
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Valentina Ndou, PhD is a Senior Researcher in Management Engineering at University of Salento (Italy). Her research specialises in analysing the innovation management trends and the effectiveness of information systems with particular emphasis on new solutions and approaches for business management, eBusiness models, entrepreneurship education and knowledge management. She is actively involved in research, education and projects management, at national and international levels. Since 2005 she has taught in several master and PhD courses. She has published a large number of peer-reviewed papers and book chapters that have appeared in international journals.

Giovanni Schiuma is Director of the CLabUnibas (Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation Development) and Professor in Innovation Management at University of Basilicata (Italy). He, as a high international academic and consultant, is widely recognised as one of the world's leading experts in the arts-based management for organisational development and innovation, as well as for his work on strategic knowledge management for company value creation dynamics. Inspiring communicator and facilitator, with extensive research management expertise and excellent ability to coordinate complex projects, lead research teams and contribute to organisational governance.

With the increasing knowledge intensity of the contemporary economy, the capacity to create knowledge has become a priority for many territories (Yigitcanlar and Lonnqvist, 2013; Schiuma, 2011). It has been primarily argued that the growth and sustainability of local innovation ecosystems rely highly on the role of knowledge and innovation, as strategic elements for competitiveness.

The scientific debate has widely recognised the role of territories as spaces where knowledge interaction takes place among scientific, technological, academic, cultural and innovation activities, catalysing economic productivity and competitiveness (Boschma, 2005; Carrilo et al., 2014). In this scenario, the knowledge-based local development has

been acknowledged as a new perspective where knowledge is the most crucial element of a development strategy for cities and regions (Yigitcanlar, 2010; Yigitcanlar, 2014). As Capello (2017, p.986) argues, “creativity and recombination capability to translate basic or applied scientific knowledge into innovative applications require a relational space where functional and hierarchical economic and social interactions are embedded in a geographical space”.

Policymakers and academics have paid increasing attention to the delineation of those processes and strategies that are necessary to support the development of a knowledge economy. Such comprehensive knowledge development agendas have been proposed, fostering entrepreneurship and enabling social dialogue (Carrillo et al., 2014).

The transformation of knowledge into innovation is an iterative and interactive process where collective learning processes happen due to high mobility of professionals and skilled internal labour between firms. Also, intense cooperation among local actors and in particular customer-supplier relationships in production, design, research and, finally, knowledge creation are required (Camagni and Capello, 2002).

In such knowledge-based development context, the connotation of knowledge with ICT development is widely known. ICTs constitute the main driving force of the knowledge society, as they enable the democratisation of knowledge and reduction of information asymmetries. The pervasive development and diffusion of ICTs are providing new opportunities for interaction and collaboration among various actors (policymakers, decision-makers, planners, stakeholders, citizens, experts, and scientists) thus sustaining the creation of distributed, real-time systems that enable fast and effective response (Stratigea et al., 2015). This has created the conditions for developing a participatory planning process to engage people in policy dialogue, to ensure inclusiveness of the decision-making process (Stratigea et al., 2015). New dimensions and dynamics of interaction and collaboration have emerged that focus on co-production and co-creation of value by direct inclusion and participation of local stakeholders and citizens in the decision-making process, thus sharing control over development initiatives as well as decisions and resources that affect them (van Asselt and Rijkens-Klomp, 2002).

It has mainly been argued that social participation for innovation leads to better informed and more creative decision-making. Meanwhile, citizens and stakeholders could make available their opinions, views, visions, ideas, expertise and knowledge to feed the innovation process (Stratigea et al., 2015).

Therefore, the term “social innovation and co-creation” has been introduced. In the literature, social innovation and co-creation is conceptualised as an open process of participation, exchange and collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including end-users, aiming to produce long-lasting outcomes, that addresses societal needs by fundamentally changing the relationships, positions and rules between the involved stakeholders (Osborne and Brown, 2011; Sørensen and Torfing, 2011; Chesbrough, 2003, 2006).

Such new perspectives require new updated approaches, frameworks and tools for the management of the social innovation. Therefore, this special issue wants to provide some contributions that investigate in-depth the dynamics of social innovation and co-creation adopting a knowledge-based perspective.

This special issue includes six papers that provide insights about the relationships between social innovation and knowledge-based local development.

The special issue opens with a position paper by the guest editors Ndou and Schiuma adopting a comprehensive structured literature review of papers published with a focus

on “social innovation for knowledge-based local development” from 1997 to 2019. The paper aims to shed light on the current scholarly conversations linking social innovation and knowledge-based development to identify critical new research areas. The paper argues that even if there is not yet an explicit specialisation on the topic, findings highlight the growing importance of the theme and underline some relevant research streams: 1: *Dynamics of social innovation for territorial development*; 2: *Promoting participatory development processes for interactive learning, networking and knowledge exchange*; 3: *The role of institutions to promote, sustain and develop knowledge-based territorial development systems*.

The paper by Leon and Romanelli, ‘Sharing cognitive, emotional and spiritual knowledge within smart and connected communities’, analyses the role of technologies in facilitating and supporting knowledge flows and sharing within private and public smart and connected communities. Through the use of exploratory research and a qualitative approach, the authors analyse the direction of knowledge flow and the typology of knowledge shared in two cases of online communities: Tripadvisor and Barcelona Cityhall. These two cases are chosen to provide insight from both the private context (Tripadvisor) and the public context (Barcellona Cityhall). By employing a social network analysis technique, the authors tracked and synthesised the knowledge activity in the communities by extracting and processing the online content from September 2017 until February 2018. The authors conclude that smart and connected communities foster communication and interaction between individuals and groups and help to enable knowledge sharing and dissemination, driving people to acquire and use the information for using knowledge and breeding new knowledge. Also, an outline of the differences that characterise public and private smart and connected communities is provided.

The paper ‘Implementing social innovation in real contexts’ by Rizzo et al. provides a critical analysis of the generic approaches and frameworks so far used for explaining the social innovation process. The authors argue that social innovation is a distinct process that requires specific frameworks to avoid misconceptions and misalignment. Through substantial empirical evidence of nearly 60 cases of social innovation realised in an EU research project, the paper sheds light on the mechanisms behind establishing and developing Social Innovation through a comparison of the different phases of the “ideal” spiral model with reality and a picture of the real social innovation development process. The paper argues that social innovation takes place in constrained contexts and the establishment of a favourable ecosystem emerges as one of the most relevant measures to sustain it. The findings of this research provide relevant managerial, theoretical and policy design implications.

The paper ‘Optional and necessary activities: operationalising Jan Gehl’s analysis of urban space with Foursquare data’ by Cerrone et al. provides a method to operationalise Jan Gehl’s categorisation of dweller’s activity patterns in public space. By utilising data coming from the social network Foursquare, the authors map and measure the variety and popularity of urban amenities to gain information. The information grasped regards the activities one city can offer and how the spatial connections between social and economic facilities are characteristic to the local, municipal or regional contexts. The dataset taken from the city of Turku, Finland is used in this paper to design an interactive tool to allow having aware conversations to learn about the hidden potentials of the city. The research provides relevant insights and new lines of thinking among the planning and urban studies community.

The paper by Benjamin et al. ‘A minimal viable process and tools for massive participation in urban Development’ aims to provide a framework for enabling massive citizen participation in urban planning projects. The paper adopted two established techniques from business and product development – minimal viable product and swim lane modelling – to provide empirical findings from the EU-funded H2020 project “U_CODE Urban Collective Design Environment” (2015–2019), that aims to create a co-design platform for urban planning. The paper focuses on providing evidence on how to design and develop supportive ICT tools for mass participation in urban planning. It also outlines the ICT tools that could support the minimal viable process that could be effective in ensuring low-friction communication between the stakeholders and maintaining an overall lean and feasible procedure. The authors find that the supporting tools could be differentiated into tools applied to a single phase – phase-specific tools – and those that support multiple steps in the process – generic tools. Based on these findings, a procedural and instrumental framework for enabling massive citizen participation in urban planning projects based on digital collaboration and communication tools is developed.

The paper of Romanelli and Zbucnea entitled ‘Knowledge-based social innovation for cultural endeavours revitalising urban structures’ provides an analysis of how knowledge exchange is connected to social innovation and urban regeneration, analysing several situations in Romania. Through the analysis of three case studies, the authors investigate how culture-led urban regeneration could be achieved in a knowledge-based framework by analysing several dimensions such as the role of the policy framework and public administration, the dynamics of the relationship between the actors involved, knowledge sharing processes, innovation drivers and the impact of cultural and creative initiatives on the urban, physical and mental fabric. The authors conclude that social innovation depends on the managerial vision of the initiators and generates multiplying effects of cultural entrepreneurship initiatives. Proper cooperation between all public and private actors, individuals as well as organisations, for culture-led urban development primarily depends on the actual involvement of the local administration, as well as on the inner dynamics of those cities.

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