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Organizing inclusion: getting through the borders of innovative communities

Short abstract: 300 car

The purpose of this paper is to better understand how open labs manage to resolve the tensions between democratization of innovation and the collectives that constitute them.

Long abstract: 250 mots

Open labs (bio)hackerspaces, fablabs, and so on) promise to democratize innovation. They transmit a rhetoric of emancipation through popular education and inclusion, that is, the ability to accommodate all human beings in their singularities. This is in tension with the exclusiveness of innovative communities made up of passionate, qualified and predominantly male experts.

To try to understand how democratization is performed, we propose to analyze the mechanisms implemented to articulate the approaches of collaboration and inclusion. This work is based on a sociological and ethnographic survey conducted since November 2012 in France (Lhoste and Barbier, 2016). It combines participant observation sessions in fablabs hosting digital fabrication workshops, interviews, participation in meetings, and data collection from websites and media. This empirical approach to practices located in time and space mobilizes innovation studies and the theory of organizations. We use the concept of project ecology (Grabher, 2004) to reveal the different levels of organization with which projects are intertwined. This author contributes to a trend that conceptualizes innovation as the product of an ecology involving a diversity of actors and knowledge production activities. We compare the organizational learning modalities in labs along three dimensions: learning in practice, autonomy of the project in relation to organizations, integration of knowledge within the project. Thus, we identify which organizations, objects and practices are produced to promote openness, what type of frontier work is made visible (or invisible), and how

organizational learning among individuals, the innovation community, and organizations is articulated in projects.