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Innovation Society Today

Perspectives, Fields, and Cases

 Springer VS

Foreword

To what extent and in what sense does innovation characterize our societies today?

This is the central question and common theme connecting the various contributions of this book.

This book is based on the idea that we are witnessing a shift in modern society's relationship with innovation. This is mirrored in discourse, institution-building, and innovation research. In public and academic discourse, we observe multifaceted uses of the term: 'Ubiquitous innovation,' 'disruptive innovation,' 'open innovation,' 'social innovation,' or 'responsible innovation' are but a few examples. Others involve the relabeling of institutional structures and processes as 'national innovation systems,' 'regional innovation clusters,' 'innovation policy,' or 'council of innovation'—even the European Union has declared itself to be an 'Innovation Union.' Finally, empirical studies of the practices of innovation also indicate thorough changes: an expansion of the sites of innovation, an enlargement of the drivers and actors of innovation, and a broader spectrum of types of innovation.

As a consequence, innovations are no longer limited to technology, science, and the economic sphere. Today we find them almost everywhere in society. Moreover, as the contributions to this book demonstrate, new innovation fields are emerging between economy and culture, between politics, planning, and social movements, and between science and public policy. Doing innovation is no longer restricted to inventor-entrepreneurs, start-up enterprises, or global corporations as drivers. Innovation processes are distributed between and co-produced by research universities, state agencies, and regional clusters of industry as well. The case studies in the book demonstrate that the network of innovators is augmented by crowd

fundlers and social entrepreneurs, citizen panelists and open-source activists, user groups and creative artists.

Innovations cannot be reduced to improvements of material products and technical processes alone. Our case studies from different innovation fields indicate that the types of innovation are becoming more and more varied: deviant concepts of co-creation and valuation; different practices of caring, financing, and sharing; and new institutional forms of governance and participation are emerging, sometimes without but more often in combination with digital technologies.

This book offers new theoretical perspectives on the role of discourses, practices, and socio-material constellations in the social, institutional, and cultural change of societies. Its authors discuss theories of ‘reflexive modernization’ (Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, Scott Lash) and the communicative or discursive construction of a ‘regime of the new’ based on a ‘dispositif’ of creativity and aesthetic sensation (Michel Foucault, Andreas Reckwitz). New concepts are developed such as ‘doing innovation’ by ‘communicating the new,’ co-producing ‘fragmented fields of innovation,’ or ‘reflexive innovation.’ The authors base their analysis on social theories of praxis and pragmatism, of communicative action, and of discourses. All studies are related to a broader concept of innovation than the economic one.

The book is a translation of an earlier publication in German: *Innovationsgesellschaft heute. Perspektiven, Felder und Fälle* (Springer 2016). More information about the authors as well as on the origins of and motivation for the book in the context of an interdisciplinary doctoral research program can be found in the introductory articles. We thank the translators David R. Antal, Nancy Chapple, Roisin Cronin, Karen Margolis, Sarah Matthews, and John Richardson, and especially the translator and chief copy editor Stephan Elkins and his colleague Eric J. Iannelli from *SocioTrans*. Last but not least, we are very grateful for the encouraging help of the editors Cori Mackrodt and Kerstin Hoffmann, both at Springer Publishers.

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The editors

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