

Thematic Issue

International Management

‘The paradoxes of Collaborative Innovation’

Deadline for submission: 30th of January 2017 at innocollabo.rinnodi@gmail.com

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For some years now, the number of calls for the authentic strategic management of collaborative innovation has risen (Cassiman & Veugelers 2013). Recent statistics show that 78% of American and European companies are increasingly using open innovation (Chesbrough & Brunswicker 2013). According to Demil & Lecoq (2012) and Ketchen *et al.* (2007), *collaborative innovation can define itself as the creation of innovation beyond the boundaries of the firm and across idea sharing, of knowledge, expertise and opportunities.* For Davis & Eisenhard (2011), collaborative innovation is based on inter-organizational relationships that are dedicated to the joint development of innovation, incorporating a collaborative approach which involves the combination of knowledge, technology and other resources to cross organizational boundaries. In the same way, AFNOR (2014) considers collaborative innovation to be a way in which joint innovation projects can emerge, be initiated or become successful. With the understanding of these definitions, researchers have put forward the notion that open and collaborative innovation concepts are very similar, apart from particular forms of acquisition which are not real collaborations (Dahlander & Gann, 2010). In an official report about collaborative innovation, Demil & Lecoq (2012) conclude that that collaborative innovation is generally the equivalent to open innovation.

If different approaches have been developed to study the concept of open innovation, the angle of collaborative innovation has remained less explored in the literature. This angle of analysis puts emphasis on the relational approach between the organizations to the detriment of the rational and normative approach often deployed by researchers. This perspective leads us to include the concept of collaborative innovation in real ecosystems that are composed of a complex set of innovation networks (alliance networks, communities, clusters, platforms, Fab Labs, etc.). Thus, in response to the researchers' call to focus on the implementation of collaborative innovation (West et al., 2014), we wish to contribute to the line of work that is dedicated to networks of diverse innovations (types of actors involved, operating, governance

and results of collaborations). The emphasis will thus be on the *implementation of collaborative innovation* and will address both scientific and managerial perspectives (West et al. 2014; Fixari and Pallez, 2014; Goglio-Primard and Crespin-Mazet, 2015).

The analysis of collaborative innovation puts forward a renewal of the concept of open innovation in relation to the first wave of work. As indicated by Huizingh (2011) in his article ‘Open Innovation: state of art and future perspectives’, the understanding of openness rests on *the study of practices* (‘Open Innovation practices’) which are linked to the question ‘how to proceed?’ (‘how to do it’). To these questions, we add the question of the *actors* of collaborative innovation, *‘who practices collaborative innovation?’*. Much of the work has focused on the development of open innovation by multinationals and mature industries, while its ownership through collaborative approaches involves a much broader and diversified range of actors (startups and SMEs, service companies, institutions, public actors) taking the technological and economic context into account. A final question is necessary for dealing extensively with the subject: *‘where is collaborative innovation developed?’*, which leads us to focus on the specificities of the context. In high-growth emerging countries, such as China for example, the model of collaborative innovation requires further exploration, in order to better understand its decline in relation to the founding studies that Western firms have studied (Li-Ying and Wang, 2014).

It is these precisely articulated questions that are addressed to the international academic community to provide concrete frameworks for analysis through this thematic issue of the journal *Management International*.

The aim of this thematic issue is therefore to explore this diversity of contexts by highlighting the paradoxes that firms, institutions and individuals face:

- **The paradoxes faced by SMEs: the specific methods of collaboration**

SMEs have shown little interest in the academic community (Gassmann, Enkel, and Chesbrough 2010), even though they have much to gain from these open and collaborative approaches, as their resources and commercial capacities are limited (Huizingh 2011). How do SMEs build and sustain collaborative innovation networks despite their limited resources? What strategies and practices are implemented by SMEs to take advantage of collaborative innovation?

- **The paradox between openness and closure: the management of intellectual property in collaboration**

The management of intellectual property rights (IPR), and especially patents, is at the heart of the opposition between models of collaborative and closed innovation. What are the practices of companies in terms of IPR in collaborative models? What are the IPR strategies in inside-out or outside-in processes? What are the organizational links between the IP departments and R&D departments and the strategies to manage this integration of IPR in processes?

- **The balance between creation and acquisition of value through collaboration: what are the emerging business models?**

In the open innovation model, the business model plays two essential functions: to enable the creation of value (within the organization but also by using external resources to amplify the created value) and the capture of value (by licensing technologies that come out of the core business to make them profitable). What are the paradoxes of business models in different economic contexts? Which strategies are favored by EGs and SMEs?

- **Organizational paradoxes of collaboration: how to associate internal and external processes?**

How do managers meet the challenges of collaboration to organize collaborative innovation? What roles do the different functions of the company play (not only R&D, but also HR, purchasing, production and IT).

- **The paradoxes linked to open spaces of collaboration**

Open Labs (Fab Labs, Living Labs, hackerspaces / makerspaces, TechShops) are a current and growing phenomenon in different countries (Futuris, 2016). Collaborative relationships are often spontaneous, repetitive and emerging and are at the heart of the current transformation of innovation methods and practices. How are the paradoxes between the passion of the makers and the economic dimension of innovation managed? What balance should be found between individualism and the collective dimension of collaboration in these spaces? What business models and governance of these spaces encourage collaboration around concepts of innovation?

- **The role of digital and manufacturing technologies in creating new paradoxes or new opportunities for collaboration**

Digitization in organizations, and especially the development of manufacturing technologies (3D printers, digital milling machines, laser cutters, etc.) is a driving force for changing the methods and processes of collaboration in the field of innovation. Which opportunities for collaboration are generated by these technologies? How does collaboration foster innovation through these technologies?

- **The paradoxes generated by public policies for innovation and regional effects**

Many public initiatives to support collaborative innovation were launched in the 1990s and then more intensively in the 2000s through the innovation cluster policy. They aimed to bring companies, universities and research laboratories together to stimulate collaborative innovation (Sölvell, Lindqvist, Ketels 2003; Depret et Hamdouch 2009; Fixari et Pallez 2014). What is the role of cluster governance in engaging collaborative innovation? What practices are implemented to encourage the creation and appropriation of new knowledge within these collaborative spaces?

We invite authors to propose original approaches to illustrate these different paradoxes of collaborative innovation. The manuscripts should be sent by e-mail to innocollabo.rinnodi@gmail.com **no later than 30th of January 2018** for publication in this thematic file. The articles must comply with the standards set out in the editorial policy of *Management International* (<http://www.managementinternational.ca/author-section/submit-an-article/>).

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