Deep Institutional innovation for sustainability and human development

..at MaREI,

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Sustainability

We need a normative fundament and…

reflecting on practices that fit our elaborated normative fundament. We call these practices "social innovations"

To say it with…

Ejderjan and others:

"this normative dimension supposes an ability to define a situation as undesirable (unsustainable) and proposes ways of developing towards a more desirable (sustainable) state".

Starting with Aristotle

- Taking up the critique of liberalist atomistic individualism

- Developping a more realistic view on human acting

- Away from merely self-interested actors against others

- in a setting of principally endless wants and limited resources

- Denying other motives for acting and non-material logics

Stating for example…

- Well-being of the many - including future generations -

cannot be sacrificed anymore

for the "normatively forcing necessities" of economic growth,

which moreover tends to serve unlimited "wants" of a few,

considering its "externalized" negative costs for environment, climate, justice

and many other fundamental aspects of well-being.

Sen states p.ex.

"Social and economic factors

such as basic education, elementary health care, and secure employment

are important not only in their own,

but also for the role they can play

in giving people the opportunity to approach the world with courage and freedom.

These considerations require a broader informational base;

focusing particularly on people's capabilities

to choose the lives they have reason to value."

In this way,

- a broader concept of well-being has been declared

- as the fundamental basis for development (also legitimized in a long tradition inside the UN up to the Sustainable Development Goals)

- than a merely linear and quantitative understanding of "wealth",

- as measured by GDP.

Second: on social innovations

- The paper especially focusses on the need not only

to re-imagine social institutions,

- but also to re-build them and to initiate practical interventions

- to gain momentum for transition towards sustainability.

- As well as re-imagining also means a form of practice.

building on Giddens structuration theory:

- This means for us, that we have to re-think social institutions

- which shape our behaviour on one hand,

- and at the same time we have to work

- on "new", "better" and "sustainable" practices

- - knowing that these innovative practices help to transform failing institutions the other way round, too.

"social innovations"

- are increasingly discussed

- as practices to overcome lock-in and path dependencies

- that prevent effective climate change and its governance.

- "Social innovations are new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes, etc.) that, simultaneously, satisfy social needs (more effectively than existing solutions). They create new or better capabilities and relationships and make better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are good for society and improve society's capacity to act." (Young Foundation)

"social innovations" in sum

- are concrete societal practices
- for finding "new" (before),
- "better" (users)
- and "sustainable" (diffusion, innovations being accessible and affordable for potential users)
- answers to changing societal meta-problems like climate change.

Some questions ahead

- How do you operationalize "economy" in its function to serve for a flourishing life?

- What do you count as "well-being"?

- Do you see the SDGs as being relevant for development towards societal well-being (including future generations)?

- How do you value efforts for implementing new measures of well-being (which ones do you favor)?

- (How) Do you conceptualize "social innovation", also in the form of doing things in "new" ways, "better" and in a "sustainable" way?

- And how can the DIIS project succeed in:

o Informing and shaping national and international dialogue

o National and international policy impacts based on evidence-based inputs

o Building and fostering national and international stakeholder alliances for transformative change that supports sustainability and human flourishing?

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