



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI BERGAMO

Department  
of Management

## Research Seminars Series

A.Y. 2023-2024 2<sup>nd</sup> Term

**May 27, 2024 – 14:30 a.m. (CET)**

**In room 22, via dei Caniana 2**

**AND Online on Microsoft Teams ([link](#))**

**Presenter: Prof. Peter Bloom**

University of Essex, UK

### **TITLE – Publicly Reproducing the Social Economy**

**ABSTRACT** – The field of public management has seen burgeoning interest in concepts from the social economy, notably ideas of "co-production" emphasizing collaboration between state, civil society, and market actors in delivering collective goods and services. While valuable, much of this work remains circumscribed by a productionist ideology focused on innovating new models for efficient provision of public value outputs. Critical scholars have rightly called for deeper engagement with the social and economic structures and practices underlying such projects of co-production.

Socially, co-production literatures have insufficiently reckoned with how public value creation necessarily relies upon – and impacts – the unremunerated reproductive labors through which societal members provision their everyday survival and care for themselves and wider communities. Feminist and Marxist theorists have cogently demonstrated how such "social reproduction" activities produce and reproduce the labor power, social norms, and affective relations animating all economic systems. However, dominant modes of capitalist production systematically devalue and exploit this crucial reproductive labor. Neoliberal austerity policies have, especially, exacerbated capitalism's contradictions around social reproduction. With the retrenchment of public funding for goods, services and social protections, there is an increasing reliance upon such informal labour by individuals to ensure the reproduction of civic institutions and workplaces through constantly and innovatively "doing more with less"

Economically, public value perspectives have predominantly centred on enabling localized entrepreneurial or community-based economic projects. However, this neglects more thoroughly identifying and transforming the dominant capitalist



modes of production that determine how the broader population materially reproduces their existence. Developing truly sustainable and emancipatory economic models requires reorganizing not just the point of production, but the entire value chain - from the sourcing of raw materials and governance of supply chains, to the organization of labor processes, to the distribution and consumption of goods and services. This means transforming not just the factory floor, but the reworking the full complex of socio-technical systems, institutional power relations, and normative value-practices that currently lock-in capitalist reproduction writ large. Rather than isolated local projects, durable alternatives require restructuring how societies organize the material activities and asset flows that provision their populations from cradle to grave. Such analysis calls for co-production to evolve beyond encouraging micro-reforms toward systematically remaking and democratizing entire regional or sectoral systems of provisioning.

This seminar introduces, therefore, an integrative public management framework of "reproducing the social economy" to center both economic transformation and social reproduction as co-constitutive imperatives. First, it argues public management must evolve beyond service delivery to cultivating new socio-technical and institutional configurations for democratic, ecologically regenerative, and decommodified modes of production. Second, it insists such economic redesign remain inextricably coupled to valuing, compensating, and creating supportive infrastructures for all reproductive labors sustaining shared social and ecological viability. Empirically, the seminar will illustrate this framework's praxis through cases of European "regenerative economy" movements blending common ownership models, care economies, and ecological ethics. These participatory efforts to co-reproduce provisioning systems through radically democratic processes and public-commons partnerships offer illustrative examples for retheorizing public management as a crucial force for social economic transformation.

TYPE OF RESEARCH –Theoretical

STAGE OF RESEARCH –Research Idea

For further information please refer to: [seminars.dipsa@unibg.it](mailto:seminars.dipsa@unibg.it)

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