



RE.CRI.RE

BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATION
OF THE CRISIS AND THE CRISIS
OF THE REPRESENTATION

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RE.CRI.RE aims to understand what kind of social identity change is going on within European societies, and from this analysis to gather suggestions in order to improve the efficiency of policies operating in/for the sake of a post-crisis scenario.

For policy-making, the analysis of social identity is highly valuable because the **social identity moderates the impact of policies**.

With the project Re.Cri.Re we mean:

A) to verify whether the symbolic universes grounding the social identity has undergone a major change within European societies, as a consequence of the socio-economic crisis;

B) to draw strategic and methodological implications for policy-making from point A.



The impact of policies is never simply a function of their intrinsic characteristics (e.g. expected actions, suggested rules, located targets) and the contents they propose (e.g. promotion of solidarity, of a European public sphere, cohesion), but it also **depends on how those elements are interpreted by the social actors** embedded in their local contexts

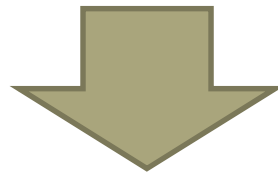
This interpretation is grounded and channeled by actors' social identity, conceived in its turn as based on **a stable system of generalized meanings** (here called: *symbolic universe*) that shapes the image actors have of themselves and their relation with the social environment



In critical situations, two possible scenarios emerge:

Scenario 1: social systems are able to assimilate the crisis into their view of reality: **the representation of the crisis** therefore does **not modify the symbolic universes of the social identity**, which can serve as the common ground to which policies can be anchored. For the policy-maker this is the scenario of continuity

Scenario 2: the crisis reorganizes the way reality is interpreted, modifying the symbolic universes of the social identity. In other words, the representation of the crisis leads **to the crisis of representation.**



This is the scenario of discontinuity. In such situations, policies to exit the crisis must address such a (dis)rupture.



The project aims at answering the following questions:

- 1. Did the crisis produce a deep change of the symbolic universes grounding social identity?**
- 2. Did this deep change, if and where it occurred, modify the responses of individuals, their capability of resilience?**
- 3. Did it affect policies? How?**
- 4. Which strategic and methodological implications may derive for the design of post-crisis policies?**



1. **Behaviour** is not the mere effect of the environmental state, but the **consequence of the mediation of meaning** made by the social actor.

$$B=f(I_{a(s)})$$

Where:

B is the behaviour, and $I_{a(s)}$ stands for the Interpretation (I) of the environmental state (s) performed by the actor a .



2 . Symbolic Universes

“a contex specific, tendentially stable system of generalized meanings (...) that in an immediate and implicit way establishes the image the social actors have of themselves and their relation with the context”

The symbolic universes grounding the social identity are conceived in terms of **culture**

The definition of culture used here is **semiotic** and **dynamic**



.... the impact of policies

$$OU_p = f(I_{\alpha(P)}) \quad (1)$$

Where:

OU_p stands for the Output of the policy, and $I_{\alpha(P)}$ stands for the Interpretation (I) of the policy (P) enacted by the actor α .

Now, according to what has been said above, the interpretation of the input depends on the symbolic universe being active. Therefore:

$$I_{\alpha(P)} = f(S) \quad (2)$$

Where:

S stands for *Symbolic universe*

Consequently, integrating (2) in (1) one gets:

$$OU_p = f(S) \quad (3)$$

Namely, according to the semiotic tenet, the output of a policy is a function of the symbolic universe at stake



1. To map the systems of meanings (henceforth *symbolic universes*) grounding the social identities in the different European societies
2. To analyze what different higher mental functions (e.g. way of feeling, thinking, planning; forms and processes of memory; logical structures of reasoning, locus of control) symbolic universes are associated with, and through what different forms of behavior and communication they are expressed in daily life circumstances;
1. To estimate the relation of the symbolic universes with the socio-economical phenomena (e.g. forms of social behaviours, functioning of institutions, characteristics of communities, consumptions, economic activities).

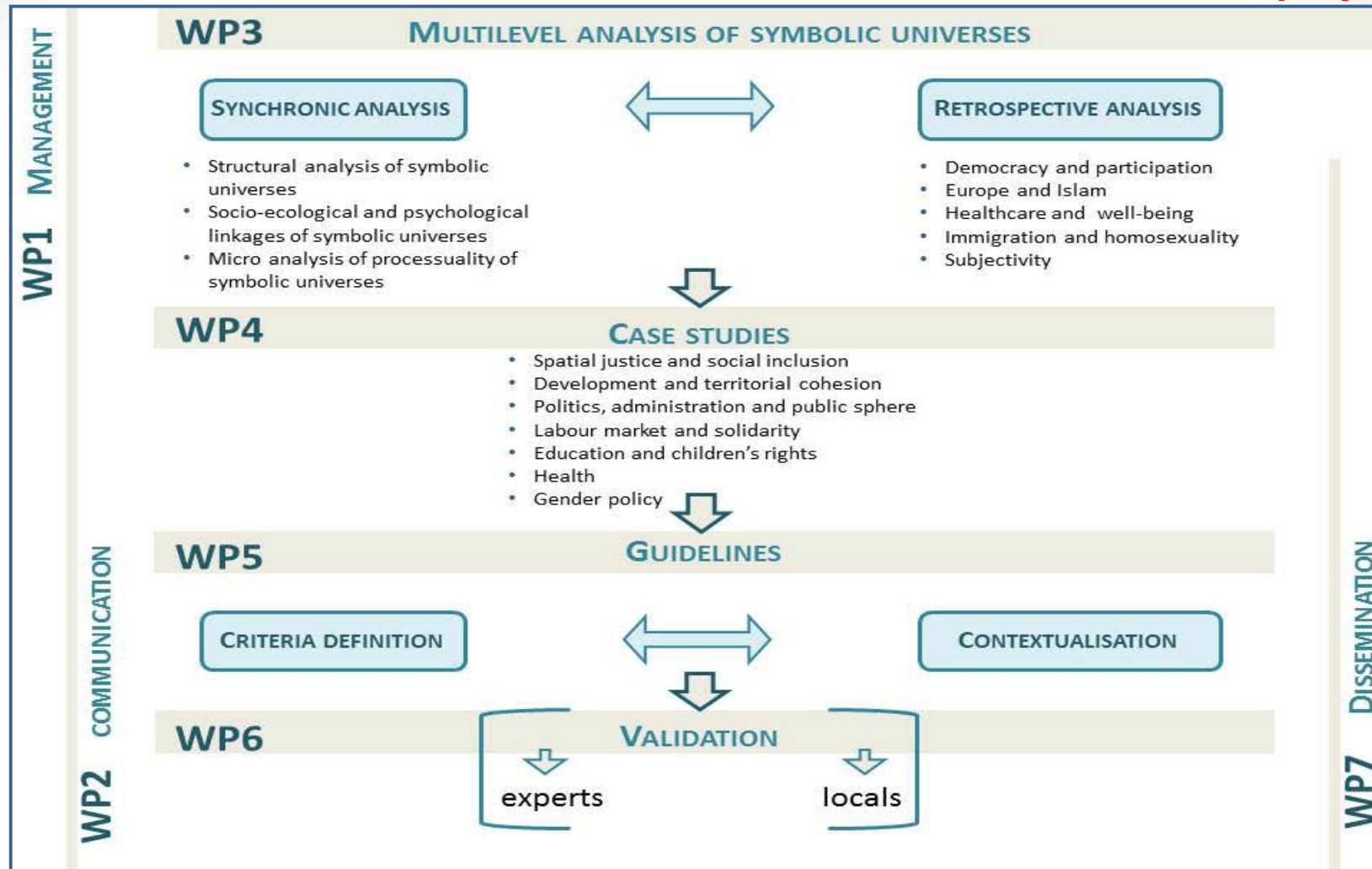


4. To verify whether a major change of the symbolic universes grounding the social identity has been occurring/has occurred
5. To analyze at what extent such a change is distributed in European local contexts, in connection with what socio-cultural (broadly speaking) conditions
6. To explore the repercussions of the change of the symbolic universes for some social objects, relevant to European cohesion (e.g. solidarity, Europe, democracy; participation; social inclusion, sustainability, innovation)



7. To understand the role played by the symbolic universes in mediating the impact of policies
8. To identify both general guidelines and context-specific, strategic and methodological guidelines for policy-making in post-crisis contexts, that are consistent with the symbolic universes at stake
9. To validate both general and context-specific guidelines in terms of relevance, effectiveness, feasibility as well as appropriateness to the symbolic universes.



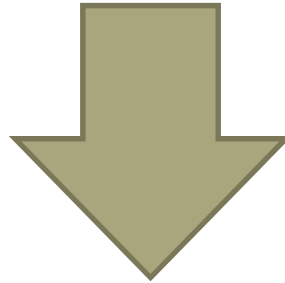


ALDA (Project Management)	The Association of Local Democracy Agencies	FRA
ISBEM (Coordinamento Scientifico)	Euro Mediterranean Scientific Biomedical Institute	ITA
AAU	Aalborg University	DAN
UNISA	Salento University	ITA
MALTA	The University of Malta	MAL
CYPRUS	University of Cyprus	GRE
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1. CONTEXT DEVELOPMENT CAN BE RE-CONCEPTUALIZED AS
“SEMIOTIC INNOVATION”



«RESOURCES AVAILABILITY» VS «USE OF RESOURCES»
(The use of resources depends on project. The project depends on meaning)



2. NOT-NORMATIVE CHARACTER OF POLICIES

Development is endogenous at the system. It happens only according to the internal system of rules, depending on the reproduction over time of its own modes of operation.

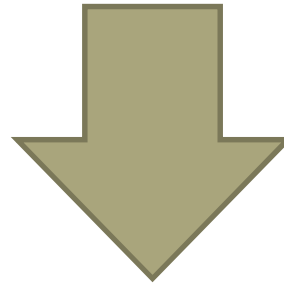
Consequently, development cannot happen by means of allocation of resources, because, in the real world, development implies the production of resources.

The abandonment of a normative approach to meanings does not imply the impossibility to plan development.

It implies a different planning paradigm, able to conceive meanings as not-for-granted objects. Consequently, this development paradigm will be oriented towards the management of semiotic dynamics, constantly re-shaped through the fluxes of social contingencies.



3. CONTEXT-BASED CHARACTER OF POLICIES



Re.Cri.Re. will produce knowledge on the meaning models which are active in European countries, in order to ground the development of a strategic-dialectic model for policy definition and implementation. This model will be able to take into account the self-organisational dimensions of European systems, including process monitoring tools to achieve the attended development.

