

World Class Cooking for *Solving Global Challenges*



Reparadigmimg Societal Innovation

Eunika Mercier-Laurent and Leif Edvinsson

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World Class Cooking for Solving Global Challenges: Reparadigming Societal Innovation

Eunika Mercier-Laurent and Leif Edvinsson

Brief summary:

Many factors influence the current state of society and generate new challenges. The authors propose to consider Societal Innovation using an analogy with cooking because it requires thinking about ingredients, know-how and context. It refers to ecosystem dynamics connecting various components requiring multiple resources with the aim of sustainable well-being.

Keywords: Knowledge; ingredients; know-how; societal innovation; education; technology; kaleidoscope; wise space

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You develop an instant global consciousness, a people orientation, an intense dissatisfaction with the state of the World and a compulsion to do something about it. From out there on the moon international politics look so petty.

Ed Mitchell, Astronaut on Apollo 14, 1971

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Preface

Cooking? Making good food with available ingredients, and making it with pleasure. Innovation? Making something new in using knowledge from science, information from market There are great similarities between cooking and innovation.

In times of climate change, digital revolution, global pandemics ... we need to cook new societies, new ways of life, new forms of business...

The ingredients are there: technologies, motivations, ideas, etc. As well as the actors: peoples, groups, individuals, you and me!

This book shows the ways forward: how to make societal change happening. It does not provide with “ready to cook” recipes. But it gives examples of initiatives, success stories, institutional settings where to operate, indicators to measure performances, mind maps to guide action.

All these materials picked out from all over the world will stimulate your creativity, drive your imagination, energize your will.

Wherever you are, whatever you do – at the city level, the nation level, the global level – you have the possibility to transform the world. This is a very positive message of this book. A most welcome message at times that are saturated by “collapse” discourses and predictions.

For all those reasons, you should read this book, written by authentic societal innovators with proven track records.

Jean-Eric Aubert
Président de la Société Française de Prospective
Former Innovation Policy expert at OECD and World Bank

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Prologue

Many factors have influenced the current state of society and have generated new challenges, new hopes, and new fears.

Today, there is a very serious alert for the increasing social unrest, pandemics, unemployment, financial debt burden on different levels, Planet crisis and growing opportunity costs for Future Generations.

The recent revolts around the globe express the protest against the current policies in their countries and demand for better future. This movements amplified and spread through social networks act as firefighter.

The economic and social effects of the recent pandemics and of financial, economic, and ecologic crisis needs another answer that perpetuation of traditional policies. There is no new recipe for sustainable future, neither for successful addressing of current challenges.

However, such recipe can be derived from experimentation.

The starting point of this book was a discussion about French societal innovation triggered by the election of Emmanuel Macron for President as a signal of expectation for another politics than traditional and expectation of new way of thinking and acting that may help solving current problems and set foundations for a better future. As all innovative reforms they rise critiques and strike ... but are necessary and President Macron promised to never give-up in aim to achieve the proposed goals corresponding to his vision, ambition, strategy and tactics. His ambition is to make France great again at the European level and in the global context.

Suddenly Covid 19 pandemics appeared as a planetary tsunami. It impacted all countries, all fields, stopped many activities and emerged others involving creativity and flexibility. Pollution due to transportation decreased, many professions and education switched to teleworking, and supply of essential goods went online. Faced with the mandatory closure of restaurants, the managers had also to innovate. As “every cloud has a silver lining” Covid 19 crisis can be an opportunity for doing thing differently.

We propose to consider societal innovation by analogy to cooking.

Why cooking? Because of President Macron’s reforms seen as societal innovation and French cuisine, considered as the world best and having a long tradition in combining traditional tastes with new trends.

“Cooking” future society is about creating something new with available ingredients. It is similar to the context of French (and certainly others) government – to succeed combining the vision with existing constraints. French cuisine provides many example of such meals made from leftovers such as hachis parmentier, gratins, tartes, turtes, crumbles, and stews, all requiring imagination.

Cooking consists in composing ordinary ingredients into extraordinary dish and multi senses experience. “It connects art, technology and science to produce chemical reaction, visual and olfactory experience through association of tastes and harmony of food and wine” (Brillat-Savarin).

“We remember for a lifetime the exceptional dishes eaten in an exceptional place” (Marcel Proust *A la recherche du temps perdu* (madeleine de Proust)).

It is not only about nutrition but also about happiness and well-being in nice and secure environment.

As innovation, cooking is a multidisciplinary activity involving imagination, creativity, expertise, knowledge of clients, knowledge of ingredients and their chemistry, organizing space, choosing the right tools, optimizing, gain and maintain a leadership and successful management of enterprise.

Every culture has a unique food philosophy, which is now evolving with people movement around the world and food business. Americans have introduced fast food without thinking about long-term effect on health. Traditional Chinese food provides balance between yin and yang to ensure good health. Other countries use specific spices.

Our health depends on what we eat – quality of ingredients and energy provided.

Globalization and technology influenced new eating habits such as ordering on line the ready meals or preparing them at home (DIY).

French cooking imposes some rules and arouses imagination. In Grand Restaurant everything is important – decoration and atmosphere, colors, mood, and smells.

Cooking a tasty meal for the enjoyment of guests requires imagination, resources, fresh and locally available ingredients of good quality, creativity, and pleasant context.

Le restaurant *Jardin des sens* in Montpellier (south of France) founded by twins Jacques and Laurent Pourcel (three stars Guide Michelin) offered wonder of the senses.

Their concept of “visions gourmands” and some of their creations are presented in Fig. 1.

Some recipes can be found on <http://www.pourcel-chefs-blog.com/blog1/category/ce-qui-se-dit-sur-les-chefs/atelier/>

They select special places for restaurants (several in Montpellier, Paris, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Bangkok). Their creations and space present system harmony and balance of senses (Fig. 2).

Bread, cheese, and wine are essential in French cuisine.



Fig. 1. Visions Gourmands of Jacques and Laurent Pourcel. *Source:* <https://www.pinterest.fr/pin/315674255113049153/>



Fig. 2. First Restaurant Jardin des Sens in Montpellier and Beach Restaurant. *Source:* <http://www.pourcel-chefs-blog.com>

According to Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin:

A meal without wine is like a day without sun.
The discovery of a new dish confers more happiness on humanity,
than the discovery of a new star.
Dessert without cheese is like a beauty with only one eye.

Time should be taken to appreciate food.

For a Grand Chef, everything is important: delighting clients, leadership (etoiles Guide Michelin), organization and equipment of kitchen, organization of work, exploring talents, scheduling, etc.

Ingredients must be carefully selected and of high quality.

Sustainability of a grand restaurant depend on several factors including innovation – renewal of menu in function of available “raw materials,” trust, etc.

Exploring the analogy of cooking this book discusses some funding principles of societal innovation such as trust, respectfulness, and artfulness. It also emphasizes on the art of thinking – out of and in between fields, considering the various impacts and transforming in some cases errors into success.

As cooking, societal innovation connects imagination, mindset, knowledge, know-how and we hope a pleasure of creating and enjoying the future.

“Cooking” future society is not easy because of constraints and contradictions; tendency for perpetuation of old mental schemas, ways of thinking, egoism, short-term planning (five years of presidency in France and six months in European Union), lack of knowledge transfer and some others.

Many consider technology including artificial intelligence and innovation as the magic wand to solve world problems. Currently, many tries to solve all kind of problems with deep learning techniques. Lessons learned from AI applications are that complex problem-solving requires deep understanding of it before elaboration of a suited solution. Nevertheless, technology possibilities are underused for solving critical problems because of perpetuation of the same cognitive approaches.

This book gives another perspective on sustainable and prosperous future that those of traditional approaches considering environmental, economic and social balance only.

Some conditions for progress are derived from experimentation (prototyping) in aim defining Key Success Indicators for real-time evaluation of the advancement of the society.

The purpose of this publication is the awakening of society including politics about involving of talents, evolving behaviors, alternative thinking, flexibility, wise use of technology, and innovating for human purpose.

It includes new perspectives on societal innovation, new look on innovation, and technology as support of societal innovation.

The best cook book offer not only recipes but describe the related ecosystems and spirit.

Betty Croker (Croker, 1961) advises to refresh a spirit before cooking, select best ingredients suited to the planned menu, organize work and combine jobs, read recipe, measure and respect temperature.

She emphasizes the importance of vision (what I want to offer), organization, scheduling, and timeline.

Julia Child proposes adaptation of American ingredients to obtain similar effect as in France ... but French cooking is much more than just adaptation. Recipe is not always sufficient to succeed, all chefs has his/her tips.

This book can be seen as a very first cookbook for societal innovation.

The first chapter lists current movements around the globe in searching of better future, next chapter provide reader with French context. It is followed by presentation of main prototyping of social innovation around the world and their results to provide the very first outline of a recipe for societal innovation. The last chapter backs to excellence in cooking in aim to improve the previous outline in the recipe for successful societal innovation.