

Making space for non-conformity, eccentricity and iconoclasm: a challenge for social innovation.

Collette Snowden

School of Communication

University of South Australia

Social innovation has moved rapidly from the margins of social and policy management to the centre. In doing so it has begun to take on the characteristics and form of established approaches to problem solving, particularly through the formation of theories, rules, and models. The danger in the success of social innovation is that what was initially a dynamic, even radical, way of approaching social change will just as quickly become formalised and concrete. This paper argues that it is critical for social innovation to make space for non-conformist, eccentric and iconoclastic thinking. It proposes “disruptive” and “catalytic” approaches to social innovation to ensure that ideas and innovation from the margins of social thinking are accessible and that the capacity for social innovation to embrace and adopt new ways of thinking remains.