



University of Salerno, 7-8 June 2018  
CALL FOR PAPERS

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SALERNO



## Sociological imagination and social promotion: the category of “agapic action” to interpret the changes and to imagine new futures.

**Background** - Proposals from different approaches and schools are converging to support the need for a new engagement of the social sciences with the humanities. There is a need for knowledge in this field to be at the service of human development based on dialogue, fairness and inclusiveness. The Convivial Manifesto (AA.VV. 2013), which was signed in 2013 by many scholars of philosophy and social sciences such as Alain Caillé, Serge Latouche and Edgar Morin is a step in this direction. This Manifesto which is based on moral considerations and political, environmental and economic information seeks to be a response to threats of conflict and lawlessness globally with the promotion of human interdependence, based on the art of living together (co-existence) that enables humans to take care of each other and of nature. An approach of co-responsibility and collective responsibility towards future generations from Karl-Otto Apel (1987; 1988; 1990; 1991) and Hans Jonas (1973; 1976; 1979; 1982) are also examples of steps in this direction. This approach emphasizes the passing from a “naïve” vision of subjective responsibility towards a broader concept of “collective” responsibility with a contemporary and conscious effort of groups of individuals who, through relationships, dialogue and communication, enable behaviour and policies which are based on new rules of shared control of a company, and follow the goal of the conservation of the environment. On the same stream, the contemporary critical sociology by Luc Boltanski and Axel Honneth (Boltanski 2011; Honneth 1990; Susen and Turner 2014) recognizes that critique is not the claim to criticize the contemporary social world from a hierarchical level of cognitive superiority. Rather, the critical capacity must be found in the social reality and in the social action of the members of societies. On this track, there is another proposal relating to the so-called critical turn of public sociology proposed by Michael Burawoy (2005), which is along the line of Charles Wright Mills and critical sociology (1956) and Alvin Ward Gouldner (1970). They reject the 'idea of a neutral science with purely cognitive purposes and strongly affirm the idea of participatory science with purely emancipatory purposes.

A common point of these proposals is the search for a new "universal point of view", or rather in the words of some authors, a "pluriversalism" or "universalism of many voices" in which, alongside the promotion of human rights, cultural diversity is recognized and the leading role of social actors and local communities with a view of sharing, interdependence and participation. With this need in mind, this conference aims at the development of a sociological imagination to see the changes which can take place and imagine a new future in a perspective of social inclusiveness and the promotion of a “multi-person” protagonist. In particular, the conference intends to focus on a new interpretation of a category of human action, love-agape action, with the aim of investigating its potential, both in analytical terms and in terms of design and action..

**The category of agapic action** - The starting point of this conference is represented by the studies carried out by the study group of Social-One (Iorio, 2014; 2015; Araújo et al., 2015; Araújo et al.,



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TEORIE SOCIOLOGICHE E TRASFORMAZIONI SOCIALI

2016; Martins and Cataldi, 2016), which recognized a public dimension and not only intimate and personal dimension of love in today's society. Taking as a reference point the work of Luc Boltanski, "*L'amour et la justice comme competences*" (1990), the research of the study group has proposed to widen the circle of sharing to go beyond the input from classic sociologists with a new conceptual category linked to agape. This path has actually already been begun by some well-known scholars - including Simmel (1907; 1921; 1989; 2001), Sorokin (1954), Giddens (1995), Luhman (1987) and Honneth (1990) - on the shoulders of whom it has already been possible to see the historical path of transformation of the concept. But the "agape" action brings something new to the social sciences: agape, in fact, introduces emerging characteristics, which at the same time link to and transcends the love understood as "eros" and "philia", defining itself as a key to gaining insight into a primarily empirical social reality based unconditional love of neighbour. On this basis the study group of Social-One defined the "agape act" as "an action, relationship or social interaction in which the subjects exceed or go beyond ( in giving, receiving, not giving up or not doing, forgetting ) all that has gone before , and therefore, offers more than the situation requires in order to bring benefits (Iorio 2015, 25).

**The conference** - The Department of Political, Social and Communication Sciences of the University of Salerno (Italy) and the research network Social-One, under the auspices of the section Sociological Theories and Social Transformations of the Italian Association of Sociology (AIS), promote the conference entitled "*Sociological Imagination and social promotion: the category of "agapic action" to read the changes taking place and imagine new future*". The conference will take place at the University of Salerno (Fisciano –SA) from June 7 to June 8, 2018.

The conference is promoted in partnership with: UFPE Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (Recife - Brazil), USAL Universidad del Salvador (Buenos Aires - Argentina), Centro Universitário Tabosa de Almeida ASCES - UNITA (Brazil), Unitelma Sapienza (Italy), Sapienza Università di Roma - Dipartimento di Psicologia dei Processi di Sviluppo e Socializzazione (Italy), Università degli Studi di Catania – Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione (Italy), Università degli Studi di Trieste – Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici (Italy), Istituto Universitario Sophia (Italy), Emanuela Zancan Foundation (Italy), Fondazione Nazionale degli Assistenti Sociali (Italy), CIRPAS – Centro Interuniversitario Popolazione Ambiente e Salute (Italy).

The aim of the conference is to investigate all the perspectives of analysis and action which have been raised by the members of the agapic action in the context of human and social disciplines with the hypothesis that the concept may offer new interpretations and perspectives of interventions for the promotion of a pluralistic society based on equality, inclusiveness and particularly dialogue. Empirical contributions, which will combine theory, research and action, are encouraged. There will also be a preference for contributions, which bring together sociological perspectives and social service perspective with multidisciplinary factors.

Contributions may be focussed on one of four strands (for different panels):

**1) Protagonist communities, sharing cultures and grassroots movements.**

This panel will select contributions that best analyze the phenomena that represent the emergence in an upwards direction of a culture of sharing and of acting collaboratively. This culture, which produced the digital network, and strengthened it, is emerging as a new paradigm for an economic operating system. It poses new challenges to the consumeristic culture, which is typical of the capitalist market. Considerations include an increase in forms of community management of land, space and resources, and a commitment to the common good, to public services; the emergence of delayed reciprocity circuits, such as the phenomenon of suspended goods, the mechanisms of a shared economy, such as carpooling or car sharing, peer-to-peer systems, crowdfunding. A final consideration is the sharing of data, information and physical assets as part of what is called with a neologism "Internet of things". It is all part of a varied phenomenon of solidarity, sharing and mutual help that depends on reciprocity and on putting value within networks on relationships. This

panel will select contributions, preferably based on case studies, which will improve the use of the category of “agape” actions to investigate the phenomena in question, preferring micro and macro levels of social actions: the functioning of the dynamics of networks, organizational forms and the daily practices that influence the culture, values and the role of different actors within these circles.

## **2) Cooperation and dialogue in the field of macro-social actions.**

This panel will select the contributions that will best analyze those participatory collaborative processes at the macro-social level that have social, environmental and economic applications. Examples are represented by the actions of the international organizations and inter-actional cooperation for the promotion of peace. Other examples relate to forms of relationship shared at several levels and by several social actors aimed at the prevention of social risk, war and health care. Also included are the forms of participation to address climate change and environmental protection, such as the experience of the Paris Conference on Climate Change COP 21. This panel will give preference to contributions that will best utilize the category of “agape” action to combine the analytical perspective with the prospect of intervention for the promotion of social policy, health, international and environmental responsibility for future generations.

## **3) Relationships, inclusion and well-being in social policies**

This panel will select social and political contributions from the different welfare systems, in order to highlight processes of sharing, participation and the co-designing of services promoted within social policies at local level. Research proposals and practices conducted by social services and professional practices which are aimed at innovating the many areas of intervention, the “aid” operations and “caring”, strategies for the social inclusion of vulnerable people, in emancipatory perspective, of development and of individual and community well-being. In particular preference will be given to multi-disciplinary contributions, which best utilize the category of “agape” actions within social policies, and that will lead analytical and experimental evidence of generating a citizenship which faces poverty and inequality and where people are seen as active protagonists by socializing and building relationships generating personal and social responsibility.

## **4) Plurality, dialogue and identity processes**

This panel will select relevant contributions relating to those processes of construction of identities that depend on dialogue and encounter with the other. In the face of globalization, communities are returning to a new need to have a sense of belonging, to a renewed need for feeling rooted. Some ways are reactive and lead to new types of ethnic communities, locality based groupings, religious identity-based groupings. In this session, all forms of identity-based social ties which try to build non-exclusive moments of solidarity will be investigated. Social and national identity born as a result of reconciliation processes to foster mutual recognition and mutual enrichment will be given special attention. Contributions that highlight, the dimension of “agape”, its dynamics, the forms and the historical and social conditions that promote the reality of dialogue and development of identity processes will be given preference.

### **How to submit the paper proposal**

- The application’s deadline is April 15, 2018.
- For the application, please use the online format available on the web page [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdiBkJL3a9PE53yfi0\\_1W1rfJz5pxL0a3RhoSF0jxGKvDtXjg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdiBkJL3a9PE53yfi0_1W1rfJz5pxL0a3RhoSF0jxGKvDtXjg/viewform)
- The paper proposal can be exclusively filled in and submitted on-line.
- The selection of the papers will be made by the Organizing Committee of the Conference, after having heard the opinion of the Scientific Committee.

For further information, please visit [www.social-one.org](http://www.social-one.org) or mail to [sociolconfere2018@unisa.it](mailto:sociolconfere2018@unisa.it).