

Research frontiers in Economic Sociology and Labour Studies (ResFron ESLS)

Seminar

Hidden Entrepreneurs? Social Innovation in Italy

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Room A, h. 13.00-14.30

Graduate School in Social and Political Sciences

via Pace 10 - Milan



This seminar explores the role of “social innovators” in Italy. Drawing on a qualitative research design using respondent-driven sampling (including network analysis) it gives rich insights into the connections between the not-for-profit sector and for-profit sectors. This locus of enquiry is timely because social innovation points to new kinds of production and exchange markets where profit and non-profit organizations interact in distinctive ways. Many of the most successful innovators have learned to operate across sectoral boundaries - and innovation thrives most when there are effective alliances between small organisations and entrepreneurs. This presentation critiques the contemporary trend of portraying social innovation purely as a functional reaction to market and state failure. It thus engages with the analytical challenge of understanding whether social innovation practices satisfy supposedly unmet needs in new ways - and whether such interaction really differs from market-like exchange.

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