

RESEARCH THEME

XXVII cycle - a.y. 2021/2022

Title of the doctoral research Social Innovation for Circular Economy

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Abstract

A just socio-technical transition towards sustainability is today priority of any research and innovation strategy and therefore of the European Green Deal, the plan to make the EU's economy sustainable. More in particular, the so-called Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) is being set as a tool to ensure that the transition towards a climate-neutral economy happens in a fair way, leaving no one behind. These two strategies clearly underline the connection between social, environmental and financial sustainability.

The contribution of Design to sustainable innovation has a long story: the reflection around how it can foster, boost and bring about sustainable solutions on the one side, and social innovation on the other, is today rich and articulated. Yet, an understanding of how design for social innovation can contribute to the transition towards a circular society requires for a deeper reflection, with particular reference to the approaches of service design and transition design. In fact, although much has been studied, there is a lack in understanding how social innovation can enable sustainable lifestyles.

The research aims to position design for social innovation within the Circular Economy frameworks and categorizations in which technical, legal and financial strategies are well defined, while the role of social innovation in supporting these actions is still vague.

In particular, the research intends to understand, through an applied experimentation, how to integrate design for social innovation into technological, financial and regulatory innovation with the purpose of creating just and successful solutions and ecosystems.

Keywords

Social innovation, Circular economy, Service design