

Participation, engagement and coproduction for social innovation in turbulent times

Whereas it has long been assumed that public sector and private organizations develop new products and services for users who merely buy and consume what producers create, recent research shows that users collectively generate massive amounts of product and service innovation, also due to the availability of low-cost enabling technologies. As pointed out by von Hippel, considering users as a major source of product and service innovation, leads to the framing of a new innovation paradigm, in which users play a central and very active role in developing products and services both with organizations and by themselves.

By considering users as a source of innovation, a new and more elaborated conceptualization of the role of users in product and service design and provision based on participation and engagement is needed. This view aims at making products and services not only user-friendly or user-centric but rather at improving the quality of decision-making, promoting greater trust and enhancing value creation through the exploitation of collaborative innovation networks established across the traditional boundaries of organizations. Participation, engagement and co-production are fundamental elements in the conceptualization of user-driven innovation both in the public and in the private sector.

With the continuously growing call for a sustainable approach to development, a new role for coproduction, participation and engagement is emerging related to the need to create networks and communities of actors that dynamically combine knowing, doing, and learning to bring about specific actions for sustainable development. Research have already shown a correlation between coproduction and successful grass-root initiatives in society for sustainable development where people, group and communities collaborate with companies and governments (especially at the local level). The level of cocreation and collaboration that we are seeing today in our ecosystems, in all fields almost, are worthy of consideration. The level of resource configuration that is being made will inform the concepts of sustainability and transformation for the years to come.

In terms of enabling technologies, the widespread availability (and use) of ICT-based tools offers new possibilities for collaborative product and service creation and provision where the distinctions between roles such as producers, professionals, practitioners, politicians, civil servants, experts, consumers and citizens are blurring. This allows a form of innovation driven by social demands rather than by the market and the development of products and services that are more and more users-centric not because they are designed FOR the users, but WITH the users and, increasingly often, BY the users themselves who take action in response to the problems of unsustainable practices, behaviors and lifestyles.

The objective of the track is to discuss co-production, participation and citizens' engagement as the key for social innovation with a special focus on the role citizens' engagement can play to cope with turbulent problems that, like the answer to the COVID-19 pandemic, preclude the existence of ready-made solutions.

The track welcomes contributions from different theoretical and methodological perspectives and academic domains (e.g., Information Systems, Management, Service Science, Network Science), as well as case studies, successful examples and failures in order to collect lessons learned that may be useful for researchers and practitioners with an interest in this field.

Topics include (but are not limited to):

- Co-production as a tool for social innovation
- Co-production as a tool for sustainability
- Citizens' engagement and coproduction in responding to the Covid-19 pandemics
- Potential impacts of pandemics on sustainability of ecosystems

- How organizations can leverage co-production for Corporate Social Innovation
- Service co-production/co-creation in the public and in the private sector: differences and similarities
- Open data, open government and open innovation
- ICT-enabled collaborative grass-root initiatives for sustainable development
- The role of ICT to enable sustainable product and service co-production
- The wisdom of the crowd: crowdsourcing in social innovation using ICT collaboration tools
- Co-production and the role of citizens in the development of smart and sustainable cities
- Co-production, social innovation and sustainability in the 4.0 Industrial Revolution
- Case-studies and examples of co-production in the public and in the private sector
- How to assess the effects of co-production on organizations: addressing potential challenges in the context of security, governance, accountability, etc.
- How users can be motivated to engage in product and service co-production).

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