

Understanding Social and Cultural Mechanisms Behind Innovation

Veranstalter Inter University Center (IUC) Dubrovnik, Croatia

Veranstaltungsort Inter University Center (IUC) Dubrovnik

Termin 05.05.2020 - 07.05.2020 ganztags

Conference on the Sociology of Innovation in Dubrovnik, Croatia

Background

Innovation is one of the fundamental social processes of our times. It is one of the main drivers of social change. It has an important effect on economic growth and development. It has also some important impacts, both intended and unintended. In sum, innovation is a cultural feature that shapes the character of contemporary societies oriented to a particular kind of social change based on the constant generation, utilization and diffusion of knowledge.

As a result of the importance of innovation, social sciences pay special interest to the different relationship between innovation, social transformation, and social welfare. Since the early 1980s, this field has grown as an interdisciplinary endeavour. It has been built with contributions from different traditions of social science, such as several streams of economics, economic geography, political science, organizational studies, and sociology.

The interdisciplinary consensus is not built on systematic theories, but on a set of social, economic and political factors that are considered as antecedents that shape innovation, including institutions, social capital, social networks and the expansion of human capital. More recently, other consensus has been built on the social effects that have to be taken into account, both positive and negative, regarding the uneven distribution of innovation outcomes and the unforeseen social effects on

social organization, environment and ways of life. Nevertheless, some important aspects of the social mechanisms behind innovation are not fully understood because of the diversity of concepts and methods used by different disciplines. Theoretical accounts to interpret innovation as a social process at micro, meso and macro levels of analysis are also dispersed. An interdisciplinary effort is needed to refine the conceptual background and the empirical evidence in order to develop systematic approaches and to apply existing research to contexts of practice.

Important contributions have been made from the sociological tradition: William Ogburn, Robert Merton, Michael Mulkey, Everett Rogers and James Coleman, among many others are considered as referents in the sociology of innovation. In recent decades sociologists have paid little attention to innovation processes in comparison to the importance given to social and cultural components that intervene in the construction of science and technology and their societal impacts. We are, however, witnessing a growing interest in the discipline in issues related to innovation, in consonance with the evidence of the role of cultural and social factors in the shaping and performance of innovation systems. There are important issues at stake that place sociologists in a privileged position from which to contribute to innovation studies.

Conference goals

This conference will explore the theoretical traditions, conceptual components and empirical approaches from sociological perspectives that are useful for understanding innovation practices, innovation systems and the social processes of innovation.

The aim of the conference is to bring together a group of scholars who are working on the main lines of sociological thinking about innovation in order to create a network that help to systematize relevant perspectives and make them more accessible to the interdisciplinary field of innovation studies.

The conference will have into account different streams that involve innovation understood broadly as the sets of actions and the social process involved with the transformation of knowledge into value. Given the importance of science and technology in development and social change, technological innovation is considered a key component of the process, although the transformation of knowledge into value implies the combination of a varied array of knowledge, skills and resources. Several forms of innovation will be considered, including technological, economic and social innovation.

The conference will be organized in three thematic tracks. The first track will focus on theoretical and conceptual developments that help to analyse and understand innovation. The second track will focus on the social antecedents of innovation. The

third track will focus on the social impact of innovation.

Conference topics

The conference will accept theoretical, empirical and comparative papers grounded in sociological streams related mainly (but not only) to the following topics:

- The social action of innovation
- The sociological meaning of innovation
- The economic sociology of innovation
- Innovation and key social processes
- Culture, values and innovation -Social structure, social classes and innovation
- Social capital, social networks and innovation
- Organizations, organizational fields and innovation systems -Innovation and work
- The diffusion of innovation
- Innovation, development and well being
- Innovation and inequalities
- The unintended consequences of innovation

Conference sessions

There will be key note sessions and paper presentation sessions:

- Key note sessions will consist on interventions of invited experts on each of the streams of the conference
- Paper presentations sessions will be based on a detailed selection of a limited number of papers that fit with the conference topics. A total of 20 papers will be selected based on the relevance and adaptation to the conference goals.
- A special session will be reserved for PhD students and young doctors working on related issues who wish to present the developments or results of their theses dissertations.

Key dates

Abstract submission: 1, February 2020

Abstract acceptance: 1, March2020

Final programme: 1, April2020

Registration: 15 April2020

Conference: 5-7 May2020

Conference fees

Participant registration: 100 Euro. The registration fee covers the use of facilities of the IUC, administration and coffee breaks. The IUC provides a welcome cocktail

party for all courses and conferences in the courtyard of the IUC building.

The IUC also provides receipts of the fees and certificates of attendance (the organizers will communicate the form of collecting fees after the publication of the final programme).

Coordinators

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Jasminka Laznjak, University of Zagreb, Croatia, [jlaznjak\(at\)ffzg\(dot\)hr](mailto:jlaznjak@ffzg.hr)

Conference venue

The Conference will take place at Inter University Center in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The information about the IUC is available at: <https://www.iuc.hr/about.php>. Information about affordable accommodation in dormitories and hotels is provided in the IUC web page.

About the organizers

Jasminka Lažnjak is full professor at the Department of Sociology at University of Zagreb where she teaches Society and Technology, Sociology of Work and Organization and Economic Sociology. She holds MA and PhD in sociology from the University of Zagreb. Main areas of research are: science, technology and society studies, sociology of innovation and sociology of work and organization. Recent publications: Švarc, J., Lažnjak, J. (2017), *Innovation Culture in Crony Capitalism. Does Hofstede's Model Matter?* Zagreb, Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, (book); Švarc, J., Lažnjak, J., Dabić, M. (2019). Regional innovation culture in innovation laggard: A case of Croatia. *Technology in society* doi:10.1016/j.techsoc.2019.03.006; Dabić, M.; Lažnjak, J.; Smallbone, D.; Švarc, J. Intellectual capital, organisational climate, innovation culture, and SME performance. Evidence from Croatia. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 25 (2018), 6; 1-23 doi:10.1108/jsbed-04-2018-0117

Manuel Fernández-Esquinas holds a PhD. in Sociology and Political Sciences from the Complutense University of Madrid. He is a research scientist at the Spanish Council for Scientific Research (CSIC) and director of the Joint Research Unit on Knowledge Transfer and Innovation (CSIC and University of Córdoba). His main fields of research are sociology of innovation, sociology of science, innovation policies, knowledge transfer and the uses of the social sciences. He has published about these subjects in *European Planning Studies*, *Technological Forecasting and*

Social Change, Regional Studies, Industry and Innovation and Higher Education, among others. His latest edited book is titled “Innovation in SMEs and Micro Firms: Culture, Entrepreneurial Dynamics and Regional Development” (Routledge, 2018, with van Oostrom and Pinto). Currently he is serving as President of the Spanish Sociological Federation and Coordinator of the Research Network “Southern European Societies” of the European Sociological Association.

Further Information (PDF)
