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The term 'social innovation' has had two meanings in the academic literature. In its earliest scholarly uses, primarily in sociology, it was used to refer to the creation of new patterns of human interaction, new social structures, or new social relations. The second focuses on innovations designed to address a social or environmental issue or to meet a specific social market failure or need. Often, both types of innovation are combined to establish new patterns of social relations that have positive social outcomes. As Mulgan et al. (2007) argued, social innovations are "social both in their ends and their means" creating "new social relationships and collaborations" as well as responding to specific social needs (p. 2). This article provides an overview of the evolving field of social innovation globally. First, it introduces the term and sets out key definitions. Next, the chapter explores the key contexts and drivers of social innovation and maps the actors who engage with it.

Social innovation has been recognized as a new wave of innovation that gives primacy to systems and processes of change in social relations on the one hand and, on the other, to innovation around the conceptualization, design, and production of goods and services that address social and environmental needs and market failures.

Social innovation can be seen as the simultaneous production of new ideas and new social structures and a process of recontextualization of the norms of the public good, justice, and equity.

Today, social innovation cuts across all sectors of society often combining the conventionally disparate logics of private, public, and civil society in new, hybrid organizations and forms of action. For the private sector, there are two dimensions of social innovation: first, the recognition that technological innovations fail if they are not integrated with changes in social relations within the organization and second, as a new agenda for the role of business in society. For the state, social innovation reflects an established tradition of welfare reform based on increased efficiency and effectiveness. It may also challenge the governance status quo in societies by aiming to transform the power structures across social relations that allocate goods and services ineffectively or unequally. For civil society, social innovation involves both internal process of organizational change (such as new legal forms and collaborations) and novelty in external outputs and outcomes (such as new products and services).

At its simplest, social innovation represents new ideas that address unmet social needs (Mulgan et al., 2007). However, beyond this, there are two broad schools of thought concerning the definition of social innovation: new social processes and new social outcomes. The first emphasizes changes in social relations and often has a focus on rebalancing power disparities in society. For example, Mumford (2002: p. 253) noted: Social innovation.refers to the generation and implementation of

new ideas about how people should organize interpersonal activities, or social interactions, to meet one or more common goals.

Westley and Antadze (2010: p. 2) subsequently expanded upon this. Social innovation is a complex process of introducing new products, processes or programs that profoundly change the basic routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of the social system in which the innovation occurs. Such successful social innovations have durability and broad impact.

Second, social innovation can be seen as the answer to social market failures in the provision of vital public goods. Phills et al. (2008: p. 36) proposed that social innovation is A novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) endorsed this definition but also acknowledged the process dimension of social innovation (2011: p. 1), Social innovation is distinct from economic innovation because it is not about introducing new types of production or exploiting new markets in itself but is about satisfying new needs not provided by the market (even if markets intervene later) or creating new, more satisfactory ways of insertion in terms of giving people a place and a role in production.

In addition to these two metadefinitions, three types of social innovation can be identified that cut across both (see Table 1). First, there is incremental innovation in existing goods and services to address social need more effectively or efficiently. Second, there is institutional innovation that aims to harness or reshape existing social and economic structures to generate new social value and outcomes. Finally, disruptive social innovation aims at systems change via political action and is typically driven by social movements aiming to reframe issues to the benefit of otherwise disenfranchised groups. Social innovation can also be defined in terms of the level of its action or impact from the individual to the systems. Such levels can be mapped against the two main definitions of social innovation focused either on new processes or on new outcomes (see Table 2).

Finally, drawing upon theory from design thinking, Murray et al. (2010) set out the key stages of the development of a social innovation as a nonlinear process (see Figure 1). This model is characterized by a series of key inflection points where the development of an innovation moves first from prompts and proposals to prototyping (an important part of the design process), then to sustainability and, finally, to scale.

Of particular influence have been Schumpeter's (1942) reimagining of Marxian notions of 'creative destruction' caused by systemic innovation and his typology of 'five dimensions' of innovation. The latter provided a conceptual classification used in much of the subsequent analysis of innovation:
1. The introduction of a new product or an improved version of an existing product.
2. The introduction of an improved method of production.

3. The development of a new market (or entry into an existing market for a new player).
4. The development of a new source of supply or supply chain.
5. The more efficient or effective organization of any industry or sector.

In tandem with a range of new theorizing concerning the competitive strategy of firms, the 1980s saw the emergence of innovation studies based firmly within the management discipline and pioneered by von Hippel (1988). This work led to important subsequent contributions by Christensen (1997, 2002) and Chesbrough (2003). In the past 10 years, there has been a plethora of more generalist management books on aspects of innovation, as well as specific studies looking at a single aspect of innovation and its effects. As part of this proliferation of work on innovation, a specific social innovation literature began to emerge, most notably with attempts by Drucker (1987) and Moss Kanter (1999) to blend commercial and social innovation theory together within a hybrid construct of 'business in society.' (Moss Kanter (1999) developed a model of corporate social innovation that suggested that cross-sector partnerships between not-for-profits and business offered valuable opportunities for innovation as a setting for 'beta testing' new ideas and processes. These pioneering ideas around 'new paradigm partnerships' led directly to subsequent work in 'corporate social entrepreneurship' (see also Collins's (2005) reflections on the similarities between his analysis of 'great' businesses and successful social sector organizations).) However, the distinctiveness of – as well as overlaps between – these two streams of work has been the subject of specific work only in the past 10 or so years. Building upon the analysis of the existing social innovation literature set out by Pol and Ville (2008), two broad conceptualizations of social innovation are identified here: innovation in social relations (that typically reflects process changes) and innovation to address social market failures (that typically reflects outcome changes). A third strand of social innovation theory, focused on macrolevel systems resilience, has also emerged from complexity theory.