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Developing the Social Innovation Ecosystem of the Vienna Region

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Impressum

I. Introduction

The paper provides an overview of the current social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna Region. Based on the methodology borrowed from the international research project SI-DRIVE: Social Innovation – Driving Force of Social Change (2014-2017), it focuses on the existing concepts and understanding of social innovation, on objectives and social demands, on actors, networks and governance, on process dynamics of social innovation and on resources, capabilities and constraints in Vienna.

Furthermore, methodologically the paper is based on interviews with actors from Vienna's social innovation ecosystem and experts. Beyond the purpose of accessing information, interviews have additionally served to raise the awareness of the potential of the ecosystem, also against the background of the expertise acquired through the global project SI-DRIVE. This paper summarizes the main results of the interviews and elaborates some first recommendations for further development of the social innovation ecosystem.

II. Multi-sectoral perspective on social innovation

Social innovation research does not originate from a systemic concept of innovation which became dominant in the innovation studies in the 1980s, but mainly from quite isolated, often uni-sectoral perspectives or also actor-centred approaches. Against this background, scientific work on social economy and on social entrepreneurship took centre stage for decades. Certainly, contributions made by scholars, such as Moulaert, e.g. regarding the question on "how institutional and social networks and interactions between levels of governance can work to enable or constrain local innovation" (Moulaert et al., 2013, p. 20) have been important for the development of the research field of social innovation. Also, empirical findings on process dynamics of social innovation, especially concerning empowerment dynamics of social movements and initiatives, have significantly contributed to a socio-theoretically sound concept of social innovation. Such a focus goes beyond the perspective of social entrepreneurship oriented approaches, which are especially common in the US and UK.

The strong focus on the social economy fails to recognize other key aspects of a comprehensive concept of social innovation grounded in social theory. Although we share the view expressed by Jessop et al. that the role of "social enterprise as the key agent for social change" is overestimated (Jessop et al., 2013, p. 111), the main concern results from our comprehensive and integrated understanding of social innovation, which includes all societal sectors and actors, different research areas and fields of application. "Theoretical Approaches to Social Innovation – A Critical Literature Review", the first constitutive publication of the research project SI-DRIVE, analyzes different concepts related to social innovation and shows how according to these multiple foci social innovation is related to social change (Howaldt, Butzin, Domanski & Kaletka, 2014). The review reaffirms the assumption that the concept of social innovation cannot be limited to one focus, be it social entrepreneurship or social economy, and demonstrates that widening the perspective is crucial for understanding social innovation. Hence, it makes an important contribution in terms of liberating social innovation from the silo of the third sector and opening up to other areas of the society.

In this context, Scoppetta, Butzin and Rehfeld (2014) point to the need of what they call "constructive partnerships between the sectors (economy/social economy-state-society)" (Scopetta et al., 2014, p. 91) in order to reap the full potential of social innovation. If we follow Tarde (2009) in pointing out the social embeddedness of any invention in a dense network of imitation streams, then social innovations are first and foremost ensemble performances, requiring interaction between many actors. This view is also supported by the empirical results of the SI-DRIVE project as they show that multiple types of partners

are involved in social innovation initiatives. Findings from the global mapping of social innovations,[2] conducted within the project, confirm that different societal sectors are relevant for social innovations on a more or less equal footing. These findings indicate that cross-sectoral collaborations are of great importance, and a general dominance of the third sector cannot be detected. The survey shows that in some policy fields the public sector is as relevant as the private sector and the civil society (education, employment, energy supply) while in other policy fields one (poverty reduction, transport & mobility) or two (health and social care, environment) of the sectors dominate (Howaldt et al. 2016).

In this regard, the question arises "which governance structures support the growth of social innovations that are set as combined actions" (Scoppetta et al., 2014, p. 92). This question is central for the project "Developing the Social Innovation Ecosystem of the Vienna Region", which seeks to understand the roles of different actors involved in the ecosystems, the relationships between them and the governance structures which influence development of social innovations in the region.

The need for better understanding the complexity and systemic character of social innovation can also be stressed by taking a closer look at the field of innovation studies (Domanski & Kaletka 2018). While social innovation research has been strongly characterized by focusing on the third sector as the main societal sector and driver of social innovation or on the social entrepreneur as its protagonist in order to explain how social innovations emerge in societies, concepts such as innovation systems (see Freeman 1987; Lundvall 1992 for national innovation systems and Cooke, Heidenreich & Braczyk 2004 for regional innovation systems) or the triple-helix (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 2000) are based upon different components, among them almost always a conceptual operationalisation of drivers, barriers and governance (even if these might be labelled in different terms). The concepts both recognize appropriate constellations of key actors (i.e. in particular universities, industry and government) and complex interactions among them as being important for development of technological innovations. An important question is to what extent such concepts as (national and regional) innovation systems can be useful in order to further develop the concept of social innovation ecosystems.

III. Towards social innovation ecosystems

Thus, a systemic approach to social innovation focuses on the interfaces of the so far differentiated and largely separate self-referential societal sectors of state, business, civil society and academia, of their corresponding rationalities of action and regulation mechanisms and at the associated problems and

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[2] In the framework of SI-DRIVE, a global mapping of social innovations was conducted, thus creating a database of 1005 cases, which covers about 80 countries from all world continents and addresses seven policy fields (education, employment, environment, mobility & transport, health & social care, poverty & sustainable development).

problem-solving capacities (Howaldt, Domanski & Schwarz, 2015). With regards to the question how these interfaces can be reconfigured in the sense of sustainability-oriented governance, established steering and coordination patterns are complemented, extended and shaped by aspects like self-organization, cross-sector co-operation, networks, and new forms of knowledge production (Howaldt, Kopp & Schwarz, 2015). Associated processes of "cross-sector-fertilization" (Phills, Deiglmeier & Miller, 2008) and convergence of sectors (Austin, Guitiérrez, Ogliastri & Reficco, 2007) increasingly make "blended value creation" possible (Emerson, 2003).

Such collaborations are picked up by at least two different heuristic models, the quadruple helix (see Wallin, 2010) on the one hand, where government, industry, academia and civil society work together to co-create the future and drive specific structural changes, and the social innovation ecosystem (see Sgaragli, 2014) on the other hand, which also asks for interactions between the helix actors, adds the notion of systemic complexity and looks at both the serendipity and absorptive capacity of a system as a whole. Academic knowledge on social innovation ecosystems is very scarce and the concept is still fuzzy. A still largely unexplored question is how such established concepts as (national and regional) innovation systems can contribute to more conceptual clarity regarding social innovation ecosystems. First of all, it is important to see whether these concepts refer to the same understanding of an innovation system. The notion of 'eco' in the term ecosystem suggests that it is about a system that is already existing as a kind of environment ecology, while innovation systems represent a largely normative concept which stresses the necessity of building and supporting interconnected structures favourable for innovations on national and regional level. Another critical remark is that although the concept of innovation systems usually refers to technological innovations, actually social innovations – understood as new social practices – are also very important in this concept, e.g. as organisational innovations, policy innovations or innovations in education. This shows the difficulty of understanding innovation systems and social innovation ecosystems as two complementing or opposite concepts. Against this background, Sgaragli's (2014) approach to social innovation ecosystems in terms of "a paradigm shift where grass-root, bottom-up, spontaneous movements and communities of change are shaping new ecosystems" and "replacement of existing governance models with ones that are more open, inclusive and participatory" (p. 9) opens up a different perspective which needs to be explored through empirical studies.

Thus, the development of a scientific concept of social innovation ecosystems is much more demanding than just trying to adapt the concept of innovation systems to social innovations. This task implies a much better understanding of what social innovation ecosystems are about. One precondition for fulfilling this task has to do with comprehending social innovations from a multi-sectoral perspective, an

approach which is still not mainstream in social innovation research. Another precondition is to see social innovation ecosystems as environments where innovations emerge which are different to technological innovations. It is one of the key tasks of social innovation research to work on the theoretical foundations of the concept and to investigate how social innovations are created, introduced into society, diffused and sustained. At the same time, social innovation research cannot ignore the fact that social and technological innovations are often intertwined and an integrated approach is required in order to better understand and promote both types of innovations.

The results of the first global mapping of social innovation initiatives conducted within the project SI-DRIVE reveal the importance of social innovation addressing social, economic, political and environmental challenges of the 21st century on a global scale. Social innovation has become a ubiquitous concept with high dynamics (Howaldt et al. 2016). The growing importance of social innovations is especially indicated by emergence of infrastructures and institutions that promote social innovations and provide a variety of funding and support structures.

However, development of social innovations requires specific conditions because they aim at activating, fostering, and utilizing the innovation potential of the whole society. Therefore, new ways of developing and diffusing social innovations are necessary (e.g. design thinking, innovation labs etc.) as well as additional far-reaching resources, in order to unlock the potential of social innovation in society and to enable participation of the relevant actors and civil society. This is not only a matter of appropriate funding but also of new participation and collaboration structures, co-creation and user involvement, empowerment and human resources development (Howaldt et al. 2016).

The mapping demonstrates that social innovation processes and the underlying resources, capabilities and constraints are related to the actors of the different sectors of the social innovation ecosystem. This includes a new role of public policy and government for creating suitable framework and support structures, the integration of resources of the economy and civil society as well as supporting measures by science and universities (e.g. education for social innovation performance, know-how transfer).

The absence of a comprehensive social innovation policy corresponds with the low maturity status of the social innovation ecosystems. While social innovation initiatives and practices have drawn a lot of attention within the last years in different world regions, being imitated by manifold actors and networks of actors and diffused widely through different societal subareas, the ecosystem of social innovation "is in very different stages of development across Europe, however. In all countries, though, the ecosystem is under development and there are a number of important factors enabling the development of social innovation, including important support and impetus from the EU" (Boelman & Heales 2015, p. 7). One of the major challenges will be the development of these ecosystems.

This also raises the question of the role of universities in social innovation processes (Domanski, Howaldt, Villalobos & Huenchuleo, 2015). The marginal engagement of research and education facilities is in strong contrast to their essential role as knowledge providers in classical innovation processes and as one actor of the triple helix model. This means that at this time we find an uncompleted ecosystem of social innovation (quadruple helix) with one important pillar missing. It will be a major challenge for the development of social innovation to ensure a much higher involvement of research and education facilities. This also includes the question of new modes of knowledge production and scientific co-creation of knowledge aiming at an integration of different actors in the innovation processes (Howaldt et al. 2016).

IV. Methodological approach of the study

The methodological approach of the project builds upon the five key dimensions of social innovation that fundamentally affect the potential of social innovations, their scope, and their impact. This methodology has been developed within the framework of the research project SI-DRIVE: Social Innovation – Driving Force of Social Change (Howaldt, Butzin, Domanski & Kaletka 2014). The five key dimensions are:

1. Concepts of social innovation including the relationship to technology and business innovation;
2. Objectives and social demands, societal challenges and systemic changes that are addressed;
3. Actors, networks and governance, including the role of social entrepreneurship and user involvement, of social change and development;
4. Process dynamics of SI, including mechanisms of diffusion, imitation, social learning, and the phases addressed in social innovation cycles (prompts, proposal, prototypes, sustaining, scaling up, systemic change);
5. Resources, capabilities and constraints including finance and regulations of the finance
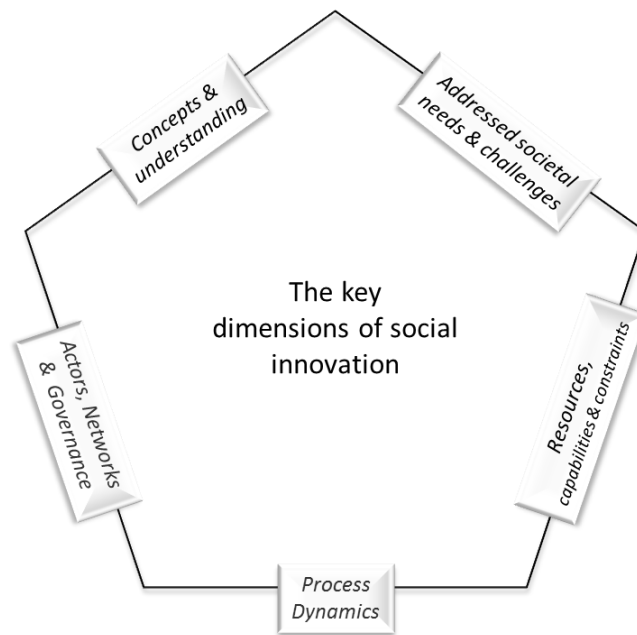
Figure 1: The Key Dimensions of Social Innovation (Howaldt, Butzin, Domanski & Kaletka 2014)

While this approach has been used in SI-DRIVE to analyze individual social innovation initiatives (a total of 1005 cases has been mapped, including all world regions), the purpose of the project "Developing the Social Innovation Ecosystem of the Vienna Region" is to further develop this methodology by applying it to environments where social innovations emerge and diffuse.

Consequently, the five building blocks of the methodological approach can be described in the following way:

1)   Concepts and understanding of social innovation

-        What are social innovations about? *E.g. new business models.*

-        How are they intertwined with other innovations? *E.g. use of technologies.*

2)   Objectives and social demands, societal challenges and systemic changes

-         What are the needs and challenges social innovations originate from*? E.g. regional problems, global challenges.*

3)   Actors, networks and governance

- Who are the actors and what are their roles? *E.g. developers, promotors, supporters, knowledge providers.*

- How does the governance model look like? *E.g. bottom-up, top-down.*

4)   Process dynamics of social innovation

- What are the process dynamics developing from idea and invention to an established social practice? *E.g. the role of the ecosystem in scaling and transfer.*

5)   Resources, capabilities and constraints

- Which resources and capabilities are available, which barriers inhibit social innovation? *E.g. financial resources, knowledge, personnel, legal framework, politics.*

V. Analysis of Vienna's Social Innovation Ecosystem

1. Concepts and understanding of social innovation

The understanding of social innovation varies a lot among the different actors. It should be emphasized that most people interviewed for the case study have a relatively clear idea of what social innovation is for them. At the same time, they were arguing in private capacity and were not presenting the definition of social innovation adopted by their organisation. Such kind of official definition usually does not exist, but there are several official documents (e.g. Innovation Strategy Vienna 2020, Smart City Vienna) where the understanding of social innovation is described in a – more or less – concrete way.

Although, as said above, most actors seem to have a relatively clear idea of what social innovation is for them, the concept is not always necessarily consistent. There are mainly two issues of inconsistence in understanding and trying to define social innovation. The first one has to do with the notion of 'social'. While many actors seem to distinguish social innovations from technological innovations, they finally mainly define the 'social' through the social impact (or – another important distinction – societal impact) of innovations. This is not consistent with the distinction between social and technological innovations, as the latter also generate social and societal impact. Furthermore, some actors refer to human factors in the innovation process when they talk about social innovation. The second issue of inconsistence has to do with social innovation creating economic value. On the one hand, most interview partners recognize that social innovation can create economic and not only social value. On the other hand, as many of them tend to define social innovation through social or societal impact, the concept of social innovation usually remains vague.

We can summarize that while there is a lack of clear understanding of social innovation, this topic is an issue on most agendas (although it may not be always labelled this way) of those interviewed for the case study. Although this confirms the world-wide trend of an increasing importance of social innovation detected by the project SI-DRIVE, it is also true that in many cities and regions social innovation is still a relatively unknown phenomenon. Sometimes, there are only one or two organisations in a region dealing with the topic. This is definitely not the case of the Vienna region. Actors interviewed for the case study represent about 20 different organisations (all of them located in Vienna; some of them are not local or regional, but they also have influence on the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region, e.g. Federal Ministries, foundations, the Austria Wirtschaftsservice Gesellschaft AWS or the Austrian Research Promotion Agency FFG) and all of them are more or less explicitly involved in social innovation initiatives.

Regarding the lack of conceptual clarity, it is important to mention that, as most of these organisations are not academic, the expectation should be less in terms of a scientifically founded definition of social innovation. It is much more about a consistent concept, which would demonstrate a clear understanding of social innovation. This could be useful in order to design and to implement more targeted measures in this area. At the same time, the mere fact that social innovation is critically discussed and considered an important or even indispensable part of societal development should be assessed as a progress. It seems to be widely recognized that innovations are not only technological (but can be social in terms of consisting of social practices); often the way in which technologies are used has to do with social innovations and innovations are not only needed regarding creation of economic, but also of social value (adding social value creation as an explicit purpose, thus many innovations achieve social impact besides and through economic impact). Furthermore, it is acknowledged that innovation is not just an issue of companies, technology parks or transfer centres, but also an area where citizens can actively participate. Moreover, innovation is understood as an important task for the city administration: on the one hand, as an enabler facilitating innovation processes in the city, on the other hand, as an innovator introducing innovations within the local administration.

Another critical issue in understanding of social innovation is the dominant role of social entrepreneurship and social business. While many actors recognize that social innovation is more than social entrepreneurship, many of them still mainly refer to social entrepreneurship when they talk about social innovation. There is certain awareness of social innovation as a diverse phenomenon, which occurs in different societal areas and on the interfaces between them. Thus, many interview partners recognize the importance of private companies, of the public sector and of academia in social innovation. The question is, however, which role do they see for these different sectors. When it is more

about supporting social innovations, the discourse mainly focuses on supporting social entrepreneurships. Initiatives such as "Mehrfachnutzung" and "Zwischennutzung", coordinated by Magistrate 18, feature, however, social innovations supported by the public sector, which are not necessarily social entrepreneurial. The dominance of social entrepreneurship in the social innovation discourse can be certainly explained by the fact that the latter is more well-known as a term and that it is probably the most concrete form of social innovation in the perception of many actors. In Vienna, this perception seems to be largely influenced by the presence and the work of actors, such as Ashoka, the Austria Wirtschaftsservice Gesellschaft's (AWS) 'social business'-initiative, Impact Hub Vienna or the Vienna University of Economics and Business (Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien) with its strong focus on social entrepreneurship.

On the contrary, a broader picture of social innovation is drawn when it comes to understanding actors from different societal sectors as innovators themselves. Here, it is especially the public sector, concretely the administration of the City of Vienna which is aware of its role as innovator and is introducing different measures to innovate itself. There are also examples of business companies introducing social innovations. Such examples are not always easy to find (due to lack of visibility), but initiatives supported by the Vienna Business Agency (Wirtschaftsagentur Wien), e.g. the Co-Creation Lab, make them more visible. Universities also participate in social innovation initiatives, which are not necessarily about social entrepreneurship only. Because of the special and very active role of the Vienna University of Economics and Business, the latter, however, seems to dominate here.

2. Objectives and social demands, societal challenges and systemic changes

Social innovations are often responses to concrete social demands. Sometimes, they are developed in view of big societal challenges and they can also be guided by the goal of introducing systemic changes. Social innovations can be implemented top-down and bottom-up as well as in a complementary way. While a top-down social innovation may correspond more to the needs or visions of policy-makers, a bottom-up social innovation is supposed to reflect the needs of citizens.

Most interviews have shown a quite clear problem orientation of social innovations in Vienna. Social innovations are developed following concrete demands. And so are the incentives and supporting structures for social innovations. Several calls for funding identified during the case study (e.g. by the Vienna Business Agency, FFG or AWS) strongly focus on the problem dimension. Projects are funded when they address concrete (social) problems through innovative solutions. FFG's call "Impact Innovation" focuses even stronger on problems than on solutions. It has been formulated in a quite open way in order to make very different innovations possible (social and technological), as long as they

address a societal problem. According to FFG, this call has been an experiment, which helps to find out how innovations can be funded beyond the patterns of technological innovations creating economic value.

There is awareness in the city administration that it is important to know what exactly needs a new solution before just looking for a technological innovation to solve a problem. In addition, existing solutions are not considered the only way to solve a problem. The city administration seems to be open for different approaches coming from academia, civil society and business. There are online tools which allow participation of a broader public and there are also formats open to everyone where people come together in order to express their ideas (see e.g. the Digital Agenda where both online and offline tools were used to involve citizens). While there is certainly awareness regarding the opening of innovation processes in the city, the question still remains to what extent external participants are really involved in the development of new solutions and even more in decision-making processes. As one of the interview partners critically commented, according to her perception, participation is often understood as information provision in Vienna. Involving citizens would be interpreted more in terms of informing them; maybe even listening to them, but this would not mean really facilitating bottom-up innovation processes.

Several interview partners from different societal sectors have confirmed that empowerment is a quite difficult issue in Vienna. Cultural reasons have been mentioned here, especially the strong tradition of top-down taking care of people instead of creating possibilities for developing own projects and initiatives. This paternalistic tradition seems to be a barrier for empowering people. Furthermore, while the welfare state is generally well developed in Austria, taking more responsibility through people can be easily misunderstood as a neoliberal norm in terms of less state and more self-responsibility.

Besides the evidence of problem orientation, which indicates a quite pragmatic approach, there is certainly always the question to what extent social innovation is fashion-driven. For example, this could be the case of the strategy Smart City Vienna.

Another important question refers to transformative social innovations. According to the typology of social innovations' interaction with the social-cultural environment developed in the project SI-DRIVE, social innovations can be transforming, modernizing, repairing or coexisting. The case study reveals that different types of social innovations can be found within the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region. Here, transformative social innovations are especially typical for areas, such as social housing and ecological sustainability. While science usually gives more importance to transformative social innovations, the significance of non-transformative social innovations should not be underestimated either. First, problems and demands are very different. Some of them are very specific or very local,

some just require immediate solutions. Then there are other social demands that decrease or disappear over time. The variety of social innovations in the Vienna region reflects this reality. Second, many small social innovations can form innovation streams with a bigger magnitude. Such streams are more likely to become transformative than just small innovations separately. However, it takes probably years in order to understand and to assess the impact of such innovation streams. The attention of the case study was drawn mostly to current and recent social innovations. Although these solutions have already demonstrated their innovative potential, it is definitely too early to assess them as transformative.

3. Actors, networks and governance

Social innovations can be found in all societal sectors of the Vienna region. They emerge in the civil society, in public policy, in business companies and in academia. And they also emerge at the interfaces of the different societal sectors. Multiple actors are involved in social innovation initiatives. They range from the Impact Hub Vienna, Ashoka and Caritas to the municipality of Vienna with its different magistrates and the Vienna Business Agency, from the Federation of Austrian Industries (Industriellenvereinigung Österreich) and ERSTE Stiftung to the Vienna University of Economics and Business and the University of Vienna.

However, the involvement of the different societal sectors varies a lot. Definitely, the third sector is playing an important role in the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region. Some of the most visible actors in this regard are Ashoka and Impact Hub Vienna. Particularly interesting about these actors is the fact that they have developed programmes, which go beyond the typical portfolio of Ashoka and Impact Hubs in other regions resp. cities. While Impact Hubs are generally known as co-working spaces, the Impact Hub Vienna offers an acceleration programme for social entrepreneurs which allows to achieve a stronger impact. Moreover, among many important actors, Caritas Vienna with its innovation department (and a particular focus on social innovation) should be mentioned as well as SozialMarie, Europe's oldest social innovation award. Founded in 2005 and funded by the Unruhe Stiftung, since 2010, it is explicitly called a social innovation award. Annually, 15 outstanding social innovation initiatives from Austria and other countries (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia and Slovenia) receive the SozialMarie award, which beyond a financial recognition adding up to 54,000 Euros, offers a public platform for projects that through new approaches provide innovative answers to societal challenges.

Growing awareness and action in the public sector could be detected through the series of interviews with heads and representatives of different departments on the city level and on the Federal level.

There are strategies, programmes, initiatives and projects, which comprise funding, coordination, facilitation, infrastructural support, just to mention the most typical ways of participation.

Strategically, a key role can be attributed to the Magistrate 23, which has developed the Innovation Strategy and is responsible for coordinating its implementation. Often, commitment of responsible institutions depends on concrete persons, which act as promoters. This can significantly influence the success of such initiatives, as strong personal commitment usually goes beyond the mere implementation. In case of Klemens Himpele, head of Magistrate 23 (Economy, Work and Statistics), it seems quite obvious that he is not just implementing a strategy because it was decided by the City Council, but also because he is convinced of the importance of social innovation for the development of Vienna. Mr Himpele is also involved in the initiative Social City Vienna, in whose board he is participating.

Another important role is played by the planning office of the City of Vienna with its director Thomas Madreiter. Here, the Smart City Vienna Strategy is especially relevant regarding the development of social innovations. Although, the first implementation phase of this strategy is currently evaluated and cannot be assessed within the framework of this case study, it is clear that social innovation is important in this context. The concept of smart cities is not understood just in terms of technological change, but much more as a part of what we could call a "new innovation paradigm", with social innovation increasing in importance compared to technological innovation.

As said above, the Magistrate 23 has an important function in coordinating the implementation of the Innovation Strategy. There are many other departments at the municipal level which are – explicitly or implicitly – involved in social innovations. Some of them concretely as a part of the Innovation Strategy, others not. It would be virtually impossible to detect all social innovation initiatives with the involvement of the municipality, as many of them are not labelled as such. Hence, we can only refer to examples. An especially interesting example is that of the initiative "Mehrfach- und Zwischennutzung" run by Magistrate 18 (Urban Development and Urban Planning) since 1998. In the framework of this initiative, residents of Vienna develop different projects, which correspond to their needs and wishes. As additional resources are generally difficult to get, these projects above all build upon already existing resources, especially in terms of unused premises, spaces and infrastructure.

Another important example of the City of Vienna engaging with the topic of social innovation is that of the Vienna Business Agency. This institution has developed an understanding of supporting Vienna as business location which goes beyond the concept of a classical economic development agency. Hence, it supports innovations, which are not necessarily creating an economic value, but are rather pursuing a social goal. In 2015, for the first time Vienna Business Agency launched a call for funding to support

social entrepreneurships. The second edition of the social entrepreneurship call took place in 2017. Worth mentioning in the context of social innovation is also Vienna Business Agency's initiative Co-Creation Lab which helps innovative businesses to find co-operation partners. Through its novel approach, this initiative is socially innovative itself and it promotes not only technological solutions, but also creation of new business models.

The focus of the case study has been less on the business sector than on other sectors. The role of business companies in the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region is difficult to assess, also because not so much information is directly available. On the one hand, an increasing openness towards social innovation and a more explicit focus on societal challenges have been confirmed in interviews by several experts. On the other hand, as one of the experts expressed it, often business companies assume that they are already sufficiently involved in social innovation, for example through their activities in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR is certainly an established topic in Vienna and in Austria in general. Since 2004, the TRIGOS award addresses socially responsible companies from all over Austria. It is a cross-sectoral initiative run by Caritas, the Austrian Red Cross, the Umweltdachverband (association of Austrian environmental organizations), GLOBAL 2000, the Diakonie Österreich, the Federation of Austrian Industries, the Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber), Golden Hill Country Chalets & Suites and respACT - austrian business council for sustainable development.

Interviews at the Wirtschaftskammer Wien (Vienna's Economic Chamber) have revealed that social innovation is still a largely unknown topic at this organization. It is partially known in terms of social entrepreneurship through the involvement of the Wirtschaftskammer Wien in Vienna Business Agency's social entrepreneurship call. A series of well-known Austrian business companies support the initiative Social City Wien. The Federation of Austrian Industries published the document "Social Innovation, Social Business, Social Investment – Ein Wegweiser", which was developed in close co-operation with the Vienna University of Economics and Business. It reflects on the role of the business sector in facing societal challenges together with other societal actors and calls for more social investment and support for social enterprises in Austria. Another highlight in this regard is the document "Future Made in Austria: More and better social innovation. For Austria. From Austria.", published by the Julius Raab Foundation (Julius Raab Stiftung). It was developed in a stakeholder process, triggered by the federal ministry of economy, science and research in 2017 and shows what is to be done and by whom to make social innovation thrive in Austria.

Another important issue that would deserve a more detailed look is that of foundations. It was claimed in many interviews that generally foundations were not playing an important role in the Austrian social

innovation ecosystem (and similarly in Vienna), as altogether they are not particularly socially engaged (especially compared to countries, such as Germany and Switzerland). Several explanations for this phenomenon were indicated, especially a traditionally different cultural approach to the role of a foundation, but also a different legal framework. Some exceptions were mentioned, especially the ERSTE Stiftung and the ESSL Stiftung. An interview with a representative of the ERSTE Stiftung has confirmed a strong interest as well as engagement in the topic of social innovation, although there seems to be more focus on other Central and South-Eastern European countries than on Austria. Especially worth mentioning is the ERSTE Foundation NGO Academy run together with the Vienna University of Economics and Business. One of its two programmes is the "Social Innovation and Management Programme".

Concerning the role of academia, in the first place, multiple activities of the Vienna University of Economics and Business should be mentioned among university institutions. Its most prominent work in this field is directed to the topic of social entrepreneurship. Its Competence Centre for Nonprofit Organisations and Social Entrepreneurship is strongly involved in numerous initiatives and works closely together with different actors from the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region. It has introduced the Social Impact Award, a social entrepreneurship training programme for students which is operating in more than 15 countries. The Competence Centre is involved in research projects on social entrepreneurship and is responsible for a considerable body of literature on social entrepreneurship in Austria. Another important actor at the Vienna University of Economics and Business is the Institute for Multi-Level Governance and Development, which is focusing on the topics of social cohesion and cooperativism, among others. Worth mentioning furthermore is the Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development, also from the Vienna University of Economics and Business. While the two latter institutions are not mainly dealing (if at all) with social entrepreneurship, this topic is generally perceived as the main focus of the Vienna University of Economics and Business in the field of social innovation. This university is definitely more active in this field than other Higher Education Institutions from Vienna.

Regarding non-university research institutions, it is certainly, above all, the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI), which has played an outstanding role in actively shaping the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region. Founded in 1990 and hence a pioneer in the field of social innovation not only in Austria, but also in Europe, ZSI has become an internationally renowned research centre in this area. It is especially well-known for its research work on topics, such as digital social innovation, maker movement and education. Currently, ZSI is involved in a variety of Horizon 2020 projects, more than many Austrian universities and more than any Austrian University of Applied Sciences.

In terms of networks, the Multistakeholder group organized by Ashoka Austria and Impact Hub Vienna, among others should be particularly mentioned. In 2014, it hosted the Multistakeholder Summit in Vienna and also launched the working paper "Für mehr gesellschaftliche Innovation und Sozialunternehmertum in Österreich", which had been prepared in three working groups (business start-up and development support, legal frameworks and access to finance). Many important actors of Austria and Vienna's social innovation ecosystem participated in the working groups and are still actively taking part in the Multistakeholder group (some of them interviewed in the framework of this case study). While this group refers to Austria in general and not to Vienna in particular and is more focused on social entrepreneurship than on other topics related to social innovation, it is still a remarkable example of collaboration, trust and shared visions which is an important characteristic of the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region.

4. Process dynamics of social innovation

Among the five key dimensions of social innovation, the biggest challenge for the case study has been finding information on the process dynamics of social innovation. The main issues summarized in the following deserve a more detailed look in the future.

Are there any programmes, tools etc. that would support social innovations beyond the initial phase? Most programmes detected so far in the case study focus on start-ups or support social innovations at an early stage. An interesting exception is the Accelerate Program run by Impact Hub Vienna, as it used for early stage ideas and prototypes in place, but also for running businesses. This programme is worth examining, especially regarding its results.

What is the role of the social innovation ecosystem in scaling and transfer? From SI-DRIVE's global mapping of social innovation initiatives we know that most social innovations scale in one or the other way (in case of SI-DRIVE 90%). At the same time, as most social innovations are relatively small, often local initiatives (in SI-DRIVE's global mapping and in general) the question is what does this scaling exactly refer to. In SI-DRIVE, increasing the target group is by far the most applied scaling mechanism (70% of scaled initiatives). It is followed by network extension (49%) and organizational growth (40%). Especially in case of network extension, but also in case of increasing the target group it is obvious that the ecosystem has to play a – more or less – important role in scaling. This can be assumed in case of the Vienna region, too. A careful look at some social innovation initiatives in Vienna would allow for – at least – partial responses, as a quantitative study would not be feasible. Transfer of solutions closely relates to scaling. In SI-DRIVE's global mapping 66% of initiatives transferred their solution in one or the other way. However, most of them were transferred within the local (41%) or the regional level (33%).

Again, we can imagine similar figures for Vienna and again a closer look on different social innovation initiatives would shed more light on transfer of social innovations within and outside the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region.

How can emergence of transformative and non-transformative social innovations be explained respectively and what is the role of the ecosystem? The issue of transformative and non-transformative social innovations has been already addressed above. Non-transformative social innovations are not necessarily less worth than transformative social innovations; it depends on the context and on the concrete needs and demands addressed by such an initiative. In addition, many small innovations together can become an innovation stream, which would have a much bigger transformative effect than just single, separate innovations. The City of Vienna's initiative "Mehrfach- und Zwischennutzung", which consists of many different usually small projects started almost 20 years ago. If we look at single initiatives, it would be difficult to attribute them a transformative power. However, if we consider the initiative as a whole, we will see that it has contributed to the transformation of Vienna. It has been important in terms of empowerment, especially regarding young people, who have learned to organize themselves in order to have recreation activities (e.g., sports). It has shown to Vienna's residents that the city belongs to them, although many areas are not immediately recognizable as something that people can access and use. And it has taught the municipality to use available resource (especially in terms of space) in a smart way.

5. Resources, capabilities and constraints

As a representative of the City of Vienna said in one of the interviews of the case study, at the municipality no one would prioritize avoiding debts over necessary investment in the infrastructure. Of course, that does not mean that there are always as many resources as necessary available, but the budget of the City of Vienna offers possibilities that many cities and regions do not have. In theory, this would mean very good conditions for social innovations. Nevertheless, the potential for supporting social innovations could be used (much) better than it is currently the case. We will refer to this issue in detail when we take a look at a central weakness of the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region: lack of social innovation infrastructures. In the meantime, we must acknowledge that certainly the City of Vienna invests in social innovations, although these are not always easily identifiable as such. Some examples of social innovation support by public policy in Vienna were described above and many other examples were mentioned in the interviews.

More calls for funding would be essential in order to introduce social innovations. There are some calls, which can be assessed in a positive way, but this should be just the beginning. What is also needed is a

variety of calls: not every social innovation is about social entrepreneurship and not every social innovator is an entrepreneur. It is reasonable that the Vienna Business Agency launches a social entrepreneurship call and focuses on this topic, as its competence lies in the field of entrepreneurship and start-ups (the same is true for AWS at the Federal level). Hence, the problem is not about these calls for funding, but about other calls with a different profile that do not exist or are rare. An interesting experiment (at the Federal level) is FFG's call for funding "Impact Innovation" that was launched for the first time in 2017.

The issue of resources does not only refer to finances. It also has to do with other types of resources, such as human resources. On the one hand, Vienna has an excellent situation in terms of human resources: it is an international hub that attracts people from all over the world, it has about 190 thousand students and very good Higher Education Institutions. Hence, there should be no problem of human resources in general. On the other hand, a problem can arise regarding concrete professions (skilled worker shortage) and it can also affect the field of social innovation for the simple reason that in Vienna – as in many other places – there is no formation of people in order to work in this field. Courses, degrees and other educational opportunities would be important in order to achieve a stronger professionalization in the area of social innovation. Currently, most people active in this field just rely on their talent, their abilities and the skills acquired in other areas.

VI. A central weakness of the ecosystem – lack of social innovation infrastructures

The systemic concept of social innovation, as shown above, also refers to the question how conditions for creation, implementation and diffusion of social innovations can be improved. The potential of social innovation for responding to social needs cannot be fully exploited without supporting structures. While communities constitute an important arena for social innovation, in recent years an increasing number of cities and regions have started to develop intermediary infrastructures in order to create solutions for – often complex – social problems (The Rockefeller Foundation & The Bridgespan Group, 2014). Such infrastructures can be created as social innovation parks, centres, labs or incubators, just to mention the most typical denominations. While there is a long tradition of establishing supporting infrastructures for development of technological innovations (e.g. science and technology parks), the consciousness about the need for supporting infrastructures regarding social innovations is generally underdeveloped and often still absent on political agendas. It is usually the civil society which creates intermediary infrastructures without public funding. However, the next step towards the professionalization of support to social innovation is a strong commitment and an enduring involvement of actors from all societal sectors.

When we talk about social innovation infrastructures, we refer to services that can range from providing space, knowledge, facilitation, matching, incubation and acceleration to funding or access to funding. Social innovation infrastructures can offer room for experimentation when mistakes are part of the learning process that does not lead to failure of the whole initiative. A closer look at the survey conducted as a part of SI-DRIVE's global mapping (1005 cases) reveals that funding challenges, lack of personnel, knowledge gaps and legal requirements and restrictions are perceived by social innovators as the main barriers to social innovations. All these barriers can be directly or indirectly addressed by social innovation infrastructures. This concerns especially the first three issues, but although infrastructural institutions, such as intermediaries cannot change the legal framework, they can provide professional advice to social innovators. As in many other countries, it is also discussed in Austria, whether the laws need to be modified in order create better and more appropriate conditions for social entrepreneurships (such as the CIC law in UK, for example).

When we look at the case of Vienna, we realize that such infrastructures are underdeveloped. When asked about the need of developing social innovation infrastructures in Vienna, several interview partners responded that there was already the Impact Hub Vienna, which would offer that kind of infrastructural support. Here, at least two critical remarks should be made. First, Impact Hubs offer co-working spaces. Such spaces can be important for development of social innovations, but this is just one

element of infrastructural support. Of course, a special feature of the Impact Hub Vienna is that its portfolio goes beyond a co-working space. The Accelerate Program developed by the Impact Hub Vienna is certainly something that distinguishes it from many other Impact Hubs. It enriches the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region. It "is designed for teams and individuals that want to provide a new product / service for the market" (https://vienna.impacthub.net/program/accelerate-program/). It applies in case of early stage ideas, prototypes in place or running businesses. Nevertheless, it is one concrete initiative that responds to the needs of social entrepreneurships, but not other types of social innovations.

Second, this infrastructural support is provided by a private initiative. We cannot observe similar initiatives from the public sector. How about governmental involvement in this kind of structures? Or, alternatively, a public-private partnership? This would give more stability and sustainability to infrastructural support and allow for a variety of programmes, which would support very different types of social innovation.

At the same time, we can hardly assume that such infrastructures can be developed just following the experience of supporting measures for technological innovations, as social innovations are created and diffused in a different way. It is also quite obvious that traditional institutions are not able to fulfil that function as they are guided by different concepts and lack necessary know-how. Moreover, sometimes there is "no clear accountability for solving the problem" (The Rockefeller Foundation & The Bridgespan Group, 2014, p. 11), when "many stakeholders are responsible for carrying out a solution" (The Rockefeller Foundation & The Bridgespan Group, 2014, p. 11) which is typical for new, emerging problems. In Vienna, there is a lot of experience in supporting technological innovations, on the one hand, and in addressing social needs, on the other hand. A different question, however, is whether the existing schemes also apply to supporting social innovations. The case study reveals that despite the growing awareness of the importance of social innovations in facing societal challenges in Vienna, the need for developing social innovation infrastructures is still not sufficiently internalized by relevant actors.

Intermediary structures for social innovation, especially labs, are emerging in many parts of the world. There is no common understanding of what social innovation labs should be, also because their functions are not yet fully understood. Very different types of social innovation labs in terms of structure, financing, stakeholders or activities can be found in different cities and regions. To put it with Westley et al. (2015), "there is as yet no established orthodoxy about what a Lab is, and the term is applied to a plethora of processes and organizations, often with markedly different goals and employing distinct methods and approaches". (Westley et al., 2015, p. 1) At the same time, it is the task of every

city and region to develop its own strategy for social innovation infrastructures and its own concept of a social innovation lab (or another type of social infrastructure). In case of Vienna, developing such a lab would be hardly a problem of resources or of expertise. Finally, it depends on the awareness of the necessity of such infrastructural support and on the will of stakeholders.

Generally, social innovation labs are institutions open to citizens where processes of collaborative and often cross-sectoral problem solving are facilitated. A social innovation lab "strategically brings people together at a time when persistent problems, disruptive changes or a crisis demand that stakeholders come together to make new sense of the situation" (Westley et al., 2015, p. 18). It offers spaces and resources for teams consisting of citizens, business companies, public administration, policy-makers and researchers and creates an innovative milieu.

Social innovation labs can help to make an innovation out of a mere invention; a typical challenge for many good ideas when they face the task of implementation into practice. And, not less important, their support can be very useful when it comes to bringing together and coordinating different – often quite small – social innovation initiatives in order to achieve broader impact. In this sense, we can understand social innovation labs "as a process, one that is intended to support multi-stakeholder groups in addressing a complex social problem" (Westley et al., 2015, p. 1). Such a process "allows for the richness of complex systems to shape decision-making; it includes a compilation of tools for exploring and imagining systems as a group; and, it uses techniques for creating and/or identifying pathways for innovations to cross scales" (Westley et al., 2015, p. 18).

On the one hand, open and participatory policy-making is an important element in such innovative milieus. On the other hand, it is also about an active civil society, business companies going beyond traditional concepts of CSR and scientists exercising a new role of research. In case of Vienna, civil society has a strong tradition of involvement in social innovation initiatives and with the public sector, showing a growing interest in supporting social innovation, public-private alliances could be a good option for creating social innovation infrastructures. A coordinating role could be assumed by Social City Wien, an initiative that brings together actors from different societal sectors. At the same time, it is difficult to assess how far the commitment of the business sector would go. Universities could also participate in such joint initiatives or create their own social innovation infrastructures. Vienna University of Economics and Business has a lot of experience in the field of social entrepreneurship. Last but not least, ZSI could contribute significantly with its expertise to the development of such infrastructures.

VII. Conclusions and outlook

The first and maybe the most important conclusion of the case study is that there is a social innovation ecosystem in the Vienna region which has clear contours and which is growing. It is growing as more and more actors arise within this ecosystem and interactions between them are intensified. There is also a growing awareness on the importance of social innovation for the development of Vienna as well an increasing interest in shaping this ecosystem in an active way. And there is openness towards the new. Thinking innovation beyond technological innovations and economic value tends to become normal. There is an ongoing community building among like-minded people from different societal sectors. Some of them are directly involved in institutionalized networks, such as the Multistakeholder group. With its strong tradition in the social area and a generally good budgetary situation, there are favourable conditions for further developing Vienna's social innovation ecosystem. Then there is of course the ZSI, one of the pioneering institutions in the field of social innovation, not only in Austria, but also on global scale. In recent years, ZSI has participated in some of the most important and prestigious social innovation projects funded by the European Commission (e.g., SI-DRIVE and SIC). It hosted two big international social innovation conferences (2011, 2015) and it co-founded the European School of Social Innovation (ESSI).

At the same time, there is a whole series of questions regarding the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region. For many of them, there are no clear answers. This concerns funding opportunities and availability of financial resources in general. While social innovation is arising on political agendas, concrete action often remains unclear: is social innovation really a part of innovation policy or mainly just a buzzword? There seems to be certain openness towards co-creation and empowerment, but does it really work in practice? Do citizen forums allow for direct participation in social innovation processes? At the same time, the topic of social entrepreneurship dominates the debate on social innovation making other – not less important – types of social innovation less visible. It is also very much the case of academia, where besides the topic of social entrepreneurship (with few exceptions) involvement in social innovation is weak along all the three missions of universities (teaching, research, third mission). The role of the business sector remains unclear beyond CSR: to what extent are business companies seriously interested in social innovations? Last but not least, the issue of little infrastructural support (that could become concrete through development of social innovation labs or centres) is one of the central weaknesses of the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region. Just relying on the civil society to assume this responsibility is not enough.

Although a comparison of the social innovation ecosystem of the Vienna region with other Austrian regions has not been an explicit goal of this case study this topic has been repeatedly addressed during a number of interviews. Experts from institutions, which operate on the national level have experience in this regard and can compare different regions, for example, according to participation in calls for funding. It is obvious that the Vienna region has a series of advantages compared to other regions. The capital city of Austria is most internationalized, it is the biggest location for higher education and research institutions and it is home to Federal institutions and numerous international organisations. Having that said, this does not mean that the Vienna region is automatically the most socially innovative one compared to the other regions. What is true is that there is lot of fertile ground for social innovations in Vienna. The critical question, however, is to what extent this potential is used.

It is a task for the near future to address in a collaborative manner all those critical questions mentioned above. International projects and initiatives, such as SI-DRIVE can help not only to continue raising awareness of the importance of social innovation for the development of cities and regions, but also to explore concrete need for action and to contribute to defining this action.

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