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REINTERPRETING TRADITION TO INNOVATE: THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

13 febbraio 2025 ore 11.00

Aula Volpato, San Giobbe Economic Campus

This seminar will present a contribution by **Giorgia Bortoloso** to the study "Reinterpreting Tradition to Innovate: The Power of Language", currently being conducted as part of the project "The Language of Innovation". Associated Investigator: Giulia Cancellieri, Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

In the growing body of research concerning the role of tradition in strategy-making, scholars have increasingly considered tradition as a resource that can be strategically managed to accomplish important goals. An interesting trajectory of this literature has begun to examine how custodians - actors vested in the continuity of traditions -reinterpret them through product design choices that revive the past by connecting it to the present and the future.

An equally important area of scholarly inquiry has focused on the narratives that can be used to raise the acceptance of innovative ideas by leveraging a revered past. Yet, we still know little about how custodians reinterpret revered traditions over time and strategically use language to legitimize these renewal efforts. To address this gap, we conduct an in-depth historical study of the design choices through which stage directors, i.e., custodians, reinterpreted the operatic tradition in the Italian opera industry over the period 1954-2024, and the narratives they employed to legitimize their reinterpetative approaches. This study has the potential to extend research on the strategic management of tradition by revealing a variety of design choices and narrative strategies that can be mobilized over time to legitimately reinterpret a cherished tradition.