

Economic Sociology of Innovation International Workshop

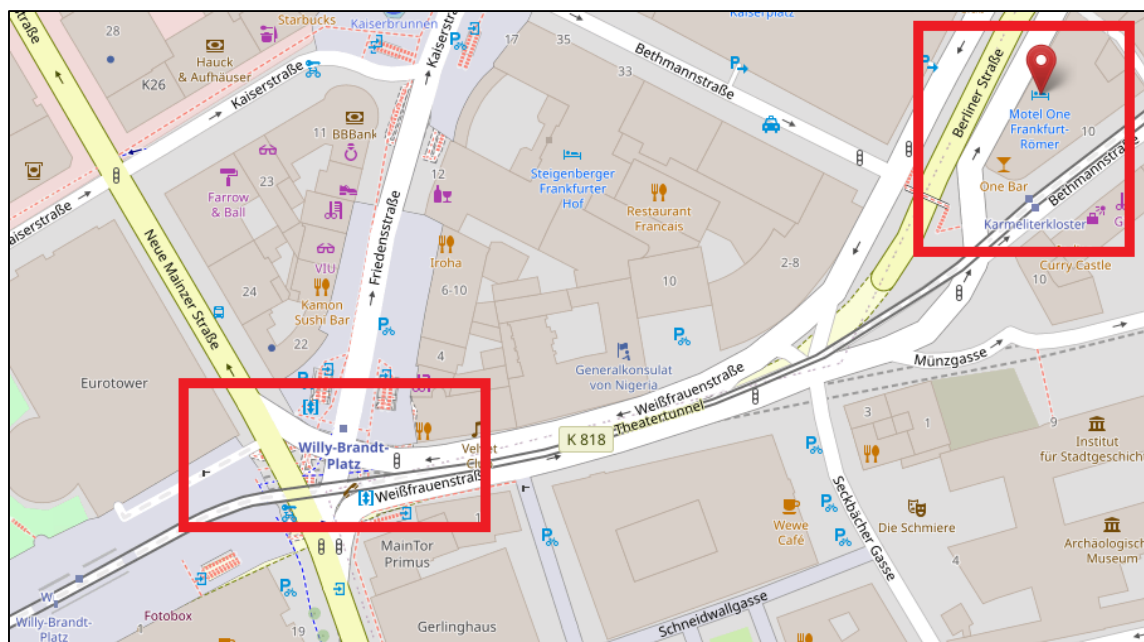
16-18 February 2023, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Convenors: Alexander Ebner and Filippo Reale (Chair of Political Economy and Economic Sociology, Goethe University Frankfurt)

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This workshop receives funding from: **Hans Sauer Stiftung; Stiftung zur Förderung der internationalen wissenschaftlichen Beziehungen der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität.**

Accommodation: Accommodation is provided at **Hotel “Motel One Frankfurt-Römer,”** located **Berliner Strasse 55**, 60311 Frankfurt am Main (close to metro station “Willy-Brandt-Platz:” metro lines U1/U2/U3/U4/U5/U8; and tram stop “Karmeliterkloster:” tram lines 11/12/14/18), <https://www.motel-one.com/de/hotels/frankfurt/hotel-frankfurt-roemer/>. Contact: +49 69 87 00 40 30.



Workshop venue: The workshop takes place in the **Casino Building** on **Westend Campus**, **room 1.811** on the upper floor. The address is **Nina-Rubinstein-Weg 1**, 60323 Frankfurt am Main (metro station “Holzhausenstrasse:” metro lines U1/U2/U3/U8; bus stop “Uni Campus Westend:” bus line M36; and bus stop “Bremer Platz:” bus line 64).



Arrival and departure: From Frankfurt Airport to the city center – For ground transportation to and from the Airport consult <https://www.frankfurt-airport.com/en/transport-and-parking/by-train/local-public-transportation.html>; we recommend riding S8/S9/RE2/RE3/RE59 trains to Frankfurt Central and changing lines accordingly afterwards. Please understand that these trains depart from the **Airport's separate regional train station (Regionalbahnhof)** in the basement of the terminal building.

From **Frankfurt Central Station to the Hotel** – Metro lines U4/U5 travel to “Willy-Brand-Platz” in the neighborhood of the Hotel, tram lines 11/12 serve the stop “Karmeliterkloster” at the entrance of the Hotel.

From **Frankfurt Central Station to the workshop venue** – We recommend using bus line 64 to “Bremer Platz.” Alternatively, use or continue on lines S8/S9 and change onto lines U1/U2/U3/U8 at “Hauptwache” to reach “Holzhausenstrasse.”

From the **Hotel to the workshop venue** – With metro lines U1/U2/U3/U8 from “Willy-Brand-Platz” to “Holzhausenstrasse.”

For more detailed queries consult the local public transport provider (RMV) at <https://www.rmv.de/c/en/homepage>. We cannot reimburse costs for taxis for participants.

Program: The workshop starts with an informal welcome on Thursday, 16 February, at 13:30h. The first session begins at 14:00h. Sessions resume at 09:00h in the mornings. The workshop will conclude on Saturday, 18 February, with a lunch at 13:30h. Breakfast is provided at the Hotel, whereas lunches will be provided Friday and Saturday and light evening snacks will be provided Thursday and Friday, on location. On Friday evening, we offer a dinner excursion based on individual payment to a traditional local inn.

Papers and presentations: First drafts of papers are available at the following URL: <https://goethe.link/econsoc-innovation>; the password to the repository is: &innnovation1. We do not provide prints of the papers; please bring your own copies in a format that suits you. Presentations should be prepared as PowerPoint slides or as PDF files. Please bring them to the venue stored on a USB stick. Otherwise, you are free to send them to Filippo Reale at reale@soz.uni-frankfurt.de in advance. Time slots for presented papers are 60 mins each. Presentations should take about 15-20 minutes followed by Q&A.

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Thematic Overview

Technological innovation is a key characteristic of the economic and social dynamics of modern capitalism. Indeed, the drive for novelty under conditions of capitalist modernity has been a major theme already in the classical contributions of Marx and Schumpeter, among others, who defined modern capitalism as a historically unique economic system that persistently revolutionizes its technological structures and by doing so spreads instability and uncertainty. In view of the corresponding diagnosis of the ubiquity and reflexivity of innovation in its various shapes and forms, recent debates in sociology have approached the creation of novelty as a social process that reaches well beyond the economic sphere and in doing so affects all fields of society. This assessment is shared by the most relevant neighbouring areas of the social sciences. Related lines of reasoning in the evolutionary economics of innovation deviate from neoclassical efficiency considerations as they take on the interplay of economic, social and political forces in the generation, selection and diffusion of innovations. The discourse of science and technology studies likewise rejects efficiency concerns as it addresses the role of power and interests in the social construction of technology.

Until recently, however, major strands of economic sociology have largely ignored the matter of innovation as a key component of capitalist market economies. Rather, they have predominantly investigated the social structures of firms, industries and markets by means of investigating their social logics, moral orders and institutional embeddedness. The analytical focus of these efforts was basically on the stabilization and maintenance of these social structures. Technological innovation emerged only recently as a more prominent issue. For instance, recent advances in economic sociology have highlighted the role of materiality in the analysis of the interplay of interests, ideas and social structures that shapes economic phenomena. These references to the 'new materialism' of science and technology studies address the matter of technological change from a sociological perspective, yet they tend to neglect the specifically economic mechanisms of innovation such as competitive incentives and rewards. Closer to these concerns is a related perspective that has studied the narratives and metrics underlying the formation and stabilization of expectations under conditions of radical uncertainty in turbulent market settings. The diverse means of coping with uncertainty provide insights on the dynamism of capitalist market economies, yet understanding the sources of radical uncertainty requires an analytical angle that goes well

beyond the fluctuation of market prices. Instead, it requires a reconsideration of the causes and consequences of innovation.

Drawing on these viewpoints, further advances of the economic sociology of innovation require focused explorations into the social conditions and constellations of technological innovation in the context of capitalist market economies. Crucially, technological innovation implies the introduction of novelty in society, and this process drives most of the phenomena of instability, insecurity and uncertainty that characterize modern capitalism. In this context, novelty challenges pertinent structures of valuation and commensuration in that established relations of equivalence are necessarily questioned. Manifestations of novelty may differ by their degrees of newness with an immediate impact on variations in predictability, calculability, and governability. Yet the corresponding impulse for economic and social disruptions, despite variations in intensity, distinguishes technological innovation from merely adaptive technological change. Following Schumpeter, it is the socially conditioned and mediated quality of disruptive newness that persistently creates, recombines and destroys actors and structures in both the private and public sector.

In line with this assessment, it is fair to suggest that the economic sociology of innovation is predominantly concerned with the socially embedded economic action of individuals and collectives in firms, industries, markets and territorial innovation systems, which is meant to generate, introduce and diffuse technological innovation in an established socio-economic setting. Decisively, this perspective, while open for historical viewpoints, is predominantly concerned with technological innovation under the institutional conditions of modern capitalism. Thus, while accounting for variation and diversity, it highlights the economic logic that is commonly underlying all processes of innovation under capitalist conditions, namely the logic of profit and competition that relates to the market mechanism. Also, non-profit constellations such as schemes of open innovation need to be assessed as specific segments in a socio-economic setting that is otherwise dominated by capitalist logics. This aspect is well illustrated by the ongoing marketization of science and research next to other previously non-market coordinated spheres of society.

In view of this, it may be argued that a distinct economic sociology of innovation aims at exploring the motives and modes of novelty-generating and -diffusing economic action in the context of tensions between diverse market and non-market types of moral orders, which may arise in diverse institutional environments. A point of departure for these concerns may be provided by the diverse forms of knowledge and the degree to which they appear as property and commodities. In a similar vein, the contested logic of marketization may be explored when it comes to narratives, metrics and other means of coping with the effects of uncertainty that is associated with technological innovation. These mechanisms reflect the economic and social constellation of paradigmatic technological fields such as digital technologies, which are deeply engrained into the evolving routines and practices of firms, networks and markets. Moreover, an economic sociological view on entrepreneurship may address reflexive actors, who develop distinct techno-economic goals and deploy social skills to achieve them, involving strategies for the legitimization of novelty. The mobilization of resources through networks is a key component of these efforts. A corresponding view on the economic sociology of the innovation efforts of firms might explore how firms proceed with innovation based on organizational capabilities that form contested innovation

routines and practices, as exemplified by the modes of R&D operations. As firms are set to compete within specific social structures, their embeddedness in socio-spatial networks emerges as key concern of the economic sociology of innovation. These inter-firm networks might extend to research institutes, universities, government agencies and other actors from the private and public sector who are active in the generation of new knowledge and thus become constitutive parts of regional or national innovation systems. An economic sociological perspective might look at the characteristics of these systems in terms of the structures of knowing, valuating, and legitimizing which sustain the reflexive interaction and learning efforts of the involved innovative actors. These and related social structures will reflect the prevailing market conditions with their distinct modes in the formation of prices and profits, which can be set in relation with the impact of power asymmetries in technological innovation. Corresponding variations in political and legal aspects of innovation inform the national and regional diversity of capitalism. They also shape the self-transformation of capitalist varieties into new paradigmatic types that have been labelled 'hi-tech capitalism', 'techno-scientific capitalism' and 'platform capitalism' among others.

The workshop "Economic Sociology of Innovation" is set to discuss both theoretical and empirical studies carving out the distinctiveness of an economic sociology perspective on innovation as the sociological analysis of technological and organizational change in causal interaction with economic and economized social structures, compared with other related disciplinary areas. Among other things, this is set to demonstrate its strong analytic value-added in explaining contemporary innovative dynamics such as, for example, digitalization, financial innovation, and sustainability transitions. To this end, the workshop discusses change and innovation as major areas of theoretical and empirical research in the intellectual history of classical and modern economic sociology. It then discusses the diversities of embeddedness of the generation and diffusion of new technologies in collaborative, epistemic, discursive, and regulatory frameworks. This includes, among other things, the social structures of market competition in the diffusion of technological innovation, especially concerning the valuation of new technologies and goods; the social structures of innovative milieux and territorialized innovation systems; and the narratives, metrics, and related institutional means of coping with uncertainty and failure in the management of R&D and innovation.

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Goethe University Frankfurt, Westend Campus
Casino Building (upper floor), room 1.811, Nina-Rubinstein-Weg 1

Program

Thursday, 16 February 2023

- 13:30h – 14:00h *Informal Welcome*
- 14:00h – 14:30h Alexander Ebner/Filippo Reale (Goethe University Frankfurt)
Introduction
- 14:30h – 16:00h *Keynote Lecture*
Michael Hutter (Berlin Social Science Center)
How Are Economic Innovations (E)Valuated? Fragments of an Evolutionist Answer
- 16:00h – 16:30h *Coffee Break*
- 16:30h – 18:30h Alf Rehn (University of Southern Denmark)
Narrating Novelty: On Constructing Innovation Discourses in a Community of Performed Expertise
- Adriana Mica (University of Warsaw)
Science of Failure: Innovation and Policymaking Compared
- 18:30h *Light Snack*

Friday, 17 February 2023

- 09:00h – 09:30h Alexander Ebner/Filippo Reale (Goethe University Frankfurt)
Introduction
- 09:30h – 11:00h *Keynote Lecture*
Richard Whitley (University of Manchester)
Explaining Lasting Change in the Arts and Sciences: Beyond Neo-Schumpeterianism in Innovation Studies
- 11:00h – 11:30h *Coffee Break*
- 11:30h – 13:30h Andrea Herrmann (Radboud University Nijmegen)
Skill Specificity in the High-Skill Online Gig Economy: Same as in Traditional Labour Markets? (with Jaap van Slageren)
- Marcin Serafin (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw)
Putting a Price Tag on a Unicorn: How Uber was Valued before Entering the Stock Market
- 13:30h – 14:30h *Lunch*
- 14:30h – 16:30h Aaron Z. Pitluck (Illinois State University)
The Interpretive Work of Financial Innovation
- Michael Faust (Georg August University Göttingen)
How does the Financialization of Firms Affect the Course of Digitalization? Conceptual Considerations and Provisional Empirical Insights
- 16:30h – 17:00h *Coffee Break*
- 17:00h – 18:00h Francesco Ramella (University of Turin)
Open and Collaborative Innovation
- 18:00h *Light Snack*
- 20:00h *Evening in Traditional Inn*

Saturday, 18 February 2023

- 09:00h – 11:00h Gaglio, Gérald (University Côte d'Azur)
Artificial Intelligence in Radiology: What Connections with Innovation?
- Dennis McNamara (Georgetown University)
Complementarity without Chaos – China's Party-State Integration of Innovation Platforms
- 11:00h – 11:30h *Coffee Break*
- 11:30h – 12:30h Cristina Besio (Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg)
The Organizational Embeddedness of Innovation: Evidences of Sustainable Innovation in the German Energy Industry (with Marco Jöstingmeyer and Anna Skripchenko)
- 12:30h – 13:30h *Farewell/ Wrap-up*
- 13:30h *Lunch*