems change with these tools much earlier in their path to leverage their work (Draimin, l. 57). Also, insights about "how are we all working with governments? How are we assuming scale?" (Larkin, l. 92f.) can be shared with the field. Promoting systems change means engaging in these conversations and producing evidence which helps in approaching funders, the governments and institutions to work in a more systemic way (Larkin, l. 90-100).

Conclusion Activity 7

Think tanks can provide others with the evidence they need (2.4.3). Through screening the work of a fellowship organization, a think tank can provide evidence, which helps the fellowship organization to improve their work and allows the field to grow (objective two) (McConnel, Desk Research, p. 13).

4.5.2.5 Sharing Fellow Insights

Ceroni describes research as "capturing and being able to tell" (l. 66). Capturing the knowledge of fellows, gives other practitioners the chance to learn (Nee, l. 130) and promotes exchange between them (Nee, l. 263). The RSA utilizes practical examples (Shallowe, l. 27) to "harness the insights of […] fellows so they get impact" (Shallowe, l. 261-263). For example, the ASC uses storytelling to share insights from journeys of systems change and open opportunities to learn from change leaders about "what worked and what didn't work" (Ceroni, l. 64-67). Producing this research also

nourishes the broader base of case studies about systems change, which then supports the field of systems change (McConnel, Desk Research 1).

Another example is the approach of the MGI. They analyze insights from the field, and relate them to the bigger picture (MGI, l. 74-78). They conduct research in teams of practitioners, employees and academic advisors (MGI, l. 65f.) and leverage their insights from different sectors, so inter-sectoral interconnections can be outlined (MGI, l. 75-78).

Another approach is to support fellows in publishing their insights. The SSIR for example supports practitioners in social innovation to publish their learnings. Knowing what other people in the field are working on and reading their learnings, can support leaders in making their work more effective (Nee, l. 96-101.). Practical examples inspire the reader to think of ways to improve their own work (Nee, l. 128f.). Nee mentions that "leaders of organizations really have the biggest […] leverage on practice, as they are leading an organization" (l. 131f.). They need to get the chance to profit from experiences and to learn about new ways to approach systems (Nee, l. 47f.). When the SSIR accepts articles, they regard several criteria (Appendix E, 4 Criteria Article Submission SSIR) to ensure a certain standard. Articles are edited in several iterations before being published (Nee, l. 123-125).

Furthermore, case studies can contribute to building the field of systems change (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 13). There is a demand for funders to understand how systems work, that way they can engage with the grantees in a different way, for example start funding networks and for a longer period of timeframe (Ceroni, l. 113).

Conclusion Activity 8

To support innovators, it is important to publish practice-oriented research and connect the work of researchers more with the work of practitioners (2.3.1.3). Insights from the practical work of the social entrepreneurs from the fellowship network can support other practitioners. The affiliated think tank can support fellows in sharing their findings and insights (SSIR). Another approach is, to publish case studies about fellows and their work, like the ASC. Also, social entrepreneurship think tanks can use their unique perspective and analyze the work of the fellows to gain insight and relate to the bigger context, like the MGI does. Also, entrepreneurs working on overlapping topics can be connected. Case studies and insights about the work of fellows can also provide evidence to nourish the field of systems change (McConnel, Desk Research, p. 13). Funders, other organizations and governments can be addressed based on the evidence of how systems change can be promoted (objective two) (McConnel, Desk Research 1).

While activity seven aims to screen the work of the organization promoting systems change, activity eight is about investigating the work of the entrepreneurs in the field of systems change themselves.

4.5.2.6 Engaging with the Field

In order to build up the field of systems change, staying engaged with the global community and participating in the bigger conversation of systems change helps to move "further faster" (Draimin, l. 21). Therefore, organizations who have same values and mission (Ceroni, l. 81) build up networks and collaborate to strengthen the field (Draimin, l. 22). In June 2018 the conference "systems change: a field building convening" took place (McConnel, Desk Research 1) and the ASC plans to organize a conference with all people involved in systems change (Ceroni, l. 88f.). Events like this enable organizations in systems change to collaborate, build networks and commonly build up the field of systems change (McConnel, Desk Research 1).

Conclusion Activity 9

According to Theory U, the aim should be to build an ecosystem to collaborate, which gives the institutions an awareness for the whole. Scharmer claims that the power lies within collaborative action and relationships between institutions (2.2.2). Thus, engaging with the field is distinctive in systems change. Social entrepreneurship think tanks can contribute to the field of systems change by sharing impact stories (McConnel, Desk Research, p. 13), engaging with other organizations in the field, attending conferences and events and publishing the findings and practices of their fellowship work. This activity plays into objective two.

4.5.3 Field of Systems Change

As mentioned above, developing the field of systems change means building an infrastructure for systems change. This includes promoting funding, sharing stories of impact, engaging people and collecting the most efficient tools and methods (McConnel, Desk Research 1). In order to bring about change it helps to have an account of the broader context and have access to different methods and approaches (Burbidge, l. 310).

Winhall claims systems change should be the new standard way of approaching problems (4.2, RSA, Observation 2, 30:20). Everyone needs to be targeted to promote systems change (Draimin, l. 60). Reaching this new standard implies change of every level where someone tries to engage with the

system (Draimin, l. 62). Nee highlights that systems need to be broken down into subsystems, which one is able to understand and influence (Nee, l. 14f.). Understanding the power of one's own role in the system and identifying the subsystem one is able to change can allow each individual to impact systems change (Nee, l. 14f.). Tackling issues in a systemic way is not a matter of the approached system's size, but rather a matter of focus (Mendizabal, l. 25).

4.5.3.1 Collaboration in the Field

In order to reach systems change, think tanks and other organizations have to collaborate, since this helps them to reach more people and integrate multiple perspectives (Mendizabal, l. 121). The collaborating institutions can bring in their networks when organizing events (Shallowe, l. 104). Also, they can commonly create content and publish research (Shallowe, l. 105). In some cases, through collaboration complementary expertise can be combined and additional target groups can be reached (Nee, l. 200-205). Shallowe underlines that co-hosting partners should have a "similar progressive stand […] and some relevance and credibility in that particular topic" (l. 106-108).

Collaboration between think tanks can be difficult, since potential cooperation partners compete for the same resources (Mendizabal, l. 145) and think tanks must have the same topic on their agenda. If the topics align and both think tanks have funding, they can collaborate (Mendizabal, l. 123). Moreover, think tanks can collaborate with multiple institutions for different reasons:

- NGOs, to partner in implementing the research (Mendizabal, l. 131).
- Social entrepreneurs/fellows to act upon the research findings (Shallowe, l. 68f.)
- Media, to partner in communication. As an example: to publish articles in established papers (Hogan, l. 196f.) or create content for podcasts (Hogan, l. 251). Also, Mendizabal mentioned that a think tank provided evidence for a documentary on Netflix (l. 135f.).
- Local or smaller think tanks, to gain local expertise (Mendizabal, l. 118f.).
- Government, to review policies or evaluate programs (Mendizabal, l. 134).

Successful collaboration opens possibilities of combining the multiple individual skills of different communities, organizations and sectors (McConnel, Desk Research 2, l. 19). The key is to collaborate in a manner that is "intentionally designed to be inclusive, mutually beneficial and that are dedicated to building sustainable solutions" (McConnel, Desk Research 2, l. 19).

Conclusion Activity 10

In order to bring about systems change a think tank must collaborate (Illustration 8). They interact with different actors from media, politics, business and the knowledge field (2.4.2). Think tanks aim

to produce knowledge independent from other actors from these fields. However, they are partly dependent on them to fulfill their mission and bring about change (2.4.2).

Depending on their goal, a think tank can create different strategies (2.4.4). Objective one of in the framework for a social entrepreneurship think tank (Illustration 13) is to support social entrepreneurs (4.5). A think tank can support their fellows through knowledge products which are targeted to their needs (Shallowe, l. 68f.). To bring about systems change entrepreneurs need to interact with policy makers, and decision-makers from government, public and business (2.2.1, 4.4.1).

The other objective outlined in Illustration 13 is to build the infrastructure for systems change (4.5). To reach this goal think tanks produce research to change policies or to recommend funding models which enable systems change (McConnel, Desk Research 1). In this case think tanks need to interact with players in the field of systems change and entrepreneurship, like other organizations, foundations and also the government or media to collaboratively change the conditions for systems change. In order to engage with other players in the field and exchange knowledge the fellowship organization can co-host events and conduct research collectively (Shallowe, l. 105).

4.5.3.2 Disseminating Knowledge

When conducting research, the think tank must ensure that their work reaches the target group who can act upon the findings (Ceroni, l. 67). For example, the different departments of New America create different ToC. Based on their ToC they decide on communication channels and target groups (Hogan, l. 273f.). Main communication channels are social media, events, websites, media or newsletters (RSA, Chatham House, OTT, CSIS, MGI & New America Desk Research 1,2,3).

Social Media: The five think tanks investigated in this thesis use Twitter more than any other social media platform. As an example, they post videos of events and interviews, films to present research findings, events, graphics, links to their research and podcasts (RSA, Chatham House, New America, MGI, CSIS, Desk Research 1). Depending on the channel, the frequency of the posts varies: LinkedIn and Instagram have less postings than Facebook and significantly less than Twitter (RSA, Chatham House, New America, MGI, CSIS, Desk Research 1). The CSIS recommends using videos in a short format with the key information from research in order to communicate the study's findings[25] (Hunter, l. 170f.). Hogan on the other hand emphasizes the importance of thinking about resources. New America is able to reach more people using less resources by focusing on other mediums:

[25] Example Short Video: https://bit.ly/2YX3Pdx (accessed: 24.01.2020).

Hogan recommends reaching new audiences for example by sharing knowledge in podcasts (Hogan, l. 251). For instance, they produce the podcast "Better Life Lab[26]" in collaboration and publish content to find healthier ways to deal with stress (New America, Desk Research 1). The RSA publishes podcasts from events and interviews (Desk Research 1).

Website: Think tanks use their websites to post live events and videos of past events, publish events, explain their membership/fellowship, share programs and their research products (RSA; Chatham House, New America, OTT, MGI & CSIS Desk Research 3). For instance, New America creates interactive diagrams in order to present knowledge in an attractive way (Hogan, l. 239). As an example, they displayed connected communities all over the States working on common solutions (New America, Desk Research 3). Another example is the CSIS who creates interactive micro websites for different research programs (Desk Research 3).

Media: Media is a vehicle to reach policy makers and public, this has proven especially prudent through published articles in renowned papers (Hogan, l. 196f.). For media visibility it can be attractive to collaborate with people known to the public and recognized by the media (Hogan, l. 83f.).

Events: Think tanks organize different types of events depending on their ToC (Hogan, l. 93-97). Events which are open to the public (El Khawaja, l. 61f.) are typically done to educate the public (El Khawaja, l. 62) or hear the public's voice (Burbidge, l. 210). Think tanks can also build a bridge between the public and government. New America aims to organize events where people, who want to change something can come together. They invite individuals, who might have distrust in the government, from both the left and the right winged political views to come together and solve problems as a community (Hogan, l. 101-107). Furthermore, events also create a space to reach policy makers, thought leaders and peers (Hogan, l. 202, Illustration 14). The RSA organized online events to communicate and interact with their fellows (Shallowe, l. 61). OTT organizes webinars to inform their target group of practitioners. Their aim is to bring about change by enabling them to do their work more effectively (Mendizabal, l. 335-340).

Network: While communicating knowledge, individual connections can also play an important role in positioning research (Hogan, l. 83-85). It is important to create and maintain relationships (El Khawaja, l. 129f.) as well as create reputation over time (El Khawaja, l. 126f.).

Research Product: Think tanks must decide on the research output they use to successfully reach people (Swan, l. 63f.). Think tanks publish research papers, newsletter, larger reports, policy papers,

[26] Better Life Lab: https://podcasts.apple.com/de/podcast/better-life-lab/id1386944144 (accessed: 24.02.2020).

blog articles and expert comments (RSA, Chatham House, New America, CSIS & MGI Desk Research 1). Due to their lack of time, policy makers need to be approached with short briefs (Swan, l. 245f.). To approach economists, economic analyses are typically a more impactful approach (Mendizabal, l. 207f.). The Chatham House uses a variety of different research products for different occasions: "We have expert comments, we find briefings, we have reports, we have larger bodies of work. All of them in a sense targeting, well being tailored to the issue and the timing, and what we think the people would probably be interested in knowing about" (Swan, l. 63-66).

Theories of Change might include addressing several target groups. To reach them, a combination of channels can be used (Hogan, l. 141f.). Hogan sketched out which mediums can be used to reach certain target groups (l. 202, Illustration 14).

Illustration 14: Target Groups (Hogan, l. 202).

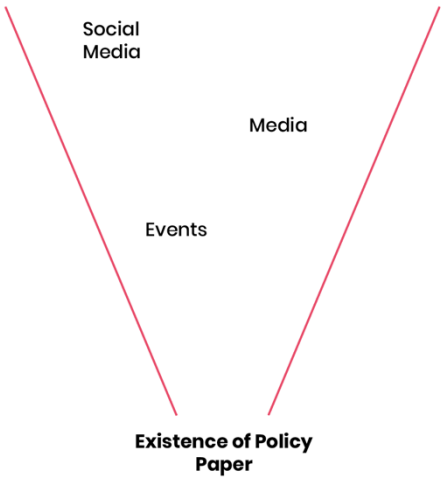

Illustration 15: Reaching Policy Maker (Hogan, l. 225).

According to Draimin, in order to really change a system everybody needs to be reached (l. 60). To educate the public and engage with them think tanks use events (Burbidge, l. 210), media (Hogan, l. 200f.) and social media (Hogan, l. 202). Reaching the public through mass media is expensive (Hunter, l. 147) and sometimes funding does not cover dissemination activities (Mendizabal, l. 268f.). As a result, think tanks often lack the resources to reach attitude and behavior change through directly targeting the public. Instead, they "are historically and institutionally used to targeting key people in the policy space rather than the general public" (Mendizabal, l. 319f.). For instance, New America aims to reach policy makers - they utilize their channels as a funnel to inform about the existence of certain policy papers (Hogan, l. 230f.; Illustration 15). The RSA, on the other

hand, increasingly tries to place the content in the hands of practitioners (Burbidge, l. 21f.), especially leaders of organizations “have the biggest […] leverage on practice” (Nee, l. 131). As an example, OTT supports the leaders of think tanks, so think tanks are better managed and maximize their impact (Mendizabal, l. 336f.). Mendizabal stresses that think tanks need to define the polity they aim to address, to frame their strategies based on that (l. 75-83).

Conclusion Activity 11

Communication is a distinctive factor to generate impact through the research (2.4.1). Based on the framework (Illustration 12) and the objectives (Illustration 13) the main target groups are *practitioners*, to support them in reaching systems change (objective one), and *stakeholders in the field of systems change*, to build an infrastructure for systems change (objective two). In general, it is important to publish research on the website to make it more likely to be found (2.4.3).

To reach practitioners: In order to reach the fellows of the fellowship organization, a think tank can use internal communication tools like a newsletter of the fellowship organization. Also, events can be used to reach the fellows. A think tank can either organize events by themselves or share their insights at events of the fellowship organization to reach the fellows. In order to maximize the impact of events, think tanks save the videos on their website (CSIS, RSA Observation).

To address stakeholders in the field of systems change: In order to succeed in the mission of building a supporting infrastructure a think tank can address

- Funders, to change the current funding environment (Ceroni, l. 111).
- Peers, to work collaboratively on change and build a stronger body (Draimin, l. 21).
- Policy makers to support the implementation of policies which create a positive environment for systems change. For example, they can support the work of social entrepreneurs in systems change, through engaging in conversations about social entrepreneurship in the Bundestag[27]. A social entrepreneurship think tank must screen the landscape of current debates in the field of systems change and social entrepreneurship to publish research aligned to that.
- Broader public, people need to realize their role in the system and shift their mindset and behavior (Draimin, l. 71f.). A think tank can contribute to the shift of consciousness through

[27] https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2019/kw15-de-social-entrepreneurship-634722 (Accessed 05.01.2020).

fellows by supporting them in leading from the emerging future and believing in a co-created vision[28] (2.2.2).

In order to reach the target groups, it is suggested to use multiple kinds of research products to build up a base of knowledge products and an opportunity for exchange. Experts can be encouraged to write comments about studies, a blog can be posted and fellows can publish their own articles. In this case it is important to create criteria as a guideline for publishing (SSIR).

4.6 Funding

In the following I illustrate different funding strategies, used by the organizations from the case studies and afterwards conclude a possible strategy for the think tank.

The think tanks who are less bound to funding have a greater margin to discover untapped research areas, collaborate with other institutions, react spontaneously on current topics, push certain topics (Swan, l. 13-15) and hire experts for the long term (Hunter, l. 176f.). To build stability and compensate for deficits, Swan advises to ideally build up a construct of different types of funding: government, foundation, earned income such as membership, and finances from private people or businesses (l. 200f.). While the duration of funding is often limited to a period of one to five years (New America, Desk Research 4), successful income models can bring about more independence (Nee, l. 289):

- CSIS, RSA and Chatham House use membership models. This provides members with access to certain papers and events as a subscription (Hunter, l. 262f.; Mendizabal, l. 248f.). The Chatham House, for example, receives 17% of their income through membership programs (Desk Research, Diagram 1). However, it can be challenging for think tanks to acquire members and maintain added value while addressing target groups and promoting change as their core activity. It has proven difficult to multitask these two very different tasks (Mendizabal, l. 256f.).

[28] "Without a fundamental shift in consciousness it will be impossible to sustain an eco-centered economy. [...] What's needed to underpin these renewals are changemakers who are willing to lead from the emerging future: leaders who are willing to open up, learn about and practice the journey from ego-system to eco-system thinking. We already have much of what we need to hand in the form of living examples, tools and frameworks. What's missing is the co-creative vision and the common will to make this revolution a reality" (Scharmer 2013, p. 1).

- OTT earns income by organizing events, which practitioners can pay for and attend (Desk Research 4).
- SSIR has an earned income model. Besides a small grant from a foundation they finance themselves through magazine subscriptions, webinars and conferences (Nee, l. 271-278).

Nee emphasizes that having the same target group for the earned income model as for the research gives the SSIR the chance to focus and generate real impact for them (Nee, l. 290f.).

Conclusion Funding

The current funding environment for think tanks is characterized by short term and project donations (4.2; 2.4.3). In order to stay independent from single funders, it is recommended to combine multiple sources of funding. For example, an earned income model combined with other donations from governments, businesses and foundations (2.4.3, Swan, l. 201-204).

When approaching funders, a think tank must fit into the funder's target group. Since a social entrepreneurship think tank is specialized in the field of systems change and entrepreneurship, funders who are especially interested in this field, should be approached (2.4.3). When building up a business model, the strategy needs to be aligned to a think tanks activities (2.4.3). Social Entrepreneurship think tanks can align their business model with their activities of producing knowledge: using the insights in the field and the work with fellows, think tanks can sell additional knowledge products (Nee, l. 276-285). Another option can be to open the activities of fellowship as a membership program to other social entrepreneurs, like the Chatham house, RSI and CSIS do.

4.7 Evaluation

This section is dedicated to illustrating evaluation strategies the think tank can use. Evaluation is considered a difficult topic in the field of systems change, because measuring the impact of research and of capacity building can be challenging (Swan, l. 277).

Measure impact of research: Successes in the field of an issue can be identified when institutions change their operations (Shallowe, l. 161-164) or the strategies of the government reflect the position of a paper (Swan, l. 267f.). However, the contribution of one think tank within change is difficult to identify (Swan, l. 275-278). In any case, different processes and activities conducted by a think tank can be measured. For example, it is possible to analyze how many people read articles, visit websites and return (Nee, l 257). Also, in the example of SSIR, having an earned income model and constant paying users can be considered as proof of concept and quality (Nee, l. 288). Depending

on the goal of the think tank success can mean that peers quote the work of a think tank (Hogan, l. 205f.), policy makers mention an article, people in the public remember a phrase (Shallowe, l. 149-151) or give positive feedback (Nee, l. 265f.). For instance, to collect this data the Chatham House does media monitoring, which includes measuring how many people view research outputs and how often a report is quoted (Swan, l. 262). Stakeholders can also be approached to ask which work they find useful (El Khawaja, l. 69f.).

Measure impact of fellowship: Measuring the impact of capacity building is also considered difficult because it typically takes five to ten years to see the outcome (Swan, l. 282-295). The activities of fellowship work can be evaluated through surveys (El Khawaja, l. 86f.) or fellows can be tracked over time to see their development (Ceroni, l. 187). Winslow emphasizes the potential of case studies about fellows as an evaluation source (l. 201-203).

Conclusion Evaluation

It is important to consider evaluation mechanism in order to reflect on the work and adapt strategies (2.4.4). Currently, think tank managers measure their success by focusing on numbers from media and then assuming that visibility is directly connected with influence (2.4.2). To measure the influence the think tank first needs to distinguish how their progress can be measured.

In order to measure think tanks targets of how many people read research products, they can track numbers that prove their visibility, such as being quoted (Swan, l. 262) or having returning readers or costumers (Nee, l. 257). In order to evaluate their activities, think tanks can use surveys or ask for feedback from fellows, stakeholders or other organizations (El Khawaja, l. 86f.). When looking at the long-term impact, a think tank can evaluate their work through long term studies and observations of their contributions to change through the work of fellows and research (Ceroni, l. 194f.).

4.8 Research Topic

In this section I highlight the different strategies organizations in the research field use to identify a research topic. Think tanks develop mechanisms to decide on next research topics (Burbidge, l. 241-243; MGI, l. 22-24). Different interests need to be considered:

Funding: Research topics can be chosen depending on what can be covered by funding (Burbidge, l. 230f.; El Khawaja, l. 5). Having core funding gives think tanks flexibility in choosing research topics (Mendizabal, l. 214-216). Deciding on research topics is an enduring “push and pull” (Hunter, l. 181)

process between what funders support and what the think tank considers most important (Hunter, l. 181). Maintaining relationships with funders (El Khawaja, l. 24) and multiple sources of funding give the think tank more stability (Swan, l. 201f.).

Internal voices: Internal mechanisms can be built up to decide on research topics. The RSA organizes internal workshops, design sessions and strategy meetings (Burbidge, l. 241f.). The Chatham House uses methods such as World Cafe[29] to set a frame to find research topics (Swan, l. 113). Systems thinking can especially impact the process of identifying opportunities in the system for the research output to flourish (Hunter, l. 92). The RSA even built up a business development team to strategically carve out topics to maximize impact in current debates (Burbidge, l. 242) and to identify future relevant topics to integrate those in today's research (Shallowe, l. 271f.). The MGI founded a council consisting of senior consultants to shape their research agenda (Windhagen, l. 10f.). To incorporate their perspective and experience they utilize a process of several iterations. These consists of suggesting, deliberating and rating ideas (Windhagen, l. 22f.). In the CSIS and New America deciding on research topics is decentralized and project managers decide on which topics to pursue (Hunter, l. 196f.; Hogan, l. 183). In the RSA internal conversations between employees also influence decisions (Shallowe, l. 236f.). Windhagen recommends integrating strategic priorities in the research agenda and at the same time leaving room for unexpected developments (l. 23f.). The strategy of the RSA is to maintain flexibility to respond to todays relevant topics and “appoint them with depth and rigor” (Burbidge, l. 136f.).

External voices: Fellowship organizations can consider the relevance of their topics for their fellows (Burbidge, l. 230). For example the OTT created their research agenda in collaboration with the practitioners which they aim to support through their research (Desk Research 3b). Simply having conversations with partners or different organizations in the field also helps to identify relevant topics (El Khawaja, l. 9f.). Another way is to attend conferences and thereby following the current discourse (Nee, l. 186-188). It is not just important to identify the most pressing and relevant topics, but also the less regarded ones which have high potential. Sometimes one research paper can bring about more change in a less regarded topic, because there are not so many strong voices yet (Burbidge, l. 243).

Moreover, the self-definition and thereby the positioning of the think tank plays an important role in research. The SSIR for example does not advocate for a certain mission. Their broader topic is

[29] The World Café methodology is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue: http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/ (accessed: 24.01.2020).

social innovation and they provide room for other people to share their opinions and findings (Nee, l. 71f.). Similarly, the Chatham House claims that they don't take positions, instead their researchers publish their evidence-based recommendations. This might lead to contradictory statements in different research papers (Swan, l. 208-214).

Conclusion Research Topic

To decide on research topics, think tanks should include multiple perspectives (2.4.3). Comparable to the MGI, a social entrepreneurship think tank can create mechanisms to decide on research topics. Practically, think tank employees and experts within the fellowship organization can suggest topics or make workshops, like World Café. Suggested topics can be discussed with the team and experts. Further tools to generate ideas can be systems mapping, to decide from a systems perspective, or fellow surveys, to pick up on their needs and interests.

5. Applying Data Analysis Results

In this chapter I reflect if the developed framework (Illustration 12) can be applied to the concrete example of TT, which was founded in 2018 under the roof of a Social Entrepreneurship Support Organization (SESO[30]).

Being active in more than 90 countries, SESO is a global support network for social entrepreneurs. SESO supports more than 3600 social entrepreneurs with innovative system-changing ideas which solve deep-rooted social problems and change society for the better. Every year SESO selects more than 100 fellows worldwide: social entrepreneurs with system changing ideas. SESO's European network includes more than 500 social entrepreneurs as well as partners from leading businesses, foundations and others to relevant actors in the field of systems change (SESO's website). Besides the fellow selection and the fellow support program, SESO offers an accelerator program to promote systems change, builds up a constantly growing network of supporting business leaders and runs programs to strengthen European partnerships[31] (SESO's website). Since SESO was rated the fifth most influential NGO worldwide in 2016, it has gained even more credibility in the field (Pilot Study).

[30] For privacy reasons the exact name of the organization will not be published, I will refer to it as SOSE throughout this paper.

[31] SOSE has more programs worldwide, in this thesis only these European programs are relevant.

In 2018 SESO founded the European think tank TT. “Its research cuts across all [SESO] programs and initiatives. It screens and analyzes our knowledge about European social issues, [SESO] fellows and system-changing new ideas and makes the insights actionable for collective solutions” (Pilot Study). In order to gain a deeper understanding of the work of TT and display the current status, an evaluation was conducted (Appendix E, Evaluation). Currently, three people work for TT: a full-time communication strategist as well as both a full-time and a half-time researcher. Additionally, they have an advisory board with senior SESO partners (Appendix E, Evaluation, p. 1) and a sounding board with SESO employees interested in the research and the work of TT. In the evaluation the vision of TT (Illustration 16) was formulated based on interviews with the employees and two board members:

Illustration 16: TT Vision. Source: Appendix E, Evaluation, p. 3.

The framework supports TT to reach its vision (Illustration 16):

- By addressing issues systemically through activity four and six, TT can ensure that it produces research matched to external demands (point one, Illustration 16).
- Through activity four, seven and eight the think tank builds up mechanisms to capture and share the knowledge of SESO (point two, Illustration 16). This makes it possible to screen all SESO programs (Pilot Study).
- The aim of activity eleven is to communicate that knowledge externally, or, as expressed through activity four, internally (point three, Illustration 16).
- Activity ten is conceptualized to build up collaboration and interact with other organizations in the field of systems change (point four, Illustration 16).
- Last, the knowledge is used for the fellowship work through activity one to four (point four, Illustration 16), in this way the fellows are supported in finding collective solutions (Pilot Study).

Their credibility in the field helps TT when building up the network with other organizations in the field of systems change. Furthermore, their network of well selected leading entrepreneurs in

Europe allows TT to implement their research findings through influential practitioners in the field (Activity 6) and collect valuable insights of the work from entrepreneurs (Activity 7 and 8). However, it must be considered that TT is still in an early stage and just has three employees. In this phase TT must decide how to use the resources most efficiently. Even though TT might not have the resources to execute all activities outlined in the framework yet, I would recommend acting upon the core ideas and leveraging the collaboration with SESO. At this point it is especially important to establish the work of TT in the organizational structure of SESO, since the network of SESO is so strong, their knowledge insights as well as their credibility are critical for the success of TT. Collaborating in terms of workshops, events and network are essential, especially in these beginning times. TT might not have the resources to conduct trainings for entrepreneurs at this stage, instead SESO can include the methods and tools in their work or TT can share them online. Furthermore, TT can use SESO events to present their research instead of organizing their own events in the beginning (Activity 5). Moreover, SESOs network of influential people in business and politics can be leveraged to connect social entrepreneurs with influential actors and stakeholders (Activity 3). In the beginning TT can screen the network of SESO in individual cases to identify contacts that support the social entrepreneur. TT already has a sounding board to internally communicate with SESO. In the long term they need to ensure that at least one employee of every department is part of this board. The recommendations concerning funding (4.6) and research topics (4.8) should be applied at this point as well. Due to the credibility of SESO, TT might have good access to funding. However, it can be an option to additionally build up an earned income model, by selling research or making payed knowledge sessions (4.6). The ideas outlined in section 4.7 can be especially valuable since TT aims to constantly test and improve its concept (Illustration 16). In conclusion I would recommend focusing on how to deliver with the most impact when making decisions. Through impactful, work attraction is gained, trust is built up and TT is recognized as a thought leader.

Since this thesis only developed the ToC, I recommend TT to design a concrete Logframe concept based on that. The Logframe makes it possible to break down the ToC into concrete steps and to identify needed resources.

6. Conclusion

In this paper I created a framework for systems change for a social entrepreneurship think tank. In the following I summarize the results and close the hypotheses (6.1), formulate recommendations for actions for the whole field (6.2) and finally, I reflect on the research outcome (6.3).

6.1 Summary of Results

Through the activities in the field of systems change, fellowship and research, a social entrepreneurship think tank can offer solutions to the obstacles outlined in section 4.2 (current situation). As displayed in Illustration 17 different activities (1-11) contribute to achieving the desired situation (4.3).

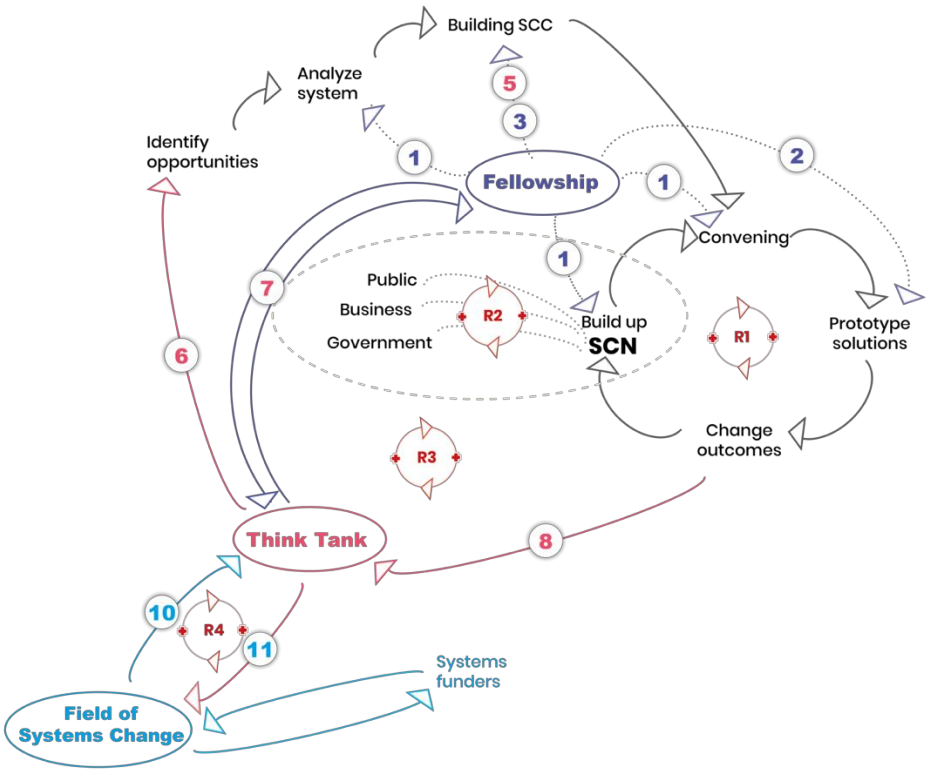

Illustration 17: Contributions to promoting systems change by think tank with activities and feedbackloops. Systems map inspired by ASC (Desk Research 3).

The framework is conceptualized for social entrepreneurship think tanks to create conditions for systems change. To achieve the largest impact the purpose of a system needs to be changed (2.2). This means the whole system of how social challenges are approached, must be transformed. The purpose of the system of "approaching social challenges" should no longer be to solve a single issue, but to address challenges in a systemic way.

The think tank pursues this goal by supporting entrepreneurs in achieving systems change through collaboration. The aim is to support them in working on both the micro and meso level simultaneously while also aligning these activities (2.2.1). Entrepreneurs need to collaboratively build innovations to enter the mainstream market while communicating with public, businesses and governments at the same time to build pressure on the current system (2.2.1). These activities must occur the same time to allow interventions to ne most effective. This requires a leader or leading organization (SCL) to organize the change process (2.2.2).

Organizations in the field of systems change must align their work as well. There have been activities conducted by different players in the field (ASC, RSA, McConnel) which aim to promote collaboration. The different players do not only need to understand the system, develop a solution and understand their own contribution to change. Instead it is more essential to pay specific care to the way they approach problems as a collective and identify root causes in order to develop visions rather than single solutions. Collaborating actors can hold onto those visions. The identification with their own project can fade in the background of the common goal (2.2.2).

The first hypothesis, as outlined in 4.4, that systems change can be promoted in practice and an enabling environment can be built is partly confirmed. Since evaluation is considered difficult in the field of systems change (4.8) and every system works differently there is not one single strategy that ensures reaching systems change. However, organizations in the field of systems change see success and potential in their strategies to promote systems change. Building on these cases, enabling conditions were identified and activities were designed.

The second hypothesis can be confirmed. Think tanks can create conditions for systems change through research and convening activities (A-F, Illustration 12). Furthermore, it can be confirmed that social entrepreneurs can be agents of change. Through capacity building social entrepreneurs can learn to understand the system and lead change. I assume that individuals can also come from other backgrounds to start their journey of becoming a SCL as long as they develop the needed capacities. Last, it can be confirmed that tools and methods can be utilized to promote systems change. In the field of systems change there already are methods and tools to support SCLs earlier in their paths in order to reach systems change faster. However, in this thesis I highlight the importance of combining different tools, for example to not just learn about human-centered design (Activity 2), but also about systems thinking (Activity 1).

6.2 Recommendations of Action for Institutions in the Field of Systems Change

Generally, this concept is created for social entrepreneurship think tanks working in systems change. However, other think tanks with a fellowship program can also apply individual activities. Furthermore, other organizations in the field of systems change can apply parts of the framework to their work. Especially the separation of the two objectives, “create conditions for systems change,” and “develop the field of systems change,” can help an organization identify activities which align with their vision. In addition, the concept can help organizations in the field building to align their activities with organizations in fellowship.

However, I would like to highlight three main values mentioned by Ott (l. 81) which can give guidance when aiming to achieve systems change. They can be integrated without a complex concept and can be recognized in the activities in the framework (4.5) as well.

- *Empathy:* In order to understand an issue it is important to recognize the position and situation of the different players in the system (Activity 4, 2.2.2). The SCL (Activity 1) and organizations in the field of systems change (Activity 9) must talk to the targeted people or institutions to understand their position (2.2.2). This enables them to frame interventions or create research products that fit their needs.
- *Iteration:* The organizations need to observe the system while intervening, in order to be able to respond to changes, improve the intervention and ensure that the solution really solves the problem (2.2.2). Organizations in the field of systems change need to constantly adapt their concept to further improve their strategies.
- *Network:* Organizations in the field of systems change must collaborate to change systems (2.2.2, Illustration 8). The key is to align different activities strategically, leverage unique assets of different institutions and to communicate (Activity 10 and 11).

Though systems change as a goal seems complex and difficult to achieve, applying these three values in the work of an organization can lead to the success in solving root problems. In this thesis it might seem like issues need to be big and complex to apply systems change. I want to emphasize that the size of the system is not relevant, sometimes it is better to approach smaller systems one can understand rather than targeting big complex systems.

6.3 Reflection and further Research

Generally, it can be discussed if think tanks are the organizational form which have the biggest leverage on changing systems. Think tanks convene people and conduct research, which is important in the process of systems change. However, I would like to mention that other institutions in the field of systems change are able to promote systems change to equal parts with the right motivation. Foundations have the power to lead change through monetarization of certain actions and research. While foundations might be able to direct systems change, think tanks can identify leverage points and detailed strategies. The power lies within the network between different institution, when identifying underlying causes and finding holistic solutions.

It can be discussed if an organization should collect the information for how systems change can be strategically promoted and instrumentalize entrepreneurs to act upon that. This could make one single institution very powerful. I believe that existing mechanisms which make it difficult to change systems are important to ensure that an innovation really improves the system rather than allowing any change to take hold. Due to these mechanisms it must be proven that there are flaws in the current system and shown that the new innovations have been thoroughly thought through and ready to be in place. Through this thorough process levers are identified rather than shortcuts. I see the distinction that levers are ideas of how to harness power points in a system to transform it on a deep level, while shortcuts can be taken when convincing stakeholders to change using power or money to realize the own interests.

Another discussion point can be whether systems change is the only solution to our current problems. Systems change builds on the fact that problems are interrelated and complex. Systems thinking assumes that seeing the complexity helps to manage and strategically align activities to promote change. However, systems change can also happen as a result of chain reactions without being planned. As a conclusion, seeing the world through a systems lens is, in my opinion, a promising approach to reach sustainable change but it is not the only way to reach systems change.

As any research, this thesis is subject to limitations. They are caused by the data, data analysis, the research design and the theoretical approach. Using case studies and multiple sources of evidence allowed me to collect insight from different perspectives. However, the observations and interviews are, to a certain degree, influenced by my perception, my prior knowledge and my experience of working in TT. Being restricted by the time, I could only visit one event of each think tank which does not fully represent their event format. Moreover, talking to one or two interviewees from each organization does not provide a holistic view of the organization. However, I followed the quality criteria by Yin (2018, p. 43) to ensure as much validity and reliability as possible.

Using the methodology of ToC for this thesis allowed me to design different activities and sketch their pathway to promote change (Illustration 12). This was helpful in order to combine the Theory U and the MLP with the case study data. The created framework is complex and abstract. It therefore provides an overview of how activities can be aligned to promote systems change rather than laying out detailed advice on next steps and needed resources. Furthermore, due to its abstract nature, the concept might exclude existing dynamics and influences, which are not yet displayed but exist nonetheless. In order to create a more concrete concept, further case studies are needed to clarify my conclusions. Also, strategies to measure systems change are required to receive better insights. Further research could investigate these topics.

Illuminating the complex topic of system from multiple perspectives and talking to various people in the field, I found two more topics for further research especially interesting.

First, looking at systems problems, I realized, that innovators often try to solve problems of subsystems, which do not align with each other, even though organizations have the common final goal: societal benefit. For example: childcare organizations aim to help as many children as possible and therefore try to use the cheapest resources. However, the cheapest resources are not typically the most ecological ones. This can lead to situations where one institution is aiming to achieve a systems change in their field hindering the process of systems change of another field. These contrary solutions make resources of funders inefficient. Further research can investigate the topic of aligning different solutions to complex challenges and search how sustainable “multi-systems change” could be organized so movements and changes support rather than hinder each other.

Second, looking at the MLP I assume the macro level is always created by the overlaying system. This hypothesis can be investigated on different stages. Especially for small systems this could open another intervention point to promote systems change. The SCL could target changes in the macro level of the subsystem they address. Also, this could be interesting for the practice of systems change in a country. I assume that depending on the values of the country system, decisions are made. If money and power are the two main values of a country it makes decisions based on that. If the main values are social and environmental sustainability, other decisions would be made.

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Glossary

Container Building	Building a container is explained as building a good holding space or space for interactions (cf. https://susannawesleyfoundation.org/conversations/essentials-of-theory-u-book-review/).
Leverage Points	"Leverage points are points of power" (Meadows, 2009, p. 145), where a change in a small thing causes big shifts in everything. Those are the points where strategic intervention produces sustainable change. These points open up opportunities for corporations and positive backwashes (Ehrlichman, 2018, p. 1).
Silo View	According to the silo view, the cognitive mindset of the actors leads them to look only at one aspect of the reality in complete isolation to the other. In fact, the members of silos view the opinions of those outside the silo as being of no value and therefore deem them negligible" (Capasso, Dagnino, 2012, p. 930).
Field Building	Field building means creating a field of support for those working on systems change so they can more readily access the tools, relationships, knowledge, partners, resources and inspiration they need to do the work of systems change" (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 8).
Systems Change	In this thesis systems change is understood as changing the whole system and considering the different influencing factors. Systems change describes the outcome.
Systemic Change	In this thesis systemic change is understood as a way to look at problems. Systemic change can lead to systems change. "recognises that change is systemic — for example emergent, multi-level/temporal, multi-actor etc." (Birney, 2018).

Appendix

Appendix A: Details Theory

1.1 Theory U – Example Listening

Developing the capacity to make decision from a point of observation instead of reacting out of habit is key for leadership in complex situations (Hall, 2008, p. 8). Scharmer asserts that listening is "the most underrated leadership skill" (Scharmer, 2018, pp. 16).

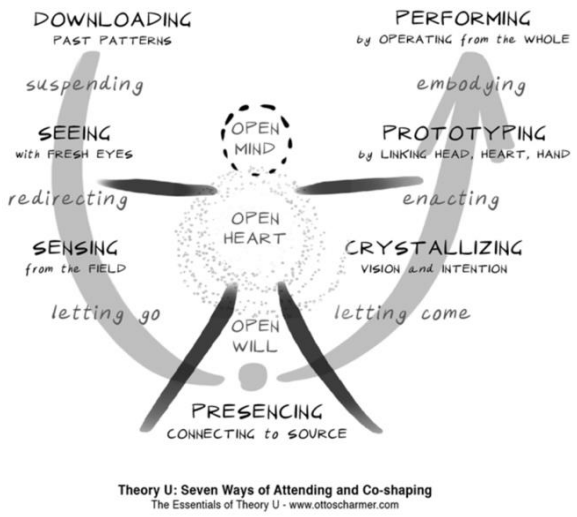

Illustration 18: Theory U. Scharmer, 2019.[32]

Considering listening as an example, people can listen on all different levels. The first level is called "downloading" (Scharmer und Kaufer, 2013, p. 20). On this level the listener connects the content with expectations based on habitual behaviors, thoughts and past experiences (Scharmer and Kaufer 2013, p. 20). "As long as we operate from downloading the world is by frozen by old mental habits and past experiences. Nothing new enters the minds" (Scharmer, 2018, pp. 16). On the second level, "seeing", the listener gets in a state of listening without judging (Scharmer, 2018, pp. 16). "Sensing", level three, describes empathetic listening and thereby being able to see oneself and the situation from another person's point of view (Schamer and Kaufer, 2013, p. 154). The fourth level, "presencing", widens the horizon for new possibilities. The understanding of the field expands a single point view to a connection with the field around. Future possibilities outside of the individual preconceptions emerge (Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013, p. 20). Resulting from listening on all levels with an open mind, heart and will. This is key for allowing leaders to identify their blind spot.

[32]https://www.ottoscharmer.com/essentials-theory-u-figures (accessed 12.12.2019)

Scharmer sees the core goal in getting awareness of the blind spot and changing the inner attitude we act upon (Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013, p. 3; Scharmer, 2018, p. xii). Scharmer and Kaufer call this the “deep point of transformation” (2013, p. 21). At this point the leader has to “pass through the eye of the needle” (Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013, pp. 22). They have to let go of everything that is not essential and reflect, according to Scharmer and Kaufer, on two questions: “Who is my self?” and “Who is my work?” The “self is our highest future possibility. The […] work is our sense of purpose or calling. It’s what we are here on this earth to do” (2013, p. 23). By answering these questions people receive access to their inner wisdom and creativity (Scharmer, 2009, p. 173). The aim for leaders should not be to always listen on the level of “presencing” but to get the capacity to listen on all three levels and decide in a second step which level to enter in which situation (Scharmer, 2018, pp. 16).

As seen in the diagram, once one has finished reviewing the three levels on the left side as well as the bottom of the U, the theory describes three further steps climbing up the right side of the U: “crystallizing”, “prototyping” and “performing”. “Crystallizing” is building a vision from the state of future possibilities (Scharmer, 2018, pp. 16) and putting that into words (Scharmer, 2009, p. 198). The “prototyping” phase is focused on “creating the future by doing” (Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013, p. 21). Experimenting and collecting feedback from a position of learning rather than self defending are the core methods (Scharmer, 2018, pp. 16). In the end the process results in “performing,” the first level, as new concepts are implemented. These were developed from a deep understanding of the ecosystem instead of one individual viewpoint (Scharmer, 2018, pp. 16).

1.2 Theory U - Collaborative Leadership

Types of Knowledge/ Systemic Intervention Points	Individual	Institution	Whole system
Technical knowledge (technical skills)	Individual technical skill building/training	Institutional technical skill building/training	System-wide technical skill building/training
Relational knowledge (stakeholder management)	Individual relational capacity building/training (multi-stakeholder dialogue)	Institutional relational skill building/training (multi-stakeholder dialogue)	System-wide relational capacity building/training (multi-stakeholder dialogue)
Transformational Self-knowledge (identity, will)	Individual transformational capacity building (multi-stakeholder innovation)	Institutional transformational capacity building (multi-stakeholder innovation)	System-wide transformational capacity building (multi-stakeholder innovation)

Table 2: Collaborative Leadership. Scharmer 2010, p. 8.

1.3 Think Tank Subtypes

CATEGORY	DEFINITION
AUTONOMOUS AND INDEPENDENT	Significant independence from any one interest group or donor and autonomous in its operation and funding from government.
QUASI INDEPENDENT	Autonomous from government but controlled by an interest group, donor, or contracting agency that provides a majority of the funding and has significant influence over operations of the think tank.
GOVERNMENT AFFILIATED	A part of the formal structure of government.
QUASI GOVERNMENTAL	Funded exclusively by government grants and contracts but not a part of the formal structure of government.
UNIVERSITY AFFILIATED[2]	A policy research center at a university.
POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATED	Formally affiliated with a political party.
CORPORATE (FOR PROFIT)	A for-profit public policy research organization, affiliated with a corporation or merely operating on a for-profit basis

Table 3: Think Tank Subtypes. McGann, 2019, p. 13.

1.4 Social Entrepreneurship

"Social entrepreneurship describes the actions of passionate mission-driven personalities who identify societal challenges and the underlying dynamics and solve them by using market-driven strategies to create sustainably funded organizations" (based on Abu-Saifan 2012, p. 25; Zimmer et al., 2018, p. 1; Mair et al., 2006, p. 37; Christie et al., 2006, p. 2).

The definition is based on the following characteristics of a social entrepreneur:

- Abu-Saifan identifies *the characteristics of a social entrepreneur* in his definition:

  > *"The social entrepreneur is a mission-driven individual who uses a set of entrepreneurial behaviors to deliver a social value to the less privileged, all through an entrepreneurially oriented entity that is financially independent, self-sufficient, or sustainable" (2012, p. 25).*

- Zimmer et al. define *their sphere of operation*: "They use market-driven strategies to tackle critical social issues in brand new ways" (2018, p. 1).
- Mair et al. underline *the processes and resources used by social entrepreneurs* by defining social entrepreneurship "as a process involving the innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities to catalyze social change" (2006, p. 37).
- Christie et al. highlight *the mission of the social entrepreneur* (2006, p. 2). "Instead of seeking a return on investment the social entrepreneur measures performance through implementation of the goals of mission and service as framed in the context of the NPO" (Christie et al., 2006, p. 2).

1.5 Systems Entrepreneurship

Systems entrepreneurship is about leveraging change on a systemic level. System Entrepreneurs are social entrepreneurs that learn to take a step back and are committed to solve root causes of problems by interacting with different players in their field and thereby creating a momentum for change (based on Balfours, 2017, p. 1; Westley, 2018, p. 2; Sautet, 2011, p. 393; Muehlenbein, 2017, p. 1).

The definition is based on the following characteristics of a social entrepreneur:

- Balfour describes *characteristics of a systems entrepreneur.*

  > *"They are an independent facilitator, a networker, and a diplomat. They must be flexible, empowering, and supportive. Like a central gear, they are the catalytic force that creates momentum among all the other actors" (Balfour, 2016, p. 1).*

- Therefore, their *sphere of operation* is on an institutional level. Westley states:

  > *"At the regime and higher institutional level, system entrepreneurs find windows of opportunity for connecting the ideas/products/programs to new and existing resources and structures, taking advantage of disturbances to introduce novelty at higher scales" (2018, p. 22).*

- *The processes and resources* used by impact entrepreneurs are constant dialogues and collaboration with different stakeholders. They focus on one specific issue and address all actors and components in the field needed to bring about change (Balfour, 2016, p. 1). Envisioning one final common goal creates a feeling of trust and joint action towards the stakeholders, that enables them to work with and through others and draw threads in the background (Balfour, 2016, p. 1). Through their work within the system, systemic entrepreneurs generate momentum which allows change (Sautet, 2011, p. 393).

- The *mission of the systems entrepreneur* is to achieve systems impact. They take a step back and put their vision first. They focus on their contribution to change the bigger system instead of trying to scale a solution of a single institution (Muehlenbein, 2017, p. 1).

1.6 Social Innovation

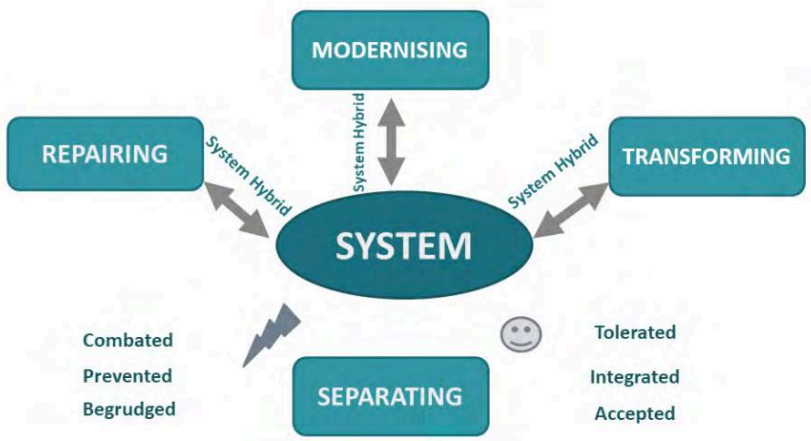

Illustration 19: Innovation and System (Rabadijeva, 2018, p. 85).

1.7 Systems Maps

1.7.1 Feedback Systems Map

Stroh demonstrates an example of community asset mapping. The map shows the elements of the community, such as educational and institutions and their relations, for instance balancing (B) and reinforcing (R) feedbackloops (Stroh, 2015, p. 179, Illustration 20).

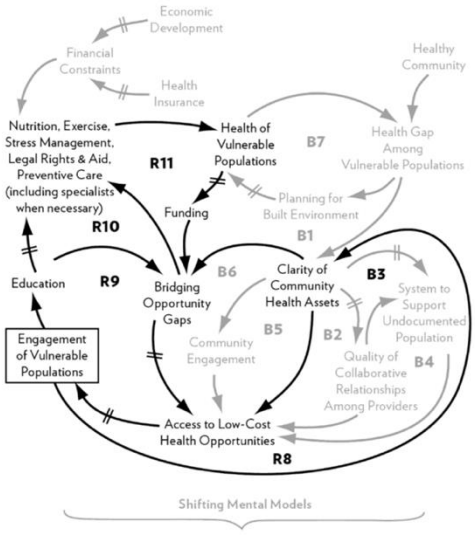

Illustration 20: Feedback Systems Map. Stroh, 2015 p. 179.

1.7.2 Circle Systems Map

Acaroglu recommends creating interconnected circles maps (2017, p. 1). The different elements are written on paper and placed around the circle, then interconnections are drawn between them. Elements with many connections can be identified as relevant intervention points (Acaroglu, 2017, p. 1, Illustration 21).

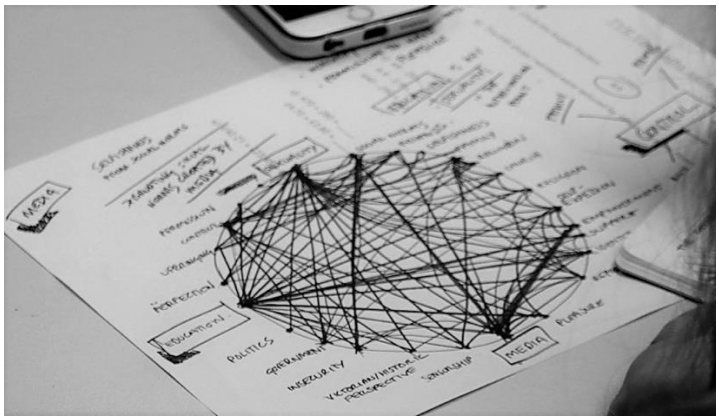

Illustration 21: Circle Map. Acarouglu, 2017, p. 1.

1.7.3 Iceberg

The iceberg model can also be used as a method to understand underlying dynamics. It helps to distinguish between events, patterns, structures and mental models. This “enables groups to see leverage points for transforming system dynamics” (CoLab, 2016, p. 44,). All of these different methods can be used for different occasions, as they provide complementary understandings.

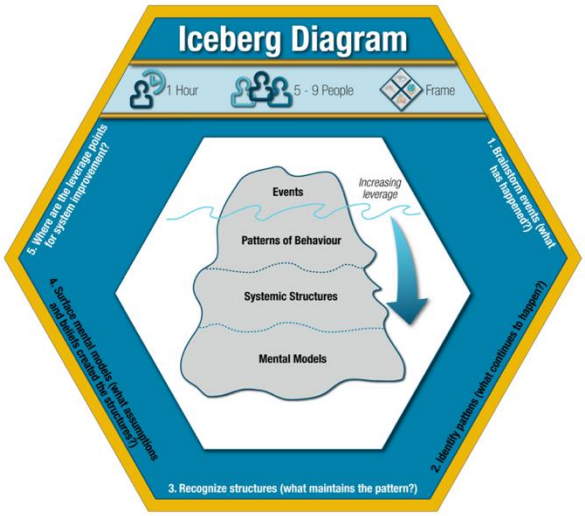

Illustration 22: Iceberg. CoLab, 2016, p. 44.

Appendix B: Guidelines

1 Think Tanks

Marlene Eimterbäumer
Hochschule Osnabrück
Master thesis

Concepts for Systems Change
An application of a social entrepreneurship think tank

Reaearch Objectives

- How can systems change be promoted? How can a think tank that creates conditions for systems change be organized?

Questions

Systems Change

- How do you understand systems change?
- How would you describe a think tank?
- How do you see their role in systems change?
- How can systems change be promoted?
- Which are the key activities to enable systems change?
- What are the three key activities the think tank does to enable systems change?

Communication and network

- Which is the think tanks target group and why?
- How do you use social media and networks?
- How do you interact with the target group and get them engaged?
- How does the think tank collaborate with other actors in the field?

Research

- How does the think tank ensure that the research findings will be , implemented?
- How does the think tank decide on next research topics?

Concept

- How is the think tank organized?
- How is the think tank funded?
- How collaborates the think tank worldwide?

Thank you!
I am looking forward to talking to you!

2 Organizations in the Field of Systems Change

Marlene Eimterbäumer
University of Applied Science Osnabrück
Master thesis

Concepts for Systems Change
An application of a social entrepreneurship think tank

Research Objectives

How can systems change be promoted? How can a think tank that creates conditions for systems change be organized?

Interview Questions

Systems change

- How do you understand systems change?
- How would you describe a think tank and do tank?
- How do you see their role in systems change?
- How can systems change be promoted?
- Which are the key activities to enable systems change?

Creativity startegies

- How can creativity workshops be organized to find solutions with social impact?
- Which methods can be used when collaboration with different stake-holders?
- Which methods can be used to make research actionable?

Working methods

- Do you know any methods that can be used to find the next research topic?
- Do you know any methods for effective collaboration between remote working researchers worldwide?

Concept

- If you could build up one organization which aims to promote system change, what would it look like?

Thank you!
I am looking forward to talking to you!

Appendix C: Case Studies

1 Selection of Cases - Think Tanks

Institute	Selection	Authors explanation	Interview	Observation
RSA	being innovative, trying new models (evaluation)	The RSA works with entrepreneurs and uses systems and design approaches to change systems.	Ian Burbidge (developing programs of research and analysis) and Adanna Shallowe (global relationship manager)	-Lunchevent -Night Event -Workship
CSIS	Top Think Tanks United States (2); Best use of Social Media and Networks (1); Best external/public relations program (2), Best use of internet (4); most innovative policy ideas/proposals (4)	The CSIS is one of the most influential think tanks. It is established for many years and is known for its good communication.	Andrew Hunter (Director of Program, Senior Fellow)	-Research event with panel discussion
The New America	recommended by RSA	New America was recommended by Shallowe. The New America is flexible and adapts strategies dependent on the systems they work in.	Fuzz Hogan (editorial efforts, multimedia production, website, and social media)	-book event
Chatham House	top think tanks worldwide (7), top think tanks western Europe (3),	The Chatham house is one of the top think tanks world wide and has a fellowship program.	Nicole El Khawaja (Project manager/concept), Andrew Swan (Fellowship)	-report launch
McKinsey global Institute	Best for profit Think Tank (1), concept (evaluation)	McKinsey is an affiliated think tank and has stragies to capture the knowledge within the organization and at the same time to share their	Eckart Windhagen (In council of MGI)	-/-

		knowledge within their structures.		
On Think Tank (OTT)	Online search	Is a think tank, which has global structures and aims to reach change through empowering practitioners.	Enrique Mendizabal (head of OTT and expert about think tanks)	-webinar

Table 4: Selection of Cases Think Tanks.

2 Selection of Cases - Organizations in Field of Systems Change

In order to investigate how systems change can be promoted, the following institutions in the field of systems change and innovation were interviewed and documents about their approaches and work were analyzed. The aim was to investigate organizations which have a heterogeneous group of organizations in the field of systems change.

Institution	**Description**	**Selection: Institutions approach to promote systems change and institutions unique perspective**
The Systems Change Academy (SCA)	"We are a global community of individuals, organizations and networks who are deeply involved in developing living examples that show what is possible in creating social systems that foster biological, social, and economic well being."- https://www.academyforchange.org (accessed: 23.01.2020) Organization which promotes Systems change through an academy program	→ capacity and network building for entrepreneurs → looks especially at tools and methods in all steps of Systems Change
McConnel Foundation	"Any complex problem requiring attention is rooted in a system or	→ approach challenges systemically, →through philanthropy

	multiple overlapping systems." – McConnel "The McConnell Foundation is a private Canadian foundation that develops and applies innovative approaches to social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges. We do so through granting and investing, **capacity building**, **convening**, and **co-creation** with grantees, partners and the public." https://mcconnellfoundation.ca/about/purpose/ (accessed: 23.01.2020)	→ has the perspective from the foundations side
IDEO	"When attempting to solve wicked problems, creative thinkers must design systems that influence people's behavior on a mass scale. Every ecosystem is comprised of both micro and macro elements, and when any element gets out of whack, the rest of the system suffers. In too many cases, products and services are conceived to impact massive change, yet the offerings lack an awareness of their overall systems." - https://www.ideo.com/news/designing-systems-at-scale (accessed: 23.01.2020) "We are a global design company committed to creating positive impact." - https://www.ideo.com/about (accessed: 23.01.2020)	→ change entire systems and build up cross-sectoral ecosystems using human centered design →know many projects, since IDEO conducts multiple projects → experienced in design led systems change
IDEO.org	"**IDEO.org is a nonprofit design studio.** We design products and services alongside organizations that are committed to creating a more just and inclusive world." - https://www.ideo.org	→ collaborating with funders and NGOs to develop systems innovation using human centered design → knows how to create innovations with social impact → knows how to collaborate with multiple actors

Stanford Innovation Review	*SSIR*'s mission is to advance, educate, and inspire the field of social innovation by seeking out, cultivating, and disseminating the best in research- and practice-based knowledge. With print and online articles, webinars, conferences, podcasts, and more, *SSIR* bridges research, theory, and practice on a wide range of topics, including human rights, impact investing, and nonprofit business models. - https://ssir.org/about/overview (accessed: 23.01.2020).	→ offers a knowledge platform for leaders in social change → knows how to build up a business model using knowledge → aims to bring about change through creating knowledge change for practicioners
PLAN	Organization in Canada which suceeded systems change in the field of financial service for people with disablities. Plan is active in systems change and therefore able to reflect on their progress from a systems perspective (https://socialinnovationexchange.org/insights/sig-story (accessed: 23.01.2020).	→ organization that successfully changed a systems, insight perspective and practical example
IMF	" The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 189 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world." - https://www.imf.org/en/About (accessed: 23.01.2020). Created iLab as an affiliated innovation center to interact within the organization and use the knowledge to design innovations - https://www.imf.org/en/News/Podcasts/All-Podcasts/2017/11/11/imf-	→ promotes innovation as an affiliated Lab, aims to change the internal culture

	ilab-new-space-for-innovation (accessed: 23.01.2020)	
The Dark Horse Foundation	Die Zukunft ist hochkomplex, rasant und gefährlich. Aber sie birgt auch riesige Potentiale. Vorausgesetzt, man ist mit ihr befreundet. Das ist es, was wir tun: Wir zähmen die Zukunft und freunden uns mit ihr an. Das Mittel unserer Wahl auf dieser Mission heißt Innovation. (https://www.thedark-horse.de/about (accessed: 23.01.2020).	→ promotes innovation and systems change in institutions → know how to use design for complex change processes

Table 5: Selection of Organizations working in the field of Social Entrepreneurship

Appendix D: Category System

1 Procedure

I did three screenings of the literature:

1) First, to get an overall view. I used post-its and commented on the printed-out interviews. And looked for main categories. I noted "actors" and the relation between them (inspired by ToC). I identified: Work with entrepreneurs (fellowship), research (think tank) and building for the field of systems change.

2) I looked for elements to build the "upper part" of the theory of change. The more abstract part, which explains how the desired change can occur, as categories I used (deductive):

→ "Systems Change", to describe the desired change (deductive)

Subcategories: "through a systems change leader", "through a think tank" inductive

→ "Current Situation", to summarize current challenges (deductive)

→ "Desired Situation", to describe the possible contributions of a think tank to system change (deductive)

→ "Domains of Change" to identify the key points that have to be in place to reach systems change. I concluded based on the MLP and 4.1.1.

3) I searched how successful think tanks are organized (inductive)

2 Categories

Category	**Definition** "The category definition serves as selection criterion to determine the relevant material from the texts; it has to be an explicit definition, theoretical references can be useful." (Mayring, 2014, p. 82).	**Category building**	**Anchor Example**
1 SC			
1.1 Systems change	This category includes the definitions and characteristics of systems change.	Deductive, Defined based on: Theory of Change, Step	"Systems Change as trying to frame a tactic and strategy to bring about positive social change with an understanding of tackling the root causes and having the medium to long-term vision of how all the different actions and activities that one is involved in contribute to a more

		2[33] (cf. Van Es, 2015, p. 34)	material and substantive reorganization of the system. So that it doesn't continue reproducing this same problem that attracted you to why you wanted to change it" - Draimin, l. 2-5.
1.1.1 Systems Change through Change Leader	This category describes actions of a systems change leader in systems change.	Deductive, Defined based on 4.1 and research question 2 They change leader /change maker/leading organization/ an organization in a practical example etc. has to do xyz to reach systems change	"So there is a process you can follow being the lead organization and then having smaller organizations work with you" – Ames, l. 96-98 "And the ones that launch and scale and kinds that kind of stay out there are always the ones where there is a partner who is really committed to seeing that thing in the world" – Larkin, l. 269-271
1.1.2 Systems Change through supporting organizations	In this category is described how think tanks can promote systems change. Additionally, strategies of other organizations promoting systems change will be named.	Deductive, Defined based on 4.1 and research question 2	"So those are the three things they might do: explain the system and develop the evidence to understand what's going on, what are the different parts of it. Identify the different levers of power or of change to make sure that you know where you might want to intervene and then the other thing, they might convene the different groups that would have to participate to bringing about that change" – Mendizabal, l. 61-70 "So one simple way to define systems change that I found very useful is, "systems change is changing the conditions that hold the problem in place" and so it is going beyond the symptomatic aspects of a problem, it is going to the root causes essentially or at least try to find them and work in that direction" – Ceroni, l. 5-8
1.2 Current Situation	This includes current obstacles in the process of systems change.	Deductive, Theory of Change, Step 3	"Also das ist so das typische, so dass natürlich aus den Silos heraus gehandelt wird und dann das dann auch die Maßnahmen so singulär sind und dann nicht tatsächlich Wandel induzieren

[33] Step 1 is to describe the desired purpose of the Theory of Change. I did this in section 3.1 already.

	Problems in the field of Fellowship and the journey of systems change leader are described. Also, problems, which research/think tanks are facing when aiming to reach change are outlined. Last, problems in the field of systems change and funding are illustrated.	(cf. Van Es, 2015, p. 44) Deductively created subcategories "fellowship, research, field of systems change" based on the data in the interviews.	sollen und irgendwie teilweise konkurrieren" – Ott, l. 32-34 "And a think tank unlikely would be able to do all of it." – Mendizabal, l. 70 "The field is still emerging and maturing as a field, we (current practitioners) are not functioning as an ecosystem." - McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 15 ". So there is obviously more demand for networks to be funded and that is challenging in times. Because sometime funders are not used to invest longer term." – Ceroni, l. 105-107
1.3 Desired Situation	This category examines strategies of organizations to promote systems change. This includes approaches in capacity building, research and field building.	Deductive, Theory of Change, Step 3 (cf. Van Es, 2015, p. 44) Deductively created subcategories based on the data in the interviews.	"But our vocal point is currently working with emerging leaders and building their capacity as they get deeper and deeper and increase their influence in whatever organization or community, they work and live in. To build their capacity, to truly be able to step back, to see a system, to understand how to create a container that includes all voices in order to be able to have the impact, that they would like to have." - Ceroni, l. 23-27 "Research will either confirm the assumptions or that will tell us what we thought was going to happen, is it happening? Or the behavior that we were trying to implement. Did or didn't it happen? And it can help us sustir the direction of the system going into the future. So re-search is really important to make sure that you are on the right track" – Ames l. 137-139 "This means creating a field of support for those working on systems change so they can more readily access the tools, relationships, knowledge, partners, resources and inspiration they need to do the work of systems change." (McConnel, Desk Research 1, p. 8).
2 Activites			
Activities	Main activities outlined, to support an Systems Change Leader	Inductive, Similar to 1.3 desired situation, looking at	"I think that people who are working more on the activist side of the occasion, are kind of leading with their gut and with their instinct. And we have increasingly recognized that there is all kinds of knowledge that society is increasingly

	Main activities outlined, to build the field of systems change	"what can a think tank do to promote change", however, this category looks more precicley at "what can be done to support Change Leader" and "What can be done to support field building"	capable of generating that can inform our understanding and is exactly how our system works" – Draimin, l. 99-102 „
Fellowship			
3.1 Capacity Building Systems Leadership	Information about Leadership capacities and tools to lead systems	Inductive	"I guess first of all it is really their ability to be able to learn about systems change and to integrate systems change thinking their strategic planning and in their day to day work." – Draimin, l. 91f.
3.1.1 Systems Mapping	Explain why and how systems mapping is used	Inductive	"We were doing kind of systems mapping to trying to understand, how are all this dynamics and inodorous players kind of effecting this situation" – Larkin, l. 130f.
3.1.2 Theory U	Explain why and how theory U is used	Inductive	"So we start with self and then work at the team, organizational and then ultimately system or network level." – Winslow l. 23f.
3.1.3 Multilevel Perspective	Explain why and how MLP is used	Inductive	"You have to think at all three levels. You have to understand what the potential of this is. Your micro is part of the wider system of change, it has to inform. Institutional and organizational challenges. It has to start building new institutions that fit the purpose. It needs to start building networks that challenge the we currently do things [] At the macro level challenging some of the wider values, that requires people who are norm entrepreneurs, they do things differently. That is really challenging." - Winhall, RSA, Observation, Video 24:40 – 25:50

3.1.4 Habits of a Systems Thinker	Explain why and how systems thinking is used	Inductive	"The Habits offer strategies for solving problems and questioning the status quo. They help people to build flexible thinking and an appreciation of emerging insights and multiple perspectives" ASC, Desk Research 4b)
3.2 Idea Testing	Information about designing innovations that aim to solve root causes and human-centered design.	Inductive	"Design and services and products are, I guess, the catalysts that we have to play with to create that change. So, it is about "how can we work in that space?". I think if you are answering that question as someone who was working really directly in government policy you would probably answer it in a really different way, because the area where they have influence and what they see to have the control over is quite different." – Larkin l. 39-45
3.2.1 Inspiration	Tools and steps before prototyping, gathering information	Inductive , Sub-category defined based on human-centered design process, Larkin	"da beteiligen wir alle Mitarbeiter in unterschiedlichen Formaten. Die sind nicht alle in großen Gesprächsrunden und dann redet man drüber, sondern es gibt eben dann welche, die führen Tagebuch über ihr Arbeitsleben, dann hat man so ein Status quo. Dann geht's in die Entwicklungsschritte, wo man Inspirationen sammelt, und so weiter. Dann können eben unterschiedliche Mitarbeiter in unterschiedlichen Settings eben auch beteiligt werden. Also es ist eben nicht so, dass man alle zusammen wirft und spricht. Sondern dass ist eben auch nen krass designter prozess, wie man Leute beteiligt." – Ott, l. 138-144
3.2.2 Ideation	Methods to test ideas and explaining the phase of integrating feedback and prototyping innovations.	Inductive , Sub-category defined based on human-centered design process, Larkin	"I guess the really creative work happens hear where you are really starting to plan an idea and usually coming up with lots of prototypes, so you might go out with twenty different prototypes into the field, you know, really scrappy things or like a piece of an idea or service you might be willing to do and start in particular testing it with users or with the people who are implementing." – Larkin, l. 169-173 Tools- IDEO.org website
3.2.3 Implementation	Phase when innovation enters the market.	Inductive , Sub-category defined based on human-	"You start to build it out further and then you take it out and test it live like a more (?) and a high level of validity when its been tested in the field." – Larkin, l. 183f.

		centered design process, Larkin	
3.3 Network			
3.3.1 Institutions with same mission	Organizations who collectively want to achieve systems change.	Inductive	"I don't think that one organization has all the resources or the ability to facilitate change on their own. So there is a process you can follow being the lead organization and then having smaller organizations work with you" – Ames, l. 96-98 "We see aligning ourselves with other like-minded organizations that agree with us, that the change we want to make is the right one. And then we lobby the government as a collective rather then just one organization on its own" – Larkin, l. 199-201
3.3.2 Stakholders that have power	Stakeholder that have the power over the change that could happen. Who are the stakeholder?	Inductive	"So if you did a good study of that system you find out, who are the key players in that system and you end up with the usual suspects of everything from government, private sector, civil society, grassroutes, citizens, everybody." – Mendizabal, l. 155-157 "I think about it in two ways, its weather trying to shift and act like more directly at kind of power points within the system like through all the people that are holding control over change that could happen. Who are the people that are in variant positions where they have influence and trying to design really specifically with those groups as partners or a board" (Larkin, l. 12-15).
Think tank			
3 Research	Research has to be delegated to the right people at the right time to reach its full potential.	Inductive	"And that for me is research. It is capturing and being able to tell. So it is not just capturing and publishing in the context of an academic setting with not many readers, but reaching those that need to see the stories." - Ceroni, l. 65-67 "And then I think the other thing we try to do and this is very challenging, it is not always accessible, is to look for windows of opportunity for change, for action and try to align our work so that you kind of deliver the momentum. Deliver a report or deliver an outcome right at the

			time where the system is in a position to do something with it." – Hunter, l. 89-92 ", so the first research thing to do would be to understand the system to explain what is going on. And then that would tell you, who needs to do what, who needs to change in what way. So they get to a research that is targeted at them, trying to understand them, the targets they face, the things that need to be done to bring about change" – Mendizabal, l. 203-206
3.1 Aligning work of Fellowship and Think Tank	Including examples of other affiliated organizations and screening their collaboration startegies.	Inductive	"We're relatively unique in the sense that we have complete independence in what we look at. We occupy this interesting space between business research and academic research, and we take the best of both worlds. Every time we do any research project, we have academic advisors who critique, challenge, advise, and collaborate with us, helping us to hold our research to the highest standards" – MGI, l. 81-83 "I mentioned this champions and sponsors network, so you have kind of that departmental representatives almost like ambassadors almost in each of our different departments." Walker, l. 49-51
3.2 Convening Activities	Events which aim to convene	Inductive	"Again, generally contributing two things, we have the knowledge and we also have the convening power, we can bring people together around that knowledge and help map that little look like and generally empowering them to do the work themselves" Hogan, l. 72-75
3.2.1 before conducting research	Think tanks conduct research before starting the research phase	Inductive	"what are the issues where a workshops, that brings a key set of stakeholders with the right knowledge together to think through a problem and make recommendations or just to find the problem which is a big part of getting to a solution. In something like a workshop setting, small, private, extended, longer multi hour session." – Hunter, l. 225-228
3.2.2 during research phase	Think tanks conduct research during the research phase	Inductive	"So even if we have just done some initial research, we just phrase and we know what it looks like, then we go out to question. But often, like we did some work around inclusive work and health, we had a publication so we put the research in to a short stimulus paper and used

			that to seed the conversation." – Burbidge, l. 217-222 Observation 3
3.2.3 after research	Think tanks do different kind of workshops, events etc. to disseminate a study	Inductive	"We do it in some traditional and some non traditional ways, there are the traditional ways like roundtables there is like the event type of things that we could do, that are just quiet traditional to think tanks sort of like roundtables or we do chair dinners where we invite dif-ferent decision-makers in key sectors to talk about a certain topic" – Shallowe, l. 84-87 Desk Researchs – Websites of think tanks with events Observations – Events
3.4. Research about SESO activities	This category outlines how screening the work of the social entrepreneurship organization can support the organization itself as well as the broader field of systems change.	Inductive	"I think there is obviously kind of a learning pattern that people go through, but what is happening now is that networks like [SESO] or philanthropic organizations, like McConnel and many many other, are saying, we have this new tools that are emerging in social change tool kit, including systems change. So we find really intelligent ways to organize that material, that knowledge, that we then communicate to people evolved in the systems change world, they can basically bring on all the implementations of systems change much earlier in their path to trying to be a social change maker." – Draimin, l. 51-57 "A kind of a sector in a landscape that's saying "What are the learnings we need to share with others and how do we kind of align what we are doing with others and there is more of a critical mass kind of working in the same direction I guess, so that was kind of one interesting area." – Larkin, l. 96-99
3.5 Fellow insights	Think tanks and fellows can share case studies about the work in systems change.	Inductive	"So one thing that we are doing and we were talking about incubated sources online, is trying to tell stories of systems change and often times, so systems change is really a journey of self, of teams, of organizations, of communities, of a whole network. So how do you tell the stories of

			these journeys and it requires a different type of storytelling." – Ceroni, l. 60-63 "We want them to reflect the work itself. "here is what we learned, here is some lessons that other people could take and use" So we are looking for articles, so it might be some organization working on health, but it can't be just about health, even as important as health is, it should be something that they learned, that could be used by people in other fields like poverty or, well it doesn't have to be, not every article has to be applicable to everybody." – Nee, l. 96-101
3.6 Engaging with the field	Think tanks can engage with the field to share their knowledge and learn from the field.	Inductive	"And that is also from the point of view that we feel that is a really strategic investment that we are making to help other players be able to identify, use and employ state of the art thinking and support tools around systems change and applying it and integrating in every-one's work. And because we realized that we would be able to move further faster if we stay engaged with the global community of thinkers and doers around systems change." Draimin, l. 18-23
Field of Systems Change			
4.1 Collaboration	Think Tanks can collaborate with other institutions to increase their impact. With whom do they collaborate and what for?	Inductive	"So that's usually how we collaborate, but the partner or the actor would be of a similar progressive stand and would engage to the issues that we want to talk about, but also have a footprint and have some relevance and credibility in that particular country context" – Shallowe, l. 105-108 "So, how it collaborates with think tanks brings quite a lot of challenges. Often it is easier to collaborate with other organizations because then you have kind of your own space. So think tanks are likely to collaborate with NGOs that do the "do-bit". So a think tank might have an idea about something and the NGO might implement it. It collaborates with governments, often they find a government that is interested in pursuing an idea or a government is interested in a think tank helping them think through a project, evaluate a project, review a project, a review of a

			program or even of a policy. I think they are increasingly working with media, like VOX (?), the atlantic, Netflix. They are generating context, whether it is via short videos, long form events or documentaries." – Mendizabal, l. 129-137
4.2 Disseminating	Think tanks use different channels to communicate and disseminate their research. Whom do they target?	Inductive	„But this is harder, because think tanks are normally small, have limited resources and they are historically and institutionally used to targeting key people in the policy space rather than the general public" – Mendizabal, l. 317-319 Graphic: Target groups and communication channels – Hogan, l. 202
4.2.1 Social Media	Think tanks use social media channel to communicate their knowledge.	Inductive	"They are something called "watch it videos" where you really take written content, maybe 13 or 14 bullet points and that is your message for the video and you lay it over either video or a changing succession of pictures and that creates a video that everyone can watch on their phone in a minute or so" – Hunter, l. 167-170 Desk Research – Social Media channels of think tanks
4.2.2 Website	Think tanks use their website to publish knowledge, events etc.	Inductive	Desk Research – Websites
4.2.3 Media	Think tanks use media for communication.	Inductive	"And then I could argue .. so media is our vehicle to get the public, right? As well as they read the New York times." – Hogan, l. 196
4.2.4 Events	Think tanks make events which aim to disseminate. Which kind of events do think tanks do to reach which target group?	Inductive	"And I think the last bit is, something we are trying to do more is hearing people's voice" – Burbidge, l. 210
4.2.5 Network	Network can be a key key to success for thin tanks.	Inductive	"So yes, it is a combination of an existing reputation build for a long time and us as an organization now working quite hard to make sure that we do stay." – El Khawaja l. 126f.

4.2.6 Research Product	Think tanks can produce different kinds of research output. On what depends the choice of research product?	Inductive	"We have expert comments, we find briefings, we have reports, we have larger bodies of work. All of them in a sense targeting, well being tailored to the issue and the timing, and what we think the people would probably be interested in knowing about" - Swan, l. 63-66
5 Funding	Think tanks need to decide on sources for funding and develop strategies. Which sources of fundings can think tanks use? What is recommended?	Inductive	". So we are a nonprofit, legally. Stanford is. But Stanford doesn't give us any money. We have one small grand that we get from the Hewlett foundation but other then that all of the money that we, our tired budget is from earned income. So we have about 9.000 people who pay for subscription of the magazine, our webinars are a pretty substantial contributor. Because those are either individuals paying to attend the webinar or else we get an organization to billet foundation to underwrite the cost of it and make it free. Our conferences people pay to attend, so we do two to three conferences a year and charge around a thousand dollars. So 250 people, so come and yes, so you can do the math it is like half a million dollars from conferences and then we actually sell a lot of reprints from our articles and as I mentioned they use them in courses a lot and universities are generally pretty strict about having professors pay for their rights to articles that they hand out, they don't always but that is a pretty good source of revenue as well. So basically 95% of our budget is from earned income" – Nee, l. 271, -283 "typically the goal is to have three types of funding in a project. So ideally attentionally a government department, foundation, and maybe sort of another pile." – Swan, l. 200f.
6 Evaluation	Think tanks can evaluate their work to improve their work. In this category methods for evaluation are summarized. Which evaluation strategies can be used for which causes?	Inductive	"And again it was difficult because we are dealing with people and timelines and that's very much different, but even for a report it can be five years until you see, maybe if you imagine somebody reads it, they quote it, the book is published, that published in a book probably takes two years, nevermind, the research goes into them." – Swan, l. 275-278 "we also have stakeholder interviews at different head points of the projects to try to engage them in how useful the stakeholders find the

			project. And then it goes into our monitoring the same way, so it is depended on told evidence, so we rely on people telling us “this is really useful and we benefit” “from this we made great contacts and we learned a lot” And that means that the program has been successful, so whether it comes from a donor or it comes from stakeholders who have been engaged in the project. That is generally how we measure the success” – El Khawaja, l. 84-93
7 Research Topic	Think tanks have to decide on research topics. This category implies strategies to find a research topics.	Inductive	“I mean it is sort of a combination I would say of push and pull. Push being the issues that we think are really important, for longer term, where we want to focus our research, that we actively go out and seek support for. And then the pull, being the point that in order to do our work we have to really get support for that, so funding.” – Hunter, l. 181-184 “And some of it as well is, we have a business development team, to figure out, well we are not going into a policy area that is already voices in that are like really strong voices.” – Shallowe, l. 242f. “We also go to conferences, like I said I just had a conference in Korea and someone on our team is going next week to a conference in Chicago. We are always going out to events talk-ing to people, reading.” – l. 184-186

Appendix E: Evaluation TT

ONE PAGE

Vision

Team

Core Team
positive and sonstructive energy

Advisory board
strong team of smart diverse people,

„A lot of people inputting but not a lot of people who can actually deliver."

Working process

Internal goals	As a follow up take action now and e.g. connect fellows
Exterenal goals	Goals reached
Working process	Good, but a lot of time pressure.
Editing	Good, next time organize who proof reads which part
Result	positive reactions

Communication

Can be improved; Ideas:

Videos | Events | Publishing | Connecting Fellows

VISION FOR THE [redacted]

Long term vision

- We turn the [redacted] into a European think and do tank that builds on all the [redacted] knowledge and data around **social entrepreneurship, social innovation and system change**
- We **capture, consulidate, analyse and understand our work** better and learn mechanisms for ourselves and based on that dessiminate, share and communicate it into the world.
- Whatever we will be doing as our vision we should be **testing the whole time** because part of what we are doing is trying to figure out what exactly the organization needs.

Within the social entrepreneurship sector

- **„We create the insights anyone is ruffling about, the [redacted] gives a repository of knowledge about „how to create change better, faster and more effectively", people dive though our achieve"**
- Work with other organizations that are also running practicional programs in the field to **develop collaborative action** with social entrepreneurs for social innovation and for system change (x2)
- Same table with [redacted] and pull together want we all learned from our studies or what we see from our fellowships and their field knowledge
- A **coalition that the EU talks to** or where global bodies talk to when it comes to social innovation in Europe
- [redacted] becomes **one of the main players doing policy** and practitioner research around this and develops the next round of where the field is going to
- Do something with another originations where we are peers
- „I want us to be really **pushing the sector.** I want us to really set the agenda. The annual report that we will release will be the one in the sector. We have a responsibility."

We can **say bold things:** e.g. change the definition of success which is right now old white highly educated man and say „the problem is not the type of solution created by diverse people, the problem is the definition if success" and that's what we have learned by working with changemakers from diverse backgrounds etc. I don't know what the next „version" of that is, but I think we should be creating those types of provocations to the sector.

Vision in connection to [redacted]

- **Centralize/align/coordinate knowledge work** done by [redacted]
- Connect the teams also with the **external demands**
- Turn [redacted] into a stronger **more research based organization**
- Strong connection to venture and fellowship
- In the long term have an **academy/training programm** (probably connect with Ross Hall)
- Have a **publishing house** and sell knowledge and case studies like Harvard

Model

McKinsey global Institute: It does within McKinsey what [redacted] could do within [redacted] The good thing is, it is not stand alone think tank that centralizes all the information created within McKinsey. It is a mixture of such a Think Tank and also a support unit for others. McKinsey consultants work in different areas and they learn a lot all the time. And usually when they do studies for a certain clients they come along with interesting insights that could be used for certain studies. But the consultants are not the best possible writers and they probably don't have time to write it themselves but they can get together with a McKinsey global institute college who helps them to put it on paper, to frame it in the best possible way and to make sure that the best publication comes out of that, etc. It is a coordination unit, that tries to pull together all the knowledge that is within the organization and makes it publishable.

Model

Royal Society of Arts (RSA): They are a club and have members that support a mixture of an academy and a cultural salon. They have been doing all kinds of different research which has often been against the Zeitgeist. If the [redacted] at one point could become something like the RSA that could be interesting too.

- Long term the [redacted] will be a **worldwide** knowledge network (5/5)
- „The model should be duplicated. Maybe it would be a global team that sits in different offices. First, we can experience in Europe because here we have so many different country offices and see how you can create a structure that enables people within a region to connect and fundraise. So we have a model to have something that we know works."

Appendix F: Details Research

1 Agents of Change

1.1 Systems Change Leader

The **Systems Change Leader (SCL)** is a leading organization or/and entrepreneur who has a guiding ambition to "mobilize a cohort, a group of people that is on the same journey as you and to walk on that […] journey and […] support them […] and use continuously feedback" (Burbidge, l. 48f.). Larkin observes that it always needs at least one organization, a team, or a person who is fully committed to the problem and envisions the possible change in the world. If the SCL has a "platform of experience, in-depth knowledge of the field, and established reputation" (Westley et al., 2014, p. 23) it is more likely to have the power to influence the meso level. The SCL needs a strong vision (Zaner, l. 120f.) and the ability to understand the system, lead the change and to adapt the solution to solve the root causes (ASC, Desk Research 4d). Ames recommends that a leading organization coordinates the work with others and builds a container for systems change (120f.). Since single organizations mostly do not have "the resources or the ability to facilitate change on their own" (Ames, l. 96f.).

1.2 Systems Change Network

The aim is to initiate change through addressing the people that hold "control over change that could happen" (Larkin, l. 14). Ames considers approaching the right people to be the "hardest piece" (10, l. 183). To promote change the SCL needs to build up and maintain rela-tionships with these actors (Ames, l. 87). "So if you did a good study of that system you find out, who are the key players in that system and you end up with the usual suspects of every-thing from government, private sector, civil society, grassroots, citizens, everybody" (Men-dizabal, l. 155-158). The SCL is part of the SCC and the SCC is part of the SCN (Illustration 23)

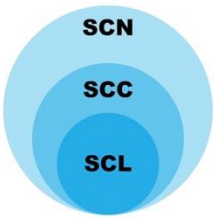

Illustration 23: Agents of Change. Source: Own Illustration.

1.3 Systems Change Coalition

A key activity to promote systems change is to build up a coalition (SCC) with like-minded or-gani-zations who have the same interest and share a vision (Ames, l. 199f.). These organiza-tions can come from business, politics and the public who have already tried to change the current system and people who suffer under the current conditions created by the system (Zaner, l. 125f.). Ames points out that single organization mostly do not have “the resources or the ability to facilitate change on their own” (Ames, l. 96f.). Targeting, for example, the government as a collective of ten organizations makes it more likely for the government to listen, rather than showing up alone (Ames, l. 201). To reach systems change, often times in-stitutions need to be targeted multiple times over a long period of time (Mendizabal, l. 79). Collectively they have the resources to target multiple institutions (Mendizabal, l. 37f.) and engage with actors who might be able to reach the broader public in a more effective way (Draimin, l. 80-83).

2 Innovation and innovative Environment

These two are conflicting objectives. Each activity either targets one or the other goal. Either an innovation is created, by making a design process to create a new solution or product. Or an envi-ronment for innovation can be created, which is more about changing underlying structures, mind-sets and behavior However, reaching one of these targets enables the other, so they promote each other (Ott. l. 308-325).

3 Examples for Systems Changes

Example 1: Health-App in Ethiopia

The Adolescents 360 (A360) is a four-year (2016-2020) initiative which has a budget of $30 million (IDEO.org, Desk Research 3b, p. 3). Their aim is to

> *"increase adolescent girls' access to and demand for modern contraception in developing countries, beginning with Nigeria, Ethiopia and Tanzania. The program is implemented by a Population Services International (PSI)-led consortium, and co-funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation" (IDEO.org, Desk Research 3b, p. 1)[34].*

Design Innovation

IDEO.org worked as a partner to design a solution for that challenge (Larkin, l. 192-194). In the process of designing the innovation, they collaborated with the young women effected by the problem and interviewed experts (Larkin, l. 165-167). Then they created app prototypes and tested them with woman, the users in the field. After multiple iterations of learning and optimizing the product they created the solution and implemented it in the market (Larkin, l. 173-183) and it was scaled across one region in Ethiopia (Larkin, l. 197).

The solution was an app called Smart Start. It

> *"links financial health to family planning using straightforward messaging that speaks directly young couples' immediate needs: planning for the lives, and the families, that they want. Delivered by HEWs, Smart Start finds and reaches them where they are, instead of asking girls to seek out contraception"[35] (IDEO.org Desk Research 3a).*

Start conversation or new way of thinking

According to their Health System Transformation Plan[36] Ethiopia has to reach certain targets until 2020. To reach their target of improving access for young woman to health services conception put

[34] Video about project: https://www.a360learninghub.org/ (accessed 9.01.2020).

[35] Futher information about that solution: https://www.ideo.org/project/smart-start (accessed: 08.01.2020).

[36]https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/sites/gff_new/files/Ethiopia-health-system-transformation-plan.pdf

pressure on the government, so they decided to scale the innovation “Start Smart” across the country in 2020 (Larkin, l. 200-208).

The PSI started the A360 consortium around the topic of contraception in developing countries (IDEO.org, Desk Research 3b, p. 1). The A360 engages on a national level with the Ministry of Health and other health organizations (IDEO.org, Desk Research 3b) and on a global level with other organization through visiting conferences, engaging with external partners, launching a learning hub about that topic (IDEO.org, Desk Research 3b, p. 17). Also, they are addressing the public through events and activities (IDEO.org, Desk Research 3b, p. 27).

Systems Change

The contract pushed the government into the position of needing to scale the solution across the country, which is supposed to happen in 2020 (Larkin, l. 196-210.).

“A little bit of the social shift to have the pressure at the same time on the institutional level and when you have great services that are designed it can make that happen” (Larkin. 208-210).

Example 2: Climate debate

The current debate around climate change can be considered as an example as well. The root causes of that problem need to be addressed to solve that problem (Nee, l. 19-22).

> *“It is not about just reducing carbon for a while; I mean it is really the whole restructuring how the economy works. So, everybody is realizing that all of these issues at a much deeper level are really systemic characters. So, I think everybody needs to be engaged in the implications of the scale of change and the speed of change are so significant that we really do need a societal conversation about what this is all about” (Draimin, 68-74).*

Prepare innovation

In niche markets people start using for example different coffee cups and water bottles (Larkin l. 49f.). However, the change in the manner of using certain products and services has not created “enough of change” (Larkin, l. 60), because the government and the business level need to involve more (Larkin, l. 58-61).

Start conversation or new way of thinking

In this example Greta Thunberg leads the change and captures the peoples “tensions and imagination” (Nee, l. 216-218). The interplay between the different actors of institutions, government and public can be identified. In this case the people set a new standard of what they find acceptable and puts pressure on the government to push industry (Larkin, l. 46-56).

4 Criteria Article Submission SSIR

Nee, l. 86-117:

We have a set of questions, we kind of ask yourself when we are looking at submissions:

- **social innovation**: does the idea offer a new perspective of an existing idea? Or is the organization or project itself innovative?

- **practical:** we want articles that are based in real world practice and have examples

- theory: does the article have some type of analysis?

- **learnings:** not about e.g. health or poverty, but about learnings from organizations working in health or poverty

- research: there should be something that shows that they have done some work (literature, compare with others in the field)