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Paradoxes of the Knowledge Society. Some Considerations on the Italian Situation

For the past several years, politicians and scholars have been attentive to the directions of development of contemporary societies by discussing the need to move towards a Knowledge Society. When we discuss about Knowledge Society, we should consider a series of contradictory processes, such as the financialization of the economy, the new-net-knowledge economy, the transformations of the labor market, the multiplication of the forms of communication and then the consequent redefinition of the relationship between the individual and society.

Starting from a concept of permanent education, put forward by UNESCO in the Seventies, and goes on with the most recent "Lisbon Strategy" the plan seems to be clear: "becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". However, despite successes in some important sectors, the ongoing evaluation of the Lisbon Strategy highlighted the difficulties in economical growth, employment and innovation, especially in the largest euro zone economies. The ongoing financial crisis has deepened the problems. Hence the relaunching of the "Europe 2020 Strategy", as a way out of the crisis, in line with the Lisbon proposals, confirms that the path towards the Knowledge Society is inevitable. This paper intends to present some paradoxical aspects within the Italian route towards the Knowledge Society and to propose a critical analysis of the problematic transition from theory to practice of the Knowledge Society. According to the statistics released by OECD and EUROSTAT, Italy is very late because of an evident contradiction: even though the idea of a knowledge society is rhetorically celebrated, public resources for strategic sectors remain insufficient. Is there a shift from illusion of progress to disappointment?