

Benoît Godin Syllabus

TIAGO BRANDÃO
HTC-CFE NOVA FCSH
PORTUGAL

CAROLINA BAGATTOLLI
4P-UFPR
BRAZIL

Abstract

Benoît Godin Syllabus.

Keywords

innovation studies; STS field; Benoît Godin; critical studies of innovation; STI policy

Introduction

A tribute to Benoît Godin (1958-2021)

From the deconstruction of the
system perspective
to the 'pro-innovation' bias

**-- or how to look historically
at STI policies**



Figure 1. A tribute to Benoît Godin and portrait (1958–2021). From the deconstruction of the system perspective to the 'pro-innovation' bias.

Copyright © 2023. (Tiago Brandão, and Carolina Bagattolli). This work is licensed under an Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International license (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0). Available at estsjournal.org.

To cite this article: Brandão, Tiago, and Carolina, Bagattolli. 2023. "Benoît Godin Syllabus." *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society*. STS Infrastructures (Platform for Experimental Collaborative Ethnography), Dec 12, 2023. Accessed Dec 12, 2023. 9(2): 137–227.
<https://n2t.net/ark:/81416/p41g68>.

To email contact Tiago Brandão: tiagobrandao@fcs.unl.pt.

One of the most remarkable scholars of a generation, Benoît Godin was a sociologist by formation but has left us a contribution that goes much beyond disciplinary boundaries. Professor Godin was a thorough reader and had an acute sense of scholarly practices, almost monastic in a sense, which made him able to deal with a tremendous amount of information, classify documents and organize different sources and a vast literature. Godin was also aware of policymaking dynamics and knew pretty well how institutions functioned daily. As a human being, Benoît was very reserved and avoided crowded happenings, having just a handful of students in the last 10-15 years of his career, the time we had the privilege of personally acquainting him. When we got to know him closer, however, he had an extraordinary sense of humour. Sensible and attentive to humanity's most personal traits, he was a true colleague, faithful to their students and the young researchers that looked for him, which he helped a lot.

He had begun his career with a sociological work, with a thesis on the social uses of scientific culture (1999, Presses Universitaires de l'Université de Laval, Canada). In 1997 he launched a project on "Indicators of Scientific and Technological Culture" (L'UQAM branché, no. 14) at the Centre Interuniversitaire de Recherche sur la Science et la Technologie (CIRST, Montreal). He began then his first huge project, on the history of Science and Technology statistics and Innovation indicators, researching at several archives including OECD headquarters in Florence and Paris, where he maintained for years close professional relationships. Human disintelligences with colleagues at UQAM made him a lone wolf for most of his career, making a few exceptions with younger scholars and a couple of highly regarded colleagues, such as Dominique Vinck (Lausanne) and Gérald Gaglio (Nice). Getting a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Godin embraced a long-term project on the history of innovation. Going further than statistics and indicators, he tracked the idea of innovation over centuries and made legible the theories and policy models that shape our day's mainstream. Possessing a strong work ethics, Godin was able to put together an academic legacy that touches several areas like innovation studies and STS – Science, Technology and Science studies, making institutional and policy history on S&T and working with disciplines such as the sociology of science, history of science, and developing since then a methodology for ST&I intellectual and conceptual histories, based on a renewed interest in Reinhard Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte* (translated as conceptual history).

Main Research Topics

- R&D statistics and the culture of numbers: a complex analysis of the origin and development of statistics of science, revealing how the science of statistics and indicators became an "industry" since the 1940s, impacting in the Science Policy through narratives as efficiency and productivity.
- Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) – policies and historical institutions: a very complete account on the history of STI policies from the second half of the XX century. By pursuing the deconstruction of the system perspective and acknowledging the 'pro-innovation' bias of our societies, showing how to look historically and critically at STI policies.

- Conceptual ‘exegesis’ on STI policy-making – theories, frameworks, and models: a new perspective for the analysis of the STI literature, looking at conceptual semantics and stressing how ‘models’, as policy ‘frameworks’, provide an authoritative argumentation for policymakers, pushing forward agendas and claiming to promote change and innovation for societal and economic well-being.
- Intellectual and conceptual histories: by acknowledging STI intellectual traditions and their authors, Godin looked for the broader trajectories that enable us to view knowledge of STI policy from a historical and global perspective.
 - Looking beyond Schumpeter!
- Genealogical approach: Maclaurin, Ogburn, Machlup, etcetera:
- Innovation as a Religion
 - The history of innovation as an idea – from early centuries and the 20th century: a contribution on the origins and evolution of the concept of innovation (i.e., kainotomia, καινοτομία, lit. 'innovation'), from its first formulations to the variety of theories of innovation since the last century – going much beyond the canonical founding fathers (e.g., W. R. Maclaurin, W. Ogburn, M. Holland, W. Zapf, G. Zaltman, J. Morton, H. G. Barnett, E. M. Rogers, C. F. Carter...). Godin shows how, in the past, innovation was used as a derogative form for social reform, social change, heretic behaviour and/or thinking until, in the XX century – when innovation assumes a positive connotation and become truly linked to technological change.
- The critical perspective and awareness of different traditions in the literature
 - Contesting ‘a tribe’: the economics of innovation, stressing how most of the Innovation Studies mainstream disregard the different traditions that contributed to understanding the complex and historical phenomena of innovation in our societies.
 - The critical studies of innovation: a (re)new(ed) agenda, seeking to enlarge the methodological possibilities of innovation studies. Going beyond the economics of innovation means embracing other perspectives and different ways of scholarly practices. Intellectual and conceptual histories are indeed among one of Godin legacy, opening a venue to another paths.

Outline for a Reading Plan

1. R&D statistics and the culture of numbers

Godin, B. (2001). *The Culture of Numbers: From Science to Innovation*. Communication presented to the Government–University–Industry Research Roundtable (GUIRR), US National Academy of Sciences, Washington May 21. Available at: <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/GUIRR.pdf>.

Godin, B. (2002). *Metadata: How Footnotes Make for Doubtful Numbers*. Project on the History and Sociology of STI Statistics, Working Paper No. 10. Montreal (Quebec–Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/Godin_10.pdf.

Godin, B. (2001). *Are Statistics Really Useful? Myths and Politics of Science and Technology Indicators*. Project on the History and Sociology of STI Statistics, Working Paper No. 20. Montreal (Quebec–Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/Godin_20.pdf.

- Godin, B. (2006). *Statistics and science, technology and innovation policy: how to get relevant indicators*. OECD Blue Sky II Conference “What Indicators for Science, Technology and Innovation Policies in the 21st Century”, Ottawa, Canada 25–27 September 2006. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/science/inno/37483949.pdf>.
- *Godin, B. (2005). *Measurement and Statistics on Science and Technology. 1920 to the Present*. Routledge. [translated in Chinese: Institute of Scientific and Technical Information of China, 2007]
- Godin, B. (2008). [in portuguese] A cultura dos números: as origens e o desenvolvimento da estatística na ciência. *Revista Eletrônica de Comunicação, Informação & Inovação em Saúde*, 2 (1), pp. 7–18. Available at: <https://www.arca.fiocruz.br/handle/icict/17538>.

Science, Technology, and Innovation – Policies and Historical Institutions

- Godin, B., & Gingras, Y. (2000). Impact of collaborative research on academic science. *Science and Public Policy*, 27 (1), pp. 65–77. <https://doi.org/10.3152/147154300781782147>.
- Godin, B., & Gingras, Y. (2000). The place of universities in the system of knowledge production. *Research Policy*, 29 (2), pp. 273–278. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333\(99\)00065-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333(99)00065-7).
- Godin, B. (2002). *Rhetorical Numbers: How the OECD Constructs Discourses on S&T*. Project on the History and Sociology of S&T Statistics, Working Paper No. 19. Montreal (Quebec–Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/Godin_19.pdf.
- Godin, B. (2011). *A User-Side View of Innovation. Some Critical Thoughts on the Current STI Frameworks and Their Relevance to Developing Countries*. Communication presented at Expert Meeting on Innovation Statistics, UNESCO, 8–10 March, Montreal. Available at: http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/UNESCO_UserView.pdf.
- Godin, B., & Lane, J. (2013). Pushes and Pulls: Hi(S)tory of the Demand Pull Model of Innovation. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 38 (5), pp. 621–654. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243912473163>.
- *Godin, B. (2015). *Technological Change What do Technology and Change stand for?* Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation, Working Paper No. 24. Montreal (Quebec–Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: http://www.csiic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Paper24_TC.pdf [the US NRP – National Research Project in the 1930s was revisited in chapters published in the following books: *The Idea of Technological Innovation* (2020), chapter 1: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781839104008.00005>; and *The Invention of Technological Change* (2019), chapter 2: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789903348.00009>.
- Niosi, J. (2000). *Canada's National System of Innovation*, with A. Manseau and B. Godin. McGill–Queen's University Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt800gz>.
- Trepanier, M., Albert, M., & Godin, B. (2017). Des organismes sous tension: Les conseils subventionnaires et la politique scientifique. *Sociologie et sociétés*, 32 (1), 19–45. <https://doi.org/10.7202/001303ar>.

Conceptual ‘Exegesis’ on STI Policy-Making—Theories, Frameworks, and Models

- Godin, B. (1998). Writing Performative History: The New 'New Atlantis'. *Social Studies of Science*, 28 (3), pp. 465–483. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/285644>.

- Godin, B. (2001). *Defining R&D: Is Research Always Systematic?* Project on the History and Sociology of STI Statistics, Working Paper No. 30. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/Godin_7.pdf.
- Godin, B. (2002). *The Linear Model of Innovation: The Historical Construction of an Analytical Framework*. Project on the History and Sociology of STI Statistics, Working Paper No. 30. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/Godin_30.pdf.
- Later published in *Science, Technology, & Human Values* (2006: 31 (6), pp. 639-667): <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243906291865>.
- Godin, B. (2007). *National Innovation System: The System Approach in Historical Perspective*. Project on the History and Sociology of STI Statistics, Working Paper No. 36. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/Godin_36.pdf.
- *Godin, B. (2009). *The making of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy: conceptual frameworks as narratives, 1945-2005*. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/TheMakingOfScience.pdf>.

Intellectual and Conceptual Histories

Looking beyond Schumpeter!

Genealogical approach: Maclaurin, Ogburn, Machlup, etcetera.

- Godin, B. (2001). *Innovation: The History of a Category*. Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation, Working Paper No. 2. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/IntellectualNo1.pdf>.
- Godin, B. (2008). *In the Shadow of Schumpeter: W. Rupert Maclaurin and the Study of Technological Innovation*. Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation, Working Paper No. 2. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/IntellectualNo2.pdf>.
- Godin, B. (2008). *The Knowledge Economy: Fritz Machlup's Construction of a Synthetic Concept*. Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation, Working Paper No. 37. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/Godin_37.pdf.
- Godin, B. (2010). *Innovation Without the Word: William F. Ogburn's Contribution to Technological Innovation Studies*. Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation, Working Paper No. 5. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/IntellectualNo5.pdf>.
- Later published at *Minerva* (2010: 48 (3), pp. 277-307): <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-010-9151-1>.
- *Godin, B. (2019). *The Invention of Technological Innovation. Languages, Discourses and Ideology in Historical Perspective*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar. <https://www.elgaronline.com/display/9781789903331/9781789903331.xml>.

Innovation and Religion

- *Godin, B. (2022). The English Reformation and the Invention of Innovation, 1548-1649. *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 17 (1), pp. 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.3167/choc.2022.170101>.

- Godin, B. (2020). *Innovation theology*. Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation, Working Paper No. []. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: <http://www.csiic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Innovation-Theology-2.pdf>.
- Godin, B. (2010). 'Meddle Not With Them That Are Given to Change': *Innovation as Evil*. Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation, Working Paper No. 6. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/IntellectualNo6.pdf>.

The History of Innovation as an Idea – From Early Centuries and the 20th Century

- Godin, B. (2012). καινοτομία: An Old Word for a New World, or the De-Contestation of a Political and Contested Concept. In K.-E. Sveiby, P. Gripenberg & B. Segercrantz (eds.). *Challenging the Innovation Paradigm* (p. 37–60). London, New York: Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Challenging-the-Innovation-Paradigm/Sveiby-Gripenberg-Segercrantz/p/book/9781138959880>.
- Godin, B. (2012). *Social Innovation: Utopias of Innovation from c.1830 to the Present*. Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation, Working Paper No. 29. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/SocialInnovation_2012.pdf.
- *Godin, B. (2015). *Innovation Contested: The Idea of Innovation Over the Centuries*. London: New York: Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Innovation-Contested-The-Idea-of-Innovation-Over-the-Centuries/Godin/p/book/9780415727204>.
- *Godin, B. (2017). *Models of Innovation: History of an Idea*. Mass., US: MIT Press. <https://mitpress.mit.edu/9780262035897/models-of-innovation/>.
- Godin, B. (2017). Innovation and the Marginalization of Research. Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation, Working Paper No. 29. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. Available at: http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/WorkingPaperNo29_2017.pdf
- *Godin, B. (2020). The Idea of Technological Innovation. A Brief Alternative History. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar. <https://www.elgaronline.com/display/9781839103995/9781839103995.xml>.

The Critical Perspective and Awareness of Different Traditions in the Literature

Contesting 'a tribe': the economics of innovation

- Godin, B. (2010). "Innovation Studies": The Invention of a Specialty (Part I). Project on the History and Sociology of STI Statistics, Working Paper No. 7. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/IntellectualNo7.pdf>.
- Godin, B. (2010). "Innovation Studies": The Invention of a Specialty (Part II). Project on the History and Sociology of STI Statistics, Working Paper No. 8. Montreal (Quebec-Canada): Centre Urbanisation Culture Société. <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/IntellectualNo8.pdf>.
- Godin, B. (2014). "Innovation Studies": Staking the Claim for a New Disciplinary 'Tribe'. Review on Ian Fagerberg, Ben R. Martin and Esben Sloth Andersen (eds.), *Innovation Studies: Evolution & Future Challenges*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014". *Minerva* 52, pp. 489-495. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-014-9262-1>.
- *Godin, B. (2015). *Models of Innovation: Why Models of Innovation are Models, or What Work is Being Done in Calling Them Models?* Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation, Working paper No. 22, INRS:

Montreal. A longer version of a paper published in *Social Studies of Science* (2015: 45 (4), pp. 570–596): <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312715596852>.

The Critical Studies of Innovation: A (Re)new(ed) Agenda

*Godin, B., Gaglio, G., & Vinck, D. eds. (2021). *Handbook on Alternative Theories of Innovation*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

<https://www.elgaronline.com/display/book/9781789902303/9781789902303.xml>.

Schubert, C., & Godin, B. (2021). Research on the history of innovation: from the spiritual to the social. In: J. Howald, C. Kaletka & A. Schröder, *A Research Agenda for Social Innovation* (p. 21–38). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789909357.00009>.

Godin, B., & Vinck, D. eds. (2017). *Critical Studies of Innovation. Alternative Approaches to the Pro-Innovation Bias*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

<https://www.elgaronline.com/display/edcoll/9781785366963/9781785366963.xml>.

Gaglio, G., Godin, B., & Pfothenauer, S. (2019). X-Innovation: Re-Inventing Innovation Again and Again”. *NOvation – Critical Studies of Innovation*, No. I (2019), 1-17. First version was the 2017 paper, In: Project on the Intellectual History of Innovation, INRS: Montreal. Available at: <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/X-Innovation2017.pdf>.

Godin, B. (2013). *The Unintended Consequences of Innovation Studies*. Paper prepared for a communication presented at “Policy implications due to Unintended Consequences of Innovation”, Special Track at EU-SPRI, Madrid, 10–12 April. <http://www.csiic.ca/PDF/UnintendedMadrid2013.pdf>.

Reviews, Interviews and Homages

Godin, B. (2016). Innovation’s evolution over the millennia. *Espace INRS*, 5 (feb.). <https://espace.inrs.ca/id/eprint/6092/>.

Bowker, G. C. (2007). Benoît Godin: Measurement and Statistics on Science and Technology: 1920 to the Present. *Isis*, 98 (2), pp. 403–404. <https://doi.org/10.1086%2F521473>.

Laberge, S. (2021). *Hommage au professeur Benoît Godin*. INRS webpage, “Vie universitaire”. Last modified April 17, 2021. Available at: <https://inrs.ca/actualites/hommage-au-professeur-benoit-godin/>.

Vinck, D. (2021). Benoît Godin (1958–2021). *Engineering Studies*, 13 (1), pp. 6–7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19378629.2021.1893915>.

Vinck, D. (2021). “Hommage à Benoît Godin.” *Revue d’Anthropologie des Connaissances* 15 (1), 20630. <https://journals.openedition.org/rac/20630>.

Williams, L. D. A. (2020). ‘From Blindness to Light’: A Review of Benoît Godin and Dominique Vinck (eds.), *Critical Studies of Innovation: Alternative Approaches to the Pro-Innovation Bias*. *Minerva*, 58 (2), pp. 309–314. <https://doi.org/10.1007%2Fs11024-020-09402-9>.

Ufer, U. (2018). Interview mit Benoît Godin: The history and politics of innovation. *TATuP*, 27 (1), pp. 60–63. <https://doi.org/10.14512/tatup.27.1.60>.

For further reading you may consult Benoît Godin personal webpage: <http://www.csiic.ca/>.

Author Biography

Tiago Brandão is researcher at Nova University of Lisbon, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (NOVA FCSH) / research group History, Territories and Communities from the Centre for Functional Ecology (CFE-HTC), Portugal. Av. de Berna 26 C, 1069-061 Lisbon, PORTUGAL.

Carolina Bagattolli is Associated Professor, Department of Economics | Public Policy Graduate Program, Federal University of Paraná (PPPP/UFPR – Curitiba, Brazil). Av. Prefeito Lothário Meissner – Jardim Botânico, Curitiba – PR, 82590-300, BRAZIL.

