

Rethinking Cultural and Technology District: from Network of Actors to Service Ecosystem

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Purpose – The present paper is aimed to rethink the Cultural and Technology District (CTD) definition adopting the theoretical lens of service ecosystem, to detect the process of value creation and service innovation.

Design/Methodology/approach – The theoretical conceptualization of service ecosystem is used to zoom in the definition of CTD, which is described by Di Pietro et al. (2013, p.6) as “an interdependent system of entities situated within a limited geographical area with the purpose of achieving sustained value creation through two drivers: culture and technology”. To rethink the CTD, first, its definition is compared with the meaning of service ecosystem as well as it is defined by Lusch and Vargo (2014, p.161), namely “relatively self-contained self-adjusting systems of resource integrating actors connected by shared institutional logics and mutual value creation through service exchange”. In this way, a new CTD definition is developed and described. Second, the theoretical lens of service ecosystem is combined with the Triple Elix Model (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000) to shed light on the mechanism behind the value creation process and dissemination of innovation.

Findings – A new definition of CTD is proposed together with a renewed conceptualization of its business model. The micro-meso-macro levels of the CTD are identified. Advantages and benefits that can be derived by the implementation of the new conceptualization of CTD as service ecosystem are presented and discussed. Finally, the different forms of innovation that can be generated by the CTD are presented.

Practical implications (if applicable) – Rethinking the CTD, adopting a more modern and practical lens such as the one of service ecosystem, it is something that allows generating new and pivotal implication for both scholars and practitioners. The paper paves the way for innovative application of service ecosystem theory to the phenomenon of district/cluster, with the opportunity to discover new implications in several theoretical aspects (i.e. resources integration, forms of collaboration and partnership, institutional arrangement development). Simultaneously, the paper provides strategic knowledge to the multiple actors engaged within the CTD, in order to maximize the process of value creation and innovation.

Originality/value – Despite the potentialities linked with the development of CTD for both the valorization of cultural heritage assets and strengthen of service innovation, so far only few studies have been dedicated to this phenomenon. In addition, the new conceptualization of CTD appears important to cope the strong need for the revival and enhancement of local economies, especially in times of crisis.

Key words (max 5): Service ecosystem; Cultural and Technology District; service innovation; Triple Elix, cultural heritage.

Paper type – Conceptual paper

References (max 1 page)

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