

Abstract

Title:

Civic engagement, sense of responsible togetherness, and hybrid ecosystems: a systemic, multilevel perspective on addressing social challenges

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Civic participation is a key driver in building inclusive, cohesive communities oriented toward collective well-being. Research highlights that participatory processes are rooted in the development of a *Sense of Community* (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; 1996), understood as a feeling of belonging, emotional connection, and mutual recognition among community members—an essential condition for fostering active citizenship and shared responsibility. Building on this relational foundation, a *Sense of Responsible Togetherness* (Procentese, 2011) emerges, referring to a mode of coexistence grounded in awareness of interdependence, attention for others, and co-responsibility for social contexts. In this perspective, promoting responsible ways of living together is crucial for enabling communities to collectively respond to emerging social needs. In rapidly evolving social and technological contexts, participation is increasingly shaped by the integration of offline and online environments. Digital spaces expand opportunities for interaction, exchange, and collective mobilization, while their interplay with face-to-face contexts strengthens social capital and broadens participation (Gatti & Procentese, 2020). This integration contributes to the development of hybrid ecosystems, where territorial proximity and digital connectedness intersect, fostering new forms of civic engagement and belonging. Situated within a systemic and ecological multilevel framework, this contribution examines how interactions across individual, relational, and contextual dimensions can enable social innovation processes. It aims to identify the conditions under which life contests become more inclusive and capable of collective action, ultimately contributing to a rethinking of civic engagement as a key infrastructure for addressing contemporary social challenges.

Key words: Civic engagement, Sense of Responsible Togetherness, Hybrid ecosystems (online–offline), Social innovation, Systemic and multilevel perspective