

Munk School of Global Affairs  
Master of Global Affairs

Short Course  
**User Innovation, Amateur Improvisation, Citizen Science:  
Perspectives on New Global Innovation Ecologies**  
(GLA2555H Innovation Policy)

**Objective**

Where and how is knowledge produced? Who are the key-actors that turn new knowledge into successful innovations? Which contexts afford the arenas for ongoing refinement, improvement and modification of products and processes? And what (if any) are the consequences for innovation policy?

This short course seeks to answer these questions by drawing attention to innovation ecologies that are evolving rapidly *beyond* the familiar loci of knowledge production and innovation. Traditionally, knowledge production was organized along disciplinary lines and took place in dedicated institutionalized arenas: the R&D department of the firm or the university lab. This disciplinary and analytical paradigm during the last decades, however, has increasingly been challenged by more pragmatist understandings of knowledge production. Although this shift appears less radical than initially prophesized, the new (and revived) modes of knowledge production privilege a situative pragmatism: knowledge is valued according to its usefulness to solve the specific project task rather than to the authority of its disciplinary, institutional or departmental origin and status.

Knowledge production, then, increasingly extends from the disciplinary 'context of justification' to the 'context of application'. Knowledge production in the context of application foregrounds a range of new actors and arenas that, so far, have hardly been appreciated: consumers, users, fans, amateurs or hobbyists. These actors either log on to (online) communities governed by firms or self-organize open-source platforms to advance products and technologies they are passionate about. The respective literature seeks to converge on the single term 'co-creation' to encompass these multifaceted phenomena.

Co-creation in these rapidly evolving innovation ecologies poses daunting challenges both for theory and policy alike. First, co-creation does not fit well into the registers of the established, more enduring geographies of knowledge-creation amongst producers. Co-creation practices rather leave ephemeral spatial imprints around temporary physical encounters: at coworking spaces, the trade-fair, the LAN-party or the sports contest. Temporary co-presence by no means, however, is confined to these obvious and exceptional occasions. On the contrary, encounters at rather mundane sites of everyday practice such as the home kitchen or the den are less spectacular, though by no means less important. Collaborative knowledge production at temporary encounters is sustained through physical mobility: of ex-

perts, users, and prototypes. Co-creation, in other words, is sustained by shifting physical geographies of circulation.

Second, these ephemeral geographies in a sense reiterate the importance of the specific physical site of encounter and interaction. User knowledge is inscribed in the physical layout of the workplace, in the temporal sequencing of everyday routines, in the improvised workarounds. Co-creation, in other words, is not only about company representatives talking to customers, but also about interaction at these unique constellations of things and objects that make up the site of usage. Co-creation thus shifts the locus of knowledge-production from the R&D department right to the site of usage or, more generally, pushes knowledge production from the context of discovery to the context of application.

Third, co-creation dramatically re-values the role of online co-presence. The Internet, however, is not merely about speeding up, spreading out and lowering costs of communication. Nor is it a simple substitute or artificial extension of face-to-face communication. The Internet is increasingly charged with social software that tracks, categorizes and channels information, sediments memory or automates word-of-mouth; aggregates idiosyncratic interests in the 'long tails', induces connectivity and sustains communities. In a sense, social software turns networks 'inside out': from latent social embeddedness into a strategic practice to deliberately furnish knowledge ecologies.

Fourth, the farther co-creation shifts knowledge production beyond the disciplinary and institutionalized realms of innovation, the more traditional firm- and institution-based innovation policies lose their effectiveness. Co-creation evolves in ephemeral contexts -- traditional innovation policies, however, rely on a long-term reliable set of actors. Moreover, co-creation involves individual households and personal actors -- usual innovation policies, though, are addressed towards organizations and institutions. And finally, the new innovation ecologies are dispersed, global and virtual -- orthodox innovation policies, however, are organized along territorial lines (province, state or supra-national polity).

### Format

At the first five meetings, Professor Grabher will deliver lectures of about 70 minutes each. Since we subsequently will discuss the lecture as well as the papers relevant to the seminar theme, it is important that you come prepared. All readings will be available in a Dropbox folder. Please focus on the papers that are *not* authored by the lecturer since the latter will be summarized in the lecture.

Please note that I will be in residence at the Munk School of Global Affairs from September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 to October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 (office room B220, 315 Bloor Street). I am most happy to discuss your research ideas related to the course topic. You also can reach me at [gernot.grabher@hcu-hamburg.de](mailto:gernot.grabher@hcu-hamburg.de).

## Program

Seminar 1 | Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015 | 10:00am - 12:00pm |  
Transit House (315 Bloor St. West)

**Part I: Knowledge Production in the Context of Application: Towards New Modes of Innovation**

**Part II: From Organizations to Networks: The Social Infrastructures of Innovation**

### *Key Questions*

- How has the traditional mode of knowledge production in disciplinary and institutionalized contexts changed?
- What are the principles, practices and formats of knowledge production in the 'context of application'?
- What are the consequences of this new mode of knowledge production for firms and institutions?
- What is the role of networks in the newly emerging innovation ecologies?

### *Readings*

Grabher, G., 1993, "Rediscovering the Social in the Economics of Interfirm Relations." In: Grabher, G., ed., *The Embedded Firm. On the Socioeconomics of Interfirm Relations*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 1-31.

Granovetter, M.S., 1973, "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6): 1360-1380.

Lingo, E.L. and O'Mahony, S. 2010. „Nexus Work: Brokerage on Creative Projects.“ *Administrative Science Quarterly* 55(1): 47-81.

Obstfeld, D., 2005. „Social Networks, the Tertius iungens Orientation, and Involvement in Innovation.“ *Administrative Science Quarterly* 50(1): 100-130.

Seminar 2 | Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 | 12:00pm - 2:00pm. |  
108N (1 Devonshire Pl)

**The Neglected King: Consumers as Drivers of Innovation**

### *Key Questions*

- How have firms changed their strategies to innovate and to harvest useful knowledge beyond their organizational boundaries?

- Are established concepts like lead-users confined to the realm of professional B2B markets?
- In what respect does consumer co-creation differ from traditional approaches of innovation and marketing practices?
- How are firms reaching out into the ever-expanding social worlds of communities and networks?

### *Readings*

Grabher, G., Ibert, O. and Flohr, S., 2008. "The Neglected King: Consumers in the New Knowledge Ecology of Innovation." *Economic Geography* 84(3): 253-280.

Kozinets, R. V., Hemetsberger, A. and Schau, H. J., 2008. „The Wisdom of Consumer Crowds. Collective Innovation in the Age of Networked Marketing“. *Journal of Makromarketing* 28: 339-353.

Neff, G. and Stark, D., 2003. „Permanently beta: Responsive organization in the internet-era.“ In P. Howard, S. and Jones, S. (eds) *Society Online: The Internet in Context*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 173-188.

Ramaswamy, V. and Oczan, K., 2014. *The Co-Creation Paradigm*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, chapter 1, pp. 1-31.

Seminar 3 | Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 | 10:00am - 12:00pm | (315 Bloor St. West)

### **Distance as an Asset? Knowledge Production in Hybrid Virtual Communities**

#### *Key Questions*

- What are the construction principles and formats of hybrid virtual communities?
- What types of knowledge are produced in hybrid virtual communities -- and is this knowledge economically useful?
- What are the specific features and outcomes of knowledge production in online-only communities?
- Under which circumstances can online-only knowledge production be more advantageous than traditional face-to-face collaboration?

### *Readings*

Faraj, S., Jarvenpaa, S.L. and Majchrzak, A., 2011. "Knowledge Collaboration in Online Communities." *Organization Science* 22(5): 1224-1239.

Garud, R., Jain, S. and Tuertscher, P. 2008. "Incomplete by Design and Designing for Incompleteness." *Organization Studies* 29: 351-371.

Grabher, G. and Ibert, O., 2014. "Distance as asset? Knowledge collaboration in hybrid virtual communities." *Journal of Economic Geography* 14(1): 97-123.

Mahr, D. and Lievens, A., 2012. "Virtual lead user communities: Drivers of knowledge creation for innovation." *Research Policy* 41: 167-177.

Seminar 4 | Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015 | 10:00am - 12:00pm | Transit House (315 Bloor St. West)

## **From Know-how to Know-who? Social Network Sites as Business Tools**

### *Key Questions*

- Why has networking turned into the emblematic practice in the 'new spirit of capitalism'?
- Is network science transformed into a tool for social engineering?
- Do social network sites function as public displays of connection and reputation?
- What are the strategies of pioneer users (software-engineers in Silicon Valley) to utilize social network sites?

### *Readings*

Bucher, T., 2012. "Want to be on the Top? Algorithmic Power and the Threat of Invisibility on Facebook." *New Media & Society* 14(7): 1164-1180.

Ellison, N.B., Steinfeld, C. and Lampe, C., 2010. „Connection Strategies: Social Capital Implications of Facebook-enabled Communication Practices." *New Media & Society* 13(6): 873-892.

Grabher, G. and König, J., 2016. "Performing Network Theory? Reflexive Relationship Management on Social Network Sites." In: Hollstein, B., Matiakse, W. and Schnapp, K.-U., (eds), *Networked Governance. Governing Networks and Governance via Networks*. Berlin: Springer Publishers (in press).

Uzzi, B. and Dunlap, S. 2005. "How to build your network." *Harvard Business Review* December: 53-60.

Seminar 5 | Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 | 12:00pm - 2:00pm | 108N (I Devonshire Pl)

## The Sharing Economy: On the Socio-Economics of a Disruptive Innovation

### *Key Questions*

- Sharing is as old as mankind. What is really new about the sharing economy?
- Sharing or economy? What are the prevailing business models and the key practices of valuation and socializing in the sharing economy?
- Hijacked by Uber? Has the sharing idea been corrupted by hyper-capitalist organizational and labour practices?
- How do incumbent industries (i.e. the hotel and taxi industries) respond to the disruption of the rapidly evolving sharing economy?

### *Readings*

Belk, R., 2014. „Sharing versus Pseudo-Sharing in Web 2.0.“ *Anthropologist* 18(1): 7-23.

Belk, R., 2014. „You Are What You Can Access: Sharing and Collaborative Consumption Online.“ *Journal of Business Research* 67: 1595-1600.

Benkler, Y. and Nissenbaum, H., 2006. „Commons-based peer production and virtue.“ *Journal of Political Philosophy* 14(4): 394-419.

Schor, J., 2014. „Debating the Sharing Economy.“ *Transition Initiative* 10.

Seminar 6 | Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 | 10:00am - 12:00pm | (315 Bloor St. West)

## What are the Conclusions for Innovation Policies (if any at all)?

This final seminar will be organized as a (mini-version of a) business game: you have to self-organize into two groups each of which will make a presentation of about 15 minutes, supporting their arguments with research findings and most recent articles in the relevant business press (i.e. New York Times, Technology Section; Business Week; Wired; Fast Company).

### ***Group One: There are no conclusions to be drawn for innovation policies!***

(Innovation policies need a reliable set of addressees; necessarily have to be organised territorially; rely on a disciplinary organization of programmes).

### ***Group Two: Innovation policy should take these new forms and formats of knowledge production into account!***

(Innovation Policies should explore the effectiveness of new innovation arenas like co-working spaces, maker-spaces, and open-source initiatives).

### Readings

Capdevila, I., 2013. „Knowledge Dynamics in Localized Communities: Coworking Spaces as Microclusters.“ *SSRN* <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2414121>.

Gandini, A., 2015. „The Rise of Coworking Spaces: A Literature Review.“ *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization* 15: 193-205.

Kleibrink, A. and Schmidt, S., 2015. “Communities of Practice as New Actors: Innovation Labs Inside and Outside Government.” Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (ed.): *Open Innovation 2.0 Yearbook 2015*, pp. 64-73.

Moilanen, J., 2012. „Emerging Hackerspaces - Peer-production Generation.“ *International Federation for Information OSS* 378: 94-111.

Spinuzzi, C., 2012. „Working Alone Together: Coworking as Emergent Collaborative Activity.“ *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 26(4): 399-441.

Toombs, A., Bardzell, S. and Bardzell, J., 2014. „Becoming Makers: Hackerspace Member Habits, Values, and Identities.“ *Journal of Peer Production* Issue 5.

### The Lecturer

Gernot Grabher is Professor of Urban and Regional Economic Studies at the HafenCity University Hamburg (HCU). Previously he held positions, amongst others, at the University of Bonn, King’s College London and the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB). He was also visiting professor at Columbia University, Cornell University, Copenhagen Business School, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (Palo Alto) and the Santa Fe Institute of Complexity. Professor Grabher was editor of the journal *Economic Geography* (impact factor: 3,452) and has published in journals like *Economic Geography*, the *Journal of Economic Geography*, *Environment & Planning A*, *Geoforum*, *Regional Studies*, *Organization Studies*, *Management Learning*, the *Journal of Organizational Behavior and Social Sciences*.

Professor Grabher has an extensive track record of externally funded and internationally collaborative research projects. His research explores the role of customers and users in innovation processes; the construction of trust and accountability in online consumer communities; the role of social network sites (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn) in establishing reputation online and offline; the management of innovation and creativity; and the role of rare events (i.e. Olympic Games) in affording opportunities for organizational learning and innovation.

<https://www.hcu-hamburg.de/en/research/arbeitsgebiete/gernot-grabher/>