Social Innovation and Transition
Dmitri Domanski & Jürgen Howaldt
TU Dortmund University – Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund

"Co-innovation theory and practice to facilitate change"

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Main characteristics of the new innovation paradigm

- Opening of innovation processes towards the society

- Increased involvement of users/citizens
  in processes of "co-development"

- Co-ordination and mediation between various
  different groups of stakeholders who are involved in
  innovation activities

Transition

(Steward 2012, 334)

- The concept of sociotechnical regime: societal functions are fulfilled by sociotechnical configurations, the perspective on innovation is framed through consumption or end use

- Sociotechnical transition: relocates innovation away from one focal actor (e.g. a business company) to the interactions of a network of diverse actors

Social innovation within the new innovation paradigm

➢ New processes

➢ New contents

➢ New goals

Social Innovation

(*Howaldt/ Schwarz 2010, 26*)

➢ a new combination or new configuration of social practices

➢ in certain areas of action or social contexts

➢ prompted by certain actors or constellations of actors

➢ in an intentional targeted manner with the goal of better satisfying or answering needs and problems than is possible on the basis of established practices

➢ socially accepted and diffused widely throughout society or in certain societal sub-areas

➢ finally institutionalized as a new social practice

The multi-level perspective (MLP)

- Our concept of social innovation can be connected to the multi-level perspective (MLP) on socio-technical transitions (Geels 2002; Geels and Schot 2007)

- From the perspective of the multi-level approach, diffusion is more than the uptake of innovation

- It is intimately connected to fundamental changes of the socio-technical regime level, giving rise to what is sometimes called "system innovations"

- In our context, we may prefer to speak of transformative social change induced by social innovation

- MLP may have its origins in technology studies, but there is no reason why it could not be adapted for purposes of social innovation → *SI Drive – Social Innovation: Driving Force of Social Change, large scale integrating research project (2014-2017)*

Relationship between social innovations and social change

(Howaldt, Kopp & Schwarz 2013)

- Recourse to Tarde: social innovations as a central element of a non-deterministic explanation of social change and a key element of social transformation processes.

- Because Tarde places the practices of imitation – and its laws – at the centre of his theory of social development, reference to the associated microfoundation of social phenomena provides vital input into an integrative theory of innovation.

- As a forceful scientific conception of active social life it enables us to discover how social phenomena, conditions and constructs come into being and transform.

- A sociological innovation theory must therefore examine the many and varied imitation streams, and decode their logics and laws.

- From this perspective, the focus is always on social practice, since it is only via social practice that the diverse inventions etc. make their way into society and thus become the object of acts of imitation.

Thank you!

domanski@sfs-dortmund.de