

STATEMENT OF AIMS

The International Journal NOVation – Critical Studies of Innovation is underway to contribute to the rethinking and debunking of innovation narratives in both the interdisciplinary STS – Science, Technology and Society, and the wide array of STI –Science, Technology, and Innovation disciplinary fields.

Our first steps date back to April 2017, where this endeavour was already in perspective with Godin and Vinck book (2017). From then, [a first Issue was proposed: "X-innovation: Re-inventing Innovation Again and Again" \(with B. Godin, G. Gaglio and S. Pfothner as editors\)](#), in the meanwhile launched in 2019 (June).

Putting together several scholars across at least three continents, NOVation is in itself proof of an urge to open the field of innovation studies and other interdisciplinary –and every disciplinary– areas engaged with STI discourses. New generations have been bold in internationalising their practices and contributing to a broader kind of inter- cross-disciplinary problems and interpretations. Like this, our Editorial Board is encouraging co-authorship between disciplines, promoting special issues with guest editors, in subjects that debate different areas and engage the innovation field with new and more critical generations.

We should emphasise that there is now a younger generation of researchers, more open to this view than the mainstream researchers and scholars are, frequently entrenched as the latter are in University chairs or established research institutions, whose agendas tend to be shaped according to policy agendas. In fact, from the very beginning, "innovation studies" has been a policy-oriented field. Otherwise, there are indeed many scholars who do not recognise themselves in that normative orientation, at the same time being critical of the current system of bibliometric validation and ready to publish in this Journal.

There is a need to look critically at innovation studies presented as the unavoidable path to scholars and experts and get better pictures of innovation than the one this field has been used to. This Journal questions then the current narratives of innovation and offers a forum to discuss some different interpretations of innovation, not just its virtues but also its implications.

In this sense, NO refers to the non-innovative behaviours, which are as crucial to our societies as innovation. Failures, imitation and adverse effects of innovation, to take just some examples of non-innovation or NOVation, are minimised and rarely form part of innovation theories. The following topics comprehend this journal scope of interests and critical approaches:

- Deconstructing theories and models of innovation;
- Deconstructing the discourses proposing, idealising and selling them;
- Confronting diverse ontologies of policy and development with rational innovation models and other views of officials and development agencies;

- Not just deconstructing, but also constructing different models and proposing alternative narratives.

Besides, the areas that NOvation calls to collaborate represents an interdisciplinary field with many disciplinary and thematic affiliations – Economics and sociology of innovation, History of Science and Technology, Conceptual history, Intellectual history, Public Policy, Institutional History, etc. –, with a wide scope of methodological possibilities:

1. Critical analyses: from and on studies of innovation, being those approaches more disciplinary or interdisciplinary;
2. Discourse analysis: deconstructing actors' rhetoric, policy-makers frameworks and scholars' theories and argumentation;
3. Intellectual history: documenting scholars' theories and trajectories;
4. Conceptual accounts: studying the concepts used in the field, the travelling of concepts among fields (academic and public) and their transformation into catchwords;
5. Case studies: helping to understand and mapping the uses of innovation and to rethink current narratives.

One thing that we find most important, to not lose sight of, is that 'NOvation' modus operandi is different from mainstream journals, i.e., not too obsessed with fashionable international credentials, like REF-Research Excellence Framework or other criteria that make rankings and so on – impact factors, etc. Researchers are also looking for alternative indicators to better account for the diversity of access and appropriation of knowledge, than the only provided by citation and impact factors in a mainstream journal. In addition, with our open peer review policy, we are encouraging responsible and grounded evaluations and constructive debates, which means that when it reveals interesting, this somewhat 'invisible' work of a journal might be published in a proper section.

The critical study of innovation is essential because innovation as a word is everywhere in contemporary societies. Innovation is on the political discourses, cultural and knowledge debates, and in the political economy of nowadays global economics. It is not for the sake of being against but to make up for the lack of empirical basis that the pro-innovation bias has. We are indeed interested in understanding "why innovation is (un)important" in connection to other categories of human agency contributing to progress", or put in other words: understand 'why, where and when' innovation could be– or not be– important to progress and development of human endeavour in different contexts and regions.

Adopting a critical stance and studying innovation not from a performative place, that's our challenge to innovation studies communities across the globe. Indeed, the field of innovation studies is normative and programmatic. People like to construct new theories or visions. They are not used to historical, conceptual and critical analysis of innovation. This is what we want to build at NOvation. This journal examines those who research, study or talk about innovation, the vocabulary and the concepts used, the discourses developed (past and present), the theories constructed, the assumptions, values and ideologies behind the theories, ideas,

views, etc. This why our look towards innovation is concerned (though not exclusively) with historical and genealogical aspects: in short, what is the 'originality' of the theories? To what extent do the alternatives challenge existing theories? This includes looking at the context of the emergence of the alternative theories; the origin of the alternative theories, evolution and recent developments; the goals (explicit and implicit) and rationales of the theories; conceptual and discursive aspects – namely, to identify precursor terms and to study a particular semantic field. In sum, our contribution at NOvation is anchored on the assumption that it has become vital to our contemporary legibility to scrutinise the discourses held in the name of, or uses of, the theories (in the academic community, among practitioners and/or policymakers). This is to unveil the normativeness of those discourses or theories: what role values and policy play in the new narratives? That is to study the politics and ideology of innovation. (Godin 2019; Godin et al. 2021)

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