

CORD lecture series presents a brown bag lunch talk by visiting scholar:



Gloria Puliga

Tuesday April 23, 2019

UCENT 480

Downtown Phoenix Campus

12:00-1:00 pm

The social impact of Big Sciences: the case of the ITER fusion project

Abstract

The expenditure in public research is matter of discussion. Even more, there is a call to assess the value generated by public investments in Big Science projects that show scientific results only after a long period of time and with high uncertainty. In this context, the social impact represents an important aspect to be analyzed. Thanks to the industry participation in Big Science projects, the links of the research world with the society have been strengthened and this may be a relevant way to contribute toward society even during the development of Big Science projects, and not only at the very end.

In this work, the results emerged from an explorative longitudinal case study will be presented. The case concerns a network built to produce spares for the ITER fusion project, by the main contractor Walter Tosto. It has involved subcontractors, other firms, research centers and universities.

First, the work shows that considering the network of actors as unit of analysis deeply improves the understanding of the social impact. Second, the study demonstrates the need to map the evolution of the network in order to evaluate the social impacts. In this regard, the study leverages on the concept of social capital that may represent a new lens to study the network evolution and grasp the social impact generated. Third and more in general, the study points out how Big Science-industry networks create a social impact at an employee, network and community level and it identifies which types of social benefits have been generated.

Gloria Puliga is a Ph.D student in the Industrial Engineering Dept. LIUC - University Cattaneo, Italy