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### **SOCIAL INNOVATION AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY**

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## INTRODUCTION

In the public interest in social innovation much focus is on the Schumpeterian charismatic hero who is able to see an opportunity and act boldly for the sake of producing a social value (Mawson, 2008). In public discourses of social innovation and social entrepreneurship it is often neglected to seek an in-depth understanding of the process leading to the outcome, and in principle a unique social value can be produced through inhuman processes. In the current exposure of social entrepreneurship the main focus is on the outcome and end result. The process leading to the outcome is led by the charismatic control of the social entrepreneur as the individual hero who, once the goal is set and the opportunity defined, is able to produce an innovative end result related to a significant challenge or problem. But end results depend on appropriate processes.

In much current literature on social entrepreneurship the entire focus is on the innovation and on the social value (the outcome) generated by the innovation. Social innovation is defined as "new and better ways to create social value" (Dees, 1998; 2002), or "social entrepreneurship seeks tipping points for innovation and change" (Light, 2008). In contrast to definitions that tentatively put the entire focus on the social value or end result without observing the process, Mair argues that the nature of social entrepreneurship "cannot be discussed without taking into consideration the complex set of institutional, social, economic and political factors" that make up the context of the social innovation (Mair, 2010: 26).

In this article we want to argue that the outcome of a social innovation is dependent on the appropriate process. A social innovation process does not only require participation and good governance within the initiative, it can also be dependent on the wider political, administrative and organisational context. An approach combining the concepts of ideas, community and deliberative democracy theory places social innovation firmly in the intersection between societal spheres and contributes to a more comprehensive theoretical view on social innovation as an integrated model of both process and outcome.

How to define social innovation? In its essence is a multidisciplinary phenomenon. Processes, practices and perceptions of social innovation tend to challenge not only the perception of state, market and civil society as three separate distinct spheres, but also the established scientific boundaries in academic theory as well as regulatory frameworks and support structures provided by government agencies (Evers, 2001; Hulgård, 2007; Chesbrough et al., 2008). It is a concept closely linked to social entrepreneurship that integrates practices triggering social change in social services, local community building or in the social economy. It builds on the combined "spirit of community" and "spirit of enterprise" (Henton et al, 1997), which inspired new economic models (Hart, Laville, Cattani, 2010).

The social capital and value generated by social enterprises and social entrepreneurs builds on a participatory approach to economy that has marked the history of European social economy (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001; Nyssens, 2006; Hulgård, 2007). While mainstream economic theory is mainly dedicated towards understanding the role of markets and public regulation, there is a new focus emerging that is devoted to explore and understand citizens and user groups as public innovators and co-producers of public services. In such situations citizens are producing, sustaining and governing collective goods efficiently by innovative and collaborative means (Ostrom, 1965; Pestoff, 2009).

Social innovation is also linked to new trends in social and political science. Classical sociology still treated and addressed the spheres of enterprise and government on the one hand and community and participation on the other as separate principles (Weber, 1973, 1985; Habermas, 1981). There was little optimism or chance for social movements and civil society to set agendas or to be agents of social change. Weber believed that the bureaucratization of communities and value-based institutions would gradually lead to a new social structure that would be almost impossible to destroy or change. Bureaucratization was a "power instrument of the first order to transform *Gemeinschaftshandeln* (community action) into rationally organized *Gesellschaftshandeln*" (societal action) (Weber, 1968: 987; Weber 1972: 570).

This view did not leave much space for community-based initiatives to govern the commons in transparent and participatory ways (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). A century later Habermas confirmed this belief in his colonisation thesis. He claimed that the "System" is only able to relate to and communicate with "Lifeworld" when practices from the latter are translated into a language of money and power, whereby "speaking from a historical perspective, monetisation and bureaucratisation of labour and public services do not take place painlessly, but come at the cost of the destruction of traditional forms of life" (Habermas, 1981, Vol 2: 474).<sup>1</sup>

However, throughout the last few decades, social scientists from multiple positions have aimed at understanding how civil society or at least active citizens and communities are able to influence and govern enterprises as well as public institutions. The notion of deliberation and deliberative democracy, a revised perception of the initial colonisation thesis now offered by Habermas inspired by civil society theorists in the 1990s (Habermas, 1996; Cohen and Arato, 1992), have been offered as ways of understanding how citizen groups and civil society organizations are able to influence the system and even roll back the colonising forces of disembodied markets and polities. Micro public spheres as they emerge in local communities engaged in agenda setting and social transformation can in principle grow to large scale social movements on the meso and macro level (Keane, 1998, Hulgård, 2004; 2007). Social networks are crucial in social and economic mobility (Granovetter, 1993), community development (Briggs, 1998) and large-scale societal sustainability (Putnam, 2000).

Efforts of combining and integrating the fields of enterprise and governance and of community and participation are conceptually worthwhile. Current practical efforts by change agents in the areas of "social innovation", "social entrepreneurship" and "social enterprise" are practical and closely related efforts of societal renewal and progress that bear testament to this. With or without the epistemological "support" of academic traditions, social innovators are working in the area of integrating economic and entrepreneurial objectives with objectives of social cohesion, participation, justice and sustainability. The aim of the paper is to conceptualise the process dimension of social innovation, with a particular focus on participation and governance with both an internal and external dimension. This will be done by defining social innovation as a combination of outcome and process which is both informed by current social innovation research and by the "classical" sociology of Weber and Habermas.

Firstly, we outline an integrated perspective on social innovation emphasizing both the outcome and process aspects of social innovation. Social innovations have an outcome (meeting social needs) and a process focus (participatory governance). This aspect could potentially reshape society as a whole, considering that participation has the potential of infusing social ends (outcomes) with an element of empowerment and learning, active citizenship and social well-being.

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<sup>1</sup> Translation of quote J.E.

Secondly, we illustrate how this approach can be informed by borrowing from the sociology of Max Weber. Weber was interested in questions of societal integration, in the social glue that keeps societies from drifting apart. The enthusiasm for social innovation and the economic, political and academic interest in the concept also stems from its integrative potential of providing service delivery, social cohesion and renewed political interest through the participatory process. From Weber we adopt the role of "Ideas" in social innovation.

Thirdly, we outline the process dimension of social innovation. From Habermas we adopt the idea of "Deliberation" as a specific way of understanding the process dimension of social innovation. The political process can be either supportive or obstructive of processes of social innovation and hence shapes the conditions for participation. The kind of deliberation, representation and advocacy determine the creation and the nature of a social innovation. It is therefore influenced by both political opportunities and agency. This will be discussed with a view to the deliberation and advocacy of social innovators as well as of elected representatives, who can push for changing social institutions and can become agents for more social inclusion. In such a model social movements, self-help groups and organisations are providing input through a process of deliberation.

A case study will be presented to illustrate the linkages between public and state spheres and how process plays a major role in defining the outcome of social innovation. It is the story of a mosque association in Berlin who successfully collaborated with a major welfare organisation. Deliberation between social actors and within the local administration helped shaping an innovation that not only serves the social mission of the mosque but also contributes to the wider political and economic concern of the integration of Germany's Muslim communities.

Finally, we conclude that powerful transformative ideas must be linked to institutional contexts and support structures of social innovation must be part of any theoretical approach to the concept. The deliberative process of civil society organizations, embedded in their local communities and institutional setting is essential for outcomes of innovating organizations and initiatives. The proposed model is a first step to filling a conceptual gap in social innovation research.

## **1. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO SOCIAL INNOVATION**

The paper adopts an integrated approach to social innovation that observes "process" and "outcome" as being equally important when understanding social innovation. The application of an integrated approach to social innovation is important for understanding the innovation in its entire institutional configuration and context. Only assessing the result or outcome of a social innovation, the work environment or the social network that produced the outcome results in a lack of transparency. The participatory governance dimension of social innovation remains in the shadow.

The need for an integrated approach to social innovation is outlined in a recent policy paper about how to meet societal challenges of extraordinary character and underlying conflicting interests.<sup>2</sup> Social innovation is defined as new ideas for products, services and models that meet

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<sup>2</sup> The paper "Empowering people, driving change: Social innovation in the European Union" was published by the Bureau of European Policy Advisors (BEPA), a group of policy makers who at the request of the President of the EU-Commission are giving advice on political issues related to the European Union.

social needs and are based on participative social interactions (BEPA, 2010). "The need to reform society in the direction of a more participative arena where empowerment and learning are sources and outcomes of well-being" (BEPA, 2010: 31) is particularly highlighted. It is further emphasised that both empowering, learning and network processes are in themselves to be understood as outcomes which can generate "improvements in the way people live and work" (BEPA, 2010: 28).

By adopting an integrated approach to innovation, this paper is in line with a turn in innovation research in at least three dimensions: from the perspective of territorial innovation, Frank Moulaert has argued that dimensions of context, governance, process, social inclusion and ethical position of social justice should be at the core of definitions of social innovation (Moulaert et al., 2003; 2005; 2010); from the perspective of technological innovation, Charles Chesbrough has argued that Open Innovation is a new paradigm that gradually finds its way into conventional ways of perceiving innovation. (Chesbrough, 2003; Chesbrough et al., 2008); and from the perspective of social economy members of EMES European Research Network has argued that social innovation can be identified through a set of economic, social and governance criteria that are emphasising the process dimension of innovation (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001; Nyssens, 2006)

From the perspective of regional and territorial planning and innovation Moulaert et al. (2003, 2005, 2010) has argued that local and social innovation is as much about innovations in the social relations as it is about satisfaction of unsatisfied human needs: Failed needs could be satisfied if neighbourhood development strategies pursued innovation in governance relations within the neighbourhood and the wider community. In such practice he sees transformative potential that goes beyond local contexts: "These governance relations include the interaction with and the embedding into the politico-administrative system of the democratic states of the countries to which communities belong. Therefore, innovation in governance relations also means innovation in representative democracy and governance of state institutions" (Moulaert et al. 2005: 1973).

As we will see in section 2 and 3 of this paper Moulaert's approach to social innovation is closely related to Habermas' notion of deliberative democracy as a way for civil society and social movements to influence the political decision-making through the public sphere. According to this perspective the dynamics in social innovation are about satisfaction of unsatisfied or alienated human needs and about innovation in the "social relations between individuals and groups in neighbourhoods and the wider territories embedding them" (Moulaert *et al.*, 2005). Moulaert objects to the metaphor of evolution frequently used in attempts to understand the process dimension of social innovation. "Other modes of social evolution like associativity, reciprocity and solidarity should be considered" (Moulaert, 2003: 298).

The integrated approach is further inspired by a turn in technological innovation research from a so-called old "Closed Model of Innovation" (CMI) to the new "Open Model of Innovation" (OMI) (Chesbrough et al., 2008). In the CMI, products and outcomes of innovation are originating from within the boundaries of the innovating enterprise or organization. Focus is on the end result of innovation. Innovation is about introduction of new products and services to be launched by the organization: the introduction of new products and services. The innovation process is fully controlled by the organization, ideally by their Research and Development Department. With a strict focus on the end result, whether this is defined as a "product", an "output" or an "outcome", the process towards the end result could for matters of principle involve perverse and straight forward authoritarian principles and processes. In the OMI, neither process nor outcomes are

fully controlled by the organization (Chesbrough et al., 2008). Networks and inputs from the outside are important features of the innovation process.

From a process perspective, social innovation is required to meet certain standards of democratic governance and participation by involving and empowering citizens (Moulaert 2010). In this light, social innovation creates social value by providing novel solutions to unsolved societal challenges (Phills et al., 2008) through participatory and empowering processes (BEPA, 2010: 30). According to this view, social innovation is predominantly developed and diffused through organisations whose primary mission is social (Mulgan, 2007).

## **2. SOCIAL INNOVATION AND SOCIETAL INTEGRATION: THE IMPACT OF IDEAS**

The notion of social innovation adopted in this paper is inspired by the cross-disciplinary tradition of social science to be found in the works of Max Weber and Jürgen Habermas. Max Weber's cultural analysis of social change was aiming at understanding the dynamic relation between ideas, interests and institutions. To Weber, the dynamic relation between these three factors could change the lanes of history (Weber, 1988; Lepsius, 1988; Hulgård, 1997; 2007). In the Weberian perspective social change is caused by change agents who are able to connect their ideas and values to the interests of larger parts of the population, thereby paving the way for institutional change.

However, Weber read the constant modernization and expansion of Western rationalization as a tendency towards subordination of value/ belief-oriented rationality and instrumental rationality gradually leading towards a constant secularisation of Western culture and the expansion of the bureaucratic state and capitalist enterprises as the main principles for any type of organization and organizational behaviour. In contemporary political sociology Jürgen Habermas combined the innovative potential of ideas and the communicative power of civil society groups rooted in different communities within society, argued that civil society and social movements can establish political legitimacy and a plurality of voices heard through public deliberation (Habermas, 1996).

Connecting Weber and Habermas is the attempt to get to the bottom of societal integration. Today, research in this field looks at the challenge of integration in pluralist, highly functional differentiated societies that no longer share a homogenous national or cultural identity. Conceptions of integration run across political and ideological lines and hence a definition that satisfies all is hard to come by. But already Weber wondered what makes society possible and developed an interest in understanding the impact of active agents of change on social renewal.

Societal integration is best regarded as a constant process of reproduction. The process itself as well as the result of this process defines integration into a specific society. For centuries the unity of society was assumed to correspond with the nation state (Imbusch/ Rucht 2005:13). Today we are looking at regional, European and worldwide cultural identification. The growing complexity of societies, relationships and identities results in tendencies of disintegration (Imbusch/ Rucht 2005:64). Economic integration is in danger, as more and more people must make a living in precarious work arrangements, undermining historical principles of solidarity. The shrinking power of the nation state in the global landscape undermines identification with a specific state power. Global migration has diluted the cultural unity of 'the people' and excludes whole segments of society from political participation, to name just a few reasons for disintegration.

Social innovations can possibly make a contribution to societal integration by overcoming fragmentation and social exclusion – under the right conditions. As Imbusch and Rucht point out, societies influence themselves, rather than being influenced by outside forces. "This influence is the result of conflicting interests and forces, of historical experiences and varying blueprints for the future, of different problem assessments and identity constructions, which all manifest themselves in reality." (Imbusch/ Rucht 2005:16).<sup>3</sup> Collectively negotiated principles and procedures provide the social glue, the public notion of the common good. At the beginning of all negotiation of change as a response to needs are always ideas for a better life.

The methodological framework to be extracted from the cultural sociology of Max Weber is a tremendous source of inspiration for contemporary attempts to understand the process dimension of social innovation and entrepreneurship. His research provides a stringent analysis of the way religious and value driven entrepreneurs pay a crucial contribution to the process of transforming ideas and values into patterns of behaviour with structural impact. Weber provides a conceptual and methodological toolset for assessing the process through which ideas are able to transform society (Lepsius, 1990) and an analysis of the way "people need powerful moral reasons for rallying to capitalism" (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005: 9).

Only ideas that can relate to important interests expressed in the social contexts where they are practiced have any chance of becoming major transforming powers in society. According to the Weberian perspective, the innovators are those who, driven by ideas, have the capability of translating (or transforming) ideas into practical schemes and applying them to specific spheres and interests in current society.<sup>4</sup> Among entrepreneurship theorists it is widely recognized that Weber's study was the first to approach "the influence of culture on entrepreneurship" (Basu and Altynay).

How to understand the process of innovation in the light of the Weberian cultural analysis? What is the role of entrepreneurs when transforming ideas into action with common impact? Lepsius considers Weber as the founder of cultural sociology since he provided a process perspective on the interaction between *ideas, interests and institutions*: Interests are intrinsically related to (embedded in, interwoven in) ideas, since they need to be legitimized by ideas in order to formulate goals and aims and in order to justify means (legitimization). On the other hand ideas can become specific/concrete because they are embedded in interests. Institutions are "carriers" of both ideas and interests. Institutions are schemes for the expression and further implementation of ideas and interests. Finally, institutions are providing the validity of ideas in specific contexts of action (Lepsius, 1990: 31).

These three factors are contributing to the constitution of society, and the dynamics between them is the reason why history is open for new directions: "Struggles between interests, arguments over ideas and conflicts between institutions are leading to new social constellations that leave the path of history open. Social orders consist of interests, ideas and institutions that influence people's living conditions, personalities and value orientations." (Lepsius, 1990: 7).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Translation of quote from German J.E.

<sup>4</sup> Denn was sie ihrem Sinn und ihrer psychologischen Qualität nach bedeuten wollte und konnte, hing dann eben von jenem Weltbild und dieser Stellungnahme ab. Interessen (materielle und ideelle), nicht: Ideen, beherrschen unmittelbar das Handeln der Menschen. Aber: die Weltbilder, welche durch Ideen geschaffen wurden, haben sehr oft als Weichensteller die Bahnen bestimmt, in denen die Dynamik der Interessen das Handeln fortbewegte. (Weber, "Einleitung zur Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen", 18. "Das Werk": Heptagon: Berlin, 2000)

<sup>5</sup> Translation of quote J.E.

The connection of ideas, interests and institutions provides the legitimacy of social order. Legitimacy, for Weber, is essential for societal integration, as only the air of legitimacy will convince people to submit to institutional and legally constituted power in the form of bureaucratic institutions of modern society, which are obliged to answer to the same legal principles (Imbusch/ Rucht 2005:29). However, he did see the danger of people becoming prisoners of bureaucracy, dehumanised and dominated without love or personal care (Weber 2000). He therefore developed the figure of the charismatic leader to counterbalance bureaucracy in a parliamentary democracy (Imbusch/ Rucht 2005:31). In societies politically integrated qua legal power self-confident citizens with an interest in participation replaced the charismatic leader.

For Weber it was a "fundamental" viewpoint that the conflicting institutionalisation of different principles and criteria forming modern rationalization would allow citizens a degree of freedom in their life practice to innovate. Weber's methodology contains a set of guidelines that can inform the process dimension of current studies of social innovation and entrepreneurship. It provides a toolset for understanding social innovation. The "guideline" consists of four steps originating in the methodological framework that can be extracted from his sociology of religion.

The first step consists of a detailed mapping of the idea whose transforming impact is to be revealed. The idea Weber chose to investigate was "calling" as interpreted by ascetic Protestants: That one's task is given by God (Weber, 2002: 39). The idea of calling as the fulfilment of duty in the daily work was new, and pleasing God in this manner "became viewed as the highest expression that moral activity could assume" (Weber, 2002: 39). Weber saw a direct link between this specific idea and the religious entrepreneurs' daily practices. In the post-Weberian debate this view of the influence of the ascetic Protestants is highly contested, whereas the methodological framework for understanding how moral forces, ideas and values are important cultural triggers for entrepreneurial action and social change is still considered a major source of inspiration in contemporary theories of social change (Habermas, 1981; Lepsius, 1990; Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005; Swedberg, 2000).

The second step is devoted to a further examination of the idea that has already been "detected" in the first: does the idea imply or even urge a specific way of behaviour? Are certain groups of people willing to act in correspondence with the idea? Lepsius describes the second step as "cognitive isolation of the idea" (Lepsius, 1998: 35). The connection between the idea and a specific carrier group must be clear. A group of people determined to live their life in accordance with the idea. This was indeed the case with the ascetic Protestantism: the idea became immediately and directly influential through the internalization in the community of believers and followers.

The third step is a process of interpreting the relation between idea and social environment or simply context: What is the relation between idea and context? Is the idea likely to influence outputs, and innovations? Or is it rather the social environment in which they are formulated and practised that nourish the evolution of ideas and the expansion of their "area of influence"? The step is devoted to researching the institutional configuration of the idea and the way it relates to major interests expressed in the context. Weber argued that economic gain and accumulation of capital among protestant sects was caused by the structure of the context and not by the idea itself. The direct impact of "the Calling" was a dramatic increase in the work intensity whereas the chances for economic success should be credited to the social context of the carrier groups – the religious entrepreneurs who lived their life in accordance with the instructions.

Fourth step is a study of the process of the diffusion of ideas in society. A way of doing so would simply be to examine statistically how many groups outside of the original carrier group would support and adopt the Calvinist interpretation of the Calling. Weber himself was very sceptical towards a quantitative approach to this question of diffusion (Weber 1973:590).

The way protestant asceticism became powerful "in the world" was through learning. Other Protestants learned from the Calvinists and gained from their experiences. The Calvinist asceticism seized a significant socializing impact in places where it blended with other and maybe even competing sects. Other groups of people than the Calvinists could adopt the protestant work ethics without adopting the Calling, simply because the mixture of religious content and a context favouring a capitalist development proved to be strong. Weber found such a "proof" in North Carolina and other American colonies where: "A string of mental content rooted in very specific religious ethics coupled with capitalist development potential" (Weber 1973: 588).<sup>6</sup>

Through such innovative mixtures of religious value-driven determination and contexts in favour of a capitalist development, the idea of "Calling" gradually lost influence but the work discipline was maintained. Protestant sects were the arch types of modern communities serving a huge mix of purposes, but all having an immense impact on the American society. Generations of political philosophers and social scientists from Alexis de Tocqueville to Robert Putnam and Theda Skocpol have scrutinized and documented the specific composition of American social life and how it influences politics. Weber was also aware of the strong impact of associational activities, but was looking at their roots in the Protestant sects (Weber 1973:590).

On the one hand he was critical of the factual result of the large-scale social innovation (capitalism and expansion of Occidental rationality) triggered by the Calvinists. But what some may consider as a decline of common values and a loss of moral standards, Weber perceived as a successful diffusion of the original idea preached by the founding fathers of protestant sects and practiced by their followers. The consequence was an immense process of rationalization: "This rationalization of the organized and directed life – now in the world yet still oriented to the supernatural – was the effect of ascetic Protestantism's concept of the calling" (Weber, 2002: 101). He concluded his essay with the famous diagnosis of modern society, where value driven life practices seized to be of any significant impact because "Victorious capitalism" (124) neither needs the values derived neither from ascetic Protestantism any longer nor any other values as supporting pillars. However, Weber does not make provisions for fragmented identities and post-nationalist scenarios. In his days long-standing internal and cultural conflicts that could not be hedged by legitimate state power and bureaucratic regulations did not yet occur (Imbusch/ Rucht 2005:31).

From Weber's cultural analysis we can extract inspiration for a methodological framework aimed at researching social change and innovation in full. In his four step analysis he tried to integrate dimensions of entrepreneurial idea, process, outcome and context. This methodology is still of importance contestation of his strong believe in the roots of capitalist expansion, the trust in objectivity and the issue of causality by the communicative turn in social science (Habermas, 1981:198).

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<sup>6</sup> Translation of quote

### **3. A HABERMASIAN FRAMEWORK: TOWARDS A PROCESS PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL INNOVATION**

Societies of today appear to be in disintegrated turmoil, as social institutions no longer provide congruent identities and the integrative frame has inflated from national to global scope. Human relationships are increasingly characterised by individualism and the diversification of norms. Habermas described publics dominated by mass media and elite interests. But where Weber saw a natural loss of freedom due to the modernisation process, Habermas opens a way out: despite the irreversibility of the modern fragmentation process he maintains that social integration is still possible if three conditions are combined in a deliberative democratic process opening new legitimate political and representative venues.

First, the risk of disagreement and distorted or end of communication is high if it is not rooted in the lifeworld. Ideas are generated in the lifeworld, within the realm of civil society. From a discursive point of view nothing is set in stone, and ideas can unfold their power of change (Habermas 1998:394-5). Second, civil society, social innovations and community activism enter the stage as a discursive public sphere that provides social cohesion and social integration (Imbusch/ Rucht 2005:39). The third condition for social integration is the legitimacy of constitutional values through deliberative communication.

Habermas bridges classic and contemporary integration theory in the sense that his own theory was constructed in critical discussion of Weber and other authors. His division of system and life world is an important step towards unleashing the power of civil society and social innovation. The system is dominated by strategic and outcome-oriented action and encompasses bureaucracies, political parties and the market. Groups and individuals participate in markets, education, and administrative activities and have certain legal obligations, which all functionally tie them to this sphere (Habermas 1973). Conflicts in the system can only be tackled in their system context. Usually the result of deliberation in this sphere will be compromise rather than agreement, as conflicting interests focussing on results rather than comprehension are prevailing (Imbusch/ Rucht 2005:36).

The lifeworld, on the other hand, is based on communication and comprehension. Here, people draw from knowledge and convictions, which help them to comprehend their world and to develop action strategies based on a common interpretation of language that provides solidarity and reason within communities. Conflicts appear as communicative contradictions that, as a matter of principle, can be resolved in a discursive process. Lifeworld expressions of social unity have also entered the systemworld, symbolised by national flags, hymns, national holidays, founding myths and cultural stereotyping (Imbusch/ Rucht 2005:16-7).

Both spheres must be constantly reproduced. According to Habermas the system world is threatening to colonise the lifeworld, i.e. through the welfare state incorporating workers into the system as the state penetrates ever more areas of life (Habermas 1990). But the lifeworld provides the essential impulses for social integration. Lifeworld consists of a cultural, a social and a personal dimension. Culture takes on the role of passing on moral obligations and values, institutionalised in the constitution. Society provides interpersonal and sustainable networks. Personal identities are constituted through social belonging and communicative rationality<sup>7</sup>,

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<sup>7</sup> Habermas explained communicative rationality as subject-subject communication between individuals in order to maintain a society that allows for shared norms, institutions and conventions that still allows all individuals to thrive because the norms can be agreed on or else put up for debate, as all knowledge is in principle fallible and revisable. Thus norms are not found on some sort of pre-determined practical

which help interpreting new situations and deciding on courses for action that are in step with core moral values (Imbusch/ Rucht 2005:37).

Habermas "read" the constant differentiation of societal spheres as a "societal evolution" (Habermas, 1981, vol. 2: 445-489). Here Habermas introduces the notions of "evolutionary push" and "learning processes" as concepts that are important for any contemporary attempt to produce an integrated perspective on social innovation emphasising process and outcome as being equally important. If colonization and pathological consequences of modernization (social change) must be avoided it is crucial that a new institutional configuration is embedded in the rationality that was already existing in the "old culture". The outcome must be based on a process that is perceived as rational from the perspective of the participating community or "constituency". Then a new institutional capacity can be reached: "The institutional representation of rationality structures developed in the culture of the old society, leads to a new level of learning" (Habermas, 1981, vol 2: 464).<sup>8</sup>

As long as a society can agree on a procedure that endorses deliberation, disputes can at least be met with compromise based on the acceptability of the better argument, which in turn endorses political decision with legitimacy. The sovereignty of the people is located in the public sphere and takes the form of communicative power. "Strictly speaking, this power springs from the interactions among legally institutionalised will-formation and culturally mobilized publics. The latter, for their part, find a basis in the associations of a civil society quite distinct from both state and economy alike." (Habermas 1996:301). Habermas pointed out that in a social state following the rule of law organized private citizens must enter the public sphere (Habermas 1990:337).

History has shown how minority groups have emancipated themselves from exclusion and discrimination this way, most popularly the trade unions, which pushed for the interest of workers. Habermas referred to the development of the public sphere into an interesting object for observation through the transformation from merely economically active citizens to active political citizenship, which transformed state power into means of societal self-organisation (Habermas 1990:22). Unreflected emotions in the public sphere can lead political decision-makers to invite civil society participation, which then in turn again informs political debate. This is where social innovations, depending on their political potential, meet the political process level, which can either support or block the innovators.

The model of deliberative democracy highlights the importance of political opinion building in informal circles of political communication (Habermas 1996:275). Political legitimacy is achieved is when public opinion can make itself heard in the strong public of the political system without undermining the separation of powers (Baynes 2002:128).<sup>9</sup> Already Weber saw legitimacy as a central aspect for societal integration, as only the air of legitimacy can convince people to voluntarily submit themselves under institutional and legally constituted power that must answer to the same legal principles. Ideally, writes Habermas, individuals develop a constitutional patriotism that allows normative messages to be sent out to every pocket of society.<sup>10</sup> In a

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rationality but on communicative rationality based on the linguistic assumption that people may not share beliefs but the ability to think (Habermas 1998:27).

<sup>8</sup> Translation of quote J.E.

<sup>9</sup> "Informal public opinion-formation generates 'influence'; influence is transformed into 'communicative power' through the channels of political elections; and communicative power is again transformed into administrative power' through legislation." (Habermas 1996:28).

<sup>10</sup> Every citizen should in principle be able to agree to the underlying principles of the constitution, as they benefit all. Recognition of every person as free and equal is threefold: "They should receive equal

pluralist society, which must integrate different and sometimes conflicting beliefs and value systems, the constitution is a frame for political institutions to refer to.

Deliberative democracy highlights the importance of certain processes and procedures. This perspective is in tune with the process perspective on social innovations. Both feed a plurality of views, generated in the lifeworld of communities to decision-makers in the state sphere through agency and discourse within civil society. However, "Discourse theory has the success of deliberative politics depend not on a collectively acting citizenry but on the institutionalisation of the corresponding procedures and conditions of communication, as on the interplay of institutionalised deliberative processes with informally constituted public opinions" (Habermas 1996:275). In other words, the success of social innovations is also dependent on deliberators and advocated within the system world. This is where new concepts of representation unite with principles of deliberation and link to Moulaert's new governance strategies.

Discourse is the tool of agency. "By using the term discourse, we can simultaneously indicate the ideas represented in the discourse (...) and the interactive processes by which ideas are conveyed (...)." The process explains why certain ideas fail or succeed. "But the discourse itself, as representation as well as process, also needs to be evaluated as to why it succeeds or fails in promoting ideas" (Schmidt 2008:309). Ideas must be conveyed from civil society to the state sphere in a deliberative process, and then need advocacy within the representative political body itself. Structure and agency work together, by structural accommodation of deliberation over a specific issue and by the agency of both civil society and political actors. The case study is presenting this connection quite clearly.

Representation today must rely more on informal negotiation and deliberation in order to generate political legitimacy.<sup>11</sup> Democratic theory of the last decade has been affected by these new realities and questions representation based exclusively on territory, not taking issues such as class, race, gender, ethnicity etc. into account.

#### **4. CASE STUDY OF SOCIAL INNOVATION: A BERLIN MOSQUE**

In 2008 the board members of a mosque in Berlin approached one of their members with a special mission: They were looking for a project manager to open the mosque to the wider community. For the past ten years the members of the community had helped building a new mosque and community centre, with both financial and physical support. The board of the mosque consisted mainly of builders and cab drivers. Now it was time to give something back to the community. „In order to do that what people need most is respect and acceptance by others in this area. We never opened up to the wider German society and they never got to know us. During the 1970s and 1980s, the state ignored us. Some 100 000 Muslims are living here, but schools, local administration, nobody opened up to us."<sup>12</sup>

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protection and equal respect in their integrity as irreplaceable individuals, as members of ethnic or cultural groups, and as citizens, that is, as members of the political community" (Habermas 1996:496).

<sup>11</sup> The European nation states and democracy "are twins born of the French Revolution. From a cultural point of view, they both stand under the shadow of nationalism" (Habermas 1996:493). This understanding of statehood is obsolete with EU-integration and more than 50 years of work migration and global movements of refugees. Communities clustered around particular ethnicities, ways of life and value systems give way to pluralistic societies that can only claim universalistic norms guaranteed by the constitution as common reference framework.

<sup>12</sup> Interview May 2010

The board of the mosque identified a committed social innovator ready to learn. The mosque is one of the oldest mosque associations in Berlin, frequented by Muslims of Turkish origin, who make up some 30% of the population in the neighbourhood (*Kiez*). The mosque had already been involved with the local *Quartiersmanagement* for some years and participated in neighbourhood initiatives and street festivities, but they never conceptualised their own projects.<sup>13</sup> Apart from occasional sponsoring activities for the mosque, the newly recruited project manager had no experience with project design, proposals or public relations. But he started doing research on the Internet.

When he saw a call for project proposals encouraging mosque participation in an educational project on the website of the *Quartiersmanagement* in the area he set to work. Education is of great concern to many Muslims: "One day there will be no more Hartz IV (unemployment benefits). What shall we do then? There are no more assembly lines, there is no industry ... This is a problem that has crossed the doorstep of our mosque, our children must be able to overcome this educational barrier and leave the Soldiner Kiez."<sup>14</sup> He drafted a proposal, and submitted it to the Commissioner for Migration and Integration of the district. Three weeks later he had a phone call to confirm the support of the Commissioner and the local Mayor for their proposal, as they were keen to activate the social potential of mosque associations.<sup>15</sup>

Due to the lack of professional skills among mosque community members the administration teamed them up with one of Germany's largest welfare organisations, which had no previous experience in working with a mosque. After thorough internal consultation they decided that active facilitation of integration requires creative approaches.<sup>16</sup> The final project outline is following two modules developed to support mothers with young children. The module "Home Instruction of Parents with Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)" is particularly addressing migrant families with kids between 4-6 years of age to practice German.<sup>17</sup> Women are trained to visit mothers of the same cultural background in their homes. The preventative learning and play programme OSTAPJE is directed at families with children between 18-24 months, either at home or in playgroups that allow intercultural and interreligious contact. For the second module a group of fathers comes together at the mosque community centre once a week.

In a meeting with the Social City, Integration and Equality commission of the district parliament in September 2009, the new mosque project coordinator explained that in conversations with

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<sup>13</sup> *Quartiersmanagement* (neighborhood management) is a programme funded by national and federal government to support disadvantaged inner city areas. Berlin has 34 specially funded areas, a local management structure is supposed to connect citizens with the local administrative level. It cooperated with all local actors to build sustainable networking structures. Citizen participation and empowerment is a special focus of the programme. (For more details refer to <http://www.quartiersmanagement-berlin.de/>, accessed May 2011)

<sup>14</sup> Interview May 2010

<sup>15</sup> Interview February 2010

<sup>16</sup> Interview May 2011. One of the worries was negative press coverage of public funding of a mosque association. They also knew that the local conservatives were weary of religious fundamentalism finding a way into an educational project.

<sup>17</sup> The acquisition of German skills is essential for educational success. According to the Department for Education Science and Research of the Berlin Senate levels of fluency in both German and foreign mother tongue have declined over the past years. See: Auszug – Konzept Sprachförderzentrum, 32. öffentliche Sitzung des Ausschusses Sozial Stadt (QM), Integration und Gleichstellung, Bezirksamt Mitte, Berlin, 20.1.2010

parents at the mosque it became evident that the role of education is underestimated.<sup>18</sup> The deputies of the local Conservative party (CDU) agreed to fund the project, commending its model character. The support of the conservative party was not at all guaranteed. The CDU, a party with strong Christian values, has been very reluctant to agree to fund Muslim organisations, particularly for those mentioned in the Reports for the Protection of the Constitution. The conservatives have also been at the forefront of preventing representative mosque building projects in Berlin. "The CDU – I have many friends who are members of the CDU, but they did give me a stomach ache. (...) We presented our project and were convinced the CDU would vote against it because we are mentioned in the Report for the Protection of the Constitution. (...) And the CDU, oh my God, then this CDU-guy is getting up and says we support the project."<sup>19</sup>

Two years later the project awaits evaluation, which will determine the continuation of the project. The cooperation between mosque and welfare organisation has been a positive experience and they will continue to work with together if they get further green light. According to their welfare organisation's project coordinator they are quite ready to plan further projects with the mosque association. It has been a steep learning curve for both organisations with unexpectedly valuable outcome.<sup>20</sup>

For now, mosque associations in Berlin do not yet have enough advocacy power to realise social innovations on their own. They do need the support of established advocates who help shaping political opportunities. The political discourse on spending public funding on projects organised by Muslim associations is ambivalent. On the one hand more participation and integration are desired. On the other hand, as Maryam Stibenz, the district Commissioner for Integration and Migration describes the political approach as „caring but degrading”.<sup>21</sup> There are too many security concerns in integration discourse. People with a background assumed to be Muslim are too much reduced on their religion, which leads also to a self-definition predominantly Muslim.

The fact that many of them are also in low-income groups is ignored. Yet, a social innovation as put forward by Haci Bayram wants both: better educational and economical prospects for their children and acknowledgement as Muslims, who have a different lifestyle. The District Mayor wants to find out how much social and political integration potential mosques can provide. He underlines the model character of their innovative approach to integration policy in Mitte.<sup>22</sup> Not every district mayor in Berlin with a high percentage of Muslim residents is that ready to cooperate. It is the still somewhat partisan political will of individuals that makes projects like this one possible against the odds.

The *Quartiersmanagement* started pursuing Muslim participation in local projects as early as 1999, right from the beginning of QM. But it was only after September 11, 2001 that the district-mayor at the time backed this approach. A former *Quartiersmanager* reports high levels of Islamophobia at grassroots level at the time, including in local CDU and SPD groups. This underlines the importance of participation and the creation of local networks of citizen groups

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<sup>18</sup> "Auszug – Tandemprojekt Elternbildung im QM Soldiner Strasse – Projektvostellung durch das BA und den Projektträger", 28. Öffentliche Sitzung des Ausschusses für Soziale Staff (QM), Integration und Gleichstellung, 16.09.2009

<sup>19</sup> Interview May 2010

<sup>20</sup> Interview May 2011

<sup>21</sup> Interview February 2010

<sup>22</sup> Einladung zur Pressekonferenz: Innovations-Tandem zur Elternbildung in Mitte, Pressemitteilung Nr. 517/2009, 18.11.2009, Bezirksamt Berlin-Mitte

and initiatives. The passing on of skills like project drafting, proposal writing and presentation to social agents was one of his central efforts.<sup>23</sup>

This nurturing paid off for the mosque. "Migrants can decide themselves between wrong and right. We can do it, we know how to do it, Mustafa and Ali. We must show our communities." The innovator from the mosque reports that this is what he tells young men and women in the mosque's youth club. The mosque's website highlights a new self-confidence for active citizenship as part of the social mission and they confidently maintain that integration is not about changing ways of life, it is about participation, as participation creates contacts and sense of empowerment.<sup>24</sup>

Since the kick-off of the tandem project on education in 2009 the mosque has hosted a community organising meeting to discuss cooperation with local schools, under participation of senate, to address poor performance of pupils with migration background.<sup>25</sup> A *Bürgerladen* (citizen shop) opened in February 2011, inviting people in in German and Turkish. People of all communities are welcome to seek support with filling forms or with school problems. Social workers, a lawyer and the local police come in to talk to residents of the area once a week. The project coordinator describes the *Bürgerladen* as another step towards an open common future. Members of the Haci Bayram community inaugurated the initiative with a prayer, thus demonstrating the support of the community. The district mayor, who attended the inauguration together with representatives of non-Muslim neighbourhood initiatives, described Islam "as a part of our world".<sup>26</sup>

The former *Quartiersmanager* highlights the importance of normalising the living together of different faith communities. He believes more Muslims must move up the ranks of political parties, where they become representatives of Muslim as well as other interests.<sup>27</sup> The mosque innovator himself would like to move on from social innovator to being a politician. He is not sure he can continue both, mosque and political activity. He is wondering where he can achieve more for his community. He certainly already helped the mosque association to open up to the wider community and to start cooperating with other organisations and political institutions. This would not have been possible without the support of the mosque community itself as well as the outreach approach of the local administration.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The driving force behind the mosque's activities, the self-trained innovator, benefitted from the original interest of QM and administration to work with mosques. Otherwise it would have been difficult to go ahead with the project, since public funding of Muslim organisations is very rare in Berlin.<sup>28</sup>

This case reunites our theoretical reflections on contributions by Weber, Tönnies and Habermas to a process perspective on social innovations. The mosque became a social innovator with the

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<sup>23</sup> Interview May 2011

<sup>24</sup> see [http://haci-bayram-moschee.de/?page\\_id=121](http://haci-bayram-moschee.de/?page_id=121) (accessed May 2011)

<sup>25</sup> starting in summer 2011 with a reward scheme for parents and students, Interview May 2011

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.deinkiez.de/index.html?http://www.deinkiez.de/easytool/index/11471/>, accessed May 2011

<sup>27</sup> Interview May 2011

<sup>28</sup> see Kleine Anfrage: Wen fördert das Land Berlin? Drucksache 16/12962, Berlin, February 2009 <http://www.cdu-fraktion.berlin.de/Initiativen/Kleine-Anfragen/Verwaltung/Wen-foerdert-das-Land-Berlin> (accessed May 2011)

aim of benefitting their community through integration in their wider neighbourhood. Participation is seen as a means of generating more acceptance and as a way of explaining difference. The tandem project, though not their original idea but decided by the district administration, was a way to jump on the band-wagon with an established German welfare organisation which has a large network of its own.

As Weber stated, ideas must be expressed in the contexts where they are practiced, which is exactly what happened in the institutional configuration of the mosque. Or expressed with Habermas: ideas are rooted in the lifeworld and must be communicated via associations to the system. If a process of social change (social innovation) follows this pattern, there is a chance of avoiding the pathological consequences that otherwise often are accompanying processes of modernization and rationalization. The board of the mosque came up with the idea of opening up to the wider community and to thus benefit their members. The social mission was clear. But in this case also a second demand of Weber and Habermas was fulfilled: that institutions become the carriers of ideas and processes of learning. The mosque was lucky that the mayor of the district was looking for ways to activate the social and integrative potential of mosque associations, as they have access to the Muslim community and social and welfare structures already at work. Once teamed up with the German welfare organisation, all sorts of new ideas emerged for possible projects within the mosque (youth-parent dialogue, mosque newspaper), and within the wider community (participation in community organising, Bürgerladen, function as good example for other mosques).

The case is a good illustration of the process dimension of social innovation. Essential to the concept of social innovation is participation and good governance. In this case the initiative was taken by the elected board of the mosque on behalf and for the benefit of their members. Individuals were pulled into the project as the partnering welfare organisation started training women as educators. On horizontal level the mosque association became part of other initiatives in the neighbourhood, thus opening communicative channels for their members they did not possess before. On vertical level, channels of communication opened between mosque representatives and the district administration. The symbolic representation of interests is important, especially in the context of the inclusion of weak interests through deliberative processes, which is institutionally a less powerful instrument of manifesting interests than elections or claims of organised economic interests.

All activities have a potentially socially integrative character as all projects, from parenting classes with the association to cooperation in community platform initiative with schools are aiming at individuals taking part in social life, preparing their children to have a better stance as members of a minority and in normalising relationships within the community and finally on political level, as the mosque established a relationship with an administrative institution following a political decision. There is a sense of empowerment among all those actively involved in the effort.

Clearly, all cooperation that involves public funding strongly depends on the political opportunity structures, but in the case of the tandem projects there were deliberators within the political process of the district who argued in favour of the cooperation and managed to secure the agreement of the conservatives and other critical parties. Otherwise neither this project, nor all following initiatives, would have been realised. This highlights the importance of a deliberative democratic process that allows all voices to speak up in the first place. In this case it was first strongly encouraged by the QM and then picked up by the mayor.

The process development of this social innovation ended in benefitting all parties involved. The mosque associations reached their aim of opening up to the local community with the long-term goal of better social and economic prospects for their members. The district administration managed to activate the social potential of the mosque, allowing better access to parts of the local Muslim community in terms of service provision, education and economic emancipation. Furthermore it was able to add some legitimacy to the wider integration policy discourse in the country, even though this story still needs a lot of telling. The public discourse on Muslim integration is dominated by normative arguments, there is a general lack of legitimacy as well as efficiency of past integration policy approaches, largely based on a lack of dialogue and cooperation between policy makers and the recipient communities. Speaking with Habermas, the new institutional configurations must be more firmly related to structures of rationality that already existed in "the old culture".

This is a case that makes the linkage between political opportunity structures and social agents quite clear. The social innovator needs the support of a professional advocate from within the political system to steer the effort towards success. However, the advocacy channels are strongly based on personal relationships and not yet adequately institutionalised. Only further developments can tell something about the sustainability of such types of innovation, as cooperation is often centred on particular individuals.

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