

Call for Papers

The Innovation Imperative – Exploring the Power of a Seemingly Ubiquitous Narrative

Session of the the Research Committee on “Sociology of Science and Technology” (RC23)

at the IVth ISA Forum of Sociology on “Challenges of the 21st Century: Democracy, Environment, Inequalities, Intersectionality”, 14.-18.07.2020, in Porto Alegre (Brazil)

organized by Ingo Schulz-Schaeffer, Jaime Jimenez Guzman, and Simon Egbert

It has become a powerful narrative over the last decades that innovation provides a solution to most of the challenges in this world and that it is, thus, imperative to innovate. Though the importance of innovation had been emphasized before, this was mostly with respect to technological innovations and focused on economic challenges. Nowadays, however, the claim that it is imperative to innovate is extended to social (political, organizational, legal, educational, civic, communal etc.) and cultural innovations of all kinds. And the challenges to be solved are as heterogeneous as can be. A recent OECD policy note nicely illustrates this by claiming that “innovation is a key driver of productivity, growth and well-being, and plays an important role in helping address core public policy challenges like health, the environment, food security, education and public sector efficiency” as well as for addressing “key challenges like ageing populations and climate change”.

This session aims at investigating the ubiquity of the innovation imperative, the characteristics of the narrative, its varieties, and its power of influencing discourses and decision-making processes in different spheres of society. It aims at an internationally comparative perspective on these issues. We welcome empirical case studies on the influence of the innovation imperative on different spheres of society and from different world regions; contributions that discuss the global nature and local varieties of the phenomenon, the hegemony of the Global North it may express, or the economic rationale that may still be embodied in this narrative.

If you are interested in giving a presentation in our session, please submit an abstract (300 words max) by no later than **30.09.2019** via the online conference tool (Confex): <https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/forum2020/webprogrampreliminary/Session13719.html>

For further information on the conference, see: <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/conferences/forum/porto-alegre-2020>