



Societing 4.0

Manifesto

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Inspired by eminent predecessors we wanted to write a Manifesto that is a public declaration which displays principles and objectives of the Program Societing 4.0. The ideas and references we propose represent for us possibilities, question marks, opportunities we like to share with all those who decide to adhere to a hypothesis to build. Together..

Societing 4.0 is a Program

Societing 4.0 is a transdisciplinary Program of research-action for the social digital transformation that considers social and technological innovation together, developing projects and theoretical knowledge, for a Mediterranean model of innovation. Societing 4.0 creates bridges among disciplines, players, meanings, methods, territories, tradition and innovation generating ideas, experiences and solutions able to produce a common value:

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- to recompose the fragmentation and overcome the current disarticulation, so as to define visions of possible futures. In these reconstruction processes technologies can have a key-role as enablers, facilitators of the connections as well as collecting and sharing systems of the knowledge produced from time to time;
- to favour the individual and collective learning together, generating empowerment, relationships and improvement of common goods. It means to address new forms of future having an active role in the creation of communities able to generate education with the involvement of players who can go beyond the borders of their traditional and consolidated roles. Technology can be an enabling and supportive tool to utilize, to create and re-think, coherently with the defined/re-defined and formulated/re-formulated meanings.



Societing 4.0 *is an idea of change*

A Mediterranean model of innovation

Societing 4.0 studies, develops and experiments a *Mediterranean* model that draws inspiration from the historical, geographical and symbolic features of the Mediterranean. This model is the conceptual paradigm Societing 4.0 turns to for the realization of all the activities and the critical reflections; a *paradigm-performance* that is forged in a continuous process of experimentation.

The *Mediterranean* model distances itself deeply from that of the Silicon Valley which, while providing great inspirations, is based on the *winner takes all* principle and also distances itself from the Industry 4.0 concept, which is born in a socio-economic context such as the German one, referred to the large automated factory. These models do not seem sustainable for the Italian country of the almost 8000 municipalities –in the middle of a new complexity, between Africa, Middle East countries and Europe- in a business reality made, especially in the South, by fragmented small and medium sized companies.

The *Mediterranean model* of Societing 4.0 analyzes and experiments activities of research, projects and services, envisaging that all advanced technologies (big data, robotics, 3D printers, artificial intelligence...) can serve contexts like the Italian one –made by a myriad of companies- with the idea of bending technologies to the well-being of society producing a positive (and improving) effect for people and communities. In the *Mediterranean model*, technologies are not necessarily cause of alienation from tradition, rurality, craftsmanship of products but they can become the means to imagine together with the young, the artisans, the small companies, social entrepreneurs, start-ups, research 4.0, institutions, ...a different sense of production, work, environment and society becoming, then, the key to sustainable development, for the safeguard of biodiversity, environment and people.

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The bet of Societing 4.0 is to try to imagine a *sudista* way to innovation and enterprise 4.0, that can transcend the unmatched thought of the profit maximization. A technological and social innovation approach devoted to a holistic concept of sustainability together economic, social and environmental.

The Mediterranean assumed as a symbol

The Mediterranean offers a rich historical and cultural scenario which has been interested by the passage, conflict and mixture of different people, languages and civilizations. It can be defined as a history characterized by traditions and innovations, closures and openings, land and sea, threats and changes. It turned out to be a challenging space for man to dominate, same as in our contemporary time;

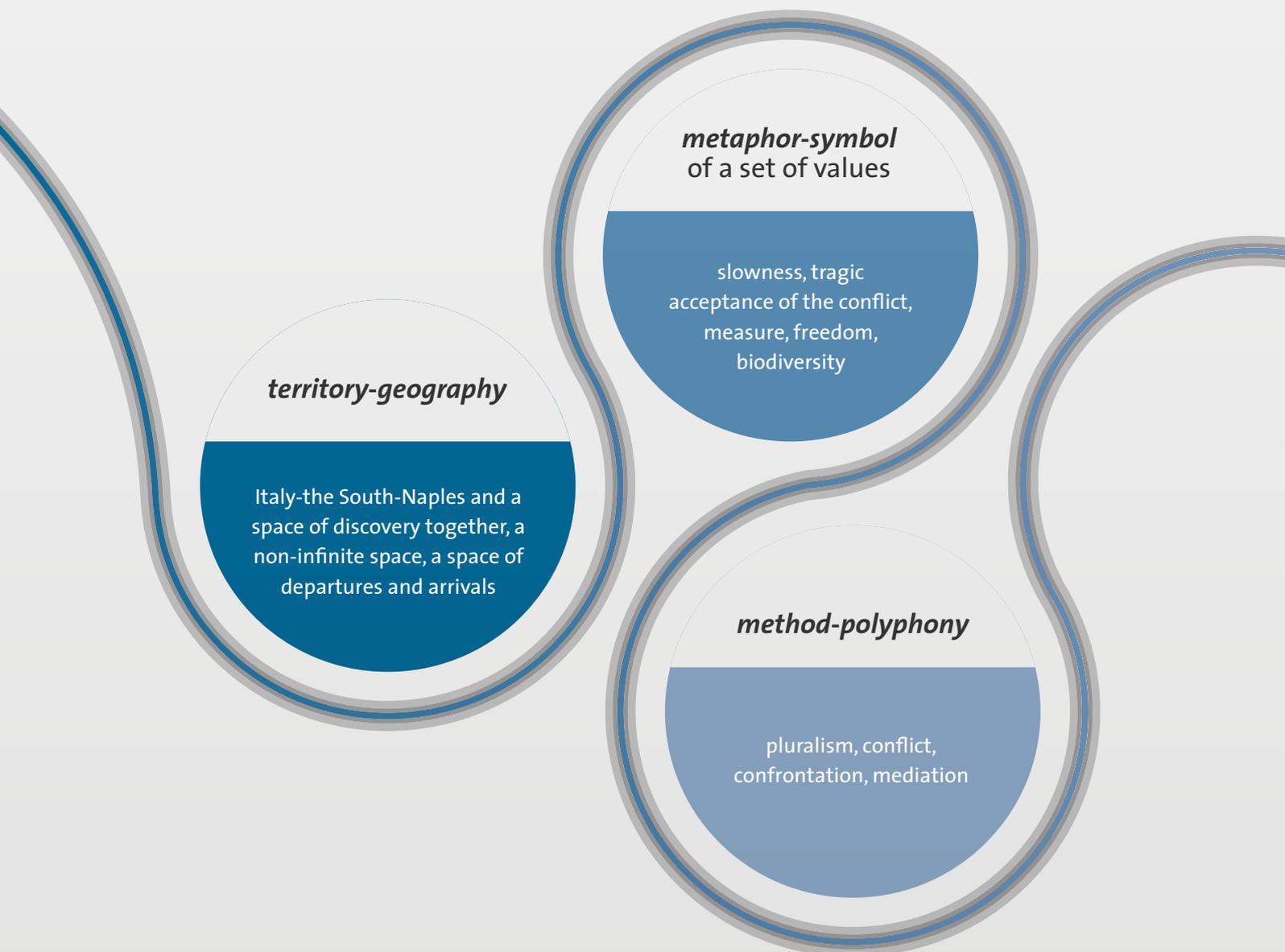
The Mediterranean is therefore metaphor of complexity that indicates to us a possible *way for the encounter with the other* through opportunities of collaboration and contamination. It is what digital technology has allowed us today, a system that has changed the perception of proximity, crunching the two categories of Space and Time on which we have founded our being in the reality;

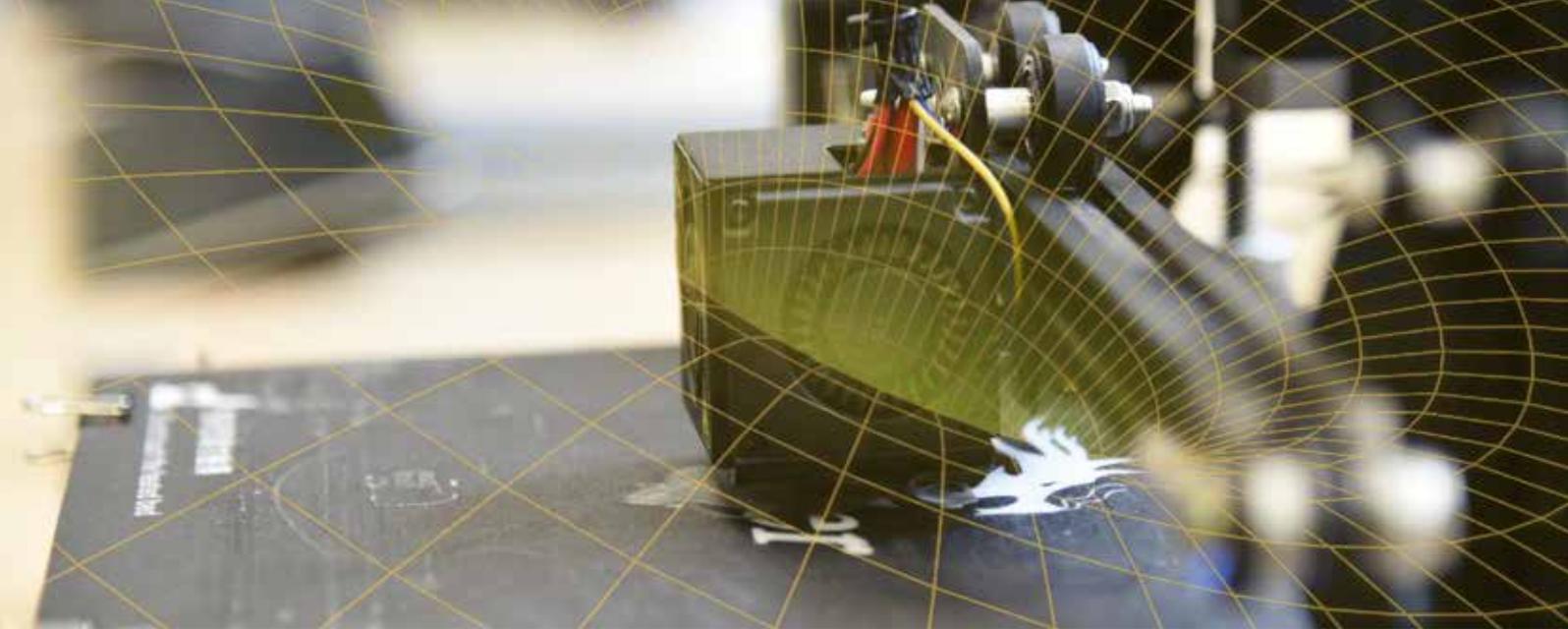
The Mediterranean as an earliest form of Internet: a means of communication that make different cultures meet and confront, with a value system which fosters tragical acceptance of the conflict namely the elaboration of conflicts and divergences. An important reference, today, for managing the complexity within the infosphere, the one and only space which contains the totality of the information, and that, thanks to technologies, make the world a neither too big nor too small space; a space where different requests, cultures and values have to learn how to coexist and survive;

The Mediterranean –and Naples in particular- evokes the ability to develop skills that permit problem-solving in non-conventional ways: a form of ductility which favours creative innovation and the ability to adapt to unexpected changes.



Therefore for Societing 4.0 the horizon to address and experimenting the innovation is that of the Mediterranean seen as





The Mediterranean model of Societing 4.0

- disputes the extractive models (of resources, environment, energy, communities, data...) and intends to assume a pluralistic and post-colonial perspective to read and deal with the complexity of the present;
- looks at the redistribution of the value rather than the extraction for a greater diffusion of opportunities;
- believes that technological innovation is social innovation or nothing;
- considers technologies as tools which play an important role only when they know how to talk with the contexts where they must be applied in order to favour processes of change, to enable connections among different players and to facilitate people;
- promotes the formation and ecosystem growth of social and technological innovation processes, supporting a widespread literacy to the advantage of a shared distribution of power and *responsibilities* of/within communities, to prevent *artificial intelligences* –that is *intelligences* which act in *autonomy*, through machines or social-economic-technical-political-military-religious devices... -to negatively affect human life;
- privileges the sharing of *open source* systems that allow to freely improve technologies, in harmony with the knowledge of *communities*, adapting technologies to needs and allowing original uses;
- confers positive meaning to *slowness* intended as the ability of living the present in a social and community dimension able to create the conditions of an ecological (social and economic) system, not constantly focused on the need for growth and continuous accumulation but oriented towards the well-being of individuals and community within their living environment (also natural);

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- takes into account the social and environmental impacts, besides the economic ones, for the benefit of individuals, communities and the whole planet;
- recognizes the need for natural, social and economic biodiversity as condition for the survival of ecosystems;
- bases its method on *the tragic acceptance of the conflict* that is the need for confrontation and mediation among many different interests and points of view;
- considers of primary importance *the psychological aspects of the innovation* that is the ways through which everyone understands the world and his own self within a context where relationships are mediated by technologies, platforms, devices and algorithms. In particular, it observes how knowledge and understanding become *concrete forms* (words, artifacts, images, infrastructures, sounds, symbols, ...) in the world and the communities where one lives, operates and interact;
- considers the mediation as a moment and a place where it is possible to express one's own differences and to recognize those of others; therefore an encounter in which it is discovered that conflicts are not necessarily destructive but can generate new relationships, new solutions and new opportunities;
- researches the *measure* as the balance between fundamentalisms of opposite signs: between individualism, centered on its present and identity belonging to one's own traditions and community that is not able to give space to freedom and change;
- accepts to be part of the *damaged world* where we live and it seeks new modes of action and reaction that nurture the ability of taking care of people and environment.



To favour encounters, confrontations and to make new points of view come to light, beyond polarizations and creating connections between disciplines and divergent positions: this is the essence of Societing 4.0 method. The methodological premise, in the *Mediterranean model* sense, is the possibility of making the different points of view talk to each other, in the same way as the conflicting dimension is tackled in the Greek tragedy: through mediation. The research-action of Societing 4.0 is based on transdisciplinary knowledge and on the mixture of traditional social research with *design thinking* techniques, useful to facilitate encounter, exchange and mediation processes.

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Society, economics and environment: facing the Age of Man

From the conceptual point of view Societing 4.0 aims at further developing meanings already included in the original idea of *Societing*, reformulated in the *Societing Reloaded*, in order to rethink the relationships between society, *economics and environment*. These three key-dimensions, in fact, characterize our Age defined in various ways among which, from someone, Anthropocene -*Age of Man*- because of man's mark on the global ecosystem, from others Capitalocene, considering capitalism as an ecological regime based on the subordination of nature to production request and wealth accumulation..

Societing is the term used since the '90s, to mark the discontinuity from the dominant approach in the studies of marketing and consumer's behaviour and means that *the company is not just a simple economic player that adapts on the market but a social player that belongs to the social context it lives in.*

The Societing becomes Reloaded because it is re-loaded by new logics: *the economic system needs to radically change to survive, adopting a new organizational model, a new company philosophy able to capitalize resources and give them new directions, yielding productive relationships which can either contribute to the common good, or generate the necessary legitimacy for the functioning and the competitiveness of a company.*



Now the concept is evolving: Societing 4.0 considers innovations as social, economic and environmentally friendly processes, that need to be planned, experimented and adopted in the peculiar local realities, starting from those global aspects of the context which are unavoidable conditions and necessary boundary. The on-going changes, included technologies' development, are to be conceived, tested, discussed, observed, shared, made clear, ...to favour their broad knowledge, avoiding to suffer uncritically their consequences and impacts.

Societing 4.0 considers innovations as social, economic and environmentally friendly processes

The social system

In a world now completely interconnected:

- a general distrust is spreading and a mutual fear which determines strong need for protection and leads to the spread of populist and nationalist ideas;
- inequalities increase, not only in income and wealth, but also in education, life expectancy and job prospects;
- the Fourth Industrial Revolution starts to have its effects: technological progresses are redefining the way we produce, consume, communicate and guarantee human well-being;
- the individual power expands: the omnipresent access to the more and more powerful information and social media give to citizens and consumers a more important voice;
- almost one billion people from one side of the world suffers from chronic starvation while, from the other side, the same number of people suffers from obesity, cardiovascular illnesses and cancers related to feeding based on an excessive supply of fats and proteins. The result is that over 2 billion people eat too much or too little with severe economic, environmental, social and sanitary problems;
- our institutions, in the face of these changes that are looming over, seem to be obsolete and often dragged by instead of driving change.



The economic system

The economic development causes big inequalities:

- globalization entered a crisis in 2008 and this has caused an increasing gap between emerging and developed countries, and greater difficulty in facing global challenges as climate change or major migration streams;
- the market extracts value and redistributes a minimum part of it, making society more unequal and unsafe;
- innovation has not produced a widespread economic growth and has generated a profits polarization, a tendency towards markets monopolization and the birth of a number of huge unicorns;
- new technologies are implemented in an economic growth paradigm which remains on the 20th century old one while the automation jeopardises employments;
- the Fourth Industrial Revolution has the potential to increase global income levels and to improve the life quality of the people from all over the world but it could cause greater inequalities, especially for its effects on the job market;
- the today on-going changes are not isolated in a specific country, field or problem. They are universal and require a global response and a systemic approach.

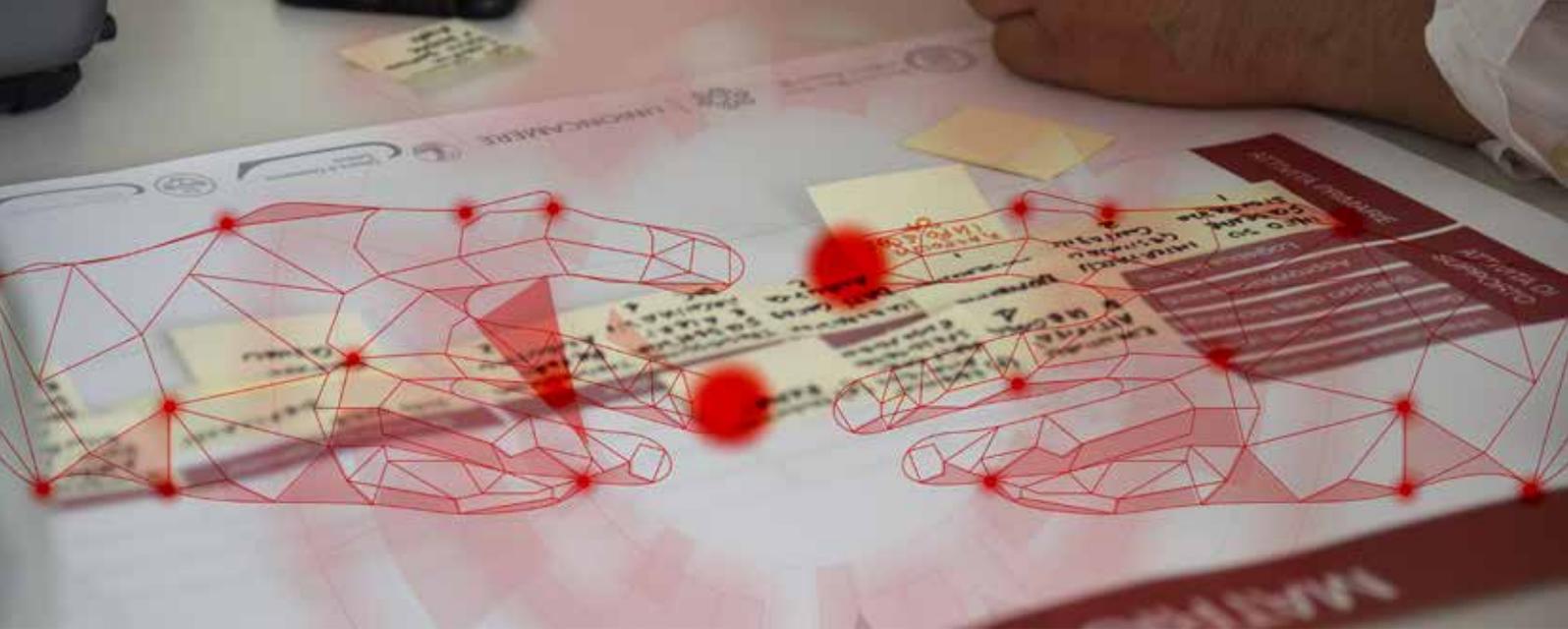


The environment

The human mark on the environment is more than indelible

Researches have calculated that about 75% of the planet is under human pressure: built spaces, cultivated lands, pastures, human population density, night lights, rail systems, roads and navigable waters. Humans have permanently changed the Earth so that they have caused the transition to a new geological era. Prospects are critical:

- climate change is looming over: atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are increased by 40% compared to pre-industrial era and are still increasing. Consequences are catastrophic: severe storms, drought, fires, floods, ice melting, rising sea level and biodiversity loss;
- by 2050, a growing global population (estimated to be 9,8 billion) will demand 70% more food than what is consumed today;
- the biodiversity at the base of our food systems is disappearing, jeopardising the future of our foods, basic goods, human and environmental health;
- in 2016 two billion tons of solid urban waste (domestic and commercial waste) have been produced in the world and if nothing is promptly done to brake on the phenomenon, by 2050 the amount of urban waste produced will increase of 70% as a result of the constant demographic and economic growth and because of the increasing urbanization;
- to manage the waste produced every year thirty billion tons of carbon dioxide end up in the atmosphere.



Societing 4.0 aims at proposing possible forms of future through collaborative processes: new modes through which people, institutions, production and research systems redefine meanings, symbols and social systems, taking advantage of the big potentials of technological innovation.



The principles of Societing 4.0 action

1. The leanings to new forms of future

Innovation processes are not an end into themselves and can not be predefined, because they are the result of confrontation, exchange and mutual learning processes. For this reason the goals to achieve are always in a redefinition process and the action is oriented towards the possible space openness to forms of future: imaginable, possible, desirable.

2. The cooperation

We think that change can be only achieved with the participation of all the players present in every (eco)system. It means to recognize the importance of the co-presence of different players who, with their contribution, allow to rearrange knowledge, points of view, languages in order to define more effective solutions to face the complexity.

3. The encounter between research and action

We are sure that it is necessary to go beyond the separation between theory and practice, creating a bridge between them to favour encounter, mutual knowledge and exchange. Research and action develop and rearrange together, strengthening each other. The synergy between theory and practice requires a transdisciplinary approach, essential to face the complexity of the socio-economic-environmental contexts.

4. The openness to change

The research-action opens, every time, to the chance of new discoveries. Every time it starts and goes on without conditionings, so that analysed problems are subjected to a possible reformulation. The actions to undertake and their consequences can never be completely known in advance: they come as a result of the uninterrupted interactions, exchanges and learnings.

5. Re-knowing the situation

We believe in the rooting within a real context, of which it is essential to know peculiarities. The research-action, that utilises and produces general thought and knowledge, starts and points towards concrete scopes of intervention (geographical, thematic, social,...), which have their characteristics, to understand, analyse and enhance. Knowledge processes are functional to define ideas and solutions that verify their usefulness and effectiveness at the check of facts.



6. Re-create situations

We use sense hijacking (*détournement*) of pre-established concepts. It is a method that let us play integrating elements, which usually belong to a specific context, within a different context, in order to create unusual relations from which gaining new possible meanings, new ideas and new solutions. In this way, for example, it is built the imaginary which establishes a dialogue between technological innovation and socio-cultural contexts where tradition prevails: technology can have a function in these contexts and at the same time can cease to be the symbol of alienation.

7. The enabling to care for the common good

We work to enable a thought and a personal and collective action to generate connective, socially oriented, creative, productive behaviours. We foster subjects and communities of learning able to positively affect conditions and effects of producing, innovating, living together, taking care. We look at the common good.

8. The artisan mode

As in the artisan's craft, we care for realising a work from which it is possible to constantly gain a necessary and new knowledge, where each stage of the "production process" becomes part of the whole, which needs to be controlled and taken care of with the willingness of learning from mistakes, motivated by the continuous possibility of improvement.

9. The connections

We create bridges: in the Age of Networks it means to connect cultural institutions and civil society; internal, rural areas and metropolitan basins; micro-small and medium sized companies and international corporations; disciplines and methods; institutional structures of research and the multitude of grassroots initiatives, daily experiments which show us new roads to come out from the failure of the present.

10. The maieutics

We take inspiration from the *ars maieutica* to favour, through the dialogue, the emergence of ideas and points of view –individual and collective- which exist but struggle to be explicated. The emergence and sharing of these weak signals, however relevant for those who keep track of them, can have an important function to define the solutions of complex problems. The problem, in fact, can already hold within itself the matrices of its solutions.

www.societing.org



info@societing.org



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