SOCIAL INNOVATION AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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 related to a significant challenge or problem (Mawson 2008). The current literature on social entrepreneurship tends to focus exclusively on the outcomes of innovation processes – the innovation itself or the social value it generates (Dees 1998, 2002). Both social innovation and social entrepreneurship discourses often neglect to seek an in-depth understanding of the process leading to the outcome, which in principle allows the production of a unique social value through inhuman processes. Current discourses thus fail to take into account the fact that end results must be linked to appropriate processes.

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 other words, a social innovation process does not only require participation and good governance within the initiative; it also depends on the wider political, administrative and organisational context.

What definitions of social innovation have been offered so far? In its essence, social innovation 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 the regulatory frameworks and support structures provided by government agencies (Evers 2001; Hulgård 2007; Chesbrough *et al.* 2008). Social innovation is a concept closely linked to social entrepreneurship, which integrates practices triggering social change in social services, local community building or 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 *et al.* 2010).

The social capital and value generated by social enterprises and social entrepreneurs build on a participatory approach to economy that has marked the history of the European social economy (Borzaga and Defourny 2001; Nyssens 2006; Hulgård 2007). While mainstream economic theory is mainly dedicated to understanding the role of markets and public regulation, there is a new focus emerging that aims 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 sphere of enterprise and government, on the one hand, and that of community and participation, on the other, as separate principles (Weber 1973, 1985; Habermas 1981). There was little optimism about the possibility for social movements and civil society to set agendas or to be agents of social change; Weber believed that the bureaucratisation of communities and value-based institutions would gradually lead to a new social structure, which would be almost impossible to destroy or change. Bureaucratisation was a "power instrument of the first order to transform 'community action' (*Gemeinschaftshandeln*) into rationally organised 'societal action' (*Gesellschaftshandeln*)" (Weber 1968: 987).

A century later Habermas confirmed this belief with his colonisation thesis. He claimed that the "system" was only able to relate to and communicate with the "lifeworld" when practices from the latter were translated into a language of money and power. "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).[1]

However, throughout the last few decades, social scientists from multiple positions have sought to understand how civil society and citizen groups can form enterprises, influence public institutions and repel the colonising forces of markets and policies. The notion of deliberation and deliberative democracy - a revised perception of the initial colonisation thesis offered a decade later by Habermas - inspired civil society theorists in the 1990s (Habermas 1996; Cohen and Arato 1992). Micro public spheres, as they emerge in local communities engaged in agenda setting and social transformation, can in principle grow into large-scale social movements on the meso and macro levels (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) and must be part of the process perspective on social innovation.

Efforts to combine and integrate the fields of enterprise/governance and of community/participation are conceptually worthwhile. Current practical efforts by change agents in the areas of social innovation, social entrepreneurship and social enterprise aiming at societal renewal and progress bear testimony 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 this paper is to develop a conceptual framework that takes both process and outcome of social enterprises into account, with a particular focus on the *internal* and *external* dimensions of participation and governance. Such a distinction seems particularly important to flesh out the interdependence of social innovation and the structures it is embedded in. Innovation and learning processes in both an innovating organisation and its environment must be compatible at least to some extent to achieve an outcome that both satisfies needs and lives up to claims of legitimacy.

In our analysis, we will combine insights from current social innovation research with methodological and epistemological concepts developed in the classical sociology of Max Weber and in the democratic theory of Jürgen Habermas. This places social innovation firmly at 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.

Firstly, we will outline an integrated perspective on social innovation, emphasising both outcome and process aspects of social innovation. Social innovations have an outcome (meeting social needs) and a process focus (participatory governance). This process 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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[1] Translation of quote by J. Eschweiler.

Secondly, we will illustrate how this integrated approach can be informed by 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 stem from social innovation's integrative potential to provide service delivery, social cohesion and renewed political interest through the participatory process. From Weber we will borrow the role of "ideas" in social innovation, which is crucial for an integrated perspective of process and outcome. The internal and external dimensions of social innovation were already inherent to his methodology of the diffusion of ideas in society.

Thirdly, we will further flesh out the process dimension of social innovation, adopting Habermas' concept of democratic deliberation as a specific way of understanding the innovation process. Particular focus of our analysis lies on the legitimacy of innovations and surrounding institutions representing diverse values and worldviews in societies today. Habermas' work on communicative action, "system" and "lifeworld" and public deliberation offers epistemological insights that are particularly relevant to understand social innovations and their contexts, which can be either supportive or obstructive of social innovation processes and hence shape the conditions for participation.

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

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; this idea will be developed in the final section of our paper. The deliberative process of civil society organisations, embedded in their local communities and institutional setting, is essential for outcomes of innovating organisations and initiatives. The proposed model is a first step towards filling a conceptual gap in social innovation research.

1. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO SOCIAL INNOVATION

This paper adopts an integrated approach to social innovation where process and outcome are equally important to understanding social innovation. We see it as the only way to understand social innovation in its entire institutional configuration and context. Only assessing the result or outcome of a social innovation, without taking into account the work environment or the social network that produced the outcome, results in a lack of transparency as the participatory governance dimension of social innovation remains clouded.

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.[2] Social innovation is defined as new ideas for products, services and models that meet

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[2] 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

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 2006; Chesbrough *et al.* 2008); and from the perspective of the social economy, members of the EMES European Research Network have 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) have argued that local and social innovation is as much about innovations in the social relations as it is about satisfaction of unsatisfied human needs: unmet needs could be satisfied if neighbourhood development strategies pursued innovation in governance relations within the neighbourhood and the wider community. In such practices, these authors see a 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 sections 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 the 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 the 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 organisation. Focus is on the end result of innovation. Innovation is about the introduction of new products and services to be launched by the organisation. The innovation process is fully controlled by the organisation, ideally by its 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 leading to this

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request of the President of the EU-Commission, are giving advice on political issues related to the European Union.

end result could for matters of principle involve perverse or straightforward authoritarian principles and practices. In the OMI, neither process nor outcomes are fully controlled by the organisation (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 aimed to understand the dynamic relation between ideas, interests and institutions. In his view, the dynamic relation between these three factors could change the lanes of history (Weber 1988; Lepsius 1990; Hulgård 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 modernisation and expansion of Western rationalisation as a tendency towards the subordination of value- and belief-oriented rationality to instrumental rationality. This would gradually lead to the secularisation of Western culture, going hand in hand with the expansion of the bureaucratic state and capitalist enterprises, ultimately defining any type of organisation and organisational behaviour. On a less pessimistic note, Jürgen Habermas combined the innovative potential of ideas and the communicative power of civil society groups, rooted in different communities within society. He argued that civil society and social movements can establish political legitimacy and make a plurality of voices heard through public deliberation (Habermas 1996).

Connecting Weber and Habermas constitutes an 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, which 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 even in the more homogeneous societies of Weber's time he already wondered what makes society possible. This led to his interest in understanding the impact of active agents of change on social renewal, at the heart of his work on bureaucratisation.

Societal integration is best regarded as a constant process of reproduction. Both the process itself and the result of this process define integration into a specific society. For centuries the unity of society was assumed to correspond with the nation state (Imbusch and Rucht 2005:13). Today we are witnessing regional, European and worldwide cultural identification. The growing complexity of societies, relationships and identities results in tendencies of disintegration (Imbusch and Rucht 2005: 64). Economic integration is also in danger, as more and more people must make a living in precarious work arrangements, which undermine 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 and Rucht 2005: 16)[3] 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 that can 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. Weber's 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 (Weber 2000). Among entrepreneurship theorists it is widely recognised that Weber's study was the first to approach the influence of culture on entrepreneurship.

How can the process of innovation be understood in the light of the Weberian cultural analysis? What is the role of entrepreneurs in transforming ideas into actions with wider 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 legitimised by ideas. Only then can newly formulated goals and means to achieve them be justified (legitimisation). Conversely, ideas can become concrete only because they are embedded in interests. Institutions are "carriers" of both ideas and interests; they are schemes for the expression and further implementation of ideas and interests, and they are providing the validity of ideas in specific contexts of action (Lepsius 1990: 31).

These three factors - ideas, interests and institutions -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)[4]

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[3] Translation of quote from German by J. Eschweiler.
[4] Translation of quote by J. Eschweiler.

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 an institutional and legally constituted power – which, in modern society, takes the form of bureaucratic institutions that are obliged to answer to the same legal principles (Imbusch and Rucht 2005: 29). On the other hand, Weber saw the danger of people becoming prisoners of bureaucracy, dehumanised and dominated, without love or personal care (Weber 2000). He therefore created the concept of the charismatic leader, who could counterbalance bureaucracy in a parliamentary democracy (Imbusch and Rucht 2005:31). In societies that are politically integrated, the charismatic leader was replaced by self-confident citizens with an interest in participation.

For Weber it was a fundamental viewpoint that the conflicting institutionalisation of the different principles and criteria forming modern rationalisation would allow citizens a degree of freedom to innovate in their life practice. 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. These guidelines consist 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 the "calling", such as it is 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, but the methodological framework for understanding the way in which moral forces, ideas and values constitute 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 been "detected" in the first step: does the idea imply that people adopt a specific behaviour, or even urge them to do so? 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 1990: 35). The connection between the idea and a specific "carrier group" – i.e. a group of people determined to live their life in accordance with the idea - must be clear. This was indeed the case with ascetic Protestantism: the idea became immediately and directly influential through internalisation in the community of believers and followers.

The third step is a process of interpreting the relation between the idea and its social environment or simply its 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 ideas are formulated and practised that nourishes their evolution and the expansion of their "area of influence"? This step is devoted to researching the institutional configuration of the idea and the way in which it relates to major interests expressed in this context. Weber argued that economic gain and the accumulation of capital among protestant sects were 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, but the chances for economic success should be credited to the social context of the carrier group – the religious entrepreneurs who lived their life in accordance with the instructions.

The fourth step is a study of the process of the diffusion of the idea in society. A way of doing so would simply be to examine statistically how many groups, beside the original carrier group, would support and adopt the considered idea – in Weber's analysis, the Calvinist interpretation of the calling. It has to be noted, though, that 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 had a significant socialising 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" view, 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).[5]

Through such innovative mixtures of religious, value-driven determination and contexts favourable to capitalist development, the idea of "calling" gradually lost influence, but the work discipline was maintained. Protestant sects were the archetypes of modern communities serving a huge mix of purposes, but all having an immense impact on American society. Generations of political philosophers and social scientists, from Alexis de Tocqueville to Robert Putnam and Theda Skocpol, have scrutinised 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).

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 rationalisation: "This rationalisation of the organised 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 ceased to be of any significant impact because "victorious capitalism" (Weber 2002: 124) no longer needs the values derived from ascetic Protestantism, nor any other values as supporting pillars. However, Weber did 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 and 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, Weber tried to integrate dimensions of entrepreneurial idea, process, outcome and context. This methodology is still of importance despite the 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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[5] Translation of quote by J. Eschweiler.

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

Today's societies 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, provided three conditions are combined in a deliberative democratic process, opening new legitimate political and representative venues.

First, ideas must be generated in the lifeworld, in the realm of civil society, in order to reducethe risk of disagreement and distorted or end of communication. From a discursive point of view, nothing is set in stone, and ideas can unfold their power of change (Habermas 1998: 394-5). Secondly, civil society, social innovations and community activism must be located in a discursive public sphere that provides social cohesion and social integration (Imbusch and 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. The distinction he establishes between system and lifeworld is an important step towards revealing 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 interests focusing on results rather than on comprehension are prevailing (Imbusch and Rucht 2005:36).The lifeworld, on the other hand, is based on communication and comprehension. Here, people draw from pre-scientific 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 in the form of national flags, hymns, national holidays, founding myths and cultural stereotyping have also entered the system (Imbusch and Rucht 2005: 16-7).

Both spheres must be constantly reproduced. According to Habermas, the system is threatening to colonise the lifeworld through the incorporation of workers into the system by the welfare state as the latter penetrates ever more areas of life (Habermas 1990). But the lifeworld provides the essential impulses for social integration. The 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,[6]

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[6]Habermas explained communicative rationality as subject-to-subject communication between individuals aiming to maintain a society that allows for shared norms, institutions and conventions while still allowing all individuals to thrive because the norms can be agreed upon or else put up for debate, as all knowledge

which help to interpret new situations and to decide on courses of action that are in line with core moral values (Imbusch and Rucht 2005:37).

Habermas reads the constant differentiation of societal spheres as a "societal evolution" (Habermas 1981, vol. 2: 445-89). Here he 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 colonisation and pathological consequences of modernisation (social change) are to be avoided, it is crucial that the new institutional configuration be 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).[7]

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 mobilised publics. The latter, for their part, find a basis in the associations of a civil society that is quite distinct from both state and economy." (Habermas 1996: 301).

History has shown how minority groups have emancipated themselves from exclusion and discrimination in this way; this is e.g.the case of the trade unions, which successfully supported worker's interests. Habermas described the development of the public sphere into an interesting object for observation through the transformation of merely economically active citizens into active political citizenship, which in turn transformed state power into means of societal self-organisation (Habermas 1990: 22). Emotions expressed 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 when public opinion can make itself heard in what Habermas terms the strong public of the political system, without undermining the separation of powers (Baynes 2002: 128).[8] Already Weber saw legitimacy as a central aspect of societal integration, as only the air of legitimacy can convince people to voluntarily submit themselves to an institutional and legally constituted power, which must answer to the same legal principles as them. Ideally, writes Habermas, individuals develop a constitutional patriotism that allows normative messages to be sent out to every pocket of society.[9] In a pluralist society, which must integrate different and sometimes

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is in principle fallible and revisable. Thus norms are not founded on some sort of pre-determined practical rationality but on communicative rationality, based on the linguistic assumption that people may not share beliefs but that they share the ability to think (Habermas 1998: 27).

[7] Translation of quote by J. Eschweiler.

[8] "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)

[9] 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

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 well 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 advocates within the system. 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 qua 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 described in section 4 below illustrates this connection quite clearly.

Representation in pluralist societies must rely on informal negotiation and deliberation in order to generate political legitimacy.[10] 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, consisting mainly of builders and cab drivers,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, providing both financial and physical support; 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."[11]

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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)
[10] According to Habermas, 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). But 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 a common reference framework.
[11] Interview, May 2010.

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 (Soldiner Kiez). The mosque had already been involved with the local *Quartiersmanagement* (QM)[12] for some years and participated in neighbourhood initiatives and street festivities, but they had never conceptualised their own projects. The board of the mosque identified a committed social innovator who was ready to learn. 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."[13] The project manager drafted a proposal and submitted it to the Commissioner for Migration and Integration of the district. Three weeks later, he received a phone call confirming the support of the Commissioner and the local Mayor for the proposal; both were keen to activate the social potential of mosque associations.[14]

Due to the lack of professional skills among mosque community members, the administration teamed them up with one of Germany's largest welfare organisations. This organisation had no previous experience in working with a mosque. After thorough internal consultation, they decided that active facilitation of integration required creative approaches.[15] The final project outline is based upon two modules developed to support mothers with young children. The HIPPY module ("Home Instruction of Parents with Preschool Youngsters") is particularly addressing migrant families with kids aged 4-6; helping them to practice German;[16] women are trained to work with mothers of the same cultural background in their homes. The second module - the preventative learning and play programme OSTAPJE - is directed at families with children between 18 and 24 months, either at home or in playgroups that allow intercultural and interreligious contact. A third initiative brings a group of fathers and their young children together at the mosque community centre for a parenting class once a week.

In a decisive 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 parents at the mosque, it had become evident that they underestimated the

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[12]*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. Neighbourhood management offices cooperate with all local actors to build sustainable networking structures. Citizen participation and empowerment are a special focus of the programme. (For more details, refer to http://www.quartiersmanagement-berlin.de/, accessed May 2011).

[13] Interview, May 2010.

[14] Interview, February 2010.

[15] Interview, May 2011. One of the worries of the local administration 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.

[16] 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 Soziale Stadt (QM), Integration und Gleichstellung, Bezirksamt Mitte, Berlin, 20.1.2010.

role of education.[17] Finally also the deputies of the local Conservative party (CDU) agreed to fund the project, commending its model character. This was somehow unexpected: support of the conservative party was not at all guaranteed. The CDU, a party with strong Christian values, has traditionally been very reluctant to fund Muslim organisations, particularly those mentioned in the Report for the Protection of the Constitution – which was the case of the mosque. The conservatives have also been at the forefront of preventing 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'."[18]

Two years later, the project awaits evaluation, and this evaluation will determine the continuation of the project. The cooperation between the mosque and the welfare organisation has been a positive experience and they will continue to work together if they get the green light. According to the welfare organisation's project coordinator, the organisation is quite ready to plan further projects with the mosque association. It has been a steep learning curve for both organisations, with unexpectedly valuable outcome.[19]

For now, mosque associations in Berlin do not yet have enough advocacy power to implement social innovations on their own; they need the support of established advocates, who can help shaping political opportunities. The political discourse on public funding for projects organised by Muslim associations is ambivalent. On the one hand, more participation and integration are desired. On the other hand, as stated by Maryam Stibenz, the district Commissioner for Integration and Migration, the political approach is "caring but degrading".[20] There are too many security concerns in integration discourse. People with a background assumed to be Muslim are too much reduced to their religion, which leads in turn to these people self-defining themselves predominantly as Muslims.

The fact that many of them are also in low-income groups is ignored. Yet, a social innovation as put forward by the mosque association wants both: better educational and economic prospects for their children and acknowledgement as Muslims, who have a different lifestyle. At the same time, the mayor of the district in which Soldiner Kiez is located supported this project because he was interested in the social and political integration potential that mosques can provide. He underlines the model character of their innovative approach to integration policy in the district.[21] Not every district mayor in Berlin with a high percentage of Muslim residents in their district 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 its inception. But it was only after September 11, 2001 that the district mayor of 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 and initiatives.

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[17] "Auszug – Tandemprojekt Elternbildung im QM Soldiner Strasse – Projektvostellung durch das BA und den Projektträger", 28. Öffentliche Sitzung des Ausschusses fü rSoziale Stadt (QM), Integration und Gleichstellung, 16.09.2009.

[18] Interview, May 2010.

[19] Interview, May 2011.

[20] Interview, February 2010.

[21] Einladung zur Pressekonferenz: Innovations-Tandem zur Elternbildung in Mitte, Pressemitteilung Nr. 517/2009, 18.11.2009, Bezirksamt Berlin-Mitte.

The passing on of skills like project drafting, proposal writing and presentation to social agents is another central effort of neighbourhood management.[22]

This nurturing paid off for the mosque in Soldiner Kiez. As the innovator from the mosque tells young men and women in the mosque's youth club, "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 mosque's website highlights a new self-confidence for active citizenship as part of the social mission, and confidently maintains that integration is not about changing ways of life: it is about participation, as participation creates contacts and sense of empowerment.[23]

Since the kick-off of the tandem project on education in 2009, the mosque has hosted a community organising meetings to discuss cooperation with local schools, under participation of members of the Berlin Senate, to address the poor performance of pupils with migration background. 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".[24]

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 can become representatives of Muslim as well as other interests.[25] He himself would like to move on from being a social innovator to being a politician. He is not sure he can continue both activities (activity at the mosque and political activity) simultaneously, though, and 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, but this would not have been possible without the support of the mosque community itself and without the outreach approach of the local administration.

5. CONCLUSION

The driving force behind the mosque's activities - i.e. the self-trained innovator - benefited from the original interest of QM and of the local administration to work with mosques. It would otherwise have been difficult to go ahead with the project, since public funding of Muslim organisations is very rare in Berlin.[26]

This case reunites our theoretical reflections on contributions by Weber and Habermas on a process perspective on social innovations. The mosque became a social innovator with the aim of benefiting their community through integration in their wider neighbourhood. Participation was

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[22] Interview, May 2011.
[23] See http://haci-bayram-moschee.de/?page_id=121 (accessed May 2011).
[24] http://www.deinkiez.de/index.html?http://www.deinkiez.de/easytool/index/11471/, accessed May 2011.
[25] Interview, May 2011.
[26] 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).

seen as a means to generate more acceptance and as a way to explain difference. The tandem project, though not the mosque's original idea but decided by the district administration, was a way to jump on the band-wagon with an established German welfare organisation with 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, in Habermas' words: ideas are rooted in the lifeworld and must be communicated to the system via associations. If a process of social change (social innovation) follows this pattern, there is a chance of avoiding the "pathological" consequences that otherwise often accompany processes of modernisation and rationalisation. 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, a second demand of Weber and Habermas was also 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. 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*), which function as good example for other mosque associations.

The case of the Berlin mosque described here is a good illustration of the process dimension of social innovation. Participation and good governance are essential to the concept of social innovation; 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 partner welfare organisation started training women as educators. On a horizontal level, the mosque association became part of other initiatives in the neighbourhood, thus opening for its members communicative channels they did not hitherto have access to. On a vertical level, channels of communication opened between mosque representatives and the district administration. The symbolic representation of interests made possible by those new communication channels 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 the activities developed in the case analysed here have a potentially socially integrative character: they support individuals in taking part in social life and they have the potential to normalise relationships within the community. On a political level 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 advocates, 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 any of the 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 eventually benefited all the parties involved. The mosque association reached its aim of opening up to the local community, with the long-term goal of achieving 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 indeed remains dominated by normative arguments, and there is still a general lack of legitimacy as well as efficiency of past integration policy approaches, largely due to a lack of dialogue and cooperation between policymakers and the recipient communities. To put it in Habermas' words, 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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