

Changing Democracies in an Unequal World

Edited by Flaminia Saccà



Sociologia

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1. Changing Democracies in an Unequal World

by *Flaminia Saccà*

1. Introduction

The Covid 19 pandemic has, among other things, fueled an international debate on whether the world will be different, more equal, or if it will stay the same after this crisis. It has raised questions on the role of the State, on the weight of the political sphere in an era when political power seemed to be steadily losing the battle with the economic power. It has put globalization to question due to the risks derived from frequent travels and open borders on the one hand and from the restructuring of the strategies of international alliances on the other. It has implicitly evidenced that countries are not only made by individuals fiercely competing with each other on the basis of their own individual merits but that they are societies, made of people who form a community that will have more chances of overcoming a crisis if the state and its political institutions manage to organize and mediate the response to their legitimate (in this case actually *vital*) interests.

For the time being we can see that, in certain countries (in Europe for example) the state has had to intervene more than it had been considered acceptable by neocon ideology. Whereas in the US it has made contradictions explode. Literally: we've seen armed white men protesting against any form of lockdown. What was being confronted there was a mislead idea of individual freedom vs public health. Profit against human lives.

Whereas Europe has tried to come together in an effort to set limits to the epidemy. Public good, awareness and accountability vs individual freedom and responsibility. These seemed to be the different attitudes between Europe and the US lead by a leader such as President Trump who has also been echoed by other populist leaders such as Bolsonaro in Brazil and Boris Johnson in the UK. With heartbreaking, disastrous effects. While negating the dangers of the virus Bolsonaro was at the same time trying to hide from the eyes

of the world the increasing number of deaths suffered by its Country, perfectly symbolized by what the international public opinion learnt to be Manaus' anonymous and hidden graveyard.

But the pandemic has hit an already unequal world and it has made it even more unequal, affecting democracies, political credibility and polarizing even more between empathic leaders (mostly women) and populist leaders¹.

2. Widening the Gap

It is hard to say where exactly the world will be at after the pandemic. But we can see certain trends arising. The widening of previous inequalities, of the gap between wealthy and developing countries, between the ruling and the working class (increasingly in lack of jobs, actually), between men and women. There will certainly be a remix in market trends, jobs, new poor. Some social advancements will experience a backlash. Women are already struggling to maintain their freedom, their jobs, their free space. In Italy, 90% of the jobs that went lost during the first year of the pandemic used to belong to women. Thrown back at home as they have been, they have also been more frequently the victims of gender violence.

More generally speaking this crisis is biting middle class and low-income sectors of our societies, the same sectors that were already struggling to recover from the previous economic crisis and who had turned to populist leaders worldwide. Trump in the US, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Boris Johnson in UK and all that Brexit has entailed, Orban in Hungary and of course we've had Salvini in Italy. These leaders are called populists because they claim to express a leadership that is close to the people and is distant from the élites. An élite that is accused of having betrayed the people. More specifically, of having betrayed the middle and low class in their own countries.

So, now that so many countries are led by populist leaders has the world become more just, more equal in the last few years? Has the wealth been more distributed, have social measures to fill the gaps been implemented? Quite the contrary.

If we look at the US we can certainly trace a protectionist effort that doesn't change the economic system nor the mode of production but that enhances the "advantage position" it already had as a world superpower

¹ The following pages derive from the readjustment and extension of a paper presented at the conference: *Changing Democracies in an Unequal World*, ISA RC26 – AIS Politica's Conference, 16-17 May 2019, Tuscia University, Viterbo.

capable of imposing import, export and taxation policies. Apart from that, we cannot say that important and structural economic measures have been implemented to change the economic system nor to reduce the gap between the affluent few and the majority of the population. But not only that, as we will see, these populist leaders are jeopardizing civil, social and political rights causing even larger unbalance gaps and growing inequalities amongst their own citizens

All the economic analysis and data demonstrate that the global wealth has become more and more concentrated, not distributed, through the years. Today, the World Economic Forum's charts tell us that less than 1% (actually 0,7%) of the world's adult population "collectively controls 46% of the world's wealth"².

Whereas the vast majority of the people, 70% of the world's population, collectively controls a mere 2.7% of the world's wealth.

The polarization between the rich and the poor is still growing and has found nothing on its way to stop it or even to slow it down. Certainly not populist leaders, nor their reforms. And of course, this did not come as a surprise.

Nonetheless the "percentage of people in the lowest wealth band has been shrinking over the years"³.

3. Inequalities Strike at Different Levels: Economic, Geographical, Social, Gender, Political

Wealth is becoming more concentrated, accumulated in the hands of a very – very - happy few, but inequalities strike at different levels: at an economic level of course, but also, at a geographic, social, gender, political level too.

We have already mentioned what the economic unequal distribution of wealth means: that less than 1% (0,7%) of the population detains almost half of the world's wealth (46%).

But inequality hits also at a *geographic level* because as we will see in the next paragraph and in figures n. 2 and 3, wealth is certainly highly concentrated in certain areas of the world whereas others struggle far behind, i.e. mainly in the US, then far behind we'll find China, Europe, Japan...not to mention Latin American nor African Countries.

² R. Foorohar (2016), *Makers and Takers: The Rise of Finance and the Fall of American Business*, Currency, Redferd.

³ *Ibid.*

At a social level because this economic concentration translates in polarized living conditions (from child death rates to life expectancy, to levels of education, and so on).

At a gender level because the richest part of the world's population is male, whereas the poorest majority is female⁴. Women are a phenomenal factor of economic and social improvement when countries invest in their education (as Nobel Prize Amartya Sen and many others after him have proven through various indicators)⁵. But they are still the poorest human group on earth.

At a political level for inequality expresses itself also on the basis of recognition of individual freedom and of human rights. At present democratic systems seem to be able to guarantee individual, social, civic and political rights. But although democracy has been growing worldwide through the decades, the level of freedom has been shrinking lately. Even within democratic countries. That means that even if procedural democracies (i.e. where free elections take place) have increased, their democratic fiber seems to lose strength as we'll see in later charts and this translates into higher levels of inequalities within these countries.

Economic and Geographical Inequalities

The most immediate indicator of global inequality levels is the GDP per capita. This amount varies considerably depending on the country a person's ill or good fate has made her/him come to birth. The range can be quite stark: it goes from Qatar's \$116,936 per person to a mere 661\$ of the Central African Republic, an amount that is similar to the average income of two hundred years ago, when it was below 1000 dollars a year. Today's global average GDP per capita is 15.469\$. The US triples that amount though with \$54,225 per person in 2017.

Public opinion worldwide seems to have a general awareness about the world's wealth distribution but giving a closer look at how this wealth is unequally distributed by *geographic regions* might help us refine our thoughts and our possible forecasts for the future (Fig. 1 and 2)⁶.

⁴ W. Byanima (2017), *8 men have the same wealth as 3.6 billion of the world's poorest people. We must rebalance this unjust economy*, WEF report. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/eight-men-have-the-same-wealth-as-3-6-billion-of-the-worlds-poorest-people-we-must-rebalance-this-unjust-economy>.

⁵ A. Sen (1999), *Development as freedom (1st ed.)*, Oxford University Press, New York.

⁶ <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/all-of-the-worlds-wealth-in-one-visualization/>

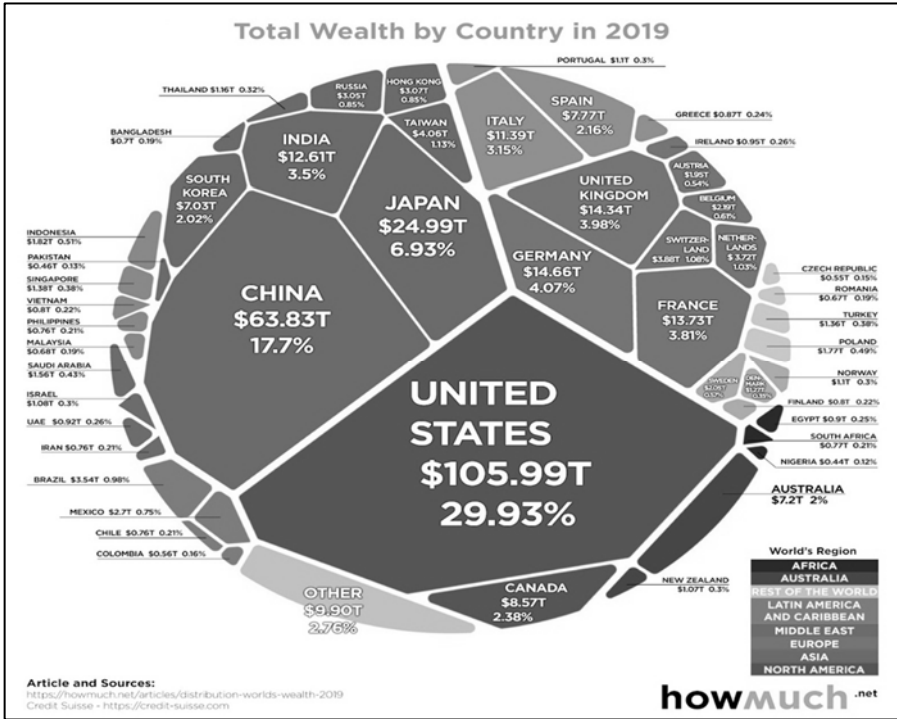


Fig. 1 - Economic and Geographic Inequality
 Source: Credit Suisse

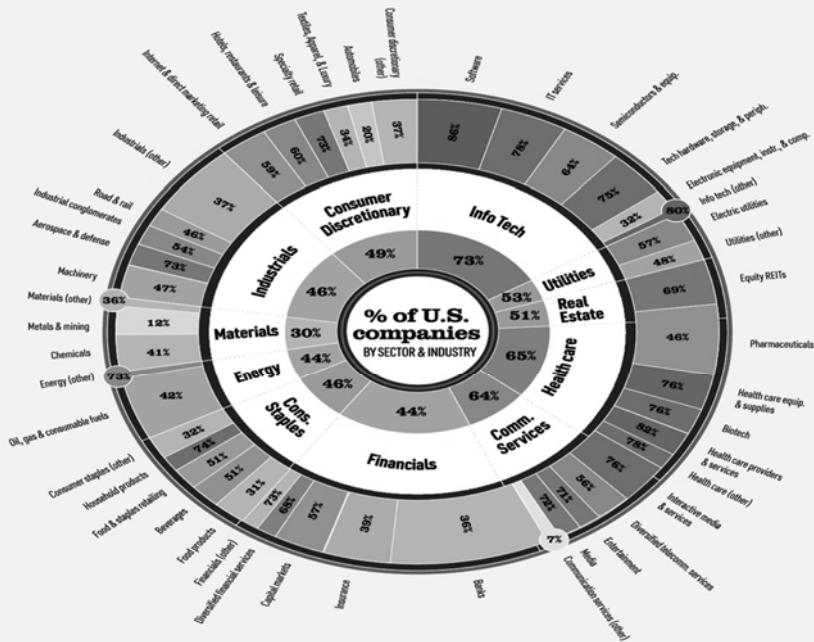
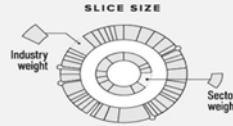
We can see that the global wealth is particularly concentrated in certain areas of the world. Mainly the US, China, Europe, Japan. And apparently things will grow this way, not in the opposite direction, if we look at the next figure (2) regarding the dominance of North American companies in the various industrial sectors⁷. According to Standard's & Poor estimates, *roughly 50% of the global market is detained by American industries* alone. They are big, actually huge as Trump would put it, basically in every sector. But they are particularly grand in the business of today and of tomorrow, the Info-Tech sector, where they are basically unrivaled since they detain 73% of the world Info-tech industries.

⁷ <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/us-companies-global-markets/>

The Dominance of U.S. COMPANIES IN GLOBAL SECTORS AND INDUSTRIES

The S&P Global Broad Market Index tracks more than 11,000 stocks across 50 developed and emerging markets. U.S.-based companies have a heavy weighting, with their market capitalization exceeding 50% of most industry totals.

HOW TO READ THIS CHART



Source: S&P Dow Jones Indices. Data as of Dec. 31, 2019. Chart shows the weight of U.S.-domiciled companies in S&P Global BMI sectors and industries. "Other" shows the weight of U.S. companies in industries with an index weight of less than 1%. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Chart provided for illustrative purposes only.

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Fig. 2 - Weight of US companies in S&P BMI Sectors and Industries.
Source: S&P Dow Jones Indices, Dec 31, 2019.

The Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report, that provides perhaps the most comprehensive information on household wealth worldwide and is written by former London School of Economics' scholar, Prof. Anthony Shorrocks,

by Prof. Jim Davies, Western University and by Dr. Rodrigo Llubera⁸, certifies that last year the total global wealth rose by USD 36.3 trillion and that wealth per adult reached USD 77,309, up 8.5% versus 2018. Adding data proving that the global wealth has actually increased through the years⁹.

But as we mentioned before things haven't improved at the same rate for everybody. Not in every country, not for every social class, not for both genders.

So, although the world seemed in a better position, from an economic point of view, to face the Covid-19 crisis, we can now say that the crisis has also enhanced previously existing inequalities.

According to Ian Goldin, Professor of Globalization and Development at the University of Oxford and to Robert Muggah, founder at the The SecDev Group and Igarapé Institute, a Brazilian think tank on economy and development, "there are at least four ways the COVID-19 pandemic is increasing inequality:

- First, higher-paid workers are working from home while lower-paid blue-collar workers typically do not have this option.
- Second, a higher share of low-paid workers is in essential services such as nursing, policing, teaching, cleaning, refuse removal, and store attendants where they are more likely to come into contact with people who are infected.
- Third, lower paid workers are more represented in the sectors that have suspended activities such as hotels, restaurants and tourism services.
- Fourth, the pandemic is increasing poverty and inequality between richer countries that can afford to bail out their firms and provide social safety nets, and poorer countries that do not have the capacity to do so¹⁰."

Recently, a survey on the impact of COVID- 19 on children's lives, carried out in 37 countries, pointed out that 3 in 4 households suffered an income

⁸ A. Shorrocks *et al.* (2018), *Global Wealth Databook 2018*, Credit Suisse Research Institute, Zurich and *Global Wealth Report 2020: file:///C:/Users/utente/AppData/Local/Temp/global-wealth-report-2020-en.pdf*

⁹ *The Global Wealth Report 2020* states that due to 2019 increase in wealth "the world has been better placed to absorb any losses from COVID-19 during 2020. However, while events this year caused wide-spread wealth losses during January–March, these were reversed by June in most countries. Surprisingly, global household wealth is slightly above the level at the start of the year". So, in the end, according to this publication the world hasn't suffered much – from an economic point of view – from the pandemic crisis.

¹⁰ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/covid-19-is-increasing-multiple-kinds-of-inequality-here-s-what-we-can-do-about-it/>

reduction since the start of the pandemic, with 82% of the poorer households affected. Even in richer countries such as the US, over 2 million more households reported a struggle in supplying adequate ratios of food to all of their family members. Basically, more than two million households said they did not have enough to eat since the pandemic. A problem that has not equally affected the American population on a low income but that has affected the African American households the most¹¹.

Social Inequalities

So, if the global wealth has increased through the years, but without equal distribution, what has happened *of inequalities at a social level*? We have just briefly mentioned the ways the COVID-19 pandemic has hit different social targets in different ways, but what was the situation like before the pandemic?



Fig. 3 - *Social Inequality*. Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/>

If we take a brief look at how the global inequality gap has changed in 200 years, we'll realize that the human condition has certainly improved for

¹¹ Actually, one in five African American households says they since the epidemic they are encountering problems in finding something to eat every day, see Save the Children Report, *Protect a Generation. The Impact of COVID-19 on Children's lives*, <https://www.savethechildren.org.za/sci-za/files/21/211c29cd-81f6-479b-b8f7-13e6d3916b6d.pdf>

all although not at the same rate. Figure n. 3¹² summarizes five basic dimensions of development across countries - and how our average standards of living have evolved since 1800.

The first basic dimension of development is *health*, and by that we consider *mortality rates* and *life expectancy*. Child mortality rates especially and life expectancy at birth are important indicators of a country's living standards: they indicate the population's possibility to access healthcare, food, jobs, medicines. As we can see from figure n. 3 *Social inequality*, the country that performed best on these indicators in 2017 was Iceland, with a mortality rate for children under five years old as low as 0.21%. On the contrary, Somalia performed the worst, with the highest child mortality rate that reached a high 12.7%, meaning it scored over three times the current global average.

Nonetheless, despite those differences, if we look at the trend through the years, we can see that it has been one of improvement even for the worst performing countries such as the latter. Over two Centuries ago, back in the 1800 the global average child mortality rate was incredibly high for today's standards: 43%. And if we look at the data of today's worst performing country, Somalia, we will notice that today's data is roughly 1/3 lower than its 1800's average rate (12.7%), whereas today the best performing country has virtually eradicated the problem (0.21%). Similar trends are to be noticed when it comes to life expectancy data. In 1800, the world's average life expectancy was only 29 years old¹³, today almost half a century of life expectancy has been added worldwide: the average is 72.2, whereas in Japan one can expect to live until he/she is roughly 80 years old.

The second basic dimension of development is *education* and it's levels are measured in two distinct ways, by mean years, i.e. the average number of years of education a person aged 25+ receives in their lifetime and by expected years, i.e. the total years a 2-year old child is likely to spend in school. If we consider the changes in both indicators through the last two centuries, we notice that they have remarkably increased. Advancements in this field are actually quite astonishing considering where the world was at only in the Nineteenth's Century, when the mean and expected years of education were both less than a year. At the rise of the industrial revolution

¹² Max Roser at Our World in Data <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/global-inequality-gap/>

¹³ Sources: James C. Riley (2005) – Estimates of Regional and Global Life Expectancy, 1800–2001. Issue Population and Development Review. Population and Development Review. Volume 31, Issue 3, pages 537–543, September 2005., Zijdeman, Richard; Ribeira da Silva, Filipa, 2015, "Life Expectancy at Birth (Total)", <http://hdl.handle.net/10622/LKYT53>, IISH Dataverse, V1, and UN Population Division (2019) UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs; <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/> <https://our-worldindata.org/>

children in industrialized countries as well as in the rural ones were expected to work rather than to go to school but, as we have seen in the previous figure, since then education levels have drastically improved.

But the impressive improvements are to be found mainly in Western countries whereas in others these two centuries have hardly changed anything. Today the global average mean years of schooling is at 8.4, Germany has the highest (14.1) whereas Burkina Faso has the lowest (being stuck at a mere 1.5). As far as the expected years of schooling are concerned, the global average reaches 12.7, Australia has the highest record (22.9) whereas South Sudan has the lowest (4.9).¹⁴

Many social inequalities seem to be connected with economic development. Not only because stark social inequalities are the direct result of economic ones but also because the persistence of these inequalities over time seems to be able to keep a country or a region underdeveloped or, at least, below its development capacity.

For example, many researches have documented for years the important role education and training play in labour productivity and economic growth. Data produced by an exercise modelling the impact of attainment in fifty countries between 1960 and 2000 found that an additional year of schooling could increase a person's earnings by 10% and the average annual GDP by 0.37%¹⁵.

Long research has shown that investing in education can have an incredible impact in narrowing the inequality gap, for just one additional year of school can:

- Raise a person's income by up to 10%
- Raise average annual GDP growth by 0.37%
- Reduce the probability of motherhood by 7.3%
- Reduce the likelihood of child marriage by >5 percentage points¹⁶

Education has a strong correlation with individual wealth, which is reflected into national wealth. So, what an investment that is.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ E. Hanushek *et al.* (2008), *Education and economic growth: It's not just going to school, but learning something while there that matters*, Education Next. 8. 62-70.

¹⁶ H. Patrinos, G. Psacharopoulos, *Returns to Education in Developing Countries: A Further Update*, Education Economics, Vol. 12, No. 2, August 2004, Routledge; H. Patrinos, G. Psacharopoulos (2010), *Returns to Education in Developing Countries*. International Encyclopedia of Education. 305-312. 10.1016/B978-0-08-044894-7.01216-1. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/4 indicates that an «increase in the average educational attainment of a country's population by one year increases annual per capita GDP growth from 2% to 2.5%» (UNESCO, 2014, p. 151).

Gender Inequalities

In fact, all these indicators are correlated to one another. Life expectancy, schooling, average income...the first ones correlate to the latter and indicate that the country and its people have access to health care and education. On its turn, education is strongly linked to the condition of women: more education entails lower fertility rates thus, more possibilities for women to gain individual independence as well as to contributing to higher per capita incomes.

If we look at the previous figure n. 3 *Social Inequality*, we have to admit that -although not at the pace nor at the rate we would like it to be- it certifies a remarkable progress of the human condition through the last couple of centuries. At a global level, we live longer, we study more, our children die less. Nonetheless we can't indulge in these results. We must focus on the great inequalities that still lay before us.

For instance, inequalities hit men and women in a different way.

Data tell us that "Inequality is sexist. With less income and fewer assets than men, women make up the greatest proportion of the world's poorest households, and that proportion is growing. They are more likely to be found in poorly paid and precarious employment, supporting the market economy with cheap or free labor. They are also supporting the state through billions of hours of unpaid or underpaid care work, a huge but unrecognized contribution to our societies and economic prosperity."¹⁷

But most importantly, (see figure n. 4 *Gender inequalities*) Women form the majority of those living in poverty.

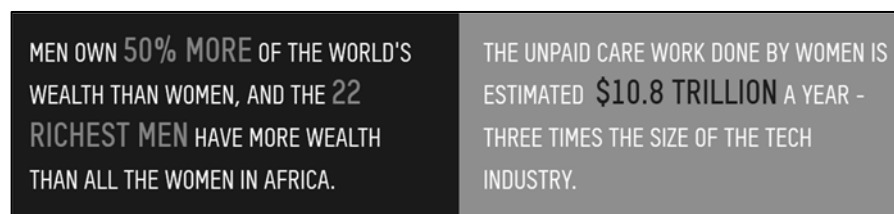


Fig. 4 - *Gender Inequalities*

Source: OXFAM report

Women worldwide, compared to men, suffer from more poverty, less education, less access to health services, lower income, less representation, less influence and less political power. They can experience further inequality because of their class, ethnicity and age, as well as religious and other

¹⁷ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/5-shocking-facts-about-extreme-global-inequality-and-how-even-it>

fundamentalisms. Their rights are often not respected. Institutions, both secular and religious, will take women less seriously than men. Many countries do not recognize them the same rights as men and even when they do, these are not applied in the same way. Women are less granted than men. And it has taken centuries to get to the international acknowledgment that gender violence is a violation of human rights (*Istanbul Convention 2011*¹⁸). As if before women were not clearly to be considered as “humans bearers of rights”. At least not in the same ways that men are. But violence against women still suffers from scarce and unreliable data. Even in Western countries where the law should, at least at a formal level, grant women access to justice.

More generally speaking, gender inequality is made of uneven, ugly, numbers.

Globally, each year 12 million girls below the age of 18 are deprived of their childhood and education just to be married to a man that’s often older than them. It sums up to a sadly impressive 33,000 girls married underage per day, one every two seconds and to a total of 650 million women alive today who were child brides.

The reasons behind it vary between communities, but it’s often because girls are not valued as highly as boys and marrying them off at a young age transfers the ‘economic burden’ to another family.

In Italy, where equal rights should be granted by law, almost one third of women between 14 and 70 years of age refer to have suffered from some sort of violence from men.¹⁹

According to the Oxfam Report, inequalities strike the female population at all levels and at every latitude. From a political perspective, less than 24% of the world’s parliamentarians and a meagre 5% of the mayors are women. From an economic perspective, women are paid 24% less than men for comparable work, across all regions and sectors. Nearly two thirds of the world’s 781 million illiterate adults are women, a proportion that has remained unchanged for two decades. 153 countries have laws which discriminate against women economically, including 18 countries where husbands can legally prevent their wives from working. Worldwide, 1 in 3 women and girls will experience violence or abuse in their lifetime.²⁰

The twenty-two richest men in the world possess, together, more money than *all* of the women in Africa and globally, 42% of women of working age are outside the paid labour force, compared with 6% of men, due to the fact

¹⁸ Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Istanbul 2011, <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>

¹⁹ ISTAT (2014), *La violenza contro le donne dentro e fuori la famiglia*.

²⁰ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/what-we-do/issues/gender-justice-and-womens-rights>

that women bear unpaid care responsibilities whereas men don't or not as much, and of course when girls have to undertake large amounts of unpaid care work also register lower schooling rates²¹. They no longer can afford to spend time at school.

On a whole, it has been calculated that this unpaid care work carried out by girls and women (from 15 years of age onwards) is valued the astonishing amount of 10.8 trillion dollars every year. I.e. three times the size of the flourishing tech industry. All this unpaid work leaves girls and women no time and energy to dedicate to their education and enrollment to the paid workforce²².

Indeed, wealth is a matter of exploitation. Of men by men, as Marx theorized²³ but, most of all, of women by men.

Nonetheless, we cannot forget that inequalities, although still bitter, are slowly being reduced. All in all, the 2020's Global Gender Gap Report has registered a remarkable improvement in the overall capacity of closing the gap worldwide. Some countries have scored particularly well, like the Northern European countries for example: Iceland is the most gender equal country in the world, for the 11th time in a row (it has closed 88% of its gender gap), followed by Norway (84,2%), Finland (83,2%) and Sweden (82.0%) while others have slipped backwards, but generally speaking, 101 out of 149 countries analyzed by the report registered an advancement towards gender parity.²⁴ The Education and the Health and Survival gaps have mostly been reduced (over 90%) while the Economic Participation (57,8%) and the Political Empowerment (24,7%) gaps remain largely behind.

Political Inequalities

At a political level we find progress too although unequal and unsteady. I talk about progress here because if inequality expresses itself also on the basis of recognition of individual freedom and of human rights, we must admit that the growing rate of democratic countries represents an enlargement of the geography of civil, social and political rights too. Figure number 5

²¹ Oxfam, *Time to Care Report*, 2020 <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620928/bp-time-to-care-inequality-200120-en.pdf>

²² *Ibid.*

²³ K. Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844* (1992, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Early Writings. Translated by R. Livingstone; G. Benton, Penguin Classics, London, pp. 279–400.

²⁴ World Economic Forum, *The World Gender Gap Report*, 2020, ISBN-13: 978-2-940631-03-2, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf

shows us the share of the world’s “free” countries between 1973-2017 and as we can see, the trend of free countries has been growing from the 70’s but it has come to a halt in the new Millennium.

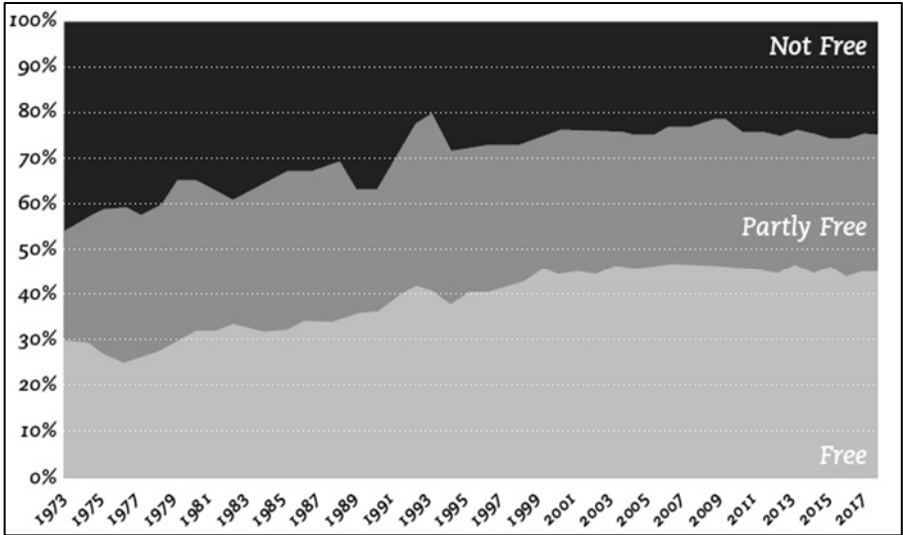


Fig. 5 - “Free” Countries. Source: Freedom House (<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/democracy-crisis>)

In fact, although democracy has been growing worldwide through the decades, the level of freedom has somewhat been shrinking. Even within democratic countries. That means that even if procedural democracies (i.e. where free elections take place) have increased, their democratic fiber seems to lose strength.

More specifically, global freedom has steadily declined for a 12 years period²⁵. So much so that Freedom House entitled its 2018 report *Democracy in Crisis* raising much debate for the report highlighted how the countries that had advanced in democracy scores had been inferior to the ones who registered a democratic decline. So, although the number of “free” countries

²⁵ <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/decline-of-freedom-12-years/> according to *Freedom in the World*, a report published every year since 1973, that attempts to measure civil liberties and political rights around the world. It’s put together by Freedom House, a non-governmental organization based in the United States. February 9, 2018 By Jeff Desjardins, <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/decline-of-freedom-12-years/> see also <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/worrying-decline-of-freedom-world/> and <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/democracy-crisis>.

remains roughly the same (between 40-45%), within those same countries, the democratic fiber seems to be decreasing.

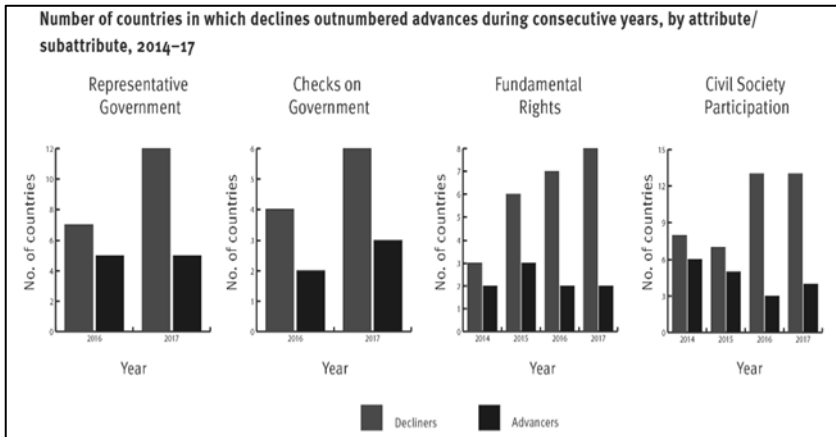


Fig. 6 - Number of countries in which declines outnumbered advances during consecutive years, by attribute/subattribute, 2014-17

Source: IDEA, Global State of Democracy, October 2018

Figure 6 shows the number of countries where four main aspects of democracy, considered by the GSoD (Global State of Democracy): “Representative Government, Checks on Government and Fundamental Rights (which are all attributes of democracy) and Civil Society Participation (which is a sub attribute as there is no aggregate score for participatory engagement)”²⁶, declined for the consecutive years indicated in the figure above.

²⁶ The Report is issued by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. *The Global State of Democracy. Key findings and new data*. N. 2, October 2018.

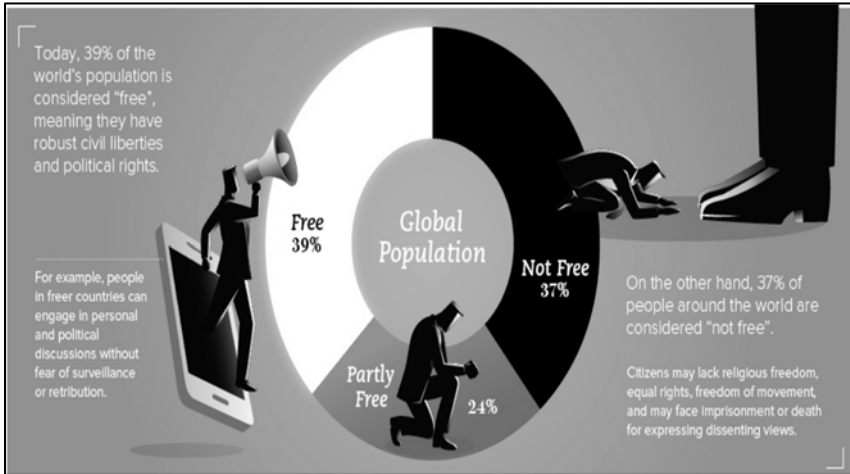


Fig. 7 - Visualizing the decline of freedom over 12 consecutive years
 Source: www.visualcapitalist.com

So not only less than half of the world's population benefits from democratic constitutions that grant them freedom of speech, civil liberties and political rights (see fig. n. 7) but also those living in democratic countries cannot be sure of the "amount" of freedom they, and the generations to come, will be able to enjoy.

In 2017, for example, there were 71 countries that had net declines in score, while only 35 had net increases. This makes for a differential of -36, which is the widest gap during the 12-year downtrend.²⁷

As the *Democracy in Crisis* Report highlighted, the erosion of democratic norms doesn't spare even the so-called *land of the free*, the democratic country *par excellence*: in the U.S. this erosion is actually the extension of a long term trend that has seen president Trump going from attacking the press; to appointing family members in government cabinets and other political/public positions; he has also been accused of attacking women, in particular women journalists with some ethnic origins other than wasp's. In the end he has gone as far as threatening to close down the social media after they fact checked him. In defiance of democratic rules!

Then of course we should take into consideration the expansion of influence from key autocracies, particularly Russia and China which the report has no doubt in describing as such; Turkey's transition from "Partly Free" to "Not Free" as a result of President Erdoğan asserting more control over the

²⁷ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/democracy-crisis>

country. Big drops in the scores of European countries like Poland and Hungary, where populist leaders are consolidating their power.²⁸ And of course, today we would have to add Brazil and Bolsonaro's government

Figure 8 visually summarizes the decline of freedom worldwide.

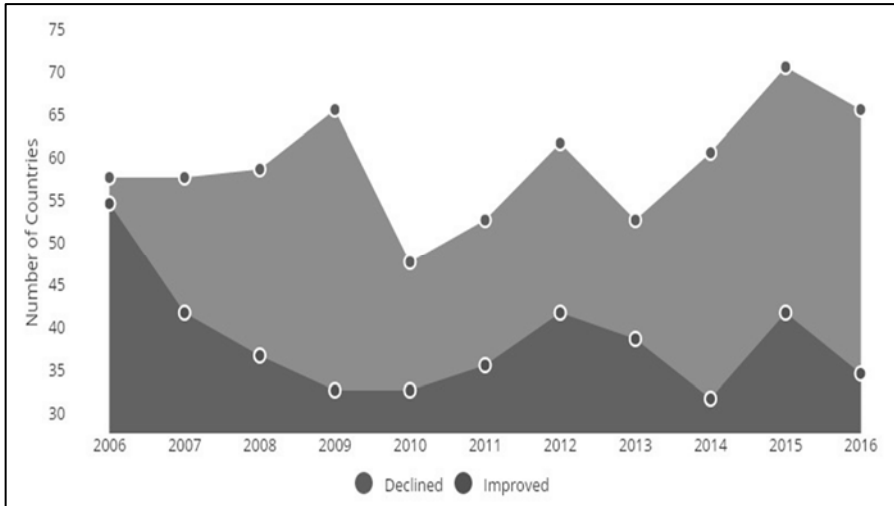


Fig. 8 - *The Decline of Freedom*
Source: Freedomintheworld.org

Those tendencies affect people's trust in authority and institutions in democratic countries too²⁹. Parliament, politicians, economic as well as religious institutions suffer a harsh backlash in trust as you can see in fig. 9. It shows data from the United States, but we've had similar rates in Italy too (although at least in Italy the majority of the population, 52%, refer to trust the Education system)³⁰.

²⁸ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/democracy-crisis>

²⁹ <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/decline-confidence-american-institutions/>

³⁰ Rapporto annuale sugli atteggiamenti degli italiani nei confronti delle istituzioni e della politica, Demos, 2020, <http://www.demos.it/rapporto.php>

Institution	Confidence level	1975	2016	Change
🏦 Banks & Financial Institutions	Hardly any	10.9%	31.2%	+20.3 p.p.
	Great deal	32.3%	14.1%	-18.2 p.p.
🏛️ Congress	Hardly any	26.2%	52.6%	+26.4 p.p.
	Great deal	13.6%	5.9%	-7.7 p.p.
🎓 Education	Hardly any	13.0%	17.5%	+4.5 p.p.
	Great deal	31.5%	25.6%	-5.9 p.p.
🏢 Executive Branch	Hardly any	29.7%	42.4%	+12.7 p.p.
	Great deal	13.4%	12.8%	-0.6 p.p.
🏢 Major Companies	Hardly any	22.9%	17.3%	-5.6 p.p.
	Great deal	20.5%	18.3%	-2.2 p.p.
🏥 Medicine	Hardly any	17.8%	13.4%	-4.4 p.p.
	Great deal	51.8%	50.6%	-1.2 p.p.
🇺🇸 Military	Hardly any	14.8%	7.6%	-7.2 p.p.
	Great deal	36.3%	53.4%	+17.1 p.p.

Institution	Confidence level	1975	2016	Change
👷 Organized Labor	Hardly any	31.5%	22.6%	-8.9 p.p.
	Great deal	10.2%	13.9%	+3.7 p.p.
🕌 Religion	Hardly any	23.0%	26.4%	+3.4 p.p.
	Great deal	25.8%	20.0%	-5.8 p.p.
📰 Press	Hardly any	19.0%	50.0%	+31 p.p.
	Great deal	24.5%	7.6%	-16.9 p.p.
🔬 Scientific Community	Hardly any	7.4%	6.1%	-1.3 p.p.
	Great deal	41.7%	42.1%	+0.4 p.p.
📺 Television	Hardly any	23.4%	43.1%	+19.7 p.p.
	Great deal	18.4%	9.8%	-8.6 p.p.
🏛️ U.S. Supreme Court	Hardly any	19.2%	17.4%	-1.8 p.p.
	Great deal	31.8%	26.3%	-5.5 p.p.

Fig. 9 - Decline in the confidence towards American Institutions

Source: <https://overflow.solutions/special-projects/how-has-confidence-in-americas-institutions-changed-over-the-last-40-years/>

So, we have seen how political inequalities have their ups and downs. Although the world is more democratic, therefore freer than let's say 50 years ago, democracy is not a steadily but surely affair. Countries can turn from free to partially free or not free at all. Even consolidated democracies can worsen their democratic procedures. The press can be a target, women can be a target, LGBT can be a target, parliaments can be a target and scientists and culture can be a target as we have seen in recent months, during the COVID-19 pandemic in the US as well as in Brazil, Hungary and elsewhere. Just a few months ago President Trump threatened to close down social networks after Twitter "fact checked" one of his tweets. Populist leaders in

democratic countries as well as autocrats and dictators are threatening the very pillars of democratic liberties and of political and civil rights exasperating inequalities even in the richest part of the world.

Furthermore political, economic and even communicative trends have brought by a political arena that is more polarized even within the national level. If we look at the US for example, we can see that Democrats and Republicans have widened their gap.³¹

The figure below (n. 10) demonstrates how America’s political divide has grown significantly and consistently over 23 years. By 2017, the divide had significantly shifted towards the two extremes of the consistently liberal/conservative scale.

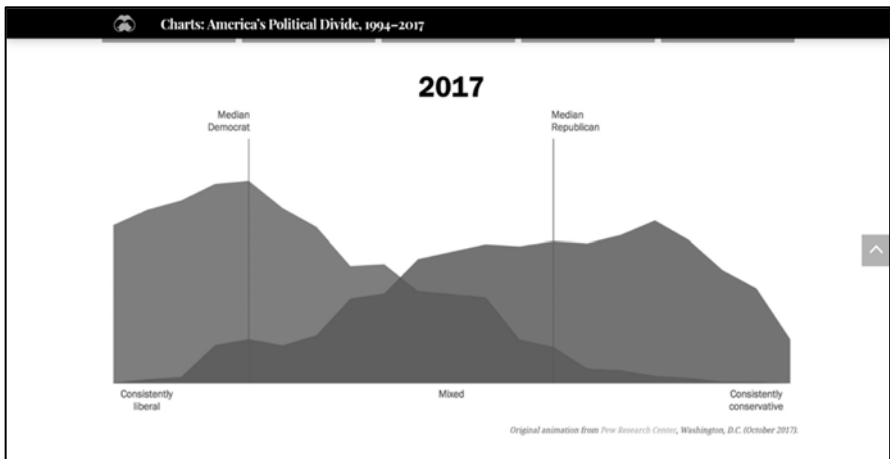


Fig. 10 - America’s Political Divide

Source: <https://www.people-press.org/2017/10/05/the-partisan-divide-on-political-values-grows-even-wider>

Median Democrat and Republican sentiment also moved further apart, especially for politically engaged Americans.

With rising tensions on both sides of the political spectrum, some claim that bipartisanship is dead. The research shows that this may well be true.³² And inequalities are an important part of this polarization for as years go by, they seem more acceptable to one political side than ever before. So, the concern about inequalities has turned to be not a human problem, nor a development and social issue, but a *political theme* for just one side of the

³¹ The data is based on surveys of over 5,000 adults to gauge public sentiment, tracking the dramatic shifts in political polarization in the U.S. from 1994 to 2017. <https://www.people-press.org/2017/10/05/the-partisan-divide-on-political-values-grows-even-wider>

³² <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/charts-americas-political-divide-1994-2017/>

political spectrum. Losing much of its strength and capability of being at least thematized and discussed in the political agenda.

During the years, Americans' feelings across major issues have increasingly diverged. For example, when asked about the fairness of the economic system 50% of Republicans think it is fair to most Americans, but 82% of Democrats think it unfairly favors powerful interests. 73% of Democrats think corporations make 'too much' profit, while only 43% of Republicans think so. Since 1994, Democrats have become more convinced of this point, gaining 10 percentage points, while Republican impressions have fluctuated marginally.³³

4. Concluding Remarks

As we have seen, the world's poverty seems to have been reduced for the lowest income range has been shrinking through the decades. But the rich have become richer, just as Karl Marx had foreseen and although the poorer have not become poorer per se, the gap between the two has widened enormously. In fact, the gap between the average income by country can seem unbridgeable: we have seen the case of Qatar hitting 172 times the average income of the Central African Republic, that is stuck at the average income levels of 200 years ago.

We have also seen that the global wealth is now extremely concentrated: 46% of the wealth is in the hands of 0.7% of the population. It is geographically concentrated in the US, in China, in European Countries and in Japan. But roughly half of the world industries are American. Even more so, looking at the future, 73% of the Info-Tech industry is American.

Inequalities originate from economic disparity but then are reflected in laws that legitimize the status quo, in cultures that reinforce it and in social and political inequalities that can take various forms as we have seen so far.

Most of the world's poor population is female. Women suffer from lesser rights, in many countries they are not granted the same status as men but even where they are formally considered equal, they live in a men's world where men occupy most of the top positions in every position that entails some sort of power. Only less than a quarter of the politicians in the world is a woman.

Democracies worldwide seem to have come to a halt. Their fundamental traits seem endangered even in the oldest and most stable democratic countries. Autocracies seem to regain power.

³³ Pew Research Center, *American Political Polarization over Economy and Inequality*, Washington, D.C. October 2017.

Some economists believe that “The job of finance is to take our savings and funnel it into productive new enterprises, which create jobs and wealth and ultimately, economic growth. Without a healthy capital markets system, capitalism itself stops working properly – and the result is slower growth, and higher inequality, which can culminate in the sort of social unrest that we’ve seen over the last eight years in many parts of the world”.

“Thanks to technology and globalization, which have enriched the markets and made them run ever faster, the spin cycle of wealth moving to the top of society, and away from productive uses on Main Street (i.e. the people), goes faster, and faster. The result is a global economy that gets bigger, but in a virtual way – the capital market system enriches itself far more than anyone or anything else. The financial sector (including everything from banks, to hedge funds to mutual funds to insurance to trading houses) represents 7% of the economy, and creates 4% of all US jobs, but takes 30% of all private sector profits”³⁴.

A trend that is likely to lead to “increasing social instability and market fragility” and both “could well undermine what growth we have”.³⁵

A trend that has been well analyzed by Thomas Piketty in his *Capital in the 21st Century* where he explained how the global economy has recovered from the 2008 financial crisis and is running high in numbers. But this mode of production cannot be equaled or limited by work and meritocracy, the two values upon which modern Anglo-Saxon, liberal democracies are based.

The economy is moving fast towards a sort of “rentier” capitalism, where the creation of products, jobs, wealth and value is no longer the underlying condition for the growth of capitals, economies, countries. No, today, just like in the centuries before the industrial revolution, once the capital is formed it produces passive income, wealth that can and is inherited rather than produced through hard work and innovation. A wealth so big that it can easily buy influence in the political system in order to find protection for their own private interests. If the political system is engaged in the protection of those interests it will be refrained from introducing redistribution policies.³⁶ So, no wonder if, in spite of the fact that economies have recovered from the 2008 crisis, even the middle class in richer countries do not believe they have reason to hope for a better future.³⁷ Globalization has created growth no doubt. But not for everybody at the same rate. Polarization of wealth has translated in polarization of political positions. The idea that

³⁴ R. Foorohar (2016), *Makers and Takers: The Rise of Finance and the Fall of American Business*, Currency, Redferd.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ T. Piketty, *Capital in the XXI Century*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Ma, 2014.

politics must engage a fight against poverty and find the means to provide for the needy has become a minoritarian programme, promoted only by one side of the political spectrum, as we have seen. So, no wonder that social, gender and political inequalities may well grow even within the oldest democracies, along with the stark economic disparities discussed so far.

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2. Self-Defeating Prophecies and Counter-Intuitive Phenomena Concerning Security and Politics at the Time of Pandemic

by *Michele Negri*

The essay attempts to provide some examples of how in research on phenomena concerning social security and deviance, it is possible to encounter, much more often than expected, counter-intuitive contexts, processes or results. Objects of study can escape the laws known and the trends that we expected to detect. This happens first of all because the subjects we study can behave, in line with the theory and typology of Merton¹, not only as ritualists or conformists, but also as innovators, rebels and renouncers. But it also happens because of a reality that often reveals itself to be anything but homeostatic or fully resilient. Individual and social behavior can be inconsistent with each other, can arise from adaptations (authentically such, i.e., accomplished in the name of change and not to restore the past) and cause someone else's. Furthermore, concepts, analyses and scientific theories can highlight some aspects of the phenomena studied, but neglect other however relevant, perhaps contradictory or only apparently such and able, therefore, surprisingly, to confirm or support the held point of view or thesis. Remaining in a very Mertonian theoretical-analytical context, at the center of the essay there will be the concept of self-defeating prophecy (referred, in the example described, to a very current case), but we will try to offer the reader other examples of cases in which researchers should always be ready to face the unexpected. This is the case of the violence of a member of a social minority against one belonging to another or of a populist rhetoric that if on the one hand foments the angry mob against the culprit, on the other it incites her to rebel against the condemnation of certain acts due to or by virtue of the categorical belonging (territorial, ethnic, gender, generational, and so on) of those who carry them out.

¹ R.K. Merton, "The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy", *The Antioch Review*, vol. 8, n. 2, 1948.

1. Unexpected and contradictory effects of prophecy

Our decisions and subsequent actions are often far from being fully or limited rational. Sometimes this happens due to the lack of authentically forward-looking contributions (in a scientific key), so decision-making only remains to rely only on contributions of a prophetic nature. According to Sabetta, “the partial knowledge in the light of which action is commonly carried on permits a varying range of unexpected outcomes of conduct [...] The importance of ignorance as a factor is enhanced by the fact that the exigencies of practical life frequently compel us to act with some confidence even though it is manifest that the information on which we base our action is not complete. We usually act, as Knight has properly observed, not on the basis of scientific knowledge, but opinion and estimate. Thus, situations which demand [...] immediate action of some sort, will usually involve ignorance of certain aspects of the situation and will bring about unexpected results”².

Over eighty years ago, Merton introduced into the sociological debate the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy³, as concrete application of the phenomenon described by the well-known Thomas’ Theorem⁴, according to which situations which are perceived to be real still have real consequences. As stated by Merton: “The first part of the theorem provides an unceasing reminder that men respond not only to the objective features of a situation, but also, and at times primarily, to the meaning this situation has for them. And once they have assigned some meaning to the situation, their consequent behavior and some of the consequences of that behavior are determined by the ascribed meaning”⁵. This happens to individuals, especially in complex societies, where communication plays a crucial and very powerful role in the dissemination and consolidation of opinions, attitudes and actions, following dynamics that the possible falsity of their premises is not at all able to counter. The classification of situations, especially those of individuals of great reputation and influence, is a relevant component of those same situations,

² R.K. Merton. “The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action”, *American Sociological Review*, 1 (VI), 1936, p. 899-900. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2084615. Accessed 30 Dec. 2020.

³ Concept also used in other disciplinary scientific fields in terms of Pigmalione effect or Rosenthal-Jacobson effect (R. Rosenthal, L. Jacobson, “Pygmalion in the Classroom”, *The Urban Review*, 3 (1), 1968, pp. 16-20), especially with regard to the psycho-social context, but with obvious pedagogical implications, or, in medicine, in terms of the placebo effect or its opposite, the nocebo effect, or even self-fulfilling prophecy. In any case, we describe situations in which we confidently listen to some type of oracle.

⁴ W.I. Thomas, D.S. Thomas, *The Child in America. Behavior Problems and Programs*, Alfred Knopf, New York, 1928.

⁵ R.K. Merton, *op. cit.*, 1948, p. 194.

which determines the present connotation and especially the subsequent developments. This awareness should concern anyone, all the more scientists and researchers, who is well aware of the need to interact minimally and possibly in a distant and neutral way, with the subject of their own study, in the case of the human sciences, eliminating or minimizing the effect of the observation variable on the investigated phenomenon, or obliterating the influence of any external factor in the case of a physical, chemical or biological experiment to be carried out in an aseptic context, free of impurities and so on, that is not to question its replicability, that is, its scientific nature itself.

Almost everyone has experienced a typical situation of self-fulfilling prophecy. “So common is the pattern of the self-fulfilling prophecy that each of us has his favored specimen”⁶. It is not necessary for an adverse destiny to be prefigured, because the expectation of success can also contribute positively to its effective achievement. In case of unawareness, we will have either a nocebo effect or a placebo effect. However, as pointed out by Sabetta, “self-fulfilling and self-defeating prophecies both involve actions which have unanticipated consequences. That these consequences may verify or falsify previously held beliefs is really accidental, by which we mean no more than that there may be unanticipated consequences without either a self-fulfilling or self-defeating prophecy being involved”⁷.

2. Self-defeating prophecies at the time of the Sars-Covid-19 pandemic

As observed by Sabetta, inside the framework of thinking about prophecies, predictions and similar concepts and related social phenomena “has been developed the consolidated differentiation between self-fulfillingness and self-defeatingness, between predictions that come true because of their dissemination and others that, for the same dissemination, become false”⁸. According to Merton, “public predictions of future social developments [...] become a new element in the concrete situation”⁹. Thus, on the one hand, a false conception of the situation come true (self-fulfilling prophecy) and, on the other hand, the opposite phenomenon occurs (self-destroying forecast)

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 195.

⁷ B. Grofman, *Rational Choice Models and Self-Fulfilling and Self-Defeating Prophecies*, in W. Leinfellner, E. Köhler (eds.), *Developments in the Methodology of Social Science*, D. Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht, 1974, p. 381.

⁸ L. Sabetta, “Self-Defeating Prophecies: When Sociology Really Matters” in R. Poli, M. Valerio (eds.), *Anticipation, Agency and Complexity*, Springer, Cham, 2019, p. 54.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, 1936, p. 903

(Merton 1948: 195; 1936: 904). In both these scenarios “the mode of prediction’s dissemination is sufficient to change the probability of the predicted event occurring from what it would be if not disseminated”¹⁰.

It seems possible to state that the actual dividing line between self-fulfilling and self-defeating prophecies (i.e., between the self-fulfilling and self-defeating outcome of prophecies) lies in the voluntariness, in the purposiveness with which social actors respond to the prophecy, as well as in the awareness of their reactions. On the one side, in fact, self-fulfillingness always rests on causal unawareness/unintentionality [...] The definition of the situation (the prophecy) is originally inadequate [...] The behavior [...] originates from fear, hope, misconception, and social fatalism and not from an adequate understanding of the situation. In this sense, it is no coincidence that self-fulfilling prophecies always have a common sense [...] On the other side, a self-defeating outcome invariably involves a degree of voluntariness and some aware actions, as the result of a correct understanding, by the actors, of those causal mechanisms that are at work in the production of predicted effects. In fact, the prediction failure is a consequence of the renewed intentions of the subjects, who modify certain aspects of their behavior in response to the new awareness, preventing the predicted future state from happening [...] The self-destroying process, therefore, presupposes that social actors had understood the sociological analysis/prediction correctly, so correctly that they were been able to act in such a way to prevent the predicted event from occurring. In this light, the self-defeating scenario seems to harmonize the validity of sociological analyses with their impact on society, keeping them together”¹¹.

With regard to the Sars-Covid-19 issue, it is clear that there are two sides representing the main players in the public debate. In the attempt, often conscious, to classify one and the other, opposing terms and groupings have been used, such as alarmists and deniers or apocalyptic and fatalistic subjects. A more balanced and respectful distinction, in the context of the ongoing debate in Italy on the pandemic, would seem that between rigorists and reductionists. Both are motivated by urgency, but in relation to distinct but clearly not separate aspects (and areas of public policy): health on the one hand and the economy on the other. Indeed, this dichotomous classification, summarized in a single term for each of the parties, hides much deeper orientations. If you look at the essence of the matter, you find feelings radically opposed to illness and death, to time and space, to today’s life and its prospects. Clearly, once again, the substantive and perceptive aspects are mixed and different value systems, more or less supportive or individualist, also come into play.

If you look at different areas of politics like the world of science, but also

¹⁰ Kopec 2011: 1253 cit. in L. Sabetta, *op. cit.*, 2019, p. 54.

¹¹ L. Sabetta, *op. cit.*, 2019, pp. 55-56.

the communication system, civil society, economic organizations and so on, you can see a counter-intuitive and paradoxical phenomenon a self-defeating prophecy rather than a self-fulfilling one, in the case of a pandemic situation, that is, one that corresponds to the most powerful type of viral diffusion found on our planet, that of a real virus, biologically infectious. “After the Spanish flu, World Wars, Chernobyl and the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers, the Covid-19 represents a further tragic stage in the process of globalization of insecurity, which once again, after a century, becomes a health problem, after being perceived mainly in military, environmental, terrorist key”¹². The will to bear witness as much as possible to their own orientation to affect the sentiment and mood of citizenship can only succeed in the short term, thanks to the confidence that others have in us and the ability to persuade, of small or large signals in support of his thesis (or rather hypothesis), but just in his moment of maximum success he would have made the last decisive effort to succeed gradually ... defeat. If the reductionist party manages to persuade of the correctness of its own point of view new adepts or to strengthen the orientation conforming to its own in those who are already on its side, then it will have reached its intent and behaviors conforming to that way of thinking and feeling will become increasingly reckless and inadequate.

However, because of the latter, which facilitate the spread of risk, we will end up in determining a reality contrary to the imagined one, for the concretization of which has in reality substantially operated, although unconsciously and unintentionally, simply communicating and acting according to one's beliefs. On the Cassandra side, the invitation to adopt extremely far-sighted behavior (which some may describe as pessimistic or even “paranoid”), if accepted, will contribute to the expansive containment or progressive downsizing of the phenomenon. Again, once the prediction is made, declaring it, spreading it and supporting it, trying to orient the behavior of citizens in respect to the imagined scenario, if the statement is judged worthy by many or most, suitable conditions would be determined to defeat the prophecy. Even if we live times of communication often self-referential, self-segregative, experienced in bubbles and echo-chambers, in which the dialogue between different becomes mostly impracticable, benefiting from the irreducible conflict between opposites dichotomous, a proportion of relatively uncertain citizens could likely be discovered and targeted first, to try to hit it later. The Cassandras of the pandemic era, in fact, unlike the Homeric mythological figure, are not ineluctably condemned to the prophetic success and of the concomitant failure of the attempt to avert the catastrophe. The range of modes

¹² M. Negri, R. Monni, *cit.*, 2020.

through which the imagined reality contributes to determining the concretely experienced one, not only includes the self-negating prophecies, but also and above all those that self-realize. One type cannot be considered the exact opposite of the other, but rather different and complementary outcomes of processes that originate and develop in a similar way, also and above all because of the contexts and phenomena to which they refer. The boundary between self-fulfilling prophecies and self-deprecating prophecies is sometimes almost imperceptible, because even small changes can redirect the evolution of phenomena. Nothing is completely irretrievable. The way is never traced once and is forever. One can succeed in blocking the way to a negative or even catastrophic epilogue, which only a moment before was considered inevitable and maybe this happens right on the edge of the gully. According to Merton,

public definitions of a situation (prophecies or predictions) become an integral part of the situation and thus affect subsequent developments. This is peculiar to human affairs. It is not found in the world of nature. Predictions of the return of Halley's comet do not influence its orbit. But the rumored insolvency of Millingville's bank did affect the actual outcome. The prophecy of collapse led to its own fulfillment¹³.

As the self-fulfilling prophecy also the self-denied prophecy is not, in the beginning, necessarily a false definition of the situation. For example, the fear of massive technology failures caused by computers' internal clocks in year 2000 stimulated to implement changes needed to avoid those failure, but without such fear and consequent actions to eliminate the danger, what feared would happen. Moreover, whether or not the prophecy is based on a false definition of the situation, what matters is that the behavior that stimulates those who believe in it, can also generate confirmatory effects in the short term, but above all it can contribute to determine an outcome opposite to what is prophesied and, in fact, denied. Some films offer excellent examples of self-fulfilling prophecies and also of others that have done everything to be fulfilled but have been stopped just in time. Among the latter we can recall the inexorable escalation towards level 1 of operational readiness of the US Armed Forces (Defcon) in the film *Wargames*¹⁴. Another example of prophecies with unpredictable effects interesting to analyze is that of the Prisoner's Dilemma, which exemplifies a typical interactive situation that can be interpreted using Game Theory, that is, the potential emergence of collaborative or non-collaborative behaviors even in tendentially non-

¹³ R.K. Merton, *op. cit.*, 1948, p. 195.

¹⁴ A film by John Badham released in 1983. This is the basic plot: "A young man finds a back door into a military central computer in which reality is confused with game-playing, possibly starting World War III". (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0086567/>).

cooperative or cooperative situations. In short, it is a situation in which two criminals, once captured, are interrogated separately to induce them to provide crucial elements for their conviction, in the absence or lack of material evidence and testimony of others. The most convenient solution for both would be to remain silent and not betray, for it would not result in any information-evidential advantage for the other side and would guarantee the minimum penalty or even freedom for both. The game, however, is based on trust in the other, in his “moral” and even more in his rationality, or in his ability to understand the coincidence of his own with the convenience of others. If one expects the betrayal of the criminal partner and if the interrogator manages to induce the criminal to reason in this way, the result will be overall (as sum of the penalties of both) the worst possible in the case of a mutual betrayal, while if the traitor were only one, the result would end up being the same for him (minimum of punishment or freedom) that he would have obtained thanks to the silence of his own and others, while the other would be sentenced to the maximum of the penalty provided for the crime committed (by both of them). The latter example is useful for shifting the focus to safety as protection of citizens from attacks by other people with specific regard to concern and fear about crime.

3. Citizens and science

When faced with extreme existential insecurity one can try to keep control of the situation to decide with a certain autonomy what to do or may prefer or think that he can only rely on tools, people (evaluators, decision-makers, etc.) and the more protective, resilient and robust contexts available to find solutions (especially science, expert systems, professions) and consistent with the basic sense of a society (made of religious, ethical and political meanings and values). In other words, it seems that a context of “emancipatory catastrophism” emerges. This concept, introduced by Ulrich Beck¹⁵, describes the positive side effect of global risk: having to face the catastrophe, we can change, for the better. The unexpected effect of apocalyptic scenarios can be to motivate to act for their failure. As will be seen below, unexpected adverse effects may also occur. This is the case of scenarios that deny the existence of real problems and that lead to careless behavior, such as to catastrophically fail the prediction and cause significant damage to society. Although this, in some cases you may be inclined to pursue a dream or to fight an enemy “prêt à porter”, whose characteristics have been defined

¹⁵ U. Beck, *La società del rischio. Verso una nuova modernità*, Carocci, Roma, 2000.

emotionally, in a propagandistic way or motivated by an excessive desire for control. This does not mean denying the possibility of thinking more consciously. Fortunately, it is not always enough to find easy scapegoats. This, of course, can happen to an ordinary citizen, but hopefully it won't happen to a scientist. However, it is not appropriate for anyone to develop the certainty that one phenomenon may be the determining and unique cause of another. Efforts must be made to identify all the really relevant factors, even when doing so is far from easy, because it requires developing counter-intuitive reasoning. All this happens perhaps because it was necessary, to identify them, to seek the truth in almost invisible contexts, anything but obvious, considering possible even what would seem unlikely.

Sometimes, however, in emergencies and radically uncertain the basic needs (those of self-production, survival and safety present in the Maslow scale¹⁶) become particularly relevant and it is urgent to regain control or at least the feeling of holding it. the structural part the individual and collective way of life (of a culture and a society) needs an authoritative rationality. It is formally synoptic-mechanical, but in true adaptive and incremental. In such a context it may happen that trust in expert systems, wise people, competent people, specialists, professionals and institutions grows, but it is also possible that feeling may win over reason or otherwise make it hasty, partial, extremist¹⁷, irrational, suitable for the development of scaremongering and paranoid overestimation of problems or, on the contrary, the superficial underestimation of issues that need to be resolved. Were both forms of irrational approach to complexity reduced or silenced in the pandemic era? Have we been able to understand that the emergencies and uncertain times, which require in-depth analysis, evaluations, estimates, scenario studies, prospective analyses, carried out by specialists, also using algorithms and forms of artificial intelligence? If so, it could be said that a surprising “re-legitimization” of science and professionalism in the medical-health field has reappeared in society and in public opinion¹⁸. This is what seemed to happen only a few months ago, in March 2020, at the time of the emerging pandemic emergency¹⁹, when in Italy there was very high public confidence in the applied science in the health system. This trend should not have been considered

¹⁶ A. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, Harper & Brothers, New York 1954.

¹⁷ As often happens to the politics of extraordinary time and also of ordinary time.

¹⁸ It could benefit from a policy which could in turn rise to a complexity profile and a scientific connotation, so that expressions such as complex political or political and political or scientific policy could be used without embarrassment. We will mention this in the following paragraph.

¹⁹ An emergency that is still very far from being overcome nine months after its spread in Italy (in December 2020).

surprising, given the exceptional nature of the context, but what happened was really atypical compared to the many delegitimizing behaviors of the recent past (violence against health workers, DIY medicine, no-vax practices and related disinformation campaigns and so on). Unusual was also the confidence in the government (82% national, 77% regional). Moreover, trusting and relying on expert systems²⁰ did not imply shirking one's responsibilities and relying on oneself (92% confidence)²¹.

Talking about the question of possible changes in the relationship between Italians and science at the time of the pandemic it in those days, Panebianco²² invited his readers to caution. He was relatively skeptical about a hypothetical sudden increase in the level of authority of the scientific world, in essence considering as temporary or not adequately the orientations of opinion emerging from opinion polls on the subject. The same author recalled that "there are prejudices settled, rooted, that very unlikely can disappear, even in the presence of a serious emergency as the current". More importantly, he recalled two recent rather emblematic episodes. The first is a case of looking for a scapegoat even during an earthquake, for the forecasting inability of experts (specifically one of the best Italian seismologists). In this way science is given a patent of omnipotence and infallibility ("the oracle science"²³). Such qualities are considered ordinary, relative to every scientist²⁴. The lack of prediction²⁵ and the consequent lack of security of the population in the city concerned is considered a professional fault. The second case concerns the paradoxical²⁶ debate on vaccines between an authoritative virologist and an expert in pop music (although he was invited as an exponent of the no-vax movement). In vero va detto che di situazioni analoghe ne abbiamo contate molte nel 2020. The author criticizes the flattening and the equalization of «opinions» based on totally different levels of competence (highly professional that of one and amateur that of the other), or their

²⁰ A. Giddens, *Le conseguenze della modernità. Fiducia e rischio, sicurezza e pericolo*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1994.

²¹ Demos & Pi, *86° Atlante politico. Indagine Demos & Pi per La Repubblica*, 19 marzo 2020, http://www.demos.it/2020/pdf/5315ap86_20200319.pdf.

²² A. Panebianco, 2020.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ The inadequacy of such a position is based, as Panebianco himself pointed out, on the ignorance of the extreme variability of the predictive possibilities that characterize the different sciences and the different objects that can be studied within the same scientific discipline. Moreover, "disagreements between scientists do not belong to the pathology of scientific work but to its physiology. Those dissensions feed thought and research, stimulate scientific knowledge".

²⁶ The situation would have been just as paradoxical in the case of a comparison between an expert and an amateur in the field of light music.

evaluation carried out mechanically applying the ideology of «one is worth one». “The first case describes blind and uncritical trust in science and the second, on the contrary, the ideology according to which everything is opinion, for which also science is an opinion like another. “Both episodes represent the inability of many Italians to understand what science really is”²⁷. Some people do not understand that science cannot be practiced sporadically or as amateurs, so that the lack of professional prerequisites or their inadequate respect and implementation should lead to expulsion from professional associations or prohibit the professional practice.

Within a few months the situation has gradually changed. Because of a habit to problems or stress, because of the acquisition of a basic competence wrongly perceived as similar to that of an expert by too many citizens or because of the impatience with which definitive solutions are expected. Apparently disappeared tendencies have been detected in truth as latent. In this regard, Scala and its research team²⁸ have highlighted what is perhaps the main feature of communication in contemporary social media: the presence of similar social behavior within the two main types of public or, better, echo chambers (or “bubbles”), in which it is possible to split the system of construction and dissemination of opinion in social networks²⁹: those who trust in mainstream scientific knowledge, on the one hand, and the conspiracy theorists on the other.

The two groups have opposite orientations, but both are closed, self-referential and substantially unable to dialogue and influence the other, considering it as radically different from itself and supporter of erroneous opinions. This result is very important, precisely because it is counter-intuitive, given the absolutely alternative view of one another. However, we must also consider the cognitive biases: “one does not expect a paranoiac to abandon his hard-won distortions and delusions upon being informed that they are altogether groundless”³⁰. Given that the exact opposite is much more likely, then it is absolutely possible that an individual tries to communicate with those who consider on their side, similar to themselves, an insider, with characteristics opposite to those of others. “At the time of Covid-19, the contrast

²⁷ A. Panebianco, *op. cit.*, 2020.

²⁸ Their observations stem from the results of quantitative studies carried out by the Institute for the Analysis of Complex Systems of the National Research Council (Italy), based on a huge amount of data, concerning 54 million users observed between January 2010 and December 2014.

²⁹ A. Scala, *Le dinamiche della disinformazione sul web: polarizzazione ed echo-chambers, Corso di alta formazione in Disinformazione e sicurezza nazionale. Manipolazione delle percezioni, contromisure e ruolo dell'intelligence*, Istituto Gino Germani di Scienze Sociali e Studi Strategici, Roma, 24-25 novembre/1-2 dicembre, 2017.

³⁰ R.K. Merton, *op. cit.*, 1948, p. 197.

between *conspiracists* and *scientists* has increasingly disruptive implications in daily life as well as on the political scene. The identification of scapegoats and *prêt à porter* enemies develops on the wave of emotion and propaganda or of a sudden desire for control, which is actually its own adversary. This does not mean denying the possibility of a resilient practice. On the contrary, it is necessary debunking conspiracy theories, countering the negative effects of optimistic self-defeating prophecies³¹. In fact, [...] reductionists and deniers, promoting the thesis of pandemic inconsistency and fomenting lightness and reckless behavior, basically act in a very effective way to deny themselves³². When the emergency is over, we will count the successes, the wrong choices and their consequences, the victims and the damages, it will not be easy to recognize the fake news, that is, to put it in terms less current but very effective, “discriminating between rationalization and truth in those cases where apparently unintended consequences are *post facto* declared to have been intended”³³. These issues appear clearly exasperated and very difficult to solve in a situation where scientific knowledge about a new phenomenon is still in progress. In addition, a relevant issue to contemporary political communication should be considered: the hyper-transparency, due to which there is no more background to mediate and find shared solutions. This problem becomes even more pressing and complicated to solve in the pandemic era. Having to face a state of extreme uncertainty, we should feel the need to listen to the experts, the competent, the professionals and not to propaganda and conspiracy theories, which are now finally considered to be misleading. In this context, it would seem particularly appropriate the laudatory orientation on political apathy, proposed by authors such as Almond and Verba³⁴, if inspired by trust in political and, above all, in scientific systems, which makes it “natural” to rely on and fully delegate the political decision-making regarding public health to specialists (politicians) supported by other specialists (scientists).

³¹ Actually, even the apocalyptic, adopting and inducing behaviors hygienic-sanitary prudence, end by reducing the negative impact of the dreaded phenomenon, “risking” in this way to cause the failure of its pessimistic prediction.

³² M. Negri, R. Monni, *Il Covid-19 e il rafforzamento della resilienza e della difesa civile*, in Casd, *Quaderno speciale*, 1, 2020.

³³ R.K. Merton, *op. cit.*, 1936, p. 897.

³⁴ G.A. Almond, S. Verba, *The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1963.

4. The public relationship between science and politics in times of pandemic

The relationship between science and politics is almost as complicated as that between reason and feeling³⁵. It is particularly so in the time of populism. It could be less so in emergencies, even within the epoch of populism itself. Because the times of radical extraordinariness and drama are those in which nothing can be wasted. Above all it is not possible to do it with time and money. On the contrary, to implement a resilient response in full emergency, it is necessary to activate all possible resources (economic, material, intangible, symbolic, communicative), changing their destination or recruiting them in an absolutely extraordinary way. This is the case of volunteers and “reserve” forces, as in the case of old (retired) and new professionals (recently entered the world of work). “The emergency contingencies related to the Covid-19 extreme and speed up the process. The decision-makers, the expert systems (such as the Armed Forces, Science, Medicine) and the specialists and professionals are not reduced. The need for greater commitment affects everyone. The citizen is called to develop self-control, to fulfil the function of social sensor of situations of insecurity, to respect new social rules, pandemically compatible. Expert systems must put all their knowledge and predictive, organizational and operational skills into practice. Opinion leaders and the communication system should make efforts both to inform and to counter disinformation. In short. in an extreme emergency context, a complex system should be set up, with complex men and women, groups and organizations, capable of rapid and effective decision-making and action”³⁶, which can block or even overturn the current negative, dramatic or catastrophic trends. In such a situation, a strong motivation could develop to implement a genuinely scientific political action, conscious of the complexity of the contexts in which it is practised and the consequent need to be characterized more than proportionally, both in time (deciding and acting not only in a contingent and preventive way) and in space (because it looks at the real or potential problems not only in their most immediate and evident dimension, but also with regard to what is around or in contact with it). A political action that is aware of the scope of problems and solutions much wider than the simple here and now.

With regard to systemic-professional relations in times of pandemic emergency, De Bellis, director of the news channel SkyTg24, during a special dedicated to scientific journalism on the prospects of post-pandemic

³⁵ Explicitly present even in the Weberian typology of ideal forms of social action.

³⁶ M. Negri, R. Monni, *op. cit.*, 2020

societies, stated that “politics must take a step back in listening to science [or rather walk side by side with science] and must take a step forward in the speed with which it performs the indications that science provides it [based on observations and forecasts]”³⁷. Clearly, listening to the scientific community is always desirable, cannot mechanically inspire decisions and political action, because of the unequivocal prerogatives of the political community. The desirable situation is one in which the expert knowledge of science does not replace the political one, but supports its decision-making and implementation processes and, in this way, does not take away their power, but contributes to increasing their legitimacy and, as a result, the authority. Moreover, it is necessary to consider, with Prandstraller³⁸, the risk related to a possible excessive functional outsourcing, that of setting in motion a vicious circle concerning the division of labor and the mechanisms of delegation between specialists and non-specialists or between different specialists. In a system of delegation, in fact, you can not only rely on others, but it can also happen that you simply try to download on other risks that you do not want to run³⁹. In the relationship between the political system and the scientific system and between their representatives it is possible that there is a discharge of responsibility from the former to the task forces or to the individual experts to which it addresses and assigns the basis of its choices, which, moreover, in an emergency context, are inevitably imperfect and require the use of a pragmatic rationality, by definition “limited”. Consistent with this situation, the attempt to establish how to relate to the members of another professional category cannot be carried out considering the identity of the members of the scientific system as absolutely compact and invariable⁴⁰.

³⁷ Intervention by the Director of *SkyTG24*, Giovanni De Bellis, in the 13.00 news edition of 22 March 2020.

³⁸ Compare with G. Prandstraller, “Professioni e sussidiarietà: “concordo con Antonini”, La nuvola del lavoro, *Corriere.it*, 2012, <http://nuvola.corriere.it/2012/03/16/l'opinione-di-prandstraller-professioni-e-sussidiarieta-concordo-con-antonini/>.

³⁹ As, for example, in the case of the military professionals of the post-conscription era in the Italian Armed Forces.

⁴⁰ As noted by Fornari, “a science that is generally responsible requires that gnoseology is no longer distinguished from ethics, seeing in the first a figure of the practice also of politics and seeing in the second the endowment of responsible cognitive processes, who care about the overall sense of humanity” (my translation of F. Fornari, “Machiavelli e il problema della libertà. Dal teatro della moltitudine alla crisi della democrazia”, *Sociologia. Rivista Quadrimestrale di Scienze Storiche e Sociali*, 3, 2018, p. 23).

5. Concluding remarks

Scientific research moves between the teleologism of discovery and that of confirmation. The one may appear much more fascinating than the other, but they are the faces of the same coin. Empirical discoveries and verifications follow one another, representing at the same time the premise and the consequence of each other, in the context of a perpetual circular process. Nothing is more gratifying for a scholar or a scientist to see the unexpected, whether it is a new knowledge about a minimal change or a phenomenon that is only partly innovative or a result that calls into question, modifies clearly or revolutionizes the knowledge conforming, what is usual and consolidated. Innovative information and interpretations take on their purest and most precious form, and therefore desired by the researcher, in cases of correlations that appear clear, either in their being direct, or because inverse. Sometimes, however, data and relationships mislead the researcher, revealing themselves in reality, introducing further concepts and indicators in the analysis, such as the result of spurious co-variations. In both cases the counter-intuitive hypotheses and results shall be notified and disseminated, to stimulate reasoning and debates, which may certify or deny it. The study of decision-making and political communication on security in times of populism and pandemic allowed to highlight self-defeating prophecies, unexpected political positions and potential counter-productive outcomes due to the strict application of certain legal and social principles. In a context (sometimes emergent) influenced by complexity, perceptions and social narratives it appears crucial that security policies and scientific research, carried out before, during and after their implementation, are focused on the highlighting of background elements, causal and consequential factors not immediate and any black swans. Otherwise, it is easy to prophesy it, they will end up exposing themselves to the possibility of denial. After all, however, this is what science is.

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3. Technology is Not Neutral. Power Dynamics and Political Communication in the Social Media Era

by *Luca Massidda*

Technology is neither good nor bad; nor is it neutral. By that I mean that technology's interaction with the social ecology is such that technical developments frequently have environmental, social, and human consequences that go far beyond the immediate purposes of the technical devices and practices themselves, and the same technology can have quite different results when introduced into different contexts or under different circumstances¹.

Technology is neither good nor bad; nor is it neutral. This is Kranzberg's First Law. The analysis of the communicative morphology of the 2018 Italian election campaign² – carried out by Tuscia University, coordinated by Prof. Flaminia Saccà, as part of the research project PRIN 2015 «Personalization, institutionalization and deinstitutionalization: the new dynamics of power in the post-democratic society» – brought us back to this classic work in the history of technology. Observing the latest election campaigns that took place in Italy (2018; 2019), their leadership styles and their communication strategies, we cannot avoid asking ourselves if this «non-neutrality» of information and communication technologies does not represent a decisive political problem today. If this interaction between digital media and social ecology is a key factor in understanding the features of our political system and, in particular, of its «populist zeitgeist»³.

Thirty-five years ago Kranzberg wrote that sometimes benign technolo-

¹ M. Kranzberg (1986), *Technology and History: "Kranzberg's Laws"*, "Technology and Culture", Vol. 27, No. 3, 544-546.

² L. Massidda (2019), *Post-politica. Morfologia di una campagna elettorale social*, Franco Angeli, Roma-Milano; F. Saccà (2020), *La politica come professione 2.0: leadership e campagne elettorali all'epoca dei social network*, "Sociologia. Rivista Quadrimestrale di Scienze Storiche e Sociali", 1.2020, 5-17.

³ C. Mudde (2004), *The Populist Zeitgeist*, "Government & Opposition", 39(4), 541-563.

gies employed on a massive scale can generate unforeseen consequences and, when their use becomes widespread, they could become threats:

Many of our technology-related problems arise because of the unforeseen consequences when apparently benign technologies are employed on a massive scale. Hence many technical applications that seemed a boon to mankind when first introduced became threats when their use became widespread. (...). Unforeseen “dis-benefits” can thus arise from presumably beneficent technologies⁴.

Can we consider the main criticalities of our current political season – the crisis of liberal democracy and its traditional structures of representation⁵, the rootedness in civil society of a widespread feeling of distrust in the political system and its institutions and the rise of anti-politics forces – as an unforeseen consequence of digital technologies employed, with social media diffusion, on a massive scale? Is populism an unforeseen dis-benefit of ICTs and, specifically, of social media? Has networked communication become a political threat?

I think that my first law – Technology is neither good nor bad; nor is it neutral – should constantly remind us that it is the historian’s duty to compare short-term versus long-term results, the utopian hopes versus the spotted actuality, the what-might-have-been against what actually happened, and the trade-offs among various “goods” and possible “bads”. All of this can be done only by seeing how technology interacts in different ways with different values and institutions, indeed, with the entire sociocultural milieu⁶.

If we take a look, from a socio-political point of view, to the long-term results of informational revolution, to its «spotted actuality», to its «trade-offs among various goods and possible bads», we have to answer one key question: how ICTs interact with the political milieu? An answer to this question can be found focusing on three interrelated topics: 1. The relationship between our hybrid-media system⁷ and the process of politics mediatization⁸;

⁴ Kranzberg, *op. cit.*, 1986, p. 546.

⁵ F. Saccà, (2013), *La crisi dei partiti e le trasformazioni della politica*, “Sociologia. Rivista Quadrimestrale di Scienze Storiche e Sociali”, 2.2013, 31-41

⁶ Kranzberg, *op. cit.*, 1986, p. 548.

⁷ A. Chadwick (2017), *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

⁸ G. Mazzoleni (2017), *Changes in contemporary communication ecosystems ask for a “new look” at the concept of mediatization*, *Javnost-The Public*, 24(2), 136-145; W. Schulz (2014), *Mediatization and New Media*, “Mediatization of Politics: Understanding the Transformation of Western Democracies”, edited by F. Esser and J. Strömbäck, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 57-73.

2. The relation of affinity⁹ or complicity¹⁰ between social media and populism; 3. The relationship between the extraordinary expansion of our digital public sphere and the crisis of our democracies, between «post-democracy»¹¹ and «post-public sphere»¹².

1. Selfie-politics is not a self-sufficient politics

Let's start from the relationship between contemporary media system and the process of politics mediatization. According to Mazzoleni and Schutz, «mediatized politics is a politics that has lost its autonomy, has become dependent in its central functions on mass media, and it is continuously shaped by interactions with mass media»¹³. In 1999, when the two authors wrote their fundamental essay, mediatized politics was a politics in the television era, «in an historical phase where mass communication was the dominant environment of contemporary society»¹⁴. Berlusconi is perhaps the political leader, not only at national level, who has absolutely best embodied this phase of the relationship between politics and media marked by television's hegemony¹⁵. But what happens when digital revolution calls into question this cultural dominance? When a new fully networked media logic is established¹⁶?

One of the main characteristics of the «new information environment»¹⁷ is certainly attributable to the process of *disintermediation*. In a communicative context where traditional media gatekeepers are “fired” by informational revolution, we could expect that media system is losing some of its shaping

⁹ P. Gerbaudo (2018), *Social Media and Populism: An Elective Affinity?*, "Media, Culture & Society", 40(5), 745-753.

¹⁰ G. Mazzoleni (2008), *Populism and the media*, in D. Albertazzi & D. McDonnell (Eds.), *Twentyfirst century populism: The spectre of Western European democracy*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 49-64.

¹¹ C. Crouch (2004), *Post-democracy*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

¹² P. Schlesinger (2020), *After the post-public sphere*, "Media, Culture & Society", 42(7-8), 1545-1563.

¹³ G. Mazzoleni, W. Schulz (1999), *Mediatization of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy?*, "Political Communication", 16(3), 247-261, p. 250.

¹⁴ Mazzoleni, *op. cit.*, 2017, p. 138.

¹⁵ D. Campus (2010), *Mediatization and personalization of politics in Italy and France: The cases of Berlusconi and Sarkozy*, "The International Journal of Press/Politics", 15(2), 219-235.

¹⁶ U. Klinger, & J. Svensson (2015), *The emergence of network media logic in political communication: A theoretical approach*, "New Media & Society", 17(8), 1241-1257.

¹⁷ B. A. Williams & M. X. D. Carpini, (2011), *After broadcast news: Media regimes, democracy, and the new information environment*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

power on the forms and logics of political action. This is questionable. Only a superficial reading can consider the breaking of television domination and the resulting affirmation of a networked paradigm, with its disintermediated logics, as a change that frees political actors from the pressures of media system. What is disintermediation and why its logic does not, in any way, ease the pressure exerted by media system on political actors, on their agency and their voice? Disintermediation produces an original communication environment that Manuel Castells describes in terms of *mass self-communication*, a new form of socialized communication which is «self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception by many that communicate with many»¹⁸. Since disintermediation changes the rules of access to the info-sphere, it is certainly true that digital contents flow «outside the institutional gatekeeping of the traditional mass media»¹⁹, but this evolution didn't reduce media logic power to shape and format political action. Game's rules change, but this "inclusive" dynamic does not in any way diminish the shaping power of the media on political agency. Digital revolution has not minimally reduced the power of the media to condition politics, rather the opposite. For two main reasons. First one: we have to take in consideration the complex nature of our contemporary media system. Chadwick describes it as a *hybrid media system*, characterized not by simply substitution but by complex stratification between mass media and network media logic. This hybrid media system, built upon interactions among older and newer media logics, opens to a time of fundamental change in the nature of political life²⁰. A time signed by the *disruptive influence of digital communication* in the political field:

The rapid diffusion of new communication technologies creates a pressing need to rethink the complex and multifaceted forces that are reshaping the political communication environments of the western democracies. At stake is whether we are living through a time of fundamental change in the nature of political life as a result of the disruptive influence of digital communication²¹.

A destructive influence that feeds the process of politics mediatization by mixing persistent features of the television era (personalization; spectacularization; crisis of intermediary bodies; decline of ideologies; vote instability; increase of populist rhetoric) with new digital natives trends (audience

¹⁸ M. Castells (2009), *Communication power*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 70.

¹⁹ D. Chandler & R. Munday (2016), *A dictionary of social media.*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

²⁰ Chadwick, *op. cit.*, 2017, p. 207.

²¹ *Ivi*, pp. 3-4.

fragmentation and targetization; digitalization/virtualization of political engagement and activism; media gatekeepers disempowerment; peer to peer interaction between politicians and citizens).

The second reason that helps us understand the strength of the process of politics mediatization in the new communicative system is linked to the issue of *information overload*²². By giving access to media system, the disintermediation and the rise of mass self-communication generate an information overload that radically changes logics and functioning of the public sphere²³. Because it requires a new restructuring of our social geography. If electronic media, as Joshua Meyrowitz brilliantly described in his *No sense of place* (1984)²⁴, have stolen, from hierarchical roles, control over the self-image shown to their audience, compromising in exchange for access to privileged spaces of visibility the traditional authority figures' power to block their own backstage space from the public gaze, digital media determine a new revolution in the social geography on which political actors move. The problem is no longer accessing mass-media stages, overcoming the strict controls of traditional gatekeepers, but breaking the wall of indifference – and therefore of irrelevance – in which the large majority of digital content daily precipitates²⁵. Understanding how the relationship between message and audience is organized in this overcrowded context is a crucial political problem. If the presence is nothing, and visibility is everything, political leaders are forced to compete for the increasingly “distracted” attention of their audience. And they have to compete not only with other leaders and with traditional information sources, but also with a daily tsunami of entertainment content and their viral distraction potential. In their attempt to capture the attention of a distracted and hyper-connected audience, politicians have two options: they can buy privileged spaces of visibility or they have to tailor their communications as much as possible to the logic and wishes of the media system. Let us focus on this second aspect (even if the distortion that the first dynamic can impose on the process of construction of the public sphere is potentially enormous). In an attempt to increase their communicative effectiveness, politicians are forced to shape the style of their leadership to get as much as

²² D. Bawden, & L. Robinson, (2020), *Information overload: an introduction*, in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

²³ E. Hargittai, W. R. Neuman & O. Curry (2012), *Taming the information tide: Perceptions of information overload in the American home*, “The Information Society”, 28(3), 161-173.

²⁴ J. Meyrowitz (1984), *No sense of place: The impact of electronic media on social behavior*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

²⁵ A. Miconi (2011), *Reti. Origini e struttura della network society*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, p. 97.

possible in tune with the logic of the new media environment²⁶. Firstly, it imposes on political leaders timing and formats of their exposure. Fear of being cut off from trendy conversations in the social media infosphere forces politicians into a frenzied pursuit of immediate exposure. But the fear of arriving out of time, increasingly forces them to be out of place. This enunciativa frenzy increases exponentially the risk for political actors of committing a gaffe, contradicting themselves, being inappropriate. Their status, already compromised by television overexposure²⁷, undergoes a further process of degradation. In this hyper-media context, «habituation to detachment»²⁸ – a quality that Max Weber considered distinctive for the politician – is further compromised, while «vanity» – which Weber still described over a century ago as «the need personally to stand in the foreground as clearly as possible»²⁹ – is increasingly widespread.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, for leaders who participate in this compulsive game of representation and self-representation, to escape this process of delegitimizing authority. And this not only applies to politicians, but to all hierarchical roles. Today the clearest example is perhaps represented by the progressive loss of authority that scientific knowledge has experienced in few pandemic months. «In the emotionally charged atmosphere of 24/7 virally distributed social media stories and news about COVID-19»³⁰, the public image of science experts has rapidly declined. Once assumed a leading role on the scene of the new communicative environment, scientists – to paraphrase Meyrowitz – have progressively lost the possibility to behave like, and therefore be perceived as, authority figures and authoritative sources of information. Science-driven narrative have been rapidly corrupted by the logic of the media system, by its timing and framing³¹. Experts, transformed into hybrid characters halfway between talk show pundits and social influencers, became media celebrities, but they have paid this increase in fame with the coin of their authority. The problem is not only the spread of

²⁶ J. Blumler (2016), *The fourth age of political communication*, “Politiques de communication”, (1), 19-30, p. 24.

²⁷ Meyrowitz, *op. cit.*, 1984.

²⁸ M. Weber (1919), *Politics as Vocation*, in *From Max Weber: essays in sociology*, Routledge, London (2009), p. 116.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ L. Garrett (2020), *COVID-19: the medium is the message*”, *The Lancet*, 395(10228), 942-943.

³¹ S. Cristante (2020), *Il virologo della porta accanto: la mediatizzazione della scienza durante la pandemia*, “Liber-O. Collana Didattica Open Access dell’Università del Salento”, 2020(1), 125-132.

misinformation and the containment of the “infodemic”³², but also how to preserve sources of trusted information in a context of digital media overexposure.

2. The affinity between social media and populism

This overloaded info-sphere, where politicians – afraid to go out of frame – are forced to jockey for position, is also critical to the success of social media. Social networks logic makes the overcrowded complexity of the network immediately habitable. It domesticates the confusion caused by the unlimited multiplication of contents and sources. Algorithm’s intelligence that rules social networks selectively exposes us to contents that are close and familiar, thus transforming the potential chaos of the web into a reassuring community of like-minded individuals. Online our bubble protects us from the cognitive stress generated by this information overload. With the paradox that the widest availability of information sources in the history of humanity translates into restored patterns of selective exposure³³ and it favors the systemic diffusion of confirmation bias³⁴. But this simplified communitarianism of like-minded individuals is also the homeland of populism³⁵. So, we have to ask ourselves how the characteristics of this renewed networked media logic – which found in the social network sites its privileged spaces – contributes to the spread of a «populist zeitgeist»³⁶ on contemporary political scene. What is the relationship between social networks and populism, between the media logic of the former and the political logic of the latter, between the diffusion of the one and the rise of the other?

Already in the age of mass communications an obvious affordance characterized the relationship between media and populism. A relationship supported by a mutual interest, since populist leaders cannot efficaciously launch and spread their appeal to the people without a media stage, while, on the other hand, media system cannot remain indifferent to a political proposal

³² M. Cinelli *et al.* (2020), *The covid-19 social media infodemic*, “arXiv preprint”, arXiv:2003.05004; E. K. Vraga, M. Tully & L. Bode (2020), *Empowering users to respond to misinformation about Covid-19*, “Media and communication (Lisboa)”, 8(2), 475-479.

³³ Blumler, *op. cit.*, 2016, p. 28.

³⁴ F. Zollo & W. Quattrociocchi (2018), *Misinformation spreading on Facebook*, “Complex Spreading Phenomena in Social Systems”, Springer, Cham, 177-196.

³⁵ Gerbaudo, *op. cit.*, 2018.

³⁶ Mudde, *op. cit.*, 2004.

characterized, basically, by a strongly charismatic leadership³⁷, an aggressive, conflictual and strongly polarized representation of the political field³⁸, a rhetoric that systematically seeks effects of dramatization and strong emotional reactions³⁹. Three features that perfectly intercept mass media needs of spectacularization. Thus was born what Benjamin Krämer defines as «populist media»⁴⁰, media already characterized, in their logic and routines, by a populist sensibility. These media show stylistic and ideological elements perfectly aligned with the logic of populism: the construction and favouritism of in-groups; hostility toward elites and institutions of representative democracy; reliance on charisma and (group-related) common-sense; appeal to moral sentiments⁴¹. According to Mazzoleni, a relationship of «complicity» can be established between media and populism⁴². This complicity is the result of a functional supply and demand relationship:

In many instances, the European media appear to have contributed to a legitimization of the issues, key-words and communication styles typical of populist leaders. “Underdog” leaders who strive to gain public attention have regularly proved able to exploit the media’s proclivity towards anything that “breaks the routine” in political arenas, by resorting to communication strategies that ensure media coverage. The result of this “supply and demand” relationship is an increased visibility and significant reverberation of the populist message among a wide audience. In other words, the media, intentionally or not, may serve as powerful mobilization tools for populist causes⁴³.

In this way, media worked as powerful mobilization tools for populist causes. In recent times, the “coincidence” between massive diffusion of social media and the multiplication of political proposals related to populism has prompted several scholars to reflect on the existence of a relationship of particular *affinity*⁴⁴ between the new communication environment and the

³⁷ L. Massidda (2020), *La politica come rappresentazione. Il carattere della leadership populista nell'epoca dei social media*, “Sociologia. Rivista Quadrimestrale di Scienze Storiche e Sociali”, 1.2020, 18-30.

³⁸ M. Hameleers & R. Vliegthart (2020), *The rise of a populist zeitgeist? A content analysis of populist media coverage in newspapers published between 1990 and 2017*, “Journalism Studies”, 21(1), 19-36, p. 20.

³⁹ R. Wodak (2015), *The Politics of Fear. What Right-Wing Populist Discourse Mean*, Sage, London.

⁴⁰ B. Krämer (2014), *Media Populism: A Conceptual Clarification and Some Theses on Its Effects*, “Communication Theory”, 24(1), 42–60.

⁴¹ *Ivi*, p. 48.

⁴² Mazzoleni, *op. cit.*, 2008.

⁴³ *Ivi*, p. 50

⁴⁴ Gerbaudo, *op. cit.*, 2018.

new political trend. Paolo Gerbaudo described this relationship between populism and social media in terms of «elective affinity»:

Social media savviness has been a characteristic of many (...) populist movements and dark horse candidates (...). What we are witnessing across these diverse phenomena is what could be tentatively described as an “elective affinity” between social media and populism: social media has favoured populist against establishment movements by providing the former a suitable channel to invoke the support of ordinary people against the latter. *What makes social media such a propitious space for the rise of populist movements?*⁴⁵.

According to Gerbaudo two factors, in particular, can help us to understand this unique harmony that seems to link populist actors and social media environment:

First, we will look at the way social media has come to be perceived as the voice for the underdog and the unrepresented in opposition to mainstream news media and how this narrative has served populist movements. Second, we will look at how social media provides means of “crowd-building” rallying politically disaffected individuals around evocative symbols and leaders and against common “enemies of the people”⁴⁶.

The first element of affinity consists in the common anti-elitist and popular DNA that characterizes both social media and populism. Narrative of the Net (and the social media) as the voice for the underdog and the unrepresented in opposition to mainstream news media has proved to be extremely operational for populist movements⁴⁷. Social media became the ideal platform for the voice of the people in opposition to legacy media, accused of being in cahoots with the financial and political establishment⁴⁸: «Attacks against MSM are a common feature of many online conversations connected with populist movements»⁴⁹. Although this tendency to stand up against the institutional media establishment is a common characteristic of different populist leaders, the clearest example is probably Donald Trump. The «fearlessness and ferocity with which Trump routinely lambasted the mainstream media»⁵⁰, in both his electoral campaigns but also in his four-year govern-

⁴⁵ Gerbaudo 2018, *op. cit.*, p. 746.

⁴⁶ *Ivi*, p. 748.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ivi*, p. 749.

⁵⁰ R. Stone (2017), *The Making of the President 2016: How Donald Trump Orchestrated a Revolution*, Simon and Schuster, New York.

ment in the White House⁵¹, fits perfectly within a narrative strategy that requires populist leaders to continually prove their popular and anti-elitist vocation⁵².

The second element of affinity between social media and populism identified by Gerbaudo concerns the functioning of the social media apparatus, the logic that presides over its communication infrastructure. Aggregating otherwise dispersed individualities, the algorithmic intelligence that builds social media architecture gives to populist communication its ideal audience, «an online crowd of partisan supporters»:

Social media has favored the rise of populist movements also because of the aggregation logic embedded in its algorithms and the way it can focus the attention of an otherwise dispersed people. Social media discussions have provided gathering spaces where the “lonely crowds” produced by the hyper-individualism of neoliberal society could coalesce, where the atoms of the dispersed social networks could be re-forged into a new political community, into an “online crowd” of partisan supporters (...). This filter-by-interest dynamic and the “economy of attention” associated with it can favour a polarisation of public opinion because of the way it restricts users’ attention on content that conforms to their existing ideological standpoints while insulating them from alternative views. The systemic political implications of this filter bubble trend are worrying because they can exacerbate social divisions. However, from the standpoint of populist movements, filter bubbles can have a mobilising effect, favouring the formation of online crowds of like-minded individuals who, while sharing no prior associational link, hold similar opinions⁵³.

This “community-building” power of social networks is crucial for the success of populist political narrative, not only because it makes available – just in time – sensitive audiences to its message, but also because it offers to these new communities the access to a space of self-representation and legitimacy that was historically denied – or in any case strongly limited – by mainstream media and traditional public arenas. For populist messages, social networks’ tendency to homophily does not represent a *vulnus*, but a fundamental prerequisite for building an otherwise invisible political community. In this way populists can exploit a political identity elsewhere, at least in its lower moods, not representable.

⁵¹ A conflict that perhaps experienced its climax during the votes counting for the 2020 presidential elections, with the controversy over the “calls” – or “missed calls” – of the mainstream media and with the historic decision, of several US networks, to interrupt, on the night of 6th of November, the speech in which the president in office denounced alleged, in no way proven, electoral fraud.

⁵² S. Turner (2011), *Classic Sociology: Weber as an Analyst of Charisma*, in M. Harvey & R. E. Reggio (Eds), *Leadership Studies: The Dialogue of Disciplines*, 82-88.

⁵³ Gerbaudo, *op. cit.* 2018, p. 746.

This ability to promote the formation of like-minded communities is one of the four main indicators that push Mazzoleni and Bracciale to identify the current one as a new phase in the process of politics mediatization. They describe it as a process of «hyper-mediatization of populist communication»:

In sum, (1) the individualised form of populist communication via social media, (2) its popularity-gearred inclination, (3) its disintermediated nature, (4) its fostering like-minded communities, are to be taken as strong indicators of a distinctive process of mediatization of political communication. What we see in the specific context of populist leaders' communication, in their followers' usage of social media, in the media coverage of populist events, in the ensuing public debate in the digital public sphere and in off-line environs, is a high-intensity sort of mediatization, i.e., a 'hyper-mediatization' of populist communication⁵⁴.

Sven Engesser, Nayla Fawzi and Anders Olof Larsson conducted a systematic theoretical analysis of the relationships that link populist communication logic to the opportunity structures that characterize online communication⁵⁵. Their goal was to prove that «populist communication logic and online opportunity structures go hand in hand in various regards»⁵⁶. Analysis started from the three main theoretical categories used by scientific literature to define populism⁵⁷: populism as ideology⁵⁸; populism as style⁵⁹; populism as strategy⁶⁰. To these ones Engesser, Fawzi and Larsson add the actor variable. Let's start from ideology. The ideological system of populism is based on four structural dimensions: popular sovereignty, people-centrism, anti-elitism and exclusion of the others. All these ideological assumptions find a catalyst in the structural characteristics of network communication. As for style, Engesser, Fawzi and Larsson reduce to three the salient features of populist rhetoric: «simplification, emotionalization and negativity»⁶¹. These three features perfectly work in a situation of information overload and

⁵⁴ G. Mazzoleni & R. Bracciale (2018), *Socially mediated populism: the communicative strategies of political leaders on Facebook*, "Palgrave Communications", 4(1), 50.

⁵⁵ S. Engesser, N. Fawzi & A. O. Larsson (2017), *Populist online communication: introduction to the special issue*, "Information, Communication & Society", 20(9), 1279-1292.

⁵⁶ Engesser, Fawzi & Larsson, *op. cit.* 2017, p. 1286.

⁵⁷ N. Gidron, N. & Bonikowski, B. (2013), *Varieties of Populism: Literature Review and Research Agenda*, in "Working Paper Series", Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, No. 13-0004, 1-38; M. Anselmi (2017), *Populismo. Teorie e problemi*, Mondadori Università, Milano.

⁵⁸ Mudde, *op. cit.*, 2004.

⁵⁹ E. Laclau (2008), *La ragione populista*, Laterza, Roma-Bari.

⁶⁰ Weyland, K. (2001), *Clarifying a contested concept: Populism in the study of Latin American politics*, "Comparative Politics", 34(1), 1-22.

⁶¹ Engesser, Fawzi & Larsson, *op. cit.* 2017, p. 1286.

attention economy. Inside populist rhetoric negative emotional reactions (resentment, indignation and anger) are in particular activated by resorting to two narrative constructions: the decline of society (e.g. *Make America Great Again*) and relative deprivation (e.g. *America first*)⁶². In this way, populist style, which simplifies complex realities and provokes an easy emotional reaction in people, is perfectly functional to the logic and interests of a media ecosystem overloaded with information and always looking for easy “attentional Trojans”. Declined as a strategy, populism functions as a means to achieve a goal. Three objectives in particular seem to interest populist actors: conquest of power; legitimization of their roles and status; mobilization of the masses⁶³. All these three aim at finding a necessary resource in the opportunity that the Internet, and social media in particular, offer populist leaders to meet and engage «non-institutionalized masses»⁶⁴. Finally, the Internet and social media offer political actors the ideal pulpit to stage their «charismatic performances»⁶⁵, providing «populist leaders with personalized communication channels that allow them to exert their charisma and suggestive power»⁶⁶.

3. The relation between digital public sphere and democracy

In this short investigation on the interaction between digital technologies and political milieu the last issue calls into question the relation between the extraordinary expansion of our digital public sphere and the crisis of our democracies. Here the key question is: why the huge extension of the public sphere – guaranteed by digital technology and social media – seems to go hand-in-hand with the deterioration of civic cultures and the crisis of liberal democracy? Technology’s non-neutrality principle can help us find an answer. Following Kranzberg’s suggestion from which we started, let’s try to compare the trade-offs among various “goods” and possible “bads” related to the affirmation of a huge digital public sphere. We can identify six decisive political turning points linked to the affirmation of the digital public sphere. The first “switch” concerns political participation. Here the alternative opens up between the extraordinary opportunities for empowerment that ideally network technologies offer to citizens and the risk that internet user practices and online social behaviors rather feed a tendency to depoliticization,

⁶² Engesser, Fawzi & Larsson, *op. cit.* 2017, p. 1285.

⁶³ *Ivi*, p. 1286.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ P. Joosse (2017), *Max Weber’s Disciples: Theorizing the Charismatic Aristocracy*, “Sociological Theory”, Vol. 35(4) 334-358, p. 336.

⁶⁶ Engesser, Fawzi and Larsson, *op. cit.*, 2017, p. 1286.

where entertainment and distraction translate into disinterest and political apathy. Second crossroads regards the functioning of democratic systems. Here the two opposite polarities concern, on one side, the possibility of renewing, thanks to digital technologies and their logic, the myth of direct democracy (implementing innovative forms of e-democracy⁶⁷) or, on the other side, the threat of aggravating and making irreversible the long-term crisis of intermediate bodies (political parties in the first place). Tangible risk of an incomplete democracy is therefore contrasted with the ideal prospect of a hyper-enhanced democracy. On both sides of the third scale, the opportunity to identify and guarantee the existence of new digital commons is counterbalanced by the danger connected to the ongoing process of online public spaces' privatization. The fourth edge problematizes the logic of public debate in a hybrid media system, where net's promise of inclusiveness is systematically challenged by increasingly polarized discursive and relational practices⁶⁸. The fifth trade-off concerns the question of power distribution and its "spatial" logic. Here the utopia of a perfectly horizontal and balanced "power market" is compared with the possible dystopia of an unprecedented concentration of resources, capital and capabilities. The impact that network society could (should?) have on government forms defines the "stake" in the sixth ideal out-out. Here the hope of authoritarian regimes' democratization is counterposed to the threat represented by a systemic crisis of liberal democracies. Let's focus our analysis on this latest trade-off. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring there was a heated debate on the role played by social media in favoring new forms of insurgent politics in that authoritarian states⁶⁹. Clay Shirky was among those convinced that social media possessed a "democratic bias" destined in the medium to long term period to hinder authoritarian regimes, redefining the balance of power between state and civil society:

The more promising way to think about social media is as long term tools that can strengthen civil society and the public sphere. In contrast to the instrumental view of Internet freedom, this can be called the "environmental" view. According to this conception, positive changes in the life of a country, including pro-democratic regime change, follow, rather than precede, the development of a strong public sphere (...) A slowly developing public sphere, where public opinion relies on both media and conversation, is the core of the environmental view of Internet freedom⁷⁰.

⁶⁷ E. De Blasio (2019), *E-Democracy. Teorie e problemi*, Mondadori Università, Milano.

⁶⁸ C. R. Sunstein (2018), *#Republic: Divided democracy in the age of social media*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

⁶⁹ M. Castells (2015), *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age*, John Wiley & Sons, Ney York.

⁷⁰ C. Shirky (2011), *The political power of social media: Technology, the public sphere, and political change*, "Foreign affairs", 28-41.

According to Shirky, access to conversation, and not access to information, becomes crucial to understanding the political meaning of social media, because it is the first to guarantee, albeit with slower times, the triggering of an irreversible process of extension of the public sphere. An extension that in the medium-long term period can only result in the imposition of a different, more democratic, equilibrium in the distribution of power between state and civil society.

Paradoxically, the political trend of recent years seems to invite us to adopt the “environmental” point of view proposed – in a cyber-optimistic key – by Shirky to support a critical reading of the current relationship between social media and power. The indiscriminate extension of the public sphere and the redistribution of power between civil society and the state seem to have undermined the foundations of liberal democracies more than those of authoritarian regimes. How was this possible? Because the barycenter of the digital public sphere trade-offs in last ten years has slowly moved towards the «possible bads», and almost all these «possible bads» are the ideal homeland for populism. Let’s consider the one related to the crisis of the intermediate bodies. This not only represents one of the key factors to understand the rise of populism but, according to Mauro Calise, it also constitutes the main variable to understand the reasons for the breakdown of the modern correlation between the expansion of the public sphere and the legitimization of liberal democracies:

Thanks to party system, the state building can withstand the impact of the democratic incorporation of the masses, in a virtuous dialectic between legitimation and expansion of the public sphere. This framework has been dominant during the last century, the short century of parties. Today it is disintegrating⁷¹.

Some years ago, in 2014, Jürgen Habermas was interviewed by Markus Schwering on the relationship between Internet and public sphere⁷². Schwering asked Habermas if is internet beneficial or unbeneficial for democracy. In his answer we can find a possible reason to understand why into the web the growing number of people enabled to access an ever growing mass of information does not automatically result in an improvement of the public sphere:

⁷¹ M. Calise (2016), *La democrazia del leader*, Laterza, Roma-Bari (Digital edition), *our translation*.

⁷² M. Schwering (2014), *Internet and public sphere. What the web can't do. Jürgen Habermas interviewed by Markus Schwering*, <https://www.resetdoc.org/story/internet-and-public-sphere-what-the-web-cant-do/>, 24 July 2014.

It is neither one nor the other. After the inventions of writing and printing, digital communication represents the third great innovation on the media plane. With their introduction, these three media forms have enabled an ever growing number of people to access an ever growing mass of information. (...). With the last step represented by Internet we are confronted with a sort of “activation” in which readers themselves become authors. Yet, this in itself does not automatically result in progress on the level of the public sphere. Throughout the nineteenth-century – with the aid of books and mass newspapers – we witnessed the birth of national public spheres where the attention of an undefined number of people could simultaneously apply itself to the same identical problems. This however, did not depend on the technical level with which facts were multiplied, accelerated, rendered lasting. At heart, these are the same centrifugal movements that still occur today in the web. Rather, the classical public sphere stemmed from the fact that the attention of an anonymous public was “concentrated” on a few politically important questions that had to be regulated. This is what the web does not know how to produce. On the contrary, the web actually distracts and dispels. (...). In the mare magnum of digital noises these communicative communities are like dispersed archipelagos⁷³.

According to Habermas, what lacks to the Internet, with its communicative spaces closed in themselves, «is an inclusive bind, the inclusive force of a public sphere highlighting what things are actually important»⁷⁴. This lack of inclusiveness does not only concern “things”, but also “ways”. The problem is not only the lack of political content shared among the dispersed communication communities that inhabit the web. If it is true that the interests of the various social “islands” of the archipelago are normally fragmented and self-referential, there are still events – and among these the electoral campaigns yet resist – which have the power to focus the attention of these dispersed online crowds on few politically important questions. Even the web has its «media events»⁷⁵ capable of penetrating its multiple “bubbles”, of overcoming its filters⁷⁶, of focusing usually dispersed interests on the same trend topic. But even when the myriad islands of digital archipelago talk about the same topics, the public sphere is not reconstituted. The problem, as Marshall McLuhan taught us more than fifty years ago, are not the messages⁷⁷, but is the medium. Its logic and its bias.

In other words, the problem is not the *agenda* (with its contents), but the *arena* (with its social practices). Observing the themes that marked the last

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ D. Dayan & E. Katz (1994), *Media Events*, Harvard University Press, Harvard.

⁷⁶ E. Pariser (2011), *The filter bubble: What the Internet is hiding from you*, Penguin UK, London.

⁷⁷ M. H. McLuhan (1964), *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*, McGraw-Hill, New York.

Italian electoral campaigns, we immediately notice how the complicity between social media and populism has generated an enormous agenda power⁷⁸, ensuring that the attention of an anonymous, distract and dispersed public was “concentrated” on few shared issues (*in primis* immigration). But the rational argument was unable to impose its authority on the emotional narrative. Sources authority was not acknowledged as an element of distinction. No right of citizenship is recognized for a different opinion. In this environment the public sphere perhaps is not “absent”, but it is certainly perverted. And in this process, we think, *technology is not neutral*.

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⁷⁸ Saccà, *op. cit.*, 2020.

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4. *Leaders and Emotions in Post-Representative Democracies*

by *Donatella Selva*

1. The emotional turn

At the beginning of the last century, emotions in politics were identified as precursors of unexpected, unpredictable and perilous collective behaviours, and the study of emotions was synthetised as an attempt to formalise a psychology of the crowds. The rise of nazi-fascism and the holocaust have contributed to the success of this negative evaluation towards emotions¹. Later, the affirmation of a rational-deliberative ideal of the public sphere has constituted a normative benchmark that has excluded emotions from politics².

Increasingly in recent years, social analyses point at the role of emotions in shaping personal lives, political processes, and social wellbeing. The beginning of the XXI century has seen a revival of the interest in studying emotions as a key feature of social change. In particular, this interest has come with ambivalent judgements about the positive or negative charge of a so-called emotionalization of the public sphere. From the one side, the increasing use of emotions in politics has been interpreted as a substitute for the loss of ideological roots, as a way to win power within dissolving political parties, and a general downgrading of the possibility of a rational deliberation in the public sphere. From the other side, emotions have maintained a positive allure because they are conceived to be in contrast with technocratic élites and with any sort of artificial intelligence that surround contemporary lives. The “right” or “efficient” use of emotions is still seen as a quality of a political leader’s ability to build a relationship with her/his supporters.

¹ Slaby, J. & von Scheve, C. (2019), *Affective societies: key concepts*, Routledge, New York.

² De Blasio, E. & Selva, D. (2019), *Emotions in the Public Sphere: Networked Solidarity, Technology and Social Ties*, in Fox, B. (ed.) *Emotions and Loneliness in the Networked Society*, Springer, Cham, 13-44.

The emotional turn describes such a vibrant debate in social sciences. Jan Slaby and colleagues, for instance, have talked about an “emotional reflexivity” to describe the tendency to study the social world through the lenses of emotions and affects³. Marx, Weber and Durkheim have also considered the role of emotions, passions and beliefs in social processes, but the consolidation of emotions as an object of study is much more recent. The emotional turn is both a point of arrival for previous reflections on subjectivity, biopolitics and recognition, and a point of departure for new lines of inquiry⁴. A contribution to this comes from a paradigm shift in neuroscience and psychology, that have demolished the dichotomy between rationality and emotions: both elements are involved in processes of cognition, communication, and decision-making⁵. The concept of “emotional intelligence” that synthesises this new paradigm has become popular also outside scientific circles⁶. Those advancements in neuroscience have constituted the basis for the development of behavioural economics and political psychology approaches to electoral studies.

Sociologists have taken a quite different perspective on emotions, more rooted in social constructivism and psychoanalysis (particularly Lacanian works)⁷. In such a view, emotions are defined as elements that reveal power structures of modern times, as they are embodied in people’s behaviours⁸. The most important consequence of this approach is that, while emotions might be universal, the ways to identify, describe and enact them are mediated by specific social and cultural contexts. “Structures of feeling” have a historicity and emerge as a result of historical processes of domination and struggles for emancipation⁹: they identify the meanings, practices, relation-

³ Slaby, J. & von Scheve, C., *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁴ Clough, P. T. & Halley, J. O. (2007) (eds), *The affective turn: theorizing the social*, Duke University Press, Durham.

⁵ Damasio, A. R. (1994), *Descartes’ error: emotion, reason, and the human brain*, Putnam, New York.

⁶ Goleman, D. (1995), *Emotional intelligence*, Bantam Books, New York.

⁷ The sociology of emotions has built different taxonomies of emotions (e.g. distinguishing between positive and negative, moral and individual, primary and secondary) and provided definitions of all related concepts such as sentiments, feelings, moods, and most of all, affects. For a comprehensive overview on those concepts see: TenHouten, W. D. (2008), *A general theory of emotions and social life*, Routledge, New York; and Slaby & von Scheve, *op. cit.*, 2019. This chapter follows a phenomenological and cultural approach to the emotional component of social and political life, meaning that “rather than asking ‘what are emotions?’, I will ask ‘what emotions do?’” (Ahmed, S., 2014, *The cultural politics of emotion*, 2nd edn, Routledge, New York, p. 4).

⁸ Clarke, S. (2003), *Psychoanalytic Sociology and the Interpretation of Emotion*, “Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour”, 33(2), 145–163. doi: 10.1111/1468-5914.00211.

⁹ Ahmed, S., *op. cit.*, 2014.

ships and discourses that ground human behaviours according to specific settings. Linking emotions to history means acknowledging that they also have a normative side, which is condensed in the words to describe emotions, the possibility to recognise certain emotions and suppress others, the ways to express emotions in the private and public life¹⁰. It also means that emotional regimes vary through the centuries¹¹ and that emotions accumulate over the lifetime contributing to build political subjectivities¹².

This last point is relevant when approaching the study of leadership through the lens of emotions. In effects, emotions seem to fill the empty space left by the corrosion of traditional ideologies and to provide a source of alignment that transcend socio-economic structures¹³, thus favouring the emergence of new political (collective) subjects (e.g. Indignados, Occupy, MeToo, Black Lives Matter, and so on). New social movements, for instance, are building their collective identities based on processes of discursive contention and consensus about values, culture, and affective stances¹⁴. Personal experiences of discrimination, isolation, and suffering, in particular, are the emotional drivers for many forms of identity politics¹⁵. As new political subjects emerge from society, political parties and leaders are also riding the emotional hegemony with alternate results: some leaders appear to be more effective in exploiting (or exhibiting) a sentimental connection with the people¹⁶, some others show specific emotional repertoires that tend to be highly polarizing and divisive (for instance, Donald Trump¹⁷). The next section will focus on specific concepts that pinpoint the main reflections about the relationship between emotions and leadership in the political realm.

¹⁰ Hochschild, A. R. (2013), *Lavoro emozionale e struttura sociale*, Armando, Roma; Illouz, E. (2007), *Intimità fredde: le emozioni nella società dei consumi*, Feltrinelli, Milano; Cabanas, E. & Illouz, E. (2019), *Happycracy: come la scienza della felicità controlla le nostre vite*, Codice, Torino.

¹¹ Reddy, W. M. (2001), *The navigation of feeling: a framework for the history of emotions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511512001> (Accessed: 26 April 2020); Martín-Moruno, D. & Pichel, B. (eds., 2019), *Emotional bodies: the historical performativity of emotions*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, IL.

¹² Ahmed, S., *op. cit.*, 2014.

¹³ Saccà, F. (2020), *La politica come professione 2.0: leadership e campagne elettorali all'epoca dei social network*, "Sociologia", 1(2020), 5–17.

¹⁴ Tilly, C. (2009), *Identities, boundaries, and social ties*, Paradigm, Boulder.

¹⁵ Dean, J. (2006), *Solidarity of strangers: feminism after identity politics*, University of California Press, Berkeley; Ahmed, S., *op. cit.*, 2014.

¹⁶ Sorice, M. (2014), *I media e la democrazia*, Carocci, Roma; Sorice, M. (2019), *Partecipazione democratica: teorie e problemi*, Mondadori Università, Milano.

¹⁷ Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2019), *Emotions, media and politics*. Polity Press, Cambridge.

2. Leadership and emotions: between qualities and performance

For analytical reasons, it could be useful to separate two strands of research that are often intertwined: the first considers the role of emotions as personality traits of the leaders (emotions as character), while the second one focus on emotionalization as a communication strategy, a matter of performance rather than ontology (emotions as performance).

Looking at emotions as leaders' character means to describe the personality traits that make a person more suitable to become a leader than others that do not share the same traits. As predictable, the analysis of leaders' personality traits has gained resonance in the social sciences and cognitive psychology¹⁸. In this respect, Max Weber's concept of leadership provides the theoretical foundation for any subsequent study. Among the three ideal-types, the charismatic leader emerges as an alternative to the "electoral machine": its definitory qualities are "absolutely personal" (i.e. individual)¹⁹ and include a vocational approach to politics (as opposed to the disenchantment of modernity and bureaucracy); the ability to inspire trust; ambition rather than competence (as in the rational-legal authority ideal-type); and the capacity to stand out of "an abstract platform of a party composed of mediocrities"²⁰. Weber acknowledges that a certain degree of charisma is essential for any form of leadership; in effects, the personality of the leader plays a pivotal role because it can have a "demagogic efficacy" in the electoral race. The centrality of personality in Weberian accounts paves the way to the study of emotions in politics: in Weber's view, as representative democracies are shifting to "leadership democracies", emotions become "natural" characters of politics²¹. This point has attracted many criticisms, in particular by those

¹⁸ Gates, G. (1995), *A Review of Literature on Leadership and Emotion: Exposing Theory, Posing Questions, and Forwarding an Agenda*, "Journal of Leadership Studies", 2(4), 98–110. doi: 10.1177/107179199500200408; Connelly, S. & Gooty, J. (2015), *Leading with emotion: An overview of the special issue on leadership and emotions*, "The Leadership Quarterly", 26(4), 485–488. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.07.002.

¹⁹ Weber, M. (2020), *Charisma and disenchantment: the vocation lectures*, New York Review Books, New York, p. 58.

²⁰ Ivi, p. 79. In other works, Weber specified that charismatic leadership resides in the ability "to attract devotion and inspire trust" in its followers. It is important here to highlight that it is disputed if the qualities of such a leadership are identifiable as "innate" personality traits (in a psychological vein) or as attributes, i.e. features of the leader that the followers attribute to it as a result of the relationship with it. For the current debate on this issue, see Joosse, P. (2014), *Becoming a God: Max Weber and the social construction of charisma*, "Journal of Classical Sociology", 14(3), 266–283. doi: 10.1177/1468795X14536652.

²¹ Weber, M. (2019), *Economy and society: a new translation*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MS.

who see charisma as a source of legitimacy for populists²². On the contrary, both charismatic leaders and populist leaders “create an emotional linkage substantiating a particular recognition of the leader, but the recognition of the charismatic leader happens because of its ‘alterity’ and not ‘similarity’ between leader and people”²³. Hence the quality and valence of emotions deployed in the relationship with the public can be detrimental to distinguish between charismatic leadership and populist leadership.

This difference resonates most in the second strand of literature about leadership and emotions, a line of inquiry that points at emotions as part of a performance. The theoretical grounds of this conception are in the dramaturgical model sketched by Erving Goffman²⁴: power, as much as any other social relationship, is exercised through screenplays that are adapted to the settings of interaction. In this model, a certain degree of publicness is always present in every “stage” in which the agent/actor intervenes, as the boundaries of the stages are defined by the situations of social interaction. Following this perspective, emotions are the basis to distinguish between the categories of transformational leaders and transactional leaders²⁵. While the latter adopt a social exchange model of interaction (i.e. based on rational calculus between costs and benefits, a disposition to privilege self-interest and the attainment of short-term achievements), the quality of the transformational leader is the ability to influence others’ behaviours through inspiring a moral commitment towards each other in the group, rather than through coercion. The concept of transformational leadership lies at the heart of studies that have investigated the role of media and communication in the construction of political leadership²⁶. It can be observed that the Covid-19 crisis, in this respect, urged government leaders to be transformational: interpreting the social change and defining the route to follow, while at the same time involving citizens in a collective mission, to be performed cognitively and behaviourally²⁷.

According to the studies on the charismatic performance, for instance, a leader’s career should be assessed through the analysis of its appearances in

²² Pappas, T. S. (2016), *Are Populist Leaders “Charismatic”? The Evidence from Europe*, “Constellations”, 23(3), 378–390. doi: 10.1111/1467-8675.12233.

²³ Viviani, L. (2020), *Il carisma nella sociologia weberiana della leadership*, “Società Mutamento Politica”, 10, 39–55. doi: 10.13128/SMP-11045, p. 52.

²⁴ Goffman, E. (1969), *La vita quotidiana come rappresentazione*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

²⁵ Burns, J. (1978), *Leadership*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York.

²⁶ De Blasio, E. et al. (2012), *La leadership politica: media e costruzione del consenso*, Carocci, Roma; Sorice, M., *op. cit.*, 2014, 2019.

²⁷ De Blasio, E. & Selva, D. (2020), *Affective Governance During the COVID-19 Crisis: Building Leadership, Trust, and Good Citizens*, “Trípodos”, 1(47), 67–86.

the “dramas” it has contributed to write and play²⁸. Such studies have stressed the ephemerality of political leaders that perform a pseudo-charisma based on popularity and visibility in the media²⁹. As leadership is performed through actions and communicative actions in particular, emotions are part of the screenplay. In this perspective, the distinction between charisma and pseudo-charisma is problematic: for instance, while recognizing that far-right leaders such as Hitler and Mussolini were not adherent to the Weberian concept of charisma, Eatwell³⁰ warns that the social consequences of such a “manufactured charismatic bond” were equivalent. It is a way to normalize manipulation in communicative processes, acknowledging that any public performance or any social interaction rely on a certain degree of fictionality or artificiality³¹. Other far-right leaders, for instance, (as Jean-Marie Le Pen and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, but also more recently Matteo Salvini and Donald Trump) sustained the emotional bond and the personification typical of the charismatic/plebiscitarian leadership ideal-type³². And we could also add that the bond between the leader (whether charismatic or pseudo-charismatic) and the people rests on a certain quota of emotions *mise-en-scene*, but it would be almost impossible to determine empirically if such emotions are truly *felt* by the leader or just pretended.

This argument leads us to conceive emotions as assets for pursuing leaders’ goals. In a first point of view, emotions are deployed by leaders for the maintenance of social order and power structures³³. The concept of affective governance describes “the way in which intimate emotional relationships between citizens are endorsed and recognized by governments in personal life”, and “how citizens are encouraged to feel about others and themselves in broader, more public domains”³⁴. The concept thus addresses the normative construction of the good citizen through social discourses, and relies on a

²⁸ Joosse, P. (2017), *Max Weber’s Disciples: Theorizing the Charismatic Aristocracy*, “Sociological Theory”, 35(4), 334–358. doi: 10.1177/0735275117740402.

²⁹ Massidda, L. (2020), *La politica come rappresentazione. Il carattere della leadership populista nell’epoca dei social media*, “Sociologia”, LIX(1), 18–30; Viviani, L., *op. cit.*, 2020.

³⁰ Eatwell, R. (2006), *The Concept and Theory of Charismatic Leadership*, “Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions”, 7(2), 141–156. doi: 10.1080/14690760600642156.

³¹ Sorice, M. (2020), *Sociologia dei media: un’introduzione critica*, Carocci, Roma.

³² Eatwell, R. (2018), *Charisma and the radical right*, in Rydgren, J. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

³³ Fortier, A.-M. (2010), *Proximity by design? Affective citizenship and the management of unease*, “Citizenship Studies”, 14(1), 17–30. doi: 10.1080/13621020903466258.

³⁴ Johnson, C. (2010), *The politics of affective citizenship: from Blair to Obama*, “Citizenship Studies”, 14(5), 495–509. doi: 10.1080/13621025.2010.506702; Jupp, E., Pykett, J. & Smith, F. (2017) (eds), *Emotional states: sites and spaces of affective governance*, Routledge, New York.

foucaultian ground³⁵. In such a vein, emotions are used to state normative constructs in an enduring timeframe.

In a second point of view, emotions are employed in a tactical dimension by leaders in their communication, as tools to consolidate a relation with the public. This is widely covered by literature on political communication and populism³⁶: if we assume a wide definition of populism as ideology, strategy to gain power and political style³⁷, emotionalization is a key feature of populist performances and communication. At the same time, there is no reason supporting the claim that only populist leaders use emotionalization as a communication strategy nor that only populist leaders are able to express empathy. This point will be further discussed in the next section.

3. Hyper-leaders, populism and social media emotionality

The trend towards the emotionalization of politics is commonly explained by the importance of media in the public sphere: the basic thesis is that the media stage has created the perfect conditions for the superimposition of performance over qualities, and simulacra over reality. Relying on his Frankfurterian background, Habermas could not be optimistic when asserting the role of mass media in the development of the public sphere in the second half of the XX century³⁸.

It is not by chance that the interest in the way emotions relate to democracy renews at every crisis of democracy. In Western countries, in particular, the consensus for xenophobic movements and parties has been interpreted as a symptom of a “cultural backlash” that undermines the social basis of democracy, the strength of democratic values and the trust towards political representatives³⁹. While formal institutions of democracy are still functioning (i.e. the parliament, the separation of powers, the rule of law), the “sentimental connection” (a concept originally coined by Antonio Gramsci) between the demos

³⁵ Isin, E. F. (2004), *The neurotic citizen*, “Citizenship Studies”, 8(3), 217–235. doi: 10.1080/1362102042000256970; Di Gregorio, M. & Merolli, J. L. (2016), *Introduction: affective citizenship and the politics of identity, control, resistance*, “Citizenship Studies”, 20(8), 933–942. doi: 10.1080/13621025.2016.1229193.

³⁶ De Blasio *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 2012; De Blasio, E. & Sorice, M. (2018), *Populism between direct democracy and the technological myth*, “Palgrave Communications”, 4(1), 1–11. doi: 10.1057/s41599-018-0067-y.

³⁷ Moffitt, B. (2020), *Populism*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

³⁸ Habermas, J. (2005), *Storia e critica dell'opinione pubblica*, Laterza, Roma.

³⁹ Saccà, F. (2015), *Culture politiche e mutamento nelle società complesse*, FrancoAngeli, Milano; Norris, P. & Inglehart, R. (2019), *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MS.

and the practices and actors traditionally mediating with democratic institutions (i.e. political parties) has eroded⁴⁰. The aftermath of the WWII was marked by a “democratic momentum”, with citizens showing strong support towards democratic institutions and values. Since the 1980s, this support has started declining and the symbolic distance between governors and governed has widened⁴¹. The attempts to cure this “democratic malaise” have been proliferating, such as democratic innovations, deliberative processes and participatory budgeting⁴²; direct social action and social movements⁴³; active and monitorial citizenship⁴⁴; the rise of new movement parties and platform parties⁴⁵. Hence the presence and success of populist and xenophobic movements (often overlapping to one another) can be read as a consequence of the crisis of representative democracies; in facts, compared to non-populist forces, they benefit the most from such a crisis⁴⁶. At the same time, populists have a reciprocal relationship with crises: it is true that historically they have emerged and gained consensus in critical junctures, but it is also true that they contribute to perform and create a social perception of crisis, first of all through a strategy of dramatization and hence emotionalization of public affairs⁴⁷.

As crisis has become a structural element of politics, we are currently witnessing a fourth phase of political communication, marked by the acceleration of news production and distribution, the increased perception of urgency, and the parallel development of a two-level communicative ecology separating institutions and the grassroots⁴⁸. In such a context, the thesis of media decadence has acquired a growing consensus:

⁴⁰ Sorice, M., *op. cit.*, 2014.

⁴¹ Rosanvallon, P. (2006), *La contre-démocratie: la politique à l'âge de la défiance*, Seuil, Paris; Norris, P. & Inglehart, R., *op. cit.*, 2019; Crouch, C. (2020), *Combattere la postdemocrazia*, Laterza, Roma.

⁴² Elstub, S. & Escobar, O. (2019) (eds), *Handbook of democratic innovation and governance*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.

⁴³ della Porta, D. (2020), *How social movements can save democracy: democratic innovations from below*, Polity, Cambridge.

⁴⁴ Keane, J. (2013), *Democracy and Media Decadence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

⁴⁵ De Blasio, E. & Viviani, L. (2020), *Platform Party between Digital Activism and Hyper-Leadership: The Reshaping of the Public Sphere*, «Media and Communication», 8(4); Deseriis, M. (2020), *Two Variants of the Digital Party: The Platform Party and the Networked Party*, “Partecipazione e Conflitto”. doi: 10.1285/I20356609V13I1P896.

⁴⁶ Crouch, C., *op. cit.*, 2020; Urbinati, N. (2020), *Io, il popolo: come il populismo trasforma la democrazia*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

⁴⁷ Moffitt, B. (2015), *How to Perform Crisis: A Model for Understanding the Key Role of Crisis in Contemporary Populism*, “Government and Opposition”, 50(2), 189–217. doi: 10.1017/gov.2014.13.

⁴⁸ Blumler, J. G. (2016), *The Fourth Age of Political Communication*, “Politiques de communication”, 6(1), 19. doi: 10.3917/pdc.006.0019; Davis, A. (2019), *Political communication: a new introduction for crisis times*, Polity, Cambridge.

It refers to the wide gaps that are opening up between the rosy ideals of free and fair public contestation and chastening of power, the unforced plurality of opinions and public commitment of representatives to the inclusion and treatment of all citizens as equals, even in cross-border settings—loosely speaking, the ideals of monitory democracy – and a rougher, wrinkled reality in which communication media are deeply implicated in the dirty business of promoting intolerance of opinions, stifling the public scrutiny of power and fostering the blind acceptance of the way things are heading⁴⁹.

The emergence of a digital post-public sphere has posited new challenges for its constantly changing nature, showing some elements of discontinuity from the previous, pre-digital media landscape, but not yet deploying its full potential: this “transitional” media ecology is featured by post-factuality, incivility, a hegemonic populist-lite style of political communication, and a “wild west” of fragmented and polarized micro-spherettes (aka echo chambers⁵⁰). Even more, some are now observing that forms of hyper-leadership are emerging, together with a mythology of direct democracy that surrounds the mushrooming of digital and platform parties⁵¹. Scholars generally agree that the rise of hyper-leaders is caused by the crisis of representative democracy and the shift towards a post-representative democracy⁵² or a post-democracy tout court⁵³; as for any concept, the prefix post- reveals the uncertainties and the lack of structuration of the contemporary landscape. In this unclear framework, the common elements are the crisis of political parties (the kind that involves ideologies, organizations, membership, voice, i.e. both communication and capacity to influence policy-making)⁵⁴, and the pervasive importance of media as *the* political arena in lieu of Parliaments⁵⁵. In Nadia Urbinati’s phrasing:

Plebiscitarian democracy in the audience style [...] is a postrepresentative democracy in all respects because it wants to unmark the vanity of the myth of participation (i.e., citizenship as autonomy) and to exalt the role of mass media as an extraconstitutional factor of surveillance (in fact, even more relevant than constitutional checks). It declares the end of the idea that politics is a mix of decision and

⁴⁹ Keane, J., *op. cit.*, 2013, p. 159.

⁵⁰ Schlesinger, P. (2020), *After the post-public sphere*, “Media, Culture & Society”, 42(7–8), 1545–1563. doi: 10.1177/0163443720948003; Sorice, M., *op. cit.*, 2020.

⁵¹ Gerbaudo, P. (2019), *The digital party: political organisation and online democracy*, Pluto Press, London; De Blasio, E. & Viviani, L., *op. cit.*, 2020; Deseriis, M., *op. cit.*, 2020.

⁵² Alonso, S. *et al.* (eds., 2011), *The Future of Representative Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

⁵³ Crouch, C. (2010), *Post-democracy*, Polity Press, Cambridge; Fawcett, P. *et al.* (2017) (eds), *Anti-politics, depoliticization, and governance*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

⁵⁴ Saccà, F., *op. cit.*, 2015.

⁵⁵ Keane, J., *op. cit.*, 2013; Sorice, M., *op. cit.*, 2014.

judgment and makes politics a work of visual attendance by an audience in relation to which the basic question is about the quality of communication between the government and the citizens or what people know of the lives of their rulers⁵⁶.

Against this backdrop, hyper-leaders emerge as the ultimate form of leadership, a move that requires a theoretical update. Hyper-leaders share the same roots of plebiscitarianism: they aimed first of all to reform mass parties' organization but soon extended to democratic institutions themselves (which is evident from the attempts to reform Constitutions, diminishing the number of parliamentary seats or disempowering legislative and judiciary)⁵⁷. The call for direct democracy groups together plebiscitarianism and populism; however, populism emerges as a form of "politicization of the collective resentment" against political representatives that constitutes the core (if not the only one) issue to address⁵⁸.

A step forward in this theorisation of hyper-leaders concerns the role of digital media, and particularly of the cultural logic of disintermediation that surrounds digital technologies. Hyper-leaders are the typical form of leadership in digital or platforms parties, new political formations that cultivate the refusal of traditional mass parties and representation through "direct" e-voting by the super-base⁵⁹; in some relevant examples, digital networked parties also allow for more decentralised⁶⁰ and discursive forms of decision-making, e.g. deliberative processes and consultations⁶¹. Most substantially, hyper-leaders designate a shift towards hyper-representation also beyond digital-native parties, favoured by media and social media in particular, in substitution for the allegedly "broken" traditional representation; intuitively, hyper-representation is not equivalent to direct democracy nor to participatory democracy, but instead tends to exploit an empowering rhetoric to superimpose a delegative system⁶².

As a matter of facts, the literature on the relationship between leadership and emotions suffers from this frame of crisis of democratic institutions and decadence of the media ecology. Accordingly, the rise of emotional publics has been interpreted as a sign of the times. The concept has born as a critical

⁵⁶ Urbinati, N. (2014), *Democracy Disfigured*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 172.

⁵⁷ *Ivi*.

⁵⁸ Viviani, L. (2017), *A Political Sociology of Populism and Leadership*, "Società Mutamento Politica", 8, 279-304. doi: 10.13128/SMP-20860.

⁵⁹ Gerbaudo, P., *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁶⁰ Deseriis, M., *op. cit.*, 2020.

⁶¹ De Blasio, E. & Viviani, L., *op. cit.*, 2020.

⁶² De Blasio, E. & Sorice, M. (2020), *Spaces of Struggle: Socialism and Neoliberalism with a Human Face Among Digital Parties and Online Movements in Europe*, "tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique", 18(1), 84-100.

investigation of political talk shows and stresses the ambivalence that results from the interplay between popular culture and politics⁶³. Emotional publics are passionate and motivated to engage in public discussions, as much as they are superficial and exposed to populist appeals⁶⁴. Emotional publics are “mobilised” through emotional governance strategies, like the war on terror and the politics of fear, that are often deployed by populist leaders⁶⁵. On the contrary, affective publics can drive forms of collective actions, most of all through social media, that involve processes of identification and grassroots mobilisation⁶⁶. Indeed, in a recent reinterpretation of the concept of media engagement beyond marketized notions, emotionality is posited at the very basis of public engagement (and sometimes disengagement) with media contents and with politics⁶⁷.

In the audience democracy sketched by Urbinati, emotions are tools to capture people’s attention in a context of over-abundance of information⁶⁸. Recently the Netflix documentary *The Social Dilemma* has pointed at how much algorithms of social platforms are based on neurosciences to capture users’ attention and produce profit. A growing industry is trying to translate how the mind works into formalized rules and algorithms, for instance through facial recognition and predictive models⁶⁹. The rise of populist leaders and parties and their capacity to gain consensus by exploiting emotional outburst has further nurtured this claim. Bonansinga⁷⁰ has reviewed studies looking at the relationship between emotions and populism, and found three lines of inquiry:

- The structural dimension, featured by the analysis of the impact of “macro-processes and long-term trends” on preparing the ground for

⁶³ Lunt, P. & Stenner, P. (2005), *The Jerry Springer Show as an emotional public sphere*, “Media, Culture & Society”, 27(1), 59–81. doi: 10.1177/0163443705049058.

⁶⁴ Higgins, M. (2008), *The media and their publics*, Open University Press, Maidenhead; De Blasio, E. *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 2012.

⁶⁵ Richards, B. (2007), *Emotional governance: politics, media and terror*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke; Wodak, R. (2015), *The politics of fear: what right-wing populist discourses mean*, Sage, London; Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2019), *Emotions, media and politics*. Polity Press, Cambridge.

⁶⁶ Papacharissi, Z. (2015), *Affective publics: sentiment, technology, and politics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford; Selva, D. (2020a), *Emozioni digitali: solidarietà, social media e democrazia*, LUISS University Press, Roma.

⁶⁷ Dahlgren, P. & Hill, A. (2020), *Parameters of media engagement*, “Media Theory”, 4(1), 1–32.

⁶⁸ Urbinati, N., *op. cit.*, 2014.

⁶⁹ McStay, A. (2018), *Emotional AI: the rise of empathic media*, Sage, London.

⁷⁰ Bonansinga, D. (2020), *Who Thinks, Feels. The Relationship Between Emotions, Politics and Populism*, “Partecipazione e Conflitto”, 13(1), 83-106. doi: 10.1285/I20356609V1311P83.

populists: those are globalization, distrust, and partisan misalignment;

- The subjective dimension, mainly rooted in the political psychology literature and pointing at resentment, disenchantment, nostalgia, and insecurity;

- The communicative dimension, that looks at studies focused on the interplay between populist discourse, communicative strategy and emotions.

The shift towards a digital ecosystem dominated by social media platforms has renewed the interest in studying digital emotions⁷¹. Some observe that emotions are *exploited* both by social media (i.e. through standardisation and commodification processes) and populist leaders (i.e. mainly through communication strategies). According to the elective affinity thesis, social media and populism share a common “rebellious narrative” against conditions of subjugation by different élites, namely media professionals and politicians⁷². It is the triumph of the ordinary man. Indeed, social media are environments in which visibility is translated in relevance; and such a relevance become the source of legitimacy⁷³, and not the other way around as Max Weber was prefiguring. Bartlett, Saccà and Wodak⁷⁴, among others, warn that populists have first and best used social media to conquer visibility and power.

If we define populism as an ideology, a strategy to gain power and a discursive-performative style⁷⁵, we can observe different aspects of the relationship between populism, emotions and social media. Following Fuchs⁷⁶, the populist ideology is inherently linked to the functioning of social media capitalism. According to this view, social media corporations pursue the very same ideology, through operations of merging and acquisitions that increase the monopoly of some companies: there is little room for a reconciliation between capitalism and democracy within social media platforms and within populist ideology. In effects, if we look at the case of Donald Trump, he is

⁷¹ Selva, D., *op. cit.*, 2020a.

⁷² Gerbaudo, P. (2018), *Social media and populism: an elective affinity?*, “Media, Culture & Society”, 40(5), 745–753. doi: 10.1177/0163443718772192.

⁷³ Khosravini, M. (2018), *Social Media Techno-Discursive Design, Affective Communication and Contemporary Politics*, “Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences”, 11(4), 427–442. doi: 10.1007/s40647-018-0226-y.

⁷⁴ Bartlett, J. (2014), *Populism, social media and democratic strain*, in Sandelind, C. (ed.), *European Populism and Winning the Immigration Debate*, Fores, Stockholm, 99-116. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/74233199.pdf>; Saccà, F., *op. cit.*, 2020; Wodak, R. (2021), *The politics of fear: the shameless normalization of far-right discourse*. 2nd ed., Sage, London.

⁷⁵ Moffitt, B., *op. cit.*, 2020.

⁷⁶ Fuchs, C. (2018), *Digital demagogue: authoritarian capitalism in the age of Trump and Twitter*, Pluto Press, London.

the perfect ideal-type of how populists can merge a neoliberal agenda with authoritarian sympathies, exploiting the logic of accumulation of value and oligarchy to gain political power. The overlapping between populists-in-power and media's complicity to privilege sensationalism over accuracy, generates a cultural hegemony in which "politics is angry rather than conciliatory in tone, and oppositional rather than constructive as to the potential of government"⁷⁷. Aggressiveness and anger are the key features of such a political hegemony, feed by social media⁷⁸ as much as by "belligerent" broadcast media⁷⁹. Another emotion commonly associated with populism is nostalgia⁸⁰.

From a strategic perspective, populists are using social media's emotionality as a channel to increase their popular consensus and gain power. In his analysis of the cultural logic of populism, Michael Higgins has defined it as a "relational attitude" manifested "in primarily oppositional forms of political rhetoric that can be directed against or in tactical collaboration with media"⁸¹. Thus media can be either allied or enemies for populists: Trump has exploited Twitter as a platform to stand out and race to the Presidency of the United States back in 2016, and by the end of his mandate in 2020, he has accused Twitter of censoring him. The analyses about the populists' use of social media during electoral campaigns have produced a long tradition of studies. What those studies point at is that populists prove to be very effective in using social media, much more than their counterparts, hit by a sort of communicative aphasia⁸². Moreover, populists are proven to take advantage of algorithms, able to run engineered-enhanced electoral campaigns through echo-chambers of like-minded, disinformation campaigns, networked publics across platforms feeding conspiracy theories and so on⁸³.

Finally, as far as the populist discourse and performance are concerned, populists increasingly use emotional dispositives to build their community. As already stated, emotions are used as tools for alignment, in substitution to ideology; this is not in contradiction with the first point, as the populist ideology is constituted by a claim for post-ideology or non-ideology. Populist and charismatic leaders have always used emotions to communicate with

⁷⁷ Higgins, M. (2017), *Mediated populism, culture and media form*, "Palgrave Communications", 3(3). doi: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-017-0005-4>, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Wahl-Jorgensen, K., *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁷⁹ Higgins, M. & Smith, A. (2017), *Belligerent broadcasting: synthetic argument in broadcast talk*, Routledge, New York.

⁸⁰ Bonansinga, D., *op. cit.*, 2020.

⁸¹ Higgins, M., *op. cit.*, 2017, p. 2.

⁸² Saccà, F., *op. cit.*, 2020.

⁸³ Benkler, Y., Faris, R. & Roberts, H. (2018), *Network propaganda: manipulation, disinformation, and radicalization in American politics*, Oxford University Press, New York.

the people. But what scholars observe is that social media promote the diffusion of emotional discourses more than rational argumentation, promote empathy and affective involvement (for business), and promote disruptive emotions such as anger and indignation as they generate peaks in posts, mentions, retweets and reactions⁸⁴. A repertoire of populists' use of emotions include: the promotion of emotional authenticity (e.g. openly showing feelings) as a source of credibility in the positioning alongside the up-down axis of conflict; the tactic of going negative, for instance through tweetstorms and hate speech campaigns; the use of emotions like fear and anxiety to cultivate and address popular resentment. In this respect, social media also offer tools to monitor and adapt in real-time to the momentous sentiment of the audience.

4. A research agenda

It is a common assumption to say that Trump and Obama were the best exploiters of social media and, at the same time, that they are at the antipodes in their use of emotions: as much the former has been identified with the label of “angry populism”⁸⁵, as the latter has been able to mobilise people with a storytelling of hope and love, challenging not only the Democratic establishment, but more broadly the Bush's narrative of the war on terror. The new elected President Joe Biden had not a clear emotional repertoire other than his loathing at Trump: his insistence on marking the difference with his opponent is the key feature of the communication strategy⁸⁶. Such a difference, however, has been nurtured with concepts of decency, empathy, openness, and a general disposition towards civility as opposed to incivility and hatred that Trump personified⁸⁷. Paraphrasing Urbinati, populism is just one of the “possible destinies” of the emotional use of social media in the political realm⁸⁸.

⁸⁴ Wahl-Jorgensen, K., *op. cit.*, 2019; Wodak, R., *op. cit.*, 2021.

⁸⁵ Wahl-Jorgensen, K., *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁸⁶ Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2020), *The emotional politics of 2020: fear and loathing in the United States*, in Jackson, D. et al. (eds.), *US Election Analysis 2020: Media, Voters, and the Campaign*, University of Bournemouth, Poole. Available at: <https://www.electionanalysis.ws/us/president2020/section-3-candidates-and-the-campaign/the-emotional-politics-of-2020-fear-and-loathing-in-the-united-states/>.

⁸⁷ Sydnor, E. (2020), *From “clown” to “community”: the democratic potential of civility and incivility*, in Jackson, D. et al. (eds.), *US Election Analysis 2020: Media, Voters, and the Campaign*, University of Bournemouth, Poole. Available at: <https://www.electionanalysis.ws/us/president2020/section-7-democracy-in-crisis/from-clown-to-community-the-democratic-potential-of-civility-and-incivility/>.

⁸⁸ Urbinati, N., *op. cit.*, 2014.

Yet emotions seem to have little chance of receiving a positive judgement when linked to political processes that involve the public sphere. First, they suffer from a normative ideal of cognition and publicness that relegate emotions to the margins. Second, even when they are recognised as part of both cognition and publicness, they are scrutinised in search of their detrimental effects for democracy. The reason for this double negativisation is probably linked to the fact that the study of emotions in politics and social media have tended to focus on strategies much more than on ideologies and discourses. Following psychological explanations, the individual effects of emotional manipulation, also summed up together in forms of “emotional contagion” or “emotional underpinnings”, have been widely investigated⁸⁹.

On the contrary, the study of emotions as part of the political narratives and ideologies is receiving a growing attention, particularly by critical discourse studies approaches that aim at neutralising the role of social media⁹⁰. This position is sustained by three basic considerations.

The first one is that affectivity has always been part of human communication and politics, and hence it is not a product of social media. Social media, indeed, could be understood as the product of the cultural logic of the contemporary age, one marked by the imperatives of happiness and sharing⁹¹.

The second one is that social media and digital platforms at large prove to be effective tools of communication, storytelling, visibility-catching, and community-building not only for populists but also for non-populists⁹² and for subjects that promote positive emotions such as hope, love, and solidarity⁹³. In some ways, positive emotions can have ideological roots insofar as

⁸⁹ See for instance: Ferrara, E. & Yang, Z. (2015), *Measuring Emotional Contagion in Social Media*, “PLOS ONE”, 10(11), e0142390. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0142390; Hameleers, M., Bos, L. & de Vreese, C. H. (2017), “*They Did It*”: *The Effects of Emotionalized Blame Attribution in Populist Communication*, «Communication Research», 44(6), 870–900. doi: 10.1177/0093650216644026; Rico, G., Guinjoan, M. & Anduiza, E. (2017), *The Emotional Underpinnings of Populism: How Anger and Fear Affect Populist Attitudes*, “Swiss Political Science Review”, 23(4), 444–461. doi: 10.1111/spsr.12261; Marquart, F., Brosius, A. & de Vreese, C. (2019), *United Feelings: The Mediating Role of Emotions in Social Media Campaigns for EU Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions*, «Journal of Political Marketing», 1–27. doi: 10.1080/15377857.2019.1618429.

⁹⁰ Ahmed, S., *op. cit.*, 2014; KhosraviNik, M., *op. cit.*, 2018.

⁹¹ Illouz, E., *op. cit.*, 2007; van Dijck, J. (2013), *The culture of connectivity: a critical history of social media*, Oxford University Press, Oxford; Cabanas, E. & Illouz, E., *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁹² Postill, J. (2018), *Populism and social media: a global perspective*, “Media, Culture & Society”, 40(5), 754–765. doi: 10.1177/0163443718772186.

⁹³ Selva, D. (2020b), *Il discorso della solidarietà: migrazioni, Terzo Settore e social media*, “Mondi Migranti”, 2020(2), 121–139. doi: 10.3280/MM2020-002007.

they exercise a counter-hegemonic role (see for instance the case of the social movement called Sardine⁹⁴); moreover, they could also promote an ideology of care, respect for human rights and for environment (condensed in the last Pope Francis' encyclical, for instance). Contemporary sociologists are highlighting that those are the ultimate fields of struggle, and that the protection of human rights (i.e. women rights and refugees rights) is deeply intertwined with the protection of the environment⁹⁵. In this struggle, affectivity can enhance the possibilities to engage in a relation of mutual respect and recognition⁹⁶. In a recent reading of the concept of media ecology, communication can be conceived also as a common good to be protected from hatred and incivility; together with our sense of respect for the environment and our awareness of being part of a global society, a “kind communication” could be the tool to preserve our sense of belonging to universal humankind⁹⁷.

The third consideration is that the indignation of the public cannot be condemned as such, especially in the context of a general distrust towards expert systems and intermediate bodies. What should be under scrutiny is the ability of some political entrepreneurs to exploit indignation and make it a source of legitimacy, or as well, the in-ability of traditional political parties to avoid this exploitation and to provide an alternative way to address it. The presence or the lack of “emotional capital” by political leaders is part of the research agenda of the sociology of emotions. Echoing Pierre Bourdieu, emotional capital can be defined as “an *embodied* form of cultural capital, understood as a trans-situational capacity to express, manage, and feel emotions in a manner that is ‘in tune’ with dominant emotion norms and cultures”⁹⁸; it is a form of capital in the sense that it can be converted in and exchanged with political capital. At the same time, the ability to use an emotional capital and to transform it into political capital is highly differentiated between genders and among social classes. Addressing the emotional capital could shed light on the future of political leadership in more complex and diverse societies.

⁹⁴ De Blasio, E. *et al.* (2020), *Sardine: fenomenologia di un movimento di piazza*, LUISS University Press, Roma.

⁹⁵ Touraine, A. (2019), *In difesa della modernità*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano; Crouch, C., *op. cit.*, 2020.

⁹⁶ Honneth, A. (2005), *The struggle for recognition: the moral grammar of social conflicts*, Polity Press, Cambridge; Fraser, N. & Honneth, A. (2020), *Redistribuzione o riconoscimento lotte di genere e disuguaglianze economiche*, Meltemi, Roma.

⁹⁷ Colombo, F. (2020), *Ecologia dei media: manifesto per una comunicazione gentile*, Vita e pensiero, Milano.

⁹⁸ Heaney, J. G. (2019), *Emotion as power: capital and strategy in the field of politics*, “Journal of Political Power”, 12(2), 224–244. doi: 10.1080/2158379X.2019.1618485, p. 234, italics in the original.

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5. The Depoliticization of Immigration. Youngsters and Immigrants in Perugia

by *Rosalba Belmonte, Marco Damiani*

1. The social dimension of immigration

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Italy has been experiencing an increase of immigration from the South of the world that made it one of the most affected countries by global migrations, alongside with France, the United Kingdom, Spain and Germany¹. At the same time, Italians are living in a climate of growing social tension due to the economic and labour crisis of the Great recession. In this social context – characterized by precarious work and declining social benefits – citizens tend to perceive immigrants as a threat to their welfare. This is what emerges from the final report of the Committee on hate, intolerance, xenophobia and racism established by the Italian Chamber of Deputies². The data on which the Committee's work is based depict Italy as the least informed country in the world with respect to immigration. According to the data observed by the Committee, most of the Italians think that immigrants living in Italy make up 30% of the population (the true figure is 8%); the 56,4% of Italians believes that «a neighbourhood degenerates when it contains many immigrants» and the 52,6% agree that «an increase in the number of immigrants favours the spread of terrorism and criminality».

Moreover, the 35% of Italian citizens believe that «immigrants are depriving Italians of work», the 48,7% believes that «when jobs are scarce, employers should give precedence to Italians» and the 65% says that «refugees are a burden because they exploit the social benefits and work of the

¹ R. Bichi (2016), *I giovani europei e l'atteggiamento verso l'immigrazione*, AA.VV. La condizione giovanile in Italia, Il Mulino, Bologna.

² Camera dei Deputati (2016), *Relazione finale della Commissione "Jo Cox" sull'intolleranza, la xenofobia, il razzismo e i fenomeni di odio*.

native inhabitants». The data also points out that the current economic and financial crisis is increasing intolerance of immigrants within the lower classes, the most affected by the crisis. According to Ambrosini³ people who are more vulnerable from a socio-economic point of view, tend to develop a behaviour of conflict and rivalry with immigrants. At the same time, the economic and financial crisis of the 21st century and the actions undertaken by several national governments and by the European Union have accelerated the phenomenon of depoliticization. Also, they have contributed to the success of right-wing (and far-right) populist parties that are creating a new social cleavage between “us” (European citizens) and “them” (migrants)⁴.

Starting from these assumptions, this work focuses on the case study of Perugia, a medium sized city of Central Italy that is well-known for its long tradition of welcoming foreigners. In Perugia, the relationship between young locals and immigrants in the last few years is characterized by an increasing degree of depoliticization. Our hypothesis is that nowadays youngsters in Perugia tend to remove the political meaning of migration, that was very relevant in the past, due to widespread political culture that – in a “red” region⁵ – prioritized solidarity rather than either indifference or hostility. Whether in the past the political meaning of this relation consisted in creating egalitarianism, according to a left-wing ideology, today the relationship between Italians and immigrants is isolated from its historical context and local people become increasingly less likely to relate with immigrants.

Starting from these considerations, we will focus on youth’s social representations, attitudes and prejudices towards immigrants, in order to understand whether they are related to unemployment and economic struggle. We will also observe how the difficulties related to the economic crisis resulted in the depoliticization of the issue of immigration, and how they shaped the idea of immigration as something to pay attention to in order to defend one’s interests and rights – Italians – from foreigners, who are increasingly considered as competitors in gaining access to the scarcely available resources and welfare services. Before discussing the data collected in the field, we will describe the theoretical framework underpinning our research and clarify the main concepts that will be taken in consideration in this study.

³ M. Ambrosini (2005), *Sociologia delle migrazioni*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

⁴ E. D’Albergo; G. Moini (2019), *Depoliticizzazione e (ri)politicizzazione: le sfide dei populismi*, in E. D’Albergo; G. Moini, *Politica e azione pubblica nell’epoca della depoliticizzazione*, Sapienza Università, Roma.

⁵ C. Trigilia (1986), *Grandi partiti, piccole imprese*, il Mulino, Bologna.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. *Depoliticization and Repoliticization*

The notions of depoliticization and repoliticization are important to better understand how politics has changed over the last decades. More precisely, these notions make us better understand the shifts that have interested the relationship between society and politics in the last few years⁶.

The concept of depoliticization consists of moving decision-making from elective arenas to places presented as politically neutral⁷. Consequently, it implies the loss of political character of certain issues and the annihilation of divergences and conflicts within the field of political actions⁸. This does not mean the disappearance of the functions and the space of politics, but a loss of transparency of the processes of government. This happens because many issues, crucial to plenty of citizens, stay out of public debate and are all handled by experts and technicians⁹.

Especially in Western Europe, the tarnishing of values and programmatic differentiations between right and left are the proofs of this type of depoliticization.

⁶ G. Moini (2019), *Depoliticizzazione e politicizzazione: una chiave di lettura*, in E. D'Albergo, G. Moini, *Politica e azione pubblica nell'epoca della depoliticizzazione*, Sapienza Università, Roma.

⁷ M. Flinders; M. Wood (2014), *Depoliticisation, Governance and the State*, "Policy & Politics", 42(2), pp. 135–149.

⁸ P. Burnham (2017), *Neo-liberalism, Crisis and the Contradictions of Depoliticisation*, "Partecipazione e conflitto", 10(2), pp. 357–380; E.A. Foster; P. Kerr; C. Byrne (2014), *Rolling Back to Roll Forward: Depoliticisation and the Extension of Government*, "Policy & Politics", 42(2), pp. 225–241; C. Hay (2014), *Depoliticisation as Process, Governance as Practice: What Did the 'First Wave' Get Wrong and Do We Need a 'Second Wave' to Put it Right?*, "Policy & Politics", 42(2), pp. 293–311. M. Flinders; M. Wood (2014), *Depoliticisation, Governance and the State*, "Policy & Politics", 42(2), pp. 135–149; P. Fawcett, D. Marsh (2014), *Depoliticisation, Governance and Political Participation*, "Policy & Politics", 42(2), pp. 171–188; F. De Nardis (2017), *The Concept of De-politicization and Its Consequences*, "Partecipazione e conflitto", 10(2), pp. 340–356; E. D'Albergo; G. Moini (2019), *Depoliticizzazione e (ri)politicizzazione: le sfide dei populismi*, in E. D'Albergo; G. Moini, *Politica e azione pubblica nell'epoca della depoliticizzazione*, Sapienza Università, Roma; F. De Nardis (2020), *Depoliticization, antipolitics and the moral people*, in M. Anselmi, F. De Nardis, *Multiple Populism*, Routledge, Londra.

⁹ E. A. Foster et al. (2014), *Rolling Back to Roll Forward: Depoliticisation and the Extension of Government*, "Policy & Politics", 42(2), pp. 225–241; Burnham P. (2017), *Neo-liberalism, Crisis and the Contradictions of Depoliticisation*, "Partecipazione e conflitto", 10(2), pp. 357–380; De Nardis F. (2017), *The Concept of De-politicization and Its Consequences*, "Partecipazione e conflitto", 10(2), pp. 340–356; De Nardis, F. (2020), *Depoliticization, antipolitics and the moral people*, in Anselmi, M.; De Nardis F., *Multiple Populism*, Routledge, Londra.

zation¹⁰. Actions are based on horizons of meaning presented in the form of “public truth” by non-political actors such as creators and disseminators of expert knowledge and companies¹¹. In particular, the latter takes directly advantage of a specific social depoliticization and a redefinition of the border between the political and the non-political. In this way, issues of collective interest are transferred to the private spheres of the market with the consequent reduction of the political potential of social issues, such as immigration and the problems related to it¹².

However, with the advent of populism many issues that were no longer polarising, public knowledge regained their political content. It is the so called “repoliticization”, that is fostered by the intensification of opposing values and the dramatization of argumentative regimes. Both of the aforementioned aspects are very typical of populist movements (in particular, the right-wing populist parties) which – deploying narratives that convey a sense of crisis and threat to citizenships – justify opposing attitudes towards the actors associated with such threats.

2.2. Social representations

Both the phenomena of depoliticization and repoliticization lead to the construction of new social representations. That is to say, systems that interpret reality and that allow small, specific, big and highly structured social groups¹³ to act, communicate and regulate their interactions in order to organize collective cohabitation. According to Moscovici, social representations are «system(s) of values, ideas and practices, that serve to establish a social order that enables individuals to orientate themselves and master the material and social world they live in, and to enable communication among

¹⁰ F. De Nardis (2020), *Depoliticization, antipolitics and the moral people*, in M. Anselmi; F. De Nardis, *Multiple Populism*, Routledge, Londra.

¹¹ C. Hay (2014), *Depoliticisation as Process, Governance as Practice: What Did the ‘First Wave’ Get Wrong and Do We Need a ‘Second Wave’ to Put it Right?*, “Policy & Politics”, 42(2), pp. 293–311; R. Jessop (2014), *Repoliticising Depoliticisation: Theoretical Preliminaries on Some Responses to the American Fiscal and Eurozone Debt Crises*, “Policy & Politics”, 42(2), pp. 207–223; F. De Nardis (2020), *Depoliticization, antipolitics and the moral people*, in M. Anselmi; F. De Nardis, *Multiple Populism*, Routledge, Londra.

¹² M. Flinders; M. Wood (2014), *Depoliticisation, Governance and the State*, “Policy & Politics”, 42(2), pp. 135–149.2014; R. Jessop (2014), *Repoliticising Depoliticisation: Theoretical Preliminaries on Some Responses to the American Fiscal and Eurozone Debt Crises*, “Policy & Politics”, 42(2), pp. 207–223; F. De Nardis (2020), *Depoliticization, antipolitics and the moral people*, M. Anselmi; F. De Nardis, *Multiple Populism*, Routledge, Londra.

¹³ A. Palmonari; N. Cavazza; M. Rubini (2002), *Psicologia sociale*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

the members of a community through a shared code for social exchange and for naming and classifying various aspects of the social world including their individual and group history»¹⁴. This system, that he refers as the “consensual universe” is neither definite nor stable. It undergoes many transformations and evolutions related to social practices and to interpersonal and social communication forms, which can create new social representations and change the existing ones¹⁵. Through the understanding of social representations, it is possible to identify many social practices, phenomena and situations that are relevant to individuals and groups and can be interpreted by them as a threat, a resource or something to control¹⁶.

In this work social representation theory has been used to explore the phenomenon of immigration in Italy, which has undergone a significant intensification in the last two decades. Indeed, nowadays in the country there are more than 5 million regularly resident immigrants who suffer, for the most part, from intolerance and struggle with integration. Such difficulties tend to worsen in the contexts and social groups most affected by the crisis. In other words, in hosting societies negative attitude towards immigrants increases in those social classes that are closer to them in terms of housing and employment conditions¹⁷.

2.3. Attitudes and prejudices

Within the framework of social representations, on the individual level of analysis, prejudice consists in «the aversive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to that group»¹⁸.

People raise individual and/or collective awareness through the use of generalizations which are based on collective categorizations on specific cases they are familiar with, in order to spare cognitive effort. Conversely, this may result in attributing to a whole group the characteristics of one or some individuals within that group.

¹⁴ S. Moscovici (1973) *Foreword*, in C. Herzlich, *Health and Illness. A Social Psychological Analysis*, Academic Press, London, pp. 13.

¹⁵ S. Moscovici (1984), *The phenomenon of social representations*, in R. Farr; S. Moscovici, (edited by), *Social Representations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge ; J.C. Abric (1994), *Pratiques et représentations sociales*, PUF, Paris ; T. Grande (2005), *Che cosa sono le rappresentazioni sociali*, Carocci, Roma.

¹⁶ P. Moliner (1996), *Images et représentations sociales*, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, Grenoble.

¹⁷ M. Ambrosini (2005), *Sociologia delle migrazioni*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

¹⁸ G. Allport (1954), *The nature of prejudice*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc., Cambridge, p. 9.

The consequence is an oversimplification of reality and the “flattening” of the differences between individuals, that lead to the formation of stereotypes¹⁹. From the collective perspective, prejudice is an intergroup behaviour that consists in highlighting the common aspects shared by ingroup members and the characteristics that distinguish themselves from the outgroup²⁰. When members of an outgroup have nationalities, habits, customs, religion creeds and somatic features different from one’s own ingroup and when these differences are thought of by means of one’s own criteria and moral norms, we talk of ethnic prejudice. This kind of prejudice can reach forms of ethnocentrism and xenophobia in the cases of individuals who are afraid and hostile towards immigrants. Such hostility comes from groups who are less well-off and perceive immigrants as a threat to their welfare²¹.

On the other hand, as predicted by the Allport’s theory of social contact, when the interactions between groups are characterised by cooperation and mutual understanding and are supported by institutions, prejudices and stereotypes are dismissed. Negative prejudices and stereotypes are the basis of either denial or hostility towards immigrants. In this circumstance, we use the term “attitude” to refer to the cognitive structures through which individuals and groups organize, encode and decode received information according to their representation and evaluation of an object, and act accordingly²². Thus, through experience, communication and observation, individuals have either positive or negative attitudes toward a specific subject.

Starting from the theoretical framework outlined above and analysing the data collected through a questionnaire, in the next paragraph we will deal with the attitudes of young people living in Perugia towards immigrants, their social representations of migration and the role of ethnic prejudice as an important constituent of such attitudes and social representations.

The work aims at understanding how Perugia young people perceive migration. In particular, we will focus on how socio-economic status influences the attitude towards migrants.

Our hypothesis is that the current economic and cultural crisis – which mainly affects young generations and causes a feeling of uncertainty –

¹⁹ G. Allport (1954), *The nature of prejudice*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc., Cambridge; V. Cotesta (1999), *Sociologia dei conflitti etnici*, Laterza, Roma-Bari; M. Ambrosini (2005), *Sociologia delle migrazioni*, Il Mulino, Bologna; R. Segatori (2016), *La libertà possibile*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

²⁰ H. Tajfel; J. Turner (1979), *An integrative theory of inter-group conflict*, in J.A. Williams, S. Worchel, *The social psychology of intergroup relations*, Wadsworth, Belmont.

²¹ M. Ambrosini (2005), *Sociologia delle migrazioni*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

²² R. H. Fazio; C.J. Williams (1986), *Attitude accessibility as a moderator of the attitude-perception and attitude-behavior relations – An investigation of the 1981 presidential-election*, “Journal of Personality and Social Psychology”, 51(3), pp. 505–514.

produces negative prejudice against immigrants and the intensification of intolerance and hostility towards them.

3. Empirical research

The research is based on a multi-thematic questionnaire addressed to a sample of 348 individuals, both male and female, from 18 to 34 years of age living in Perugia. For what concerns the theme of immigration, the questionnaire contained seven questions dealing with: a) the level of either openness or reticence towards incoming immigrants; b) the kind of services that the Italian government should guarantee to immigrants; c) the behavior immigrants should adopt in order to be integrated in Italian society; d) the impact of immigration on specific current issues and the perception of the number of immigrants in the country; e) the level of proximity among interviewees and immigrants; f) the representation of immigrants. In order to verify our hypothesis, we relied on variables related to socioeconomic status, cultural capital and political orientation.

3.1. Attitudes towards immigrants

With reference to the attitudes of openness or reticence towards immigrants, question number 10 of our questionnaire focuses on integration, namely the process through which individuals step into society by interiorizing norms and values. From the answers given to this question we can see how half of the interviewees (41.1%) seems to be in favour of integration policies. However, the 23,4% declared to welcome only workers who have steady jobs and the 20.5% believes that immigrants' problems must be solved in their own countries of origin. Moreover, 7% of the interviewees said to welcome only refugees and the 7% thinks that if the migration will keep being so intense there will be no Italians left.

The widespread tendency in believing that migrations should be limited only to migrants with steady jobs and refugees, and that migrants should solve their problems in their own countries of origin can be explained by the current economic crisis, as Ambrosini²³ rightfully suggests. According to the author, the worsening socioeconomical condition of young Italians may lead the latter to perceive migrants as potential competitors to access the national welfare system.

²³ M. Ambrosini (2005), *Sociologia delle migrazioni*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

As demonstrated in table 1, the higher the cultural capital value, the more favourable the declarations towards policies of welcoming and integration of immigrants. Conversely, the less cultural capital is available, the less favourable the declarations towards openness and cohabitation with immigrants. Moreover, we also have to consider that youngsters who are in favour of integration policies are mostly (43%) middle-class students²⁴. Conversely, the declaration that denotes criticism towards immigration, namely «if we keep going like this there will be no more Italians left», was made mostly by young precarious workers from the lower-class (42,9%)²⁵.

Tab.1 - Declaration on immigration and cultural capital (Values in %)

<i>Statements on immigration policies</i>	<i>Low cultural capital</i>	<i>Low-middle cultural capital</i>	<i>Middle cultural capital</i>	<i>High-middle cultural capital</i>	<i>High cultural capital</i>
Integration and inclusion policies should be promoted by the government	37,0	34,5	37,0	52,3	41,0
Immigrants should enter the country without any restrictions	3,7	3,5	0,0	3,1	4,2
Only immigrants with steady jobs should stay in the country	11,1	22,1	30,1	20,0	25,4
If we keep going like this there will be no more Italians	0,0	6,2	6,8	1,5	2,8
Only through contributions paid by the immigrants we will be able to afford pensions for Italian people	3,7	0,0	1,4	1,5	1,4
We should make only refugees stay	11,1	7,1	9,6	4,6	5,6
The problems of immigrants should be solved in their own countries of origin	33,3	26,5	15,1	16,9	14,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: our elaboration on own primary data

²⁴ The youngsters who have answered in this way are mainly from a father who is either a freelancer or an entrepreneur (21,5%) an artisan (20,1%) and from a mother who is either a housewife (25,9%) or a clerk (14,7%).

²⁵ The youngsters who have answered in this way are from a father who is a construction worker/farmer (28,6%) and from a mother who is a housewife (40%).

3.2. *Guarantees for immigrants*

From table 1 attitudes of criticism towards migration can be found. These attitudes are confirmed when interviewees are asked what services the government should or should not guarantee to migrants²⁶.

As shown in table 2, many interviewees declared their availability to granting essential services, such as healthcare, proper education and the regularization of irregular work to immigrants. However, there are still some doubts on the possibility of accelerating the procedures for the acquisition of the Italian citizenship and on the possibility of extending the right to vote to immigrants. The interviewees are also split in two at the rising of the question concerning the possibility of granting spaces for cultural and religious activities, social housing for migrants and contributions to associations in support of them. The percentages of agreement and disagreement show that most of the people declared their availability to grant essential services and social security to immigrants. Conversely, there is uncertainty about whether offering to the immigrants' services which are already poorly available for Italian citizens or not. Many of them, in fact, interpret an extension of such guarantees as a reduction of resources available to them.

Tab. 2 - Agreement and disagreement with policies in support of migrants

<i>Migrants' guarantees</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>Total</i>
Social housing	52,3	47,7	100,0
Spaces for religious and/or cultural activities	41,8	58,2	100,0
Proper education	8,3	91,7	100,0
Healthcare	8,3	91,7	100,0
The right to vote to regular migrants	42,7	57,3	100,0
Regularization of irregular work	15,0	85,0	100,0
Quick procedures for the acquisition of citizenship	58,5	41,5	100,0
Italian language courses	22,0	78,0	100,0
Contributions to associations that support migrants	51,9	48,1	100,0

Source: our elaboration on own primary data

²⁶ Question 11 asked to the interviewees whether they were in favour or against the following policies towards immigrants: social housing; spaces devoted to cultural and religious practices; proper education; healthcare; the right to vote for residents, regularization of irregular work, quick procedures for the acquisition of citizenship, courses of Italian language, contributions to associations that support migrants.

3.3. Migrants' behaviour and the impact of immigration on current issues

By focusing on the level of individual responsibilities, we have also asked our interviewees what an immigrant should do in order to integrate in the host country. Before proceeding with our considerations, it must be pointed out that the process of integration is related to and depends on a variety of factors such as the labour market, the inclusion of immigrants and the interaction with them, the conditions for the access to welfare benefits and that this process is defined by a complex path which implies various elements such as the mastery of the language and the respect towards the host society's customs²⁷. Among the answers given by our interviewees, the most relevant percentages concern the necessity to respect the laws of our country and focus on the importance of finding stable jobs and housing (table 3).

Tab.3 - Behaviours immigrants should have to integrate into our country

<i>Migrants' responsibilities</i>	<i>Fre- quence</i>	<i>%</i>
Master the language	35	10,1
Follow our laws	144	41,4
Find stable jobs and housing	59	16,9
Conform to our customs and habits	53	15,2
Stay only with co-nationals	1	0,2
Have a proper social behaviour	36	10,4
Not to influence Italian working rhythms	8	2,3
Other	12	3,5
Total	348	100

Source: our elaboration on own primary data

Moreover, the limited number of interviewees that believes that integration depends on the mastery of Italian, on proper social behaviour and on the ways of adapting to our customs and habits highlights that among young people in Perugia the fact of adopting the host country's culture is not fundamental. Instead, what emerges from the majority of the answers is the need for social security. This is shown by the fact that 41,4% of the interviewees believes that integration depends on the respect of our country's laws. This tendency is assessed when, in order to reconstruct the perception of social problems that shape social representations of immigration, the interviewees are asked to quantify the degree of responsibility they attributed to

²⁷ M. Ambrosini (2011), *Il multiculturalismo è finito? Le esperienze europee di integrazione degli immigrati*, "Studi e ricerche", n. 5, p. 343-354.

immigrants for several current issues (question n.13). The highest scores (an average of 6,6 in the Cantril scale) concern the increase of social insecurity and social expenses. It follows the spread of new religions (average of 6,5), spread of diseases (average of 5,1), unemployment (average of 4,2) and lack of housing places (average of 4,1).

3.4. *Social representation of immigrants*

In order to understand their representation of migrants we have asked our interviewees to express by a score from 1 to 10 their degree of agreement/disagreement with 12 items (question number 16) evoking a series of points of view on immigration that we find in the common thought and in specialized contemporary literature²⁸. We applied a principal component analysis and a cluster analysis on the variables according to the Ward's agglomerative hierarchical clustering procedure²⁹, from which three main groups of variables – having in common their approach on migration – emerged. These three groups represent three different social representations of migration: a positive one, a neutral one and a negative one. The first cluster is constituted by the following items: immigrants increase our country's cultural heritage; since immigrants escape from desperate circumstances they should better be rescued; immigrants are friendly and always available; immigrants are useful as they take jobs that Italians don't want. All these items conceive **migration as a resource**.

The second cluster is constituted by items that deal with concrete resolutions: immigrants should stay in specific neighbourhoods; immigrants are useful as they have plenty of children who make Italian population younger; we should look up to immigrants as they work hard but are badly rewarded. This set of items represents **migration as an inevitable phenomenon**.

The third cluster is made by items that express the following statements: when immigration increases so do drugs and prostitution; immigrants' values are too different from the Italians' ones; only migrants who have a steady job should stay in Italy; giving migrants the right to vote is too risky; immigrants steal jobs and houses to Italians. Thus, this cluster includes rather pessimistic items that conceive **immigration as evil of society**.

Having analysed the variables which have been grouped in three main

²⁸ F. Crespi; R. Segatori (1996), *Multiculturalismo e democrazia*, Donzelli, Milano. Alietti, Padovan, 2005; M. Ambrosini (2014), *Non passa lo straniero?*, Cittadella Editrice, Assisi; V. Calzolaio; T. Pievani (2016), *Libertà di migrare*, Einaudi, Torino.

²⁹ G. Di Franco (2001), *EDS: esplorare, descrivere e sintetizzare i dati*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

representations of immigration, we now turn to the attitudes shown by our interviewees.

In order to describe their attitudes, we developed a new cluster analysis on the cases that allowed us to split the 348 youngsters in 4 groups which had homogeneous attitudes toward immigrants. After comparing the average scores obtained by each group for the three social representations on migrants, and after observing the polarization embedded within these results, we have developed a map of the interviewees' attitudes towards immigration (table 4).

Tab. 4 - Groups of attitudes for each social representations of immigration

Attitudes	Social representations		
	Resource	Inevitable phenomenon	Evil of society
Welcoming	0,92	-0,37	-1,32
Indifferent	0,50	-0,08	-0,57
Annoyed	-0,06	0,20	0,28
Hostile	-0,98	0,07	1,05

Source: our elaboration on own primary data

The first group shows positive polarization towards the representation of migration as a resource (0,92) and negative towards the idea of migration as evil of society (-1,32). This is the group of **welcoming** people composed of fifty-four youngsters, namely 15,6% of our interviewees. This group appears to be very open-minded towards migration, either because of pragmatic or ideological reasons. Its members, the welcoming people, are young liberals inclined to interact with migrants, who are perceived as an opportunity of personal and social growth. As far as the last statement is concerned, migrants are perceived as a resource and not as competitors since they do not belong to the interviewee's social class. The welcoming people group is relatively small compared to the other groups that contain twice the number of people.

The second group includes ninety-nine cases, meaning 28,5% of the interviewees. These cases are young people who express neither approval nor disapproval towards immigration and have **indifferent** or neutral attitudes. Youngsters who belong to this group are either working students or workers who do not see the value of welcoming immigrants but do not consider them as a threat to their interests, since they are socially distant. That is why they are rather indifferent to the phenomenon of immigration.

The third group, made of ninety-nine cases, is not polarised to any of the three representations of immigration but agrees on perceiving immigration

as ineluctable (0,20), as social evil (0,28), rather than as a resource (-0,06). This is the group of **annoyed** people, persons who are not hostile but who tend to distance themselves from immigrants whom they consider to be a “necessary evil”.

Finally, the fourth group is composed by ninety-five cases, 27,5% of the interviewees, and shows clear polarizations: immigration as resource (-0,98) and immigrations as evil to be fought (1,05). The members of this group manifest **hostility** towards immigrants and refuse the idea of relating with foreigners. Moreover, they consider immigration as an issue to be stopped. The hostile people are influenced by ethnic prejudices that make them conceive immigration not only as something that will worsen their own social conditions, since immigrants will hardly be integrated in the host country’s socio-culture and are dangerous, but they will also impoverish the economy because of the cost they imply.

Intertwining the four attitudes with the variables of family’s employment history, cultural capital and self-attested political ideologies, it has been noted that:

1) welcoming people are mostly students (53,6%) coming from various family working conditions³⁰, with high cultural capital (51,8%) and who are left-wing oriented (55,6%);

2) indifferent people are also mostly students (37,4%) and temporary workers (13,1%) coming from middle-class families³¹, with a high cultural capital (46,5%) and politically oriented to either the centre or left-wing (34,7% centre; 33,7% left);

3) annoyed people are also mostly students (35,4%), from various family working circumstances³², with low cultural capital (44,2%) who are conservatives (43,2%);

4) hostile people are also almost all students (33,3%), unemployed (18,2%), from low social status³³, with low cultural capital (44,4%) and politically oriented towards the centre (43,2%).

³⁰ Their fathers are either construction workers (34,6%) or entrepreneurs /freelancers (23,6%). Their mothers are mostly housewives (22,2%), clerks (20,4%) or primary school teachers (18,5%).

³¹ Their fathers are either artisans/traders (23%) or entrepreneurs/freelancers (21%). Their mothers are almost exclusively housewives (38,4%).

³² Their fathers are construction workers (33%), artisans/traders (19,6%), entrepreneurs/freelancers (17,5%).

Their mothers are either housewives (27,1%) or artisans/traders (18,8%).

³³ Their fathers are construction workers (48%), traders/artisans (19,6%) and entrepreneurs/freelancers (17,5%) Their mothers are housewives (26%), construction workers (21%) and trader/artisans (15%).

3.5. Prejudice against immigrants

On the level of analysis of prejudice, we asked our interviewees the frequency with which in the last year they have socialized with migrants, watched movies set in migrants' countries, listened to ethnic music and taken part into multicultural manifestation/events. From the answers given, it emerges that 90% of the interviewees has very limited, if not inexistent, contacts with immigrants.

Intertwining the results of this survey with the variables of socio-economic status, cultural capital and self-assessed political ideology we see that the people who want to have a friendly relationship and are interested in immigrants' cultures is constituted by a minority of students (36,8%) from diverse social status³⁴, who are either centre or centre/left-wing oriented³⁵ and possess a high cultural capital (45,9%). This last data confirms the idea that with proper tools it is possible to deconstruct prejudices against immigrants. Under these circumstances Allport's theory on social contact (1954), which has already been mentioned in the previous paragraph, is confirmed. According to this theory the exchange between *ingroup* and *outgroup* determines the deconstruction of the ethnic prejudice and of the stereotypes towards migrants.

4. Conclusions

Throughout human history a series of internal and international migrations have generated transformations in the economic and cultural development of many destination countries³⁶. Even Italians have always been migrants. In the past, they predilected internal migrations, from the South to North of the country. Afterwards, migrations became international and have never stopped since. This is evident if we consider that, on the 1st of January 2019, the Registry of Italians Resident Abroad (AIRE) registered 5.288.281 Italians living in other countries (8,8% of people living in Italy)³⁷.

Notwithstanding, Italians tend to be more and more reluctant towards incoming immigrants. Other than for xenophobic reasons, this reluctance can be explained by the crisis that affected the country throughout the last decade and worsened living conditions for most of the Italians. This has increased

³⁴ Their fathers are either entrepreneurs/freelancers 32,4% or construction workers 24,3%. Their mothers are either housewives (28,9%) or clerks (21,1%).

³⁵ Centre: 37,8%; left-wing: 29,7%; right-wing: 16,2%; not oriented: 16,2%.

³⁶ V. Calzolaio; T. Pievani (2016), *Libertà di migrare*, Einaudi, Torino.

³⁷ Migrants (2019), *Rapporto Italiani nel Mondo 2019*, Tau, Todi.

negative attitudes towards immigrants, leading to hostile behaviours and even phenomena of hatred and discrimination. Thus, we are witnessing a re-thematization of immigration that is centered on the safeguard of the rights and interests of Italians towards the immigrants, who are considered as a threat and as competitors to access the national welfare system and the labour market.

This research has explored attitudes, social representations and prejudices of young people from Perugia towards migrants and focused on how the cultural and economic status have influenced their formation. Our main hypothesis was that the current economic and cultural crisis that affect mainly young generations, produce a sense of instability which generates negative prejudices and the spread of attitudes of intolerance and hostility towards migrants.

As far as the question of whether there is either openness or closedness towards immigration, this research has showed that the attitude of youngsters is rather favourable to integration policies aimed at better the conditions of cohabitation of different cultures. However, the interviewees have not showed complete availability to welcoming everyone indistinctively and are doubtful on the extension to immigrants of the right to vote. The reason explaining these tendencies can be found within the genericity of this question: young people in Perugia are favourable to integration policies but, when facing the idea of less available social housing, job opportunities and welfare services, they are doubtful on whether to extend all the rights Italian have to immigrants.

Moreover, in our attempt to reconstruct the perception of social problems that shape social representations of immigration, we noted that young people living in Perugia tend to consider migrants as responsible to the spread of insecurity and social expenses. These results can be explained by the higher salience of immigration in the in public debates in recent years and by the amplification of this phenomenon through the media³⁸, that inflates prejudices against immigrants and non-EU citizens.

In this regard, another important outcome is that just a slight percentage of the interviewees (10%) wants to make friends with and deepen their knowledge of immigrants' cultures. One of the factors that is shared among the members of this small percentage is the high cultural capital. Thus, the hypothesis according to which culture is fundamental to dismantle ethnic prejudice has been confirmed.

From our research it emerges that, although Perugia is known as a

³⁸ A. Masini *et al.* (2017), *Measuring and Explaining the Diversity of Voices and Viewpoints in the News*, "Journalism Studies", pp.1-20.

multicultural city and ready to welcome people from all over the world, we found out that the young people living in the city at the beginning of the 21st century, especially the ones belonging to the lower-class, are interested more than everything in fighting for their individual rights, rather than building a more open and more inclusive society. To this extent, on the one hand, it has been noted that the group of welcoming people, though numerically inferior to the other three groups, is composed by youngsters characterized by high cultural capital. The same can be said of the indifferent people that are numerically inferior to the welcoming group. On the other hand, for both annoyed and hostile people, we noticed a reduction of the percentage of students belonging to the groups and a low cultural capital of their components. Moreover, in the hostile group also the percentage of unemployed people increases, and the economic conditions of the members seem to be the worst compared to the other groups.

All this data confirms the hypothesis of the research, namely that prejudices and negative attitudes toward immigration depend on the economic status. Our data are also useful to reflect on the ongoing political change in Umbria region. In the past, in a “red” region like Umbria, the relation between locals and immigrants was politically relevant and aiming to guarantee equal conditions and to abolish every kind of discrimination.

Nowadays, due to the crisis of the traditional political parties that led to a decline of political participation, the relation between youngsters and immigrants has lost its historical political content, as it emerges from the comments of the interviewees who were hostile to immigrants and who declared to belong neither to the right-wing nor to the left-wing.

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6. From Political Participation to Civic Participation. The Case of “Tutti per Roma” (“All for Rome”)

by *Andrea Millefiorini, Vito Marcelletti, Francesca Cubeddu*

1. Introduction

The research that we present here took place over a period of about two years, between 2018 and 2020, and has observed, analyzed and tried to interpret the sociological dynamics of a civic participation movement called “Tutti per Roma, Roma per tutti (“All for Rome, Rome for all”).

A multi-level method was used, with qualitative and quantitative data collection tools, as well as the ethnographic method of the participating observation.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the leaders of the movement and the most committed activists, while participants were asked to answer an online questionnaire (only a clear minority did so, but since the population, as we will see, is very homogeneous, the data can be considered reliable); finally, researchers participated in events organized by the movement and interacted within the Facebook activity, which, as we will see, is a bit the beating heart of the whole movement.

While by “political participation” we mean

an action that, set in motion by individual or group motivations, develops exclusively in relation to a social context, and has as its object problems related to politics. Such action necessarily takes collective forms, and has as its objective to intervene, directly or indirectly, in the processes of elaboration of decisions of the political system, or, in exceptional cases, to replace it¹

with the term “civic participation”, instead, we refer to

¹ A. Millefiorini (2002), *La partecipazione politica in Italia*, Carocci, Roma.

an action that, based on reasons of identity, personal cost-benefit ratio and altruism, is aimed at the pursuit of the general public good, and is conducted through associations, movements or organizations that do not compete politically with each other or with other subjects, political or institutional².

As it can be seen, while the first type of participation implies some form of competition with other political subjects (“has as its object issues related to politics”), the second is not characterized, at least in the first instance, by some forms of struggle for the achievement of political power, but only by forms of commitment, denunciation, involvement of other actors, in order to pursue the generalized public good.

Of course, between these two “pure” types of participation, which we can place at the extremes of an ideal continuum, there is a whole series of mixed types³ ranging from a maximum of political participation, with a minimum of civic participation, to a maximum of civic participation with a minimum of political participation. It would be possible, in fact, to construct a real classification of the many participatory experiences that have appeared in our country in recent decades, using precisely this criterion in order to define their forms and contents.

There is, for example, the expression “political civism”⁴ to designate those experiences of civic commitment that are structured alongside or in parallel with more direct political organizations (for example, city associations that after certain experiences decide to “take the field” in municipal elections by supporting some lists, or presenting their own candidates in civic lists).

The panorama of civic participation in Italy, in this period, shows a clear vitality, with different forms and ways of activation of different experiences. In fact, for some time now, there has been a growth, from North to South, of the phenomenon of civic participation⁵. This phenomenon affects cities of large, medium or small size indiscriminately, and even involves smaller centers and rural realities.

Italy has always been characterized by high levels of political participation, in parties or movements, but Italy had not been so, at least until yesterday, as far as civic participation is concerned⁶.

² M.C. Marchetti; A. Millefiorini (2017), *Partecipazione civica, beni comuni e cura della città*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

³ P. Lichterman; N. Eliasoph (2014), *Civic Action*, “American Journal of Sociology”, n. 3, pp. 798-863.

⁴ S. Rolando (2015), *Civismo politico*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli.

⁵ R. Biorcio; T. Vitale (2016), *Italia civile. Associazionismo, partecipazione politica*, Donzelli, Milano; G. Moro (2020), *Cittadinanza*, Mondadori, Milano 2020.

⁶ A. Millefiorini (2002), *La partecipazione politica in Italia*, Carocci, Roma.

In general, the panorama of civic participation in Italy shows in this period a clear vitality, with different forms and modalities of activation of different experiences⁷.

Particular interest arouses, in this framework, the case of the capital. Here forms of civic commitment aimed at improving the conditions of decorum, the care of the city, its common goods, its historical and artistic places, the spaces of aggregation, socialization and cultural activities have developed. Both at the level of associations of individual neighborhoods, organizations or movements extended to the entire Capitoline territory, dozens and dozens of new initiatives are counted, starting from the nineties and then especially since the early years of the new millennium, a sign of a revival, or rather the birth, even in Rome, of forms of civic sense and commitment no longer linked only, as had traditionally happened, to the world of associationism linked to specific interests (for example the protection of animals, or assistance to people in need, or limited realities of the neighborhood), but also, this is the real novelty, the desire to join for a public purpose, civil precisely, as the general public good⁸.

Among the various associations, organizations and movements that have flourished in recent times, it was decided to turn the attention of our research to the movement “Rome for All”, born in 2018. The reasons for this choice are the following. It is a movement that, while moving from typically civic motivations, also defines itself as “political” in its intentions and possible objectives that, in the not immediate future, it could set itself. This makes it particularly interesting, since one of the assumptions from which we start is exactly what, in the framework of contemporary democracies, and even more so in that of Italian democracy, civic participation seems to be taking on a substitutive and substitute role with respect to traditional forms of political participation. This leads to the hypothesis that the new forms of civic participation may in perspective assume a role of real political forms of participation, under completely new models compared to those that characterized twentieth-century political participation. A second but not less significant argument to justify the interest in “Rome for all” lies in the great innovativeness of the ways and forms through which communication takes place between simple interested people, sympathizers, activists, leadership group⁹.

⁷ T. Vitale (edited by) (2007), *In nome di chi? Partecipazione e rappresentanza nelle mobilitazioni locali*, Franco Angeli, Milano; R. Gubert; G. Pollini (edited by) (2008), *Il senso civico degli italiani*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

⁸ M.C. Marchetti; A. Millefiorini (2017), *Partecipazione civica, beni comuni e cura della città*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

⁹ M.K., V. Zeitner (2003), *Internet Use and Civic Engagement: A Longitudinal Analysis*, “The Public Opinion Quarterly”, n. 3, Autumn, pp. 311-334.

Of course the use of social networks is not at all a novelty for such a group. However, in the case in question, these tools also have an additional technical function, since they serve to convey forms of complaint and to raise awareness among political and institutional actors regarding the various and different situations of degradation or neglect into which the capital has been poured for several years now¹⁰.

The main objectives that we have set in undertaking the research, arising from hypotheses associated with them, implicit or explicit, are the following.

- To observe the evolution of the movement and its main dynamics, to evaluate if and how much those who have been involved in the “All for Rome” movement have had in the past other experiences of political participation or civic participation, both at individual and aggregate level; to observe if, among the participants in the movement, there are types of sympathizers or activists with new personal characteristics compared to those generally attributed to the “classic” type of political participant.

- To deepen the function of the “Facebook group” in the choice of the political lines of action of the movement; to analyze its role in the strategies of growth and expansion of consensus. Also observe the interactions on the Facebook group by identifying the issues of greatest collective interest, political references, civic culture and the urban context of reference of its participants.

- Finally, we will understand if and what effects the strong gender component has on the leadership group of the movement; if and how it can also represent an element of greater cohesion in the subsequent stages of the movement towards institutionalization and/or if it can constitute an element of imbalance, under different perspectives, for the good and efficient leadership of the movement itself.

The main hypothesis, finally, that has moved our intent in the research consists, as mentioned above, in verifying if, how and how much civic participation can apply, at least in the current framework of the capital, as a substitute, or even substitute, with respect to traditional forms of political participation. In other words, whether it has sufficient means, resources, motivations, etc. to fill the evident void of ideas, initiative and organizational capacity attributable to traditional political forces. Further hypotheses to mention are the following.

We expect to note:

- the attribution of greater significance and motivation towards civic participation than traditional political participation;

¹⁰ K. Lelo; S. Monni; F. Tomassi (2020), *Le mappe della disuguaglianza. Una geografia sociale metropolitana*, Donzelli, Milano.

- motivations to participation and commitment caused by a need to intervene to change a social context in which one does not recognize oneself and which is considered inadequate with respect to one's values, expectations and ideals;

- A female protagonism no longer subordinate, as often happened in the past, to the political visions and ideological currents of the twentieth century, but "secularly" oriented to the search for the "common good" and pragmatically turned to the general interest.

2. Short history of the movement and its organizational structure

"Tutti per Roma, Roma per tutti" (this is the original name, then became, more simply, "Tutti per Roma", "*All for Rome*") is a movement that currently has about 20,000 members, enrolled in the closed Facebook group, of which a few hundred active (operational). It was born before the summer of 2018, after a meeting between six friends: Emma Amiconi, Tatiana Campioni, Francesca Barzini, Valeria Grilli, Roberta Bernabei and Martina Cardelli. In that meeting, after having ideally and concretely agreed that the time had come to do something for a city abandoned for too long by the administrations, they decided to open a closed Facebook group to give those who wanted the opportunity to denounce, publish, bring to the attention of the group the serious situations of degradation, neglect, in which the capital has been poured for almost a decade.

Far from even remotely imagining what was going to happen, the six friends were beginning to equip and configure the interface of the Facebook site, when they were literally overwhelmed by a flood of requests for registration, which forced them to quickly review their initial project, and to devote body and soul to this creature that, almost not yet out of the belly of the child, was already screaming and pawing.

In short, it was necessary to organize to take care of and accompany the birth of a movement that was almost self-producing after the spark triggered by the intuition of the six professionals. Each of them also had their own job and family of their own. But being women, they also had the ability to cope with emergency situations, and to make do by sharing time, information, difficulties, and distributing equally the additional tasks unforeseen, but indispensable to stay behind the creature that required attention, answers, trust.

We would like to point out that the events we are going to give an account of are only the main ones in which the research group participated, since there were also others that we cannot account for here.

The “alberonian” phase of the *nascent statu*¹¹ was then managed, in that spring of 2018, with uncommon “midwifery” skills. The leaders decided that in order to give a robust and “audible” voice to the newborn movement, and to give everyone the opportunity to see, meet and recognize each other in a physical place, it was necessary to organize a public event. Which place is more suitable for this, if not Michelangelo’s Piazza del Campidoglio? On October 27, 2018, the first public event of the movement was held, which in the meantime had already risen to the national news and therefore enjoyed wide visibility on that occasion (about 10,000 people were present), which then served as a further sounding board to increase the number of members in Rome.

This first event was followed by an event organized at the Palladium Theater in Garbatella on February 20, 2019, in which several representatives of the world of waste management cycle skills and expertise took the floor. The movement had, in fact, taken a clear and clear content direction towards a position towards the Raggi Council on the problem of waste management (as can also be seen from the results of the quantitative survey, and from the analysis of interactions on Facebook). All the interventions proposed solutions that, starting from bases of great competence and knowledge of the problems, tried to go towards a definitive solution of the waste problem in the capital.

A second event in the Campidoglio was organized on June 27, 2019, with less participation than the first, but, above all, with the blatant separation from the movement of three of the six founding leaders, Tatiana Campioni, Francesca Barzini and Valeria Grilli. Plateale in the full sense of the word, as the leaders took the floor publicly to announce their exit. They thus openly exploded a series of problems that had already been brooding before among the leaders of the movement, linked both to questions of content and to different visions of the movement’s objectives and strategy. In summary, while Emma Amiconi preferred a “quiet” but constant strategy of expansion, the spills would have preferred more visible actions, with greater use of media, newspapers, etc. In addition, some wanted to orient the activities of the movement according to their previous skills and experiences. For example, investigative journalism, or becoming something similar to Fai (Italian Fund for the Environment).

Despite the defection of the three leaders, after taking stock in 3 or 4 meetings, it was decided to continue. A document was drafted that constitutes a bit of the watershed of the transition from the first of June 2019 to the post-June 2019.

¹¹ F. Alberoni (1968), *Statu Nascenti. Studi sui processi collettivi*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

Moving from the mobilization phase, of the nascent state, to the organizational phase had therefore created problems, which were overcome, however, at the cost, of course, of a painful separation.

On October 26, 2019, a walk on the Tiber was organized to protest against the degradation and scandal of waste. On January 29, 2020 it started, both through the traditional Facebook channel and - this time - also through the website of the movement, which in the meantime also became a dynamic tool for interaction, an initiative of civic monitoring of city lighting.

On July 1, 2020 a live Facebook meeting entitled “*Rome tomorrow*” was held, with representatives of the world of civic activism in Rome as the spokesman of “Liberare Roma” and the secretary of Cittadinanzattiva of Lazio.

Around the same time, the “Letter of Appeal to Political and Social Forces” was launched on the website, motivating it with the final consideration that «the exercise of political and civic participation begins well before the moment of voting and does not boil down to that alone».

On November 4, 2020 was held the live Facebook entitled “*Fermenti romani. Stories, energy and projects from the city that wants to change*”, with the participation of intellectuals, personalities from the world of politics and culture of the capital.

Finally, after this last event (at the date of when we draft this article) Emma Amiconi and her movement began to evaluate the possibility of proposing ideas, practices and direct experiences to be made known to future candidates for mayor in the next local elections to be held in Rome in 2021.

Over time, the organizational structure of the movement has taken shape in the following way.

The recognized leader of the movement keeps the main relations with external subjects and interlocutors, and draws the lines of the strategy to be kept, the perspectives to be identified, the paths to be followed and the civic-political initiatives to be undertaken. In this she is supported by the other two co-founders, Roberta Bernabei and Martina Cardelli, who assist her in the organization of initiatives and in the management of communication. Over time, the operative nucleus (steering committee) of which we mentioned above has been formed, composed of 30 professionals, divided if necessary also into working groups, with the task of carrying out activities of cognitive acquisition of the main problems of the city (always keeping in mind the feedback with the facebook group members), data and technical information on possible solutions to be proposed, and finally on concrete proposals to be activated, both as possible projects to be proposed to the public opinion and to the council, and as mobilization initiatives to be put concretely on the agenda and to be realized thanks to the participation of the active members on the Facebook group.

3. Civic activism as “Beruf”. Political and sociological outputs from the semi-structured interviews with the female leaders and some members of the coordination group of “Tutti per Roma, Roma per tutti”

3.1. A brief introduction

It was a day at the end of October 2018, it had just ended the sit-in against the degradation of the city and the embarrassing inability of the local government, which had seen more than ten thousand Romans gather under the watchword “Roma dice basta”: at that precise moment, the flashes of the photographers immortalize six Roman women at the height of their maturity, held in a collective embrace after a field day.

It was an appointment to which they had dedicated body and soul in the previous months (starting from the first meeting held in June 2018) and which had seen a response in terms of participation by “tired” and “disillusioned” Roman citizens far exceeding their most optimistic expectations. There was no stage in the square, as they announced in the previous days, because they didn’t have the money to rent it; there were no political flags, because they declined all offers of membership.

For some of these women in particular, the day of October 27, 2018 was a decisive step in a path of civic activism rooted in the Italian socio-political events of the 70s of the last century, and which therefore saw in the comforting response from below, thanks to the “tam tam” generated by their Facebook group (set up just a few months earlier and now has over 21,000 members) the symbolic consecration of years of hard work and commitment.

Emma Amiconi, spokeswoman for “Roma per tutti”, answering to a journalist of an important national newspaper, explained that it was a message of love for Rome, not only a protest against the current administration, but above all a stimulus to take Rome’s destiny in hand with seriousness and competence¹².

We met Emma Amiconi few months after the big demonstration in a phase of important reflection about the future of the new “civic-politic creature”. She has been one of the most authoritative witnesses of the birth of civic associationism in Italy, and through her answers she allowed us to reconstruct a picture of enormous interest on the first steps of the world of civic participation.

¹² https://roma.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/18_ottobre_18/roma-27-ottobre-manifestazione-campidogliotuttiperromapertutti-dd3051da-d240-11e8-9cd8-6bfe110c11f0.shtml

I entered the high school in 1971, and I left it in '76, the '68 was still there. I remember like it was yesterday the first day of school at the Mamiani high school with the Molotov bomb and police charges [...] and then came the political season of which I saw the birth [...]. In those years the community of Sant'Egidio was born, "Comunione e Liberazione" began and then we were born and with time we became "Cittadinanzaattiva". I was 16 years old when I attended the first conference on the "problems of the city" in February 1974. It was an epic event for the city of Rome [...]. The theme of the conference was about the problems of the city and the responsibilities of Christians. It was organized by the diocese of Rome but was not confessional at all [...] it was done together with the sections of the PCI, the unions and it was immense. Don Luigi Di Liegro, founder of the diocesan "Caritas" of Rome, was one of the inspirers [...]. It was prepared by decentralized sector conferences in the various quadrants of the city, I remember these meetings in which everything was discussed, beginning with the suburbs, the parishes, etc- [...]. The small group with which we began was not by chance called "Febbraio 74". We organized lists in schools to take care of the suburbs; we opened an office on Tiburtina because we worked with textile workers in particular. In those days there were real factories on Tiburtina, when I was 16 years old I remember going to flyers in front of the factories. Let's say that I have never been a member of a party, I have always been committed to this form of civic participation, even if the elaboration has been done over the years.

3.2. First considerations

"Roma dice basta", therefore, marks an important turning point in the biographical story of these women leader. A sort of Conrad's shadow line for people who were already not attracted to the spotlight, who suddenly found themselves with a capital of trust, esteem, credit, undoubtedly rewarding on a moral level, but at the same time emotionally burdensome in terms of rigor, commitment and results required not to fail these expectations.

In the past, for example, as some of them confided to us, either for character reasons or family needs, they had always preferred to take a step back from this kind of responsibility. Today, however, they feel the role and function of *advocacy* and *commitment* that they play in the movement as a fundamental part of their citizenship *service*; a commitment through which they have also rediscovered a trait of identity that had always been present, especially in their youth age, but now meets the conditions to fully express themselves. This helps them to face this demanding challenge with enthusiasm and professionalism, also and above all, as Emma Amiconi herself reiterated "for the responsibility we feel towards sympathizers and public figures who have approached the movement and who believe in our work".

In our opinion, the success of their experience opens up a glimpse of sure

socio-political interest on a type of *civic sensibility* and “political culture” declined to the feminine that for a long time, probably, acted and grew silently, and whose public “emersion” was revealing a new style and a new way of manifesting its own planning as well as its own dissent against a state of affairs considered unacceptable. It was clearly distant from any form of violent delegitimization of the opponent or political antagonism, but also from easy personalism and power struggles.

Mechanisms that instead punctually insinuated themselves into the “narrative” and “imaginary” of many movements also born from civil society. They started from the experience of the “girottoni” and “popolo viola” that between the end of the 90s of the last century and the beginning of 2000 contributed to put on the carpet important issues such as the internal selection of parties and the crisis of the same functions of parliamentary representation. Nevertheless, they were still movements where the cumbersome presence of men of entertainment and the strong preponderance of the male component in the leadership, probably contributed to generate a similar populist drift. The “negative identity” (in this case anti-Berlusconism), the image of an “arch-enemy” to be demolished, in the long run have become the only aggregating factor; the same problem that seems facing now the new political movement called “Le Sardine”.

It is no coincidence, in fact, that the political and media impact of the demonstration organized in a spontaneous way (without having the direct support of parties or trade unions), by this civic movement led by six women, was such as to inspire another civic movement born in Turin in the same period, the “Madamine” movement; also born as a protest against a policy that does not decide, succumbing to the moods of political and ideological minorities who often hold hostage the same *common good* that they claim to defend.

And yet, perhaps because it lacked an ideal inspiration that went beyond the thematic area around which the mobilization was organized, perhaps because it lacked civic culture and social planning linked to it (in this case we took to the streets to say yes to the TAV, the Italian high speed train), in fact the interest and attention towards the “Madamine” movement soon evaporated, as well as the promoters themselves seem to have returned to their previous interests and occupations.

This did not happen for the leaders of the “Roma per tutti” movement, who also went through moments of crisis and internal divisions from which they came out with patience and intelligence, to the point that today the movement seems to have found its own way and a clearer and more defined identity. This passage, however, took place at the price of a painful split.

Through the story of its protagonists we will try to retrace some of these critical passages. But we go with order.

3.3. *The “statu nascenti”*

One of the youngest leaders of the movement, Martina Cardelli, a professional publisher, who within the movement deals mainly with communication and relationships with personalities from the world of culture and political influencers active in social media, during the interview gave us a brief and sociologically dazzling account of the birth of the movement, indirectly shedding light on the mechanisms of selection and “construction” of internal leadership.

When a few months ago I was contacted by Valeria Grilli who is the wife of my uncle who died a few months ago, she told me «look we are gathering to understand what to do, because in this city the measure is now full» [...] At the meeting we were about forty people in this big living room [...]. Although at the beginning I was hesitant to make this commitment, even for lack of time, I went ahead with the meetings and I saw that the people were gradually parading. Some because they were against the political line, others because they were touchy, others because they had the impression of not being listened to [...]. Just to give an example when it came to choosing the logo, there were people who resented it because their proposal had not been approved. [...] Unfortunately not everyone accepts defeat. The six of us were the most tenacious, the most convinced and the most willing to discuss and not to take it for small things. So in practice the thing was born.

Martina Cardelli’s testimony highlights the importance of a specific side of the strongly distinctive character of female leadership; that is, tenacity and the ability to endure defeats and frustrations. As well as basic humility and the fear of not living up to such a great responsibility. Even more so the ability to discuss without imposing one’s own point of view, but leveraging authority, competence, commitment, strategy. In short, nothing further from the bravado and arrogance that characterize the leadership style of many men. And perhaps this is also one of the dividing lines separating the world of civic activism from the political world.

As Roberta Bernabei, art historian and publicist journalist, argues, perhaps the most passionate and combative representative of the current “triumvirate”.

A good leader must be a person capable of networking and surround himself with competent and reliable people. At least in this way he or she should be the leader I hope for. We need a person who does not overshadow the people next to him or her but who values them. In my opinion, for example, the fact that politics decision are increasingly being taken in locked rooms represents the big divide that there is today between politics and society. So the leader must open up to the outside world, listen and confront even those who have a different opinion before making decisions.

3.4. After the “*statu nascenti*”

As Emma Amiconi candidly confided to us, in the days following the sit-in in Piazza del Campidoglio, there was a series of enthusiastic comments from authoritative figures and requests for interviews in the main national newspapers, television programs and political talk shows, and even reports in popular magazines.

In short, the clamor and attention aroused by the protest initiative seemed to be the prelude to what many observers considered a possible and for some even hoped for a step forward; a shift from civil society to politics that, as a practice now consolidated since the end of the First Republic (with the most striking cases of well-known entrepreneurs and magistrates of the Republic) is marked by the so-called “*discesa in campo*”, or at least by the entry into the political arena.

Yet, as it became clear from the interviews, despite the various advances received, this hypothesis has never been taken into consideration by the leaders of the “*Tutti per Roma*” movement. As we have been able to understand, this is a profound conviction that has matured over time and is also the result of first-person experiences. Emma Amiconi, in a particular way, lived this ordeal and came out of it with a clearer idea of herself and her identity.

I enrolled for the first time at “*Partito Democratico*” when he was born in 2007, because it was hoped that it would become a federation of reality. At that time I had moved away from politics, for professional and life issues, my daughter had just been born, I had also put aside “*Cittadinanzattiva*” [...]. With a group of friends we applied for the “*Partito Democratico*” primaries, those for the constituent. I was also elected, I got a lot of votes and then I was appointed to the regional leadership of the PD, but at the third meeting I realized that it was not my place. I resumed working with “*Cittadinanzattiva*”, then I started working again with “*Fondaca*” of which I became director and then president. This lunge with the “*Partito Democratico*” only served to convince me that I already had my civic and political path clear I just had to start over from where I had stopped.

In essence, even from the responses of the other two leaders, it is clear that civic commitment has never been considered, as often happens, a springboard for a future landing in the political arena, but it is rather conceived, as clearly emerged during the qualitative survey, as the privileged ground where to bring together resources, skills, cultures, sensitivities present in civil society in function of “*common good*” and “*general interest*”.

Precisely for this reason it represents a precious link between civil society and democratic institutions, whose potential is, however, often culpably debased or lazily underestimated. From here comes the will they clearly

express of rebuilding a relationship of trust between citizens and political institutions through the growth and development of citizenship networks system (according to the role that Alexis de Tocqueville and Émile Durkheim assigned to the “intermediate institutions”, in order of preserving democracy from the risk of dictatorship).

According to their experience, the method and style of communication also plays an important role in this process of increasing trust between citizens and institutions. As Roberta Bernabei passionately claimed,

We have understood how fundamental is the concept of network in communication. We understand why Salvini spends thousands of Euros with the renowned “La bestia”. We do not have the money that Salvini has so it is even more essential to network with each other, and in this meeting we asked for support to these very popular figures on social media, they also wanted to see us, so we wanted to have a live meeting. Because then the fundamental thing is to be people who give trust, which represents an enormous capital that today is more fundamental than ever. When we saw 10,000 people at the first event we were incredulous, but then we realized that we are credible people. Because we are people [...] not in search for consensus at all costs.

3.5. The break and the beginning of “phase two”

As Martina Cardelli and Roberta Bernabei recall, between the third and fourth meeting for the reasons mentioned above there was an evident skimming that then led to the arrangement of the six leaders with whom the movement presented itself at the event. From then on, however, not everything is going in the right direction.

We continued to hold meetings once a week. Each of us did a part of the work, after which there was a kind of fracture with respect to the general vision of the movement, so three of us, Emma and Martina and I had a more open vision, even of leadership, in the sense of opening up to people who had joined us over time and had expressed the desire to join us [...]. The others instead had a different vision, they wanted to keep the six of us as an exclusive nucleus and maybe create an association. In essence they had a different idea of how to manage the second phase [...]. Consequently, there was a phase shift so that Emma and Martina and I were more cohesive and we started phase two.

One of the most critical and delicate passages of this second phase was the choice to open up to a greater involvement of the citizens, thus favoring a series of debates and comparisons sometimes with heated and polemic tones with the base of the sympathizers who approached the movement through the Facebook group.

In this phase two we involved some people who, starting from facebook, which is a very powerful tool, started to follow us, and then we started to make open meetings, in which we invited to participate those who followed us on facebook group [...]. There was also a skimming, and we formed a coordination group consisting of about thirty people with different skills, there is an urban planner, an architect who makes projects for the city of Rome, just to give some examples. An economist who works for a famous bank [...]. Shortly, all people who either have finished working and therefore have free time, or are still working but are available for a sense of civic responsibility, compared to the disastrous situation we are facing.

We also had the opportunity to speak with three authoritative members of the “coordination group”: Laura Barbieri, Susanna Spafford and Luigia Mirella Campagna, who during our meeting, a few days before the “lock-down” due to the “Covid emergency”, highlighted the pitfalls and difficulties encountered in the transition to phase two. Among these difficulties there are no exceptions to the organizational deficiencies and some slowness in making decisions that characterized the previous structure. According to the economist Luigia Mirella Campagna,

there was an objective difficulty in moving from the unexpected success of the event “Roma dice basta” to the creation of a structured organization. [...] Hence the misalignment with respect to a working method that was perhaps a bit too centralized [...]. It was also unclear the program and the direction to follow, and all of us were dependent on the founders [...], so this working method may have alienated some sympathizers, since transition to step two maybe took too long, and during this phase lacked a common idea of what to do. Then there was the problem of political positioning, the decision to take sides led to a series of defections by people who hated politics or who were siding with the center-right.

Beside this critical analysis over the delicate transition “from movement to institution”¹³, one point on which the three representatives of the coordination agree is the love and enthusiasm for the world of civic activism and the working atmosphere and method they found in “Roma per tutti”. In particular, lawyer Susanna Spafford, who has always been involved in the civic and political movement, emphasizes the operational and horizontal dimension based on cooperation and the division of tasks according to each person’s competence:

there are those who are experts in the care of green areas, those who are competent in waste disposal. Then there is always talk about who goes to buy stuff and material

¹³ F. Alberoni (2014), *Movimento e istituzione. Come nascono i partiti, le chiese, le nazioni e le civiltà*, Sonzogno, Venezia.

for events. The communication staff of “Tutti per Roma” for example is entrusted to people who have made communication all their lives, and this is certainly an important opportunity to learn new things. Then in this civic movement there is a strong confidence in the competence of people, so there is the opportunity to speak and express our point of view without vetoes or restrictions, although then there is Emma who pulls the strings and dictates ways and times [...] But this is also an important competence that comes from the fact that she has organized working groups for life and for this reason everyone recognizes this role.

In the end, as pointed out by Luisa Barbieri, who has been working for a long time in an important trade union, this attitude and cooperative method among peers is in stark contrast with the pinstripe communicative style and hierarchical approach she has experienced in her recent militancy within trade unions and left-wing political parties.

3.6. A “civic capital” to defend and enhance

However, one of the main problems in the transition from protest to proposal is the complexity and risk associated with the decisions that are taken. This happens, as Luigia Mirella Campagna pointed out,

because it is one thing to point out a problem, to gather consensus, but clearly when it comes to proposing solutions, there are always other possibilities than a series of alternative solutions to those proposed, which inevitably create distinctions and divisions.

In any case, they were not afraid to take a clear line on the waste scandal, stressing the need to create an integrated waste disposal cycle, and a new industrial policy to improve an essential service for the health and quality of life of Roman citizens, now that old public companies are simply collapsing due to waste and corruption of local governments. So the decision to draw the public’s attention to urban decorum, to put the focus on the issues of waste disposal system and public green areas, avoiding any form of customization, and, consequently, to put in a bad light the mayor of Rome, Virginia Raggi (even at the cost of losing out in terms of media exposure and political consent) responds to a moral conviction strongly shared.

Political debate is seen by those female leaders as a means to promote public interest, not the search for consensus at all costs.

Hence the choice to become a channel of communication between citizens and political institutions. Also for this reason they decided to accept the invitation of the Mayor of Rome Virginia Raggi in February 2019, who

opened the doors of her rooms to the leaders of “Roma per tutti” for a confrontation. On that occasion they brought with them a photo album with 600 photographic testimonies of the degradation of the city, coming from different areas and municipalities established after a careful selection, and gave it as a gift to the mayor. As Barbara Bernabei told us, «these were all kinds of emergencies, a real encyclopedia of degradation».

Also for this reason, they decided to undertake a path of in-depth study, research, comparison with experts and actors involved in various ways, while, in the meantime, they have put in place initiatives of various kinds: from the demonstrations, to the elaboration of first proposals, the creation of group actions that have acted in civil and criminal law against AMA Roma S.p.A.¹⁴, up to participation in public meetings and the organization of conferences, such as the one at the Palladium Theatre in February 2019. Then they wrote a proper notebook about waste issue named “La gestione dei rifiuti. Viaggio guidato fra Roma Capitale e Regione Lazio”¹⁵.

The text, completed in September 2020, is the result of almost two years of research, study and deepening of one of the working groups of “Tutti per Roma” that, particularly in recent months, has dedicated a lot of time and energy to this not easy task.

For “Tutti per Roma”, anyway the problem of waste and more in general the issue of urban decorum isn’t just a matter of touristic image.

As Roberta Bernabei reminded us, neglect and the absence of urban decorum is also a carrier of moral degradation. A bit like the theory of the “window with broken glass”, whose presence becomes a tacit legitimation of illegality:

That’s why a city like Rome that today is so dirty and unliveable contributes to the moral degradation of the citizen, because not everyone has access to the resources available to us privileged citizens, not everyone has the privilege to have studied, to have deepened the knowledge of socio-cultural phenomena, so this state of abandonment in which they pour public spaces, this absence of beauty, of common good, produces even more negative consequences on the behavior of people and their political culture.

¹⁴ With the support of Cittadinanzattiva Lazio’s lawyers, Tutti per Roma formed a group action, made up of more than 100 citizens, which filed an application for the repetition of the T.A.R.I. (the roman waste tax) against “AMA Roma S.p.A.” for failure to collect and/or partially remove waste from the bins in the street, and a criminal complaint against AMA Roma S.p.A. for damage to the environment, to health, to the health of the places and sites of the inhabited city, to the road network and parking hindered by waste in the street and to the dignity of every Roman citizen.

¹⁵ <https://tuttiperroma.com/i-quaderni-di-tutti-per-roma-roma-per-tutti>.

Therefore, to promote a great change and to reverse this dangerous trend, the most important act is to engage in a struggle at every level of public life, starting with civil society, where those women activists are working for a cultural change in political narrative. A few months ago they created a new website, and created several working groups, each with a theme that together form a sort of manifesto on the idea of “sustainable city” sponsored by “Tutti per Roma”: environment, culture, productive activities, social fabric, urban qualities, new governance, and so on.

4. Quantitative research

Quantitative research was conducted through a questionnaire in Google forms, consisting of 25 questions divided into three different sections: I. Socio-demographic information; II. Urban decorum and civic engagement; III. Education and political culture

The questionnaire was sent with a covering letter, with the specifications of the research and the aims, to all the signatories of the appeal of the movement Tutti per Roma, Roma per tutti and to the coordination of the movement. The link containing the questionnaire was sent on 5 August 2020 from the email address tuttiperroma@gmail.com, for privacy reasons, to 548 recipients, of which 15 emails were returned. The administration of the questionnaire took place until 15 September, the deadline for delivery. 119 responses were collected from a sample of 533 subjects (22.3%).

Although there was a low adherence to the initial estimates, through the answers to the questionnaire it was possible to refute some of the hypotheses expressed in the theoretical part and to corroborate some theses that emerged from the interviews with members of the movement.

In order to validate the answers obtained, it was considered relevant to carry out a final interview with the movement’s parent company, Emma Amiconi, who found that the answers found are fully representative of the entire movement.

The answers given by the 119 subjects highlighted different characteristics of the movement All for Rome, Rome for all, moreover, the data that emerged read in sequence show a logicity and consequentality in the answers. From the first area of the questionnaire, Socio-demographic information, it can be seen that the majority of the participants, 74%, are women (graph 1), aged between 55-64 and 65 and over, respectively, 44% and 30% (graph 2). Moreover, 99% of the members are Italian nationals (Graph 3) and married, 48.7% (Graph 4).

42% have a master’s degree, 26.9% have a postgraduate degree and

22.7% have a secondary school degree (Graph 5). The working condition (Graph 6) is related to age and educational qualifications, in fact, 33.6% are full-time employees and 31.1% are retired. In addition, 62% have children (Graph 7).

When asked about the Town Hall to which it belongs, although the members come from all the Municipalities, there is a majority (Graph 8) living in I (28.6%) followed by II (17.6%), III and IX (10.1%). Municipalities which, in relation to the income of their inhabitants, are considered, by the data of the Municipality of Rome, central and well-off.

The data of the I section allow us to define the trend of the subjects of the movement and lead us to be able to read and interpret the data of the II and III area. The members of the movement are subjects with a high level of education and good competence. As the majority of them are close to retirement or in retirement age, they have a different perception of the urban context, quality of life, social and political dimension. Variables that, together with being women and with children, most likely lead them to have a different reading sensitivity of some phenomena.

The analysis of the other areas reveals a strong civic interest motivated, also, by the interests of the movement itself. Graph 9 highlights how the biggest issue of interest of the movement is Waste Management (63.9%), a subject dealt with by the movement itself in several campaigns. This can be seen in relation to the answers in graph 10, where the main actions of the local administrators are: urban regeneration plan of the suburbs (37%); integrated waste disposal system (31.1%) and the usability of green areas (20.2%).

A reading of the problems that lead 65.5% to hold the Local Administrators responsible for the city's problems (Graph 11), to indicate the citizenship networks (45.4%) as the most effective tool to influence from below (Graph 12) and to observe that the main quality that an Administrator should possess, as can be seen from Graph 15, is the ability to choose collaborators and delegate (45.3%).

It is significant that 60% of the respondents of the movement (Graph 13) are participants of groups, other movements and associations. In addition to the civic movement (39%) they belong to political groups (10%), solidarity and human rights associations (7%) and religious groups (3%, Graph 14).

A characteristic that allows us to explain how 52.1% of respondents consider reception and inclusion a preponderant value (Graph 16).

The main channel of approach to politics for the members of the movement were for the majority (Graph 18) youth political movements (18.5%), followed by associations and voluntary groups (17.6%), family (16.8%) and school (15.1%). Answers that make us understand how the participation and political interest of the movement All for Rome, Rome for all is not current

but is based on previous knowledge and political skills that can also be considered in relation to the degree.

The main channels of political information used by the majority of the movement, 67.2%, are National Newspapers (Graph 19), a response that confirms not the competence given by the qualification but mainly related to age. Variable that as far as the choice of medium is concerned is a weighting factor.

95% of the respondents follow (Graph 20) with interest the political events of the country, given that it fully responds to the interest observed so far.

48.7% place hope in the political strength of the Democratic Party (Graph 21) and 25.2% consider the Prime Minister to be the most authoritative and trustworthy figure at the moment (Graph 22). Variable that has created a dispersion of responses since, as can be seen from the percentages in the graph, there is no precise figure preponderant.

Graph 23 allows us to observe how the respondents themselves indicate 61% that they believe their commitment is linked to their political sensitivity.

Finally, the last Graph shows how political sensitivity to environmental issues, also analysed previously, is actually a mission of the movement: 59.7% see environmental sustainability as the measure to be adopted and from which to start again for the relaunch and governance of the country.

In the contingency tables an attempt has been made to relate gender and educational qualifications to the other variables.

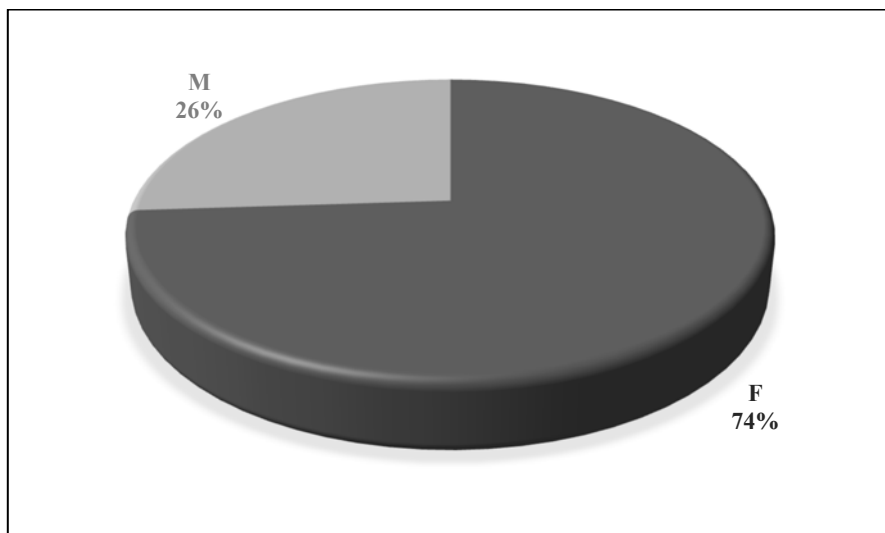
Table 1 shows how sex, despite the fact that there are more women in the sample, is a predominant variable in the interest of political events, equal to 68.9% compared to 26.1% of males.

In the other tables the incidence or possible incidence of the qualification on the other variables is analysed.

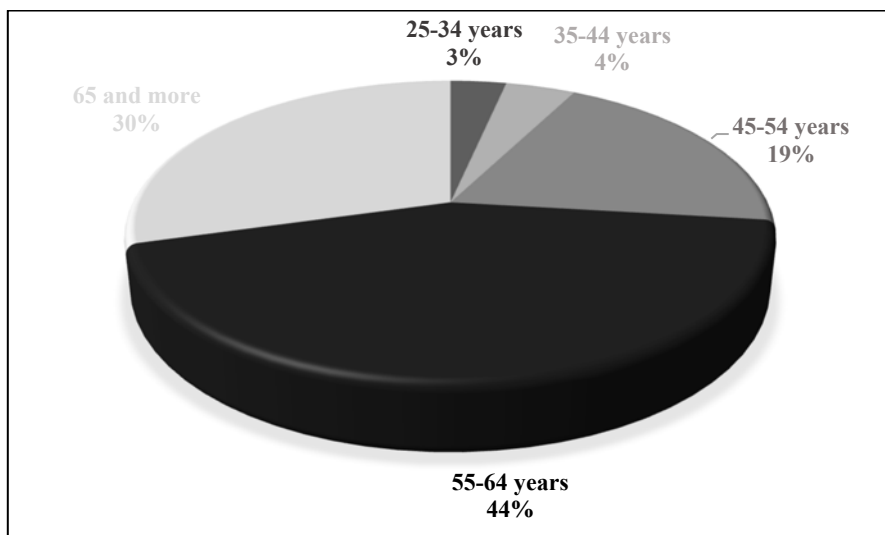
Table 2 shows how the qualification can characterise the choice of the main quality that an Administrator should have. It is noted that the “ability to choose collaborators and delegate” mode is chosen more by those with a Master’s degree (20.2%), followed by secondary school (13.4%). This choice is motivated by the capacity acquired by the degree but also by the skills acquired during that course. The Master’s degree allows the acquisition of specific skills for a managerial or managerial position, while the diploma, especially the one issued by technical institutes, allows direct access to the world of work as it is a qualification considered to be a guideline and specialisation of the various categories as it provides practical skills for immediate employment. The variable qualification related to age makes it possible to better motivate this response.

The qualification is also a variable that can explain, in addition to age, the choice of National Newspapers as the main political information channels

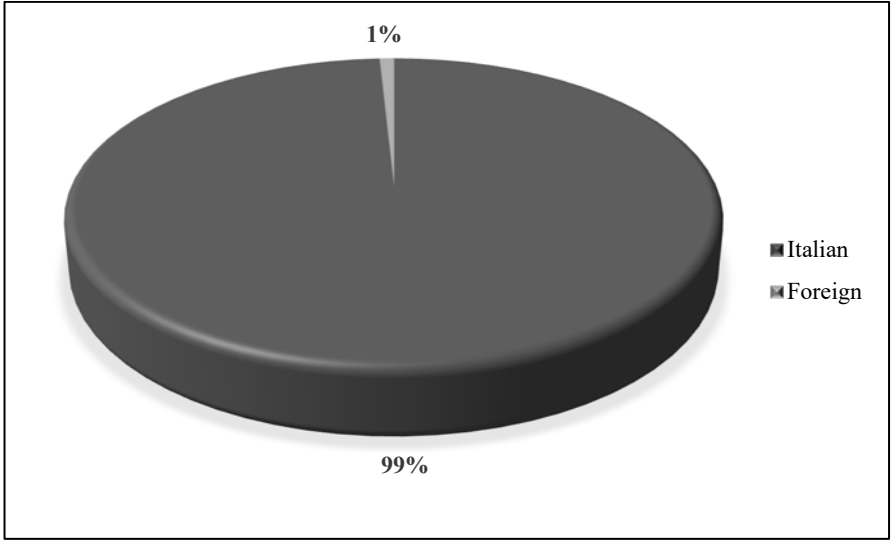
used, 30.3% have a master's degree and 17.6% a postgraduate degree (Table 3). Finally, Table 4 shows us how the choice of the Prime Minister as an authoritative and trustworthy figure is more likely to be made by those who have a diploma (25.2%).



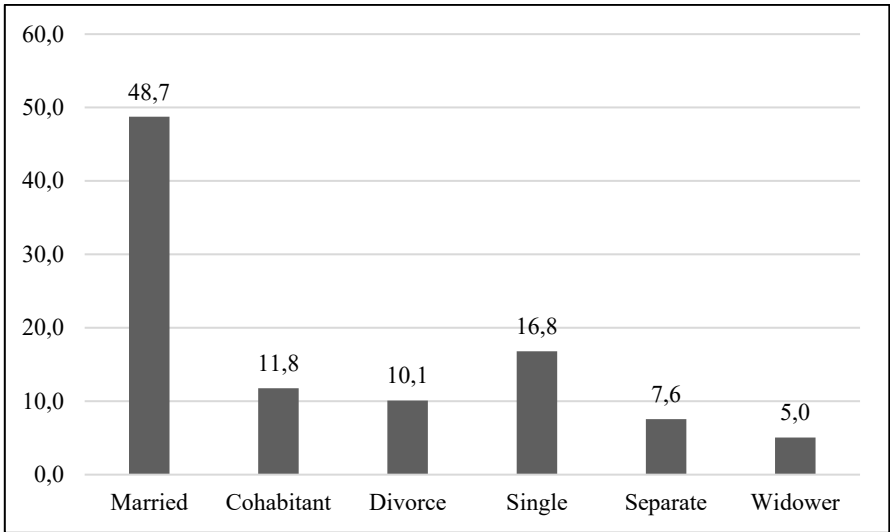
Graph. 1 - Sex



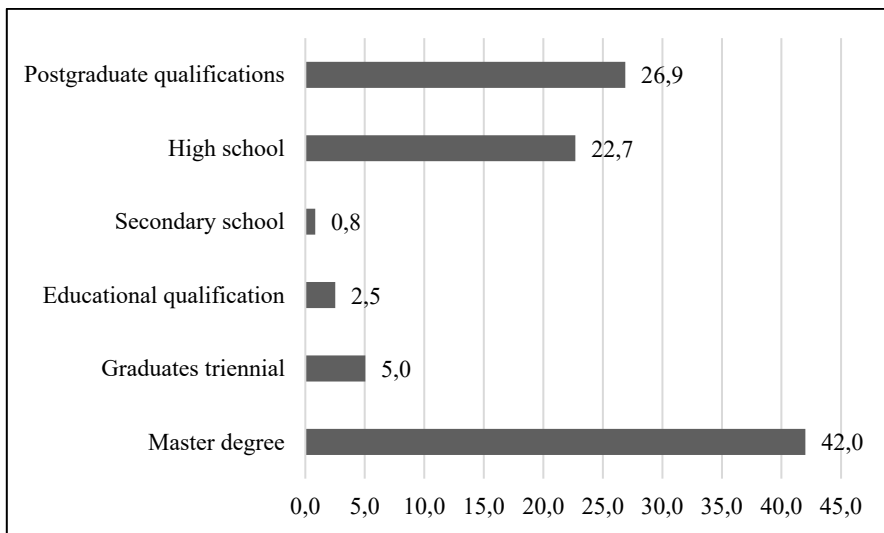
Graph. 2 - Age



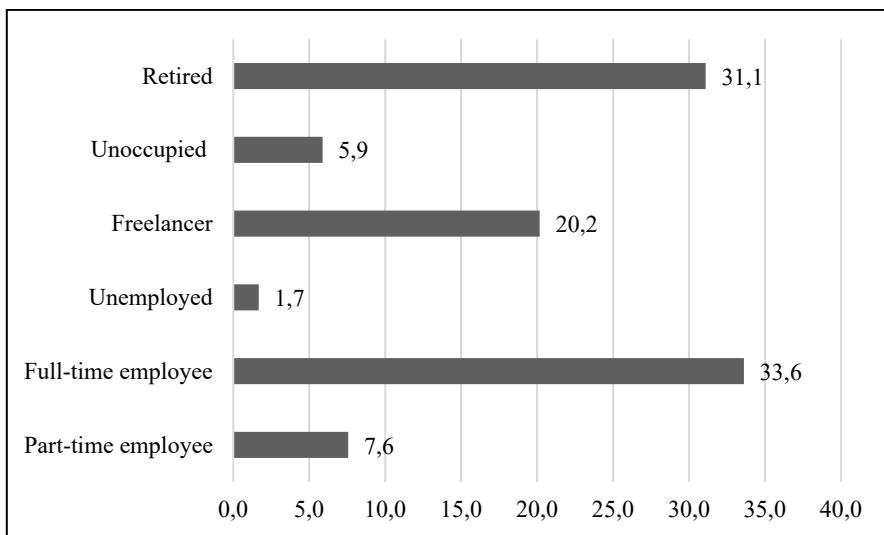
Graph. 3 - Nationality



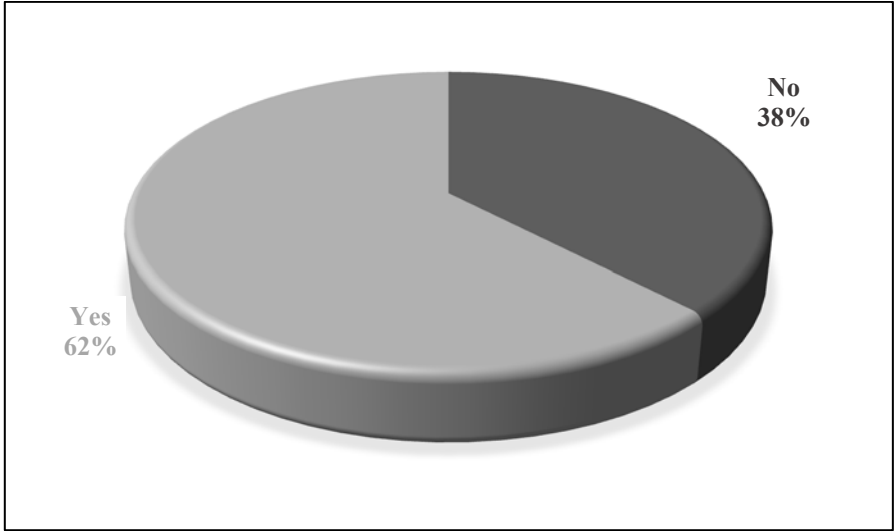
Graph. 4 - Civil Status



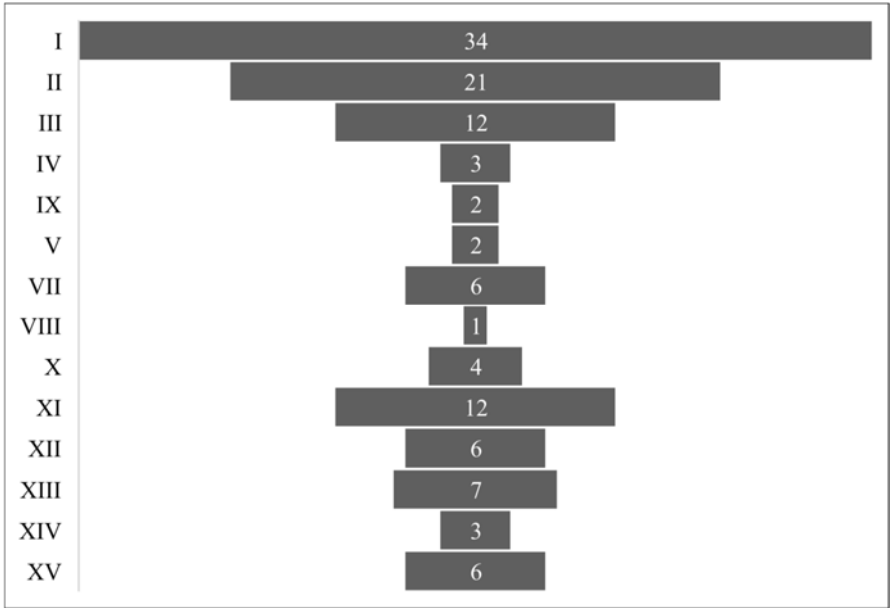
Graph. 5- Educational attainment



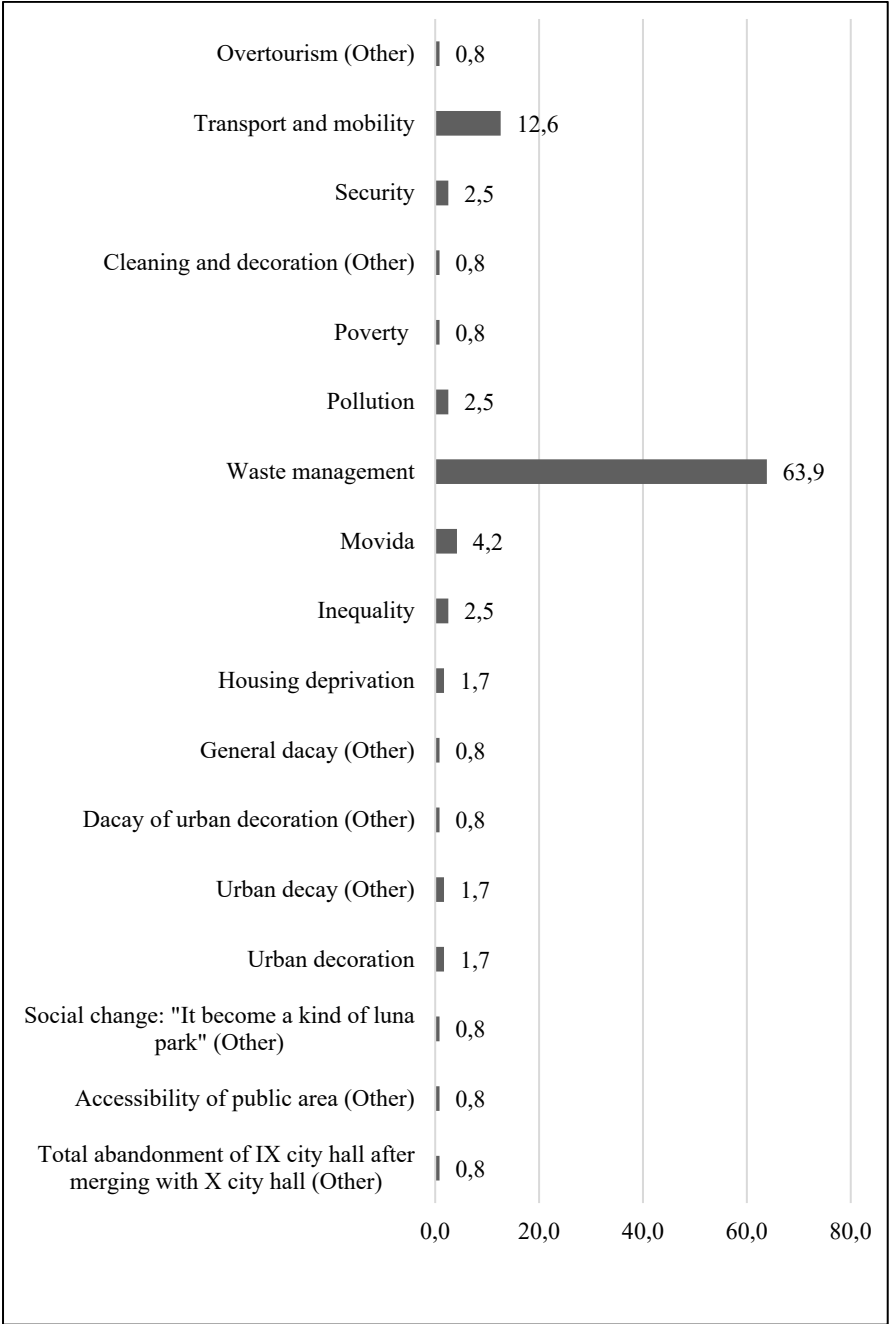
Graph. 6 - Employment status



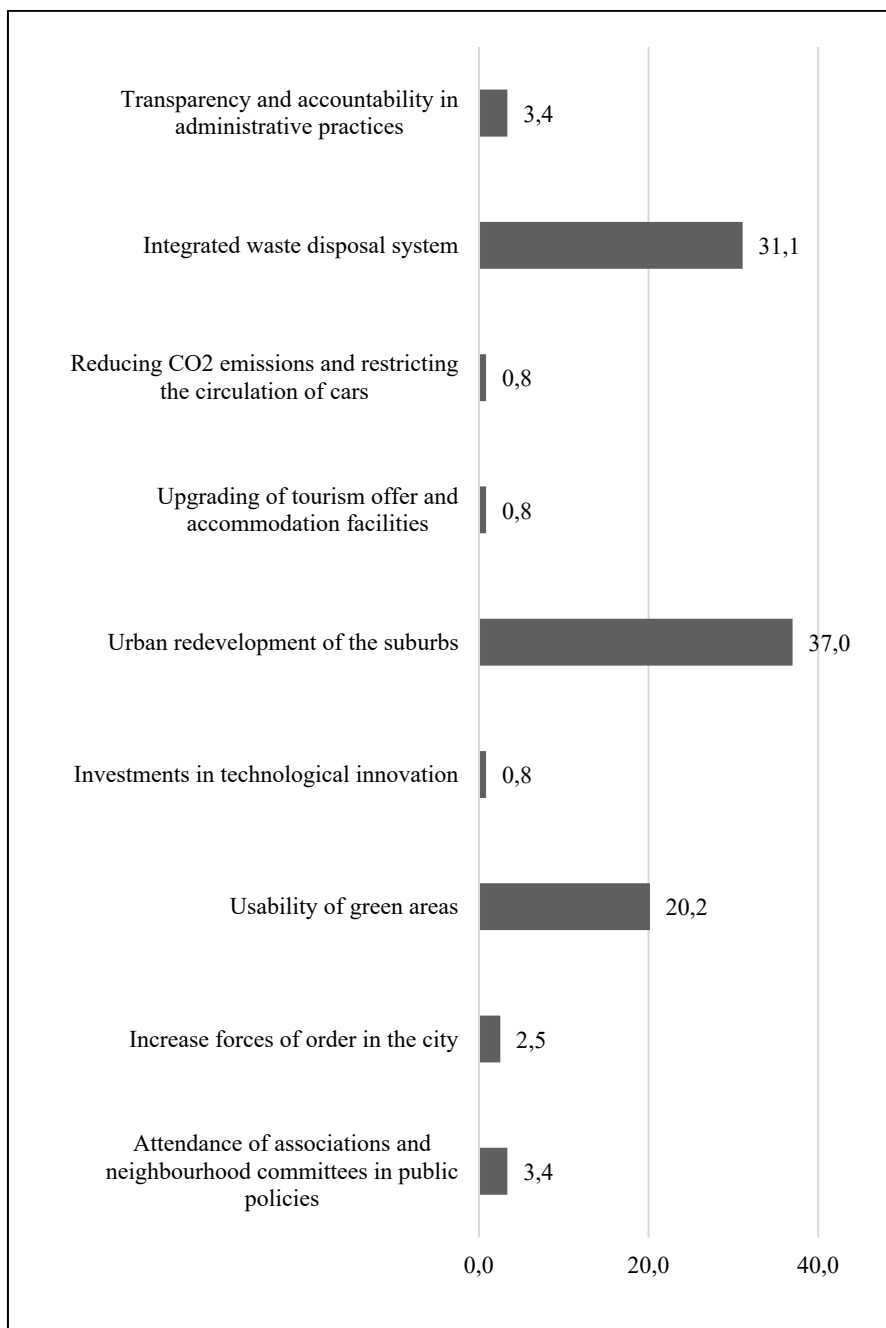
Graph. 7 - Has Sons



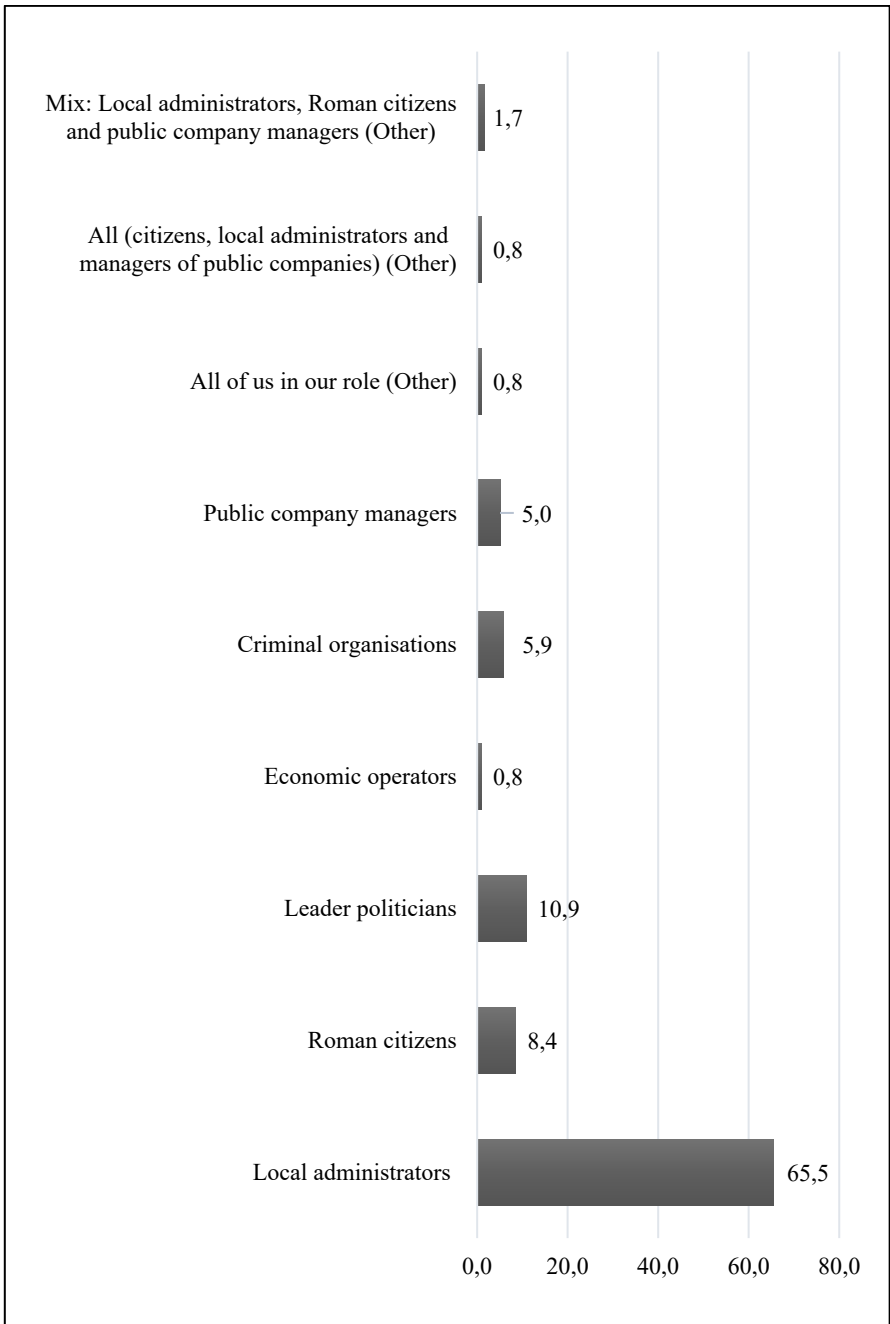
Graph. 8 - City hall



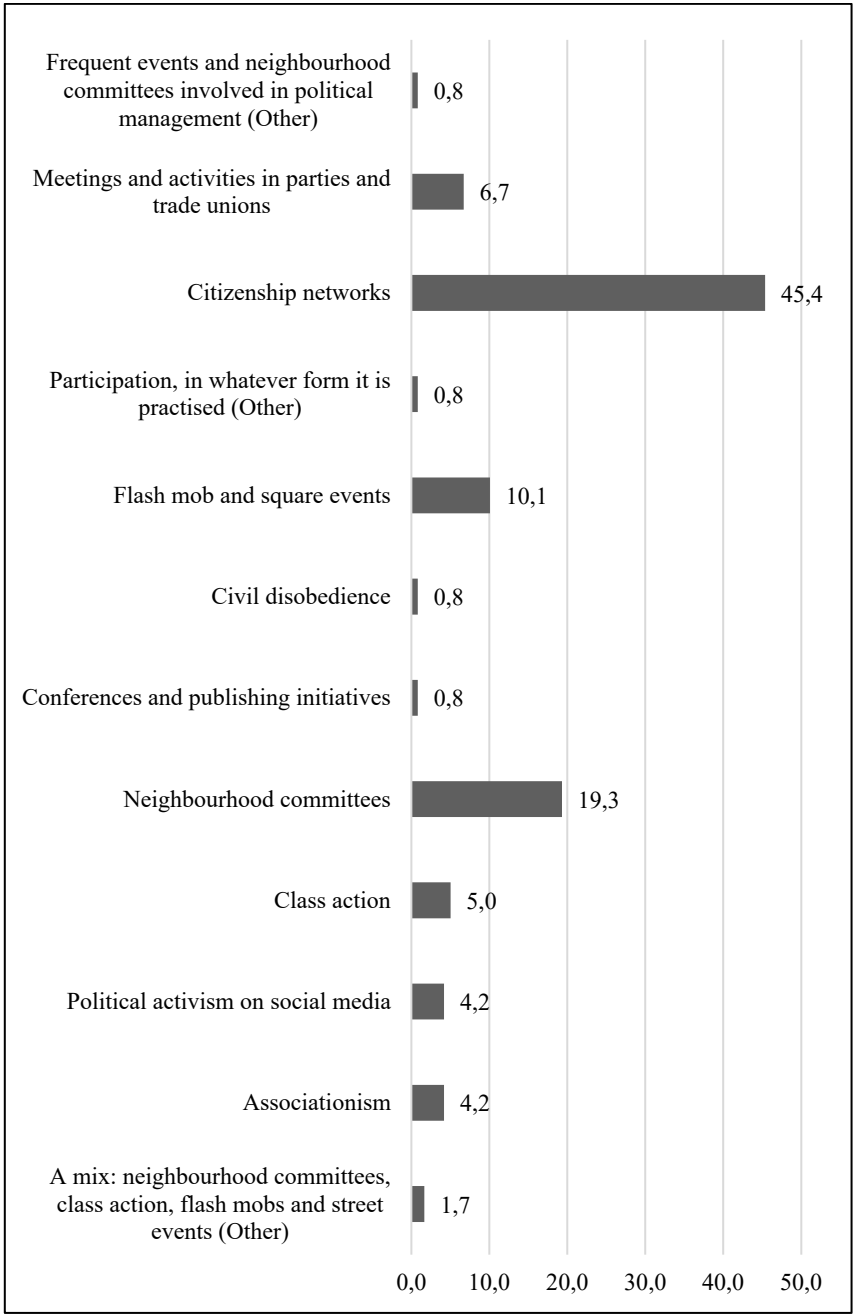
Graph. 9 - Problems in the City hall



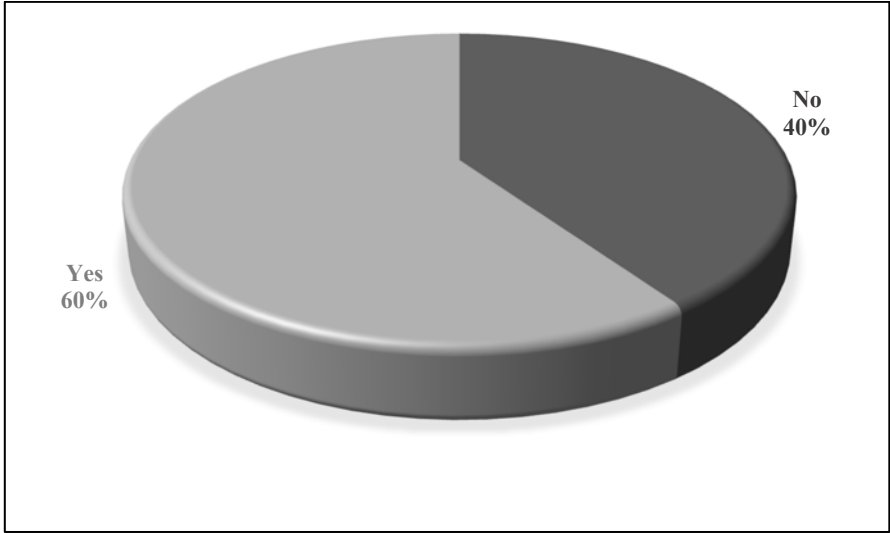
Graph. 10 - Interventions that the city's administrators should urgently carry out



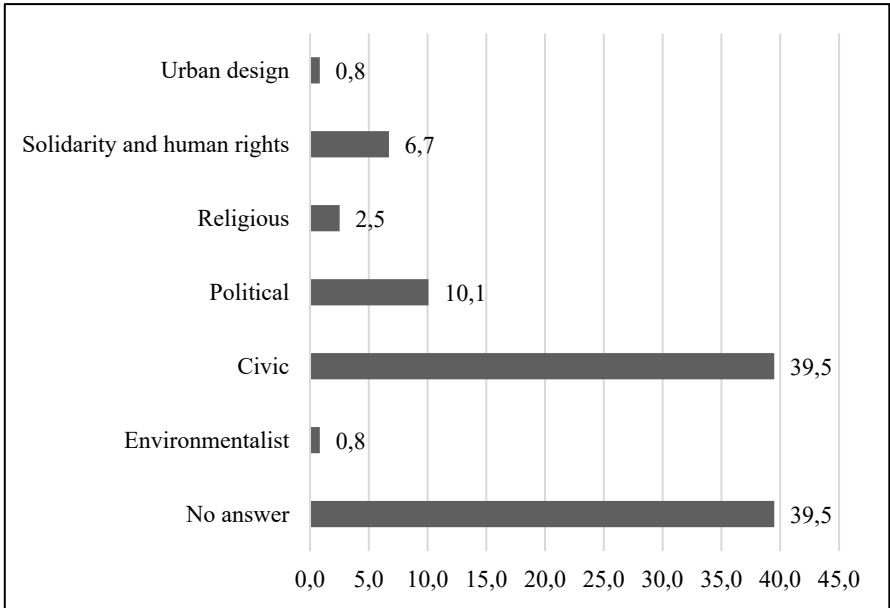
Graph. 11 - Main responsible for the city's problems



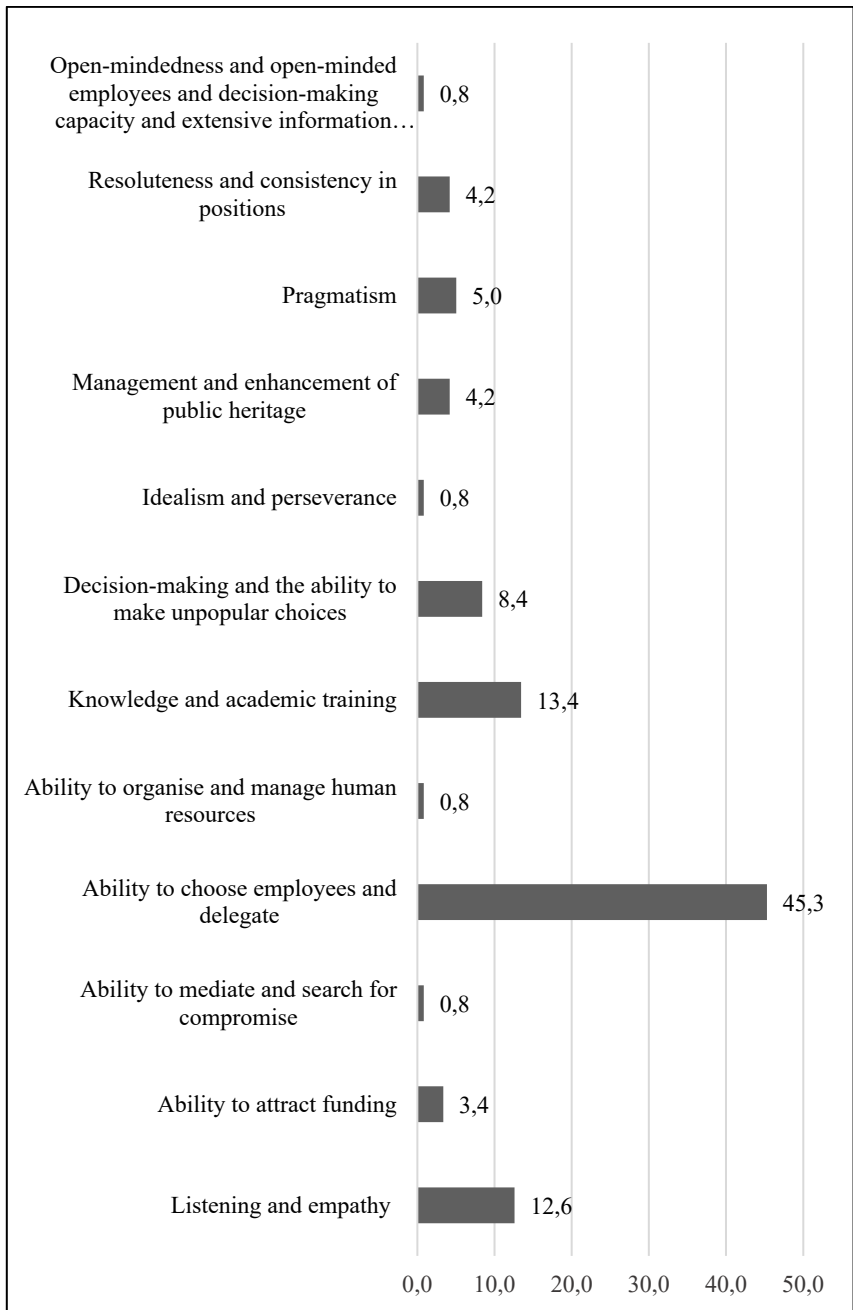
Graph. 12 - The instrument considered more effective to influence the Government's decisions from law



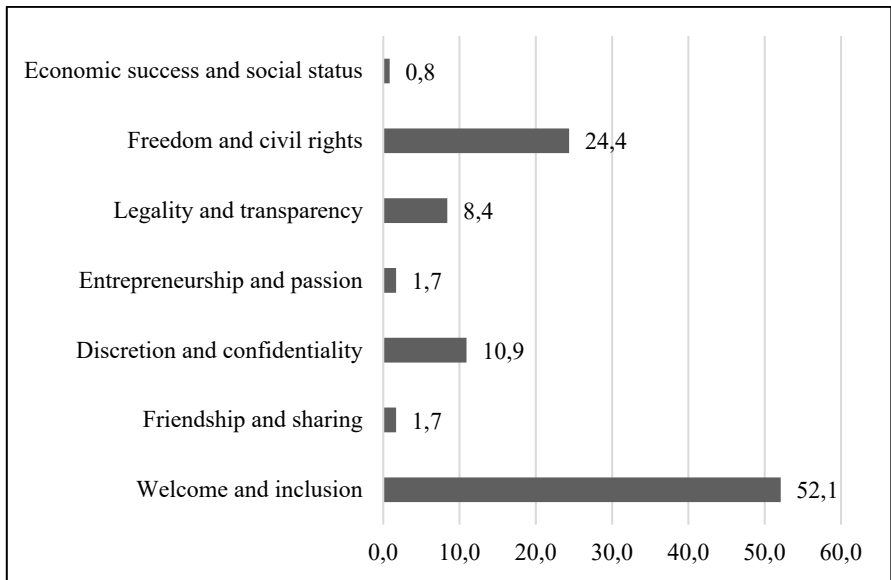
Graph. 13 - Current participation in Group, Movements or Associations



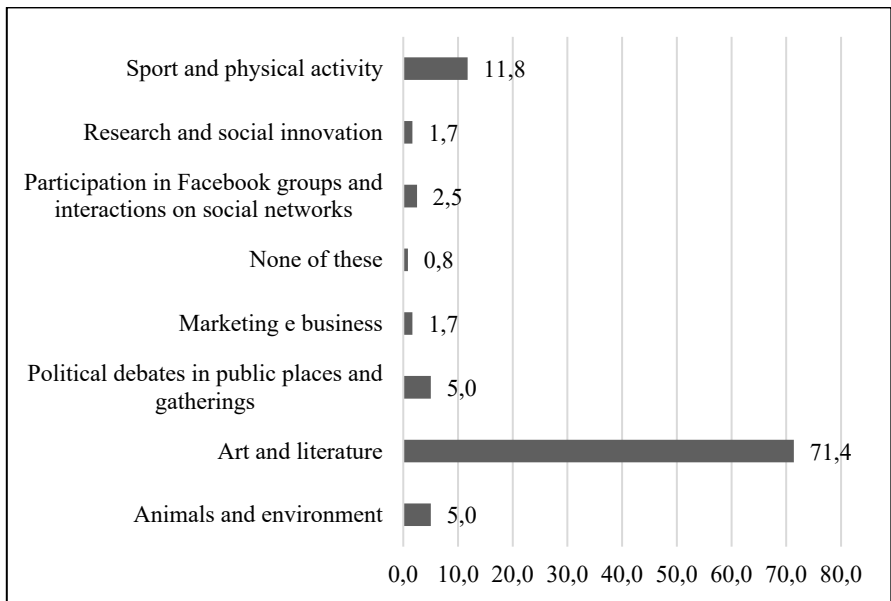
Graph. 14 - If yes, what group, movement or association is involved?



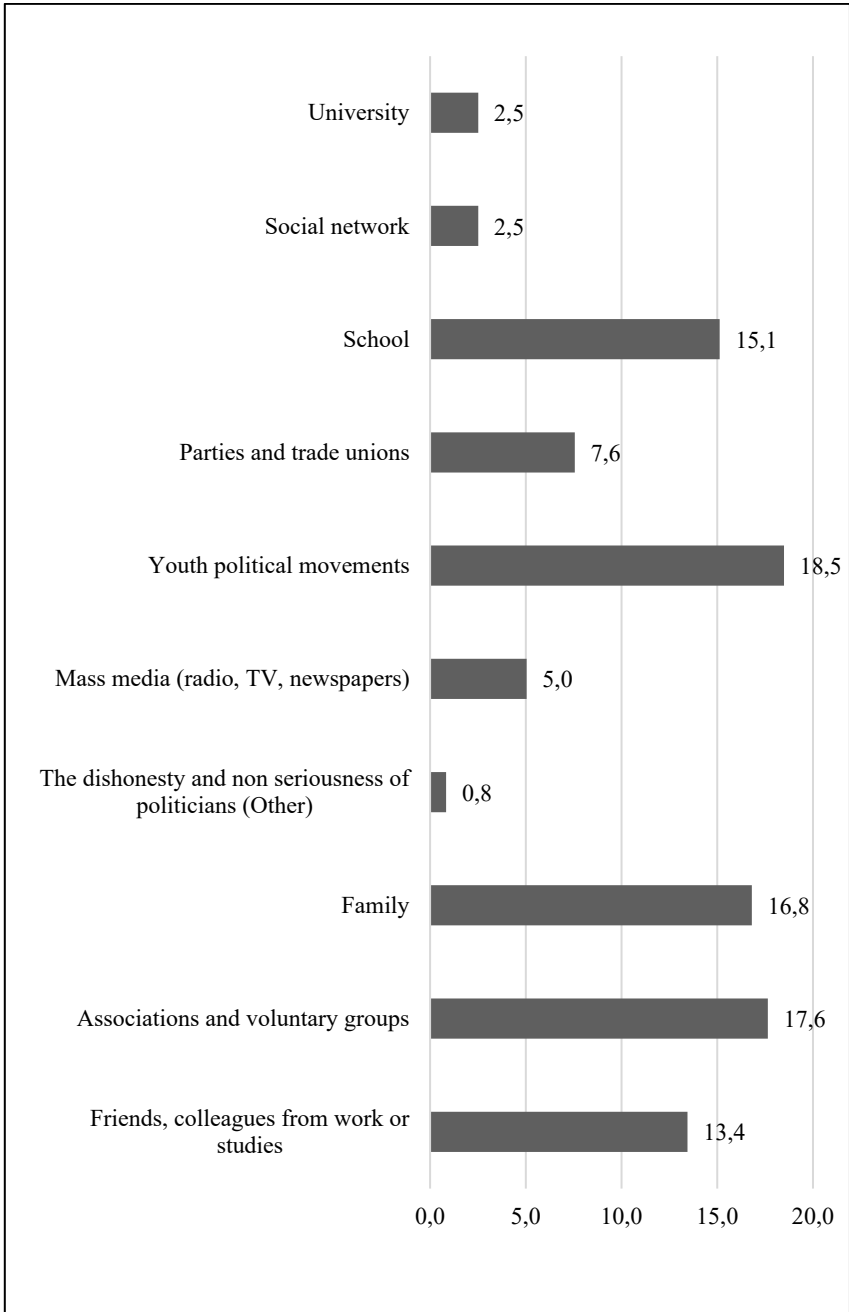
Graph. 15 - Qualities that administrators should have and that they do not prove to have



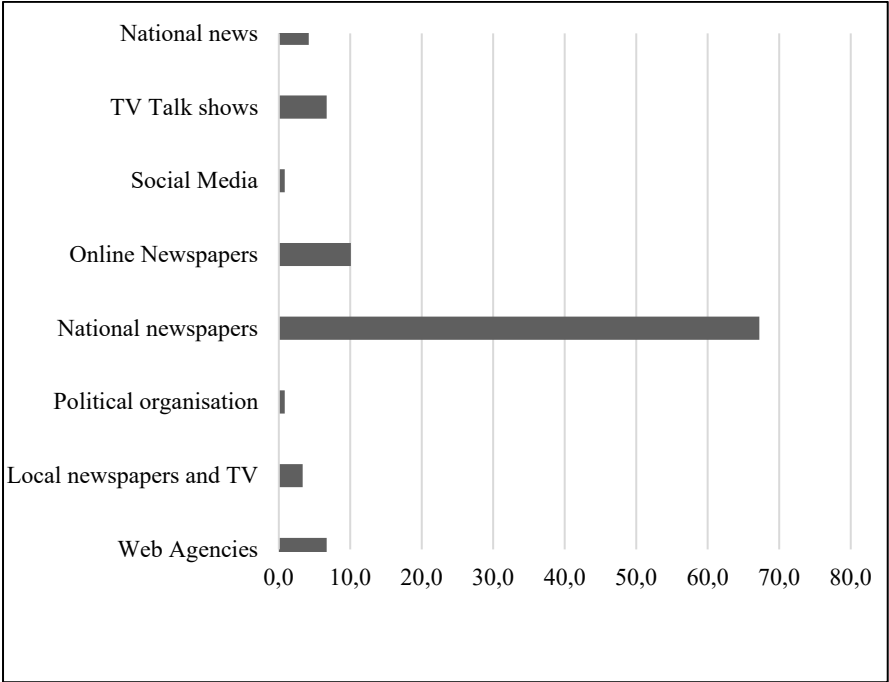
Graph. 16 - Values that are considered more akin to one's character and sensitivity as a citizen



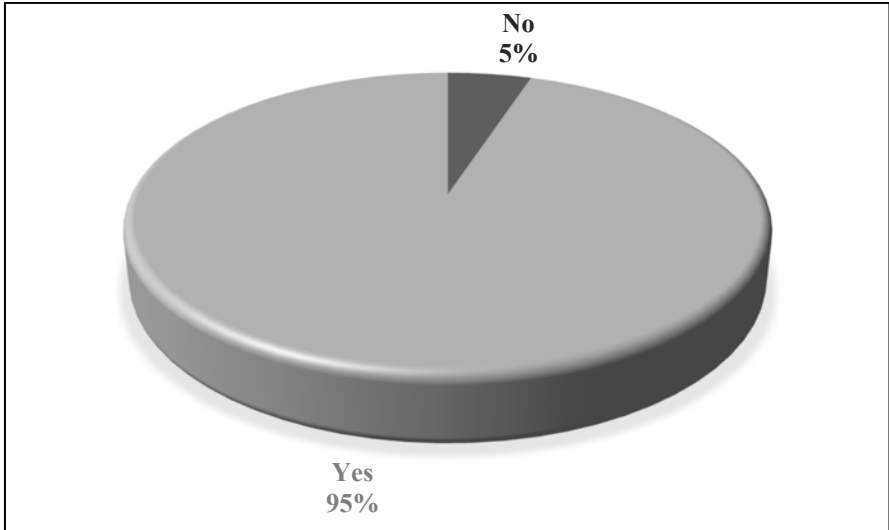
Graph. 17 - Activities and interests



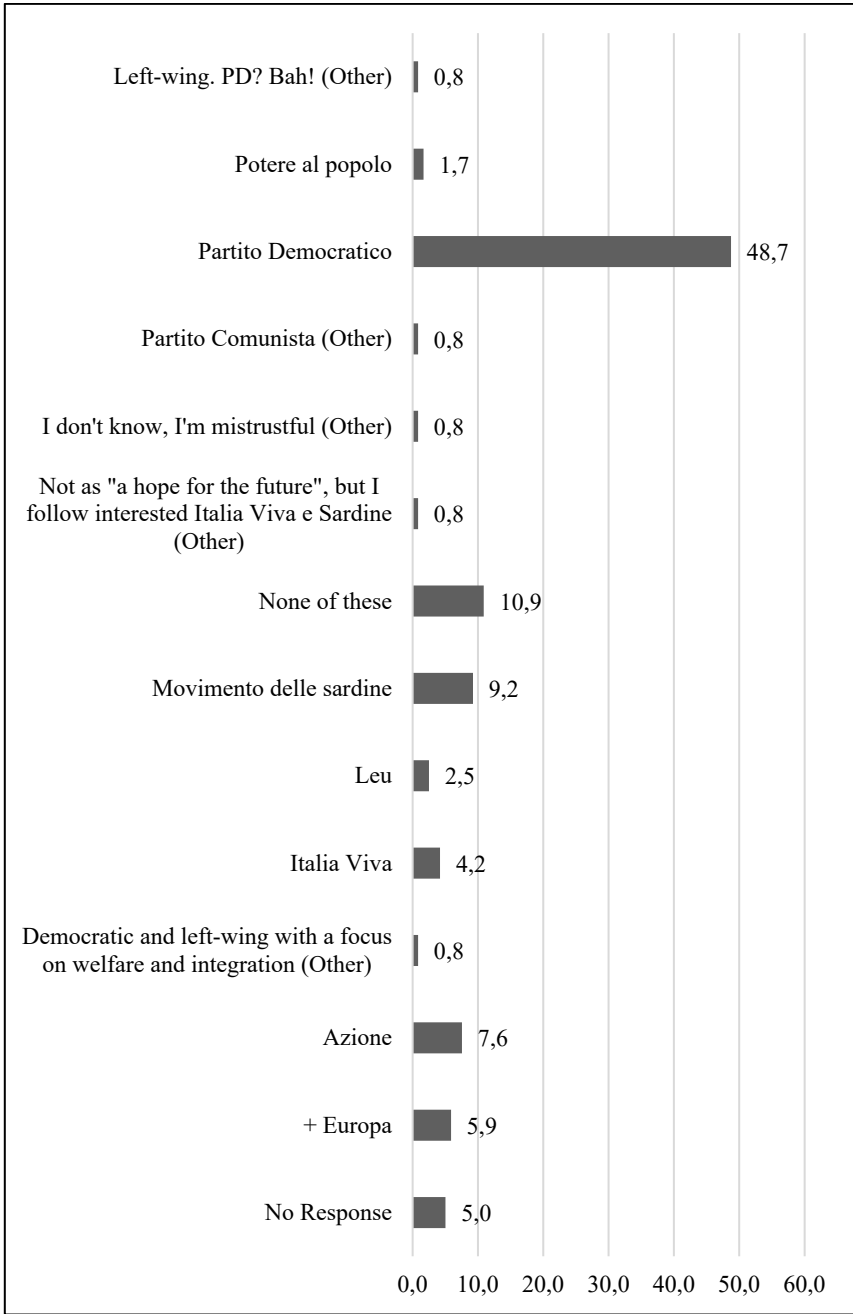
Graph. 18 - Channel allowed you to approach politics for the first time



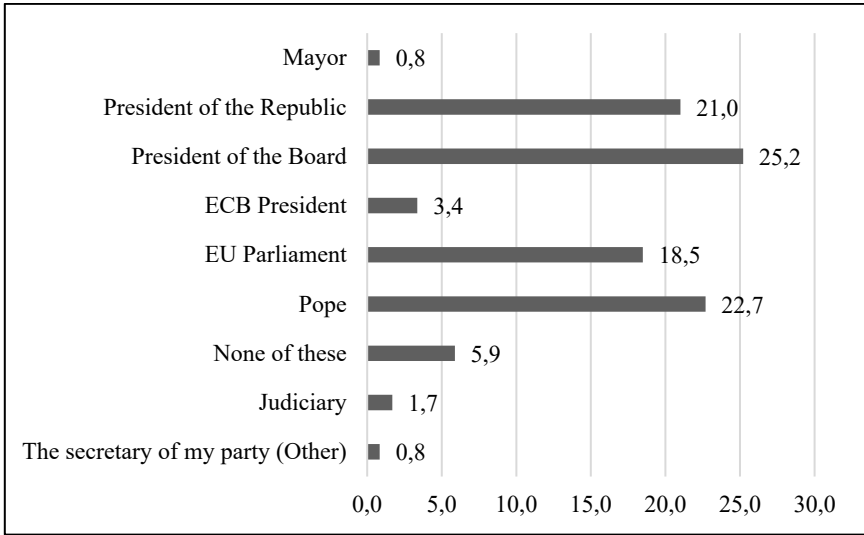
Graph. 19 - Channels of political information



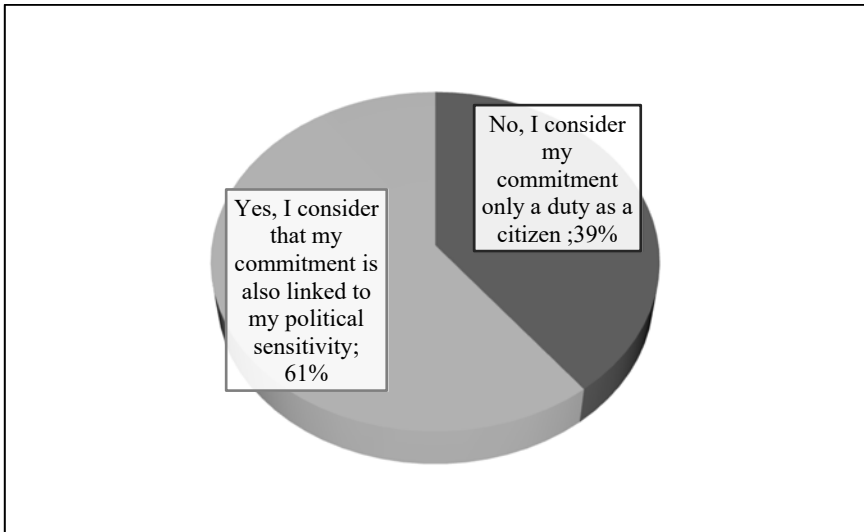
Graph. 20 - Interest in the political events of the country



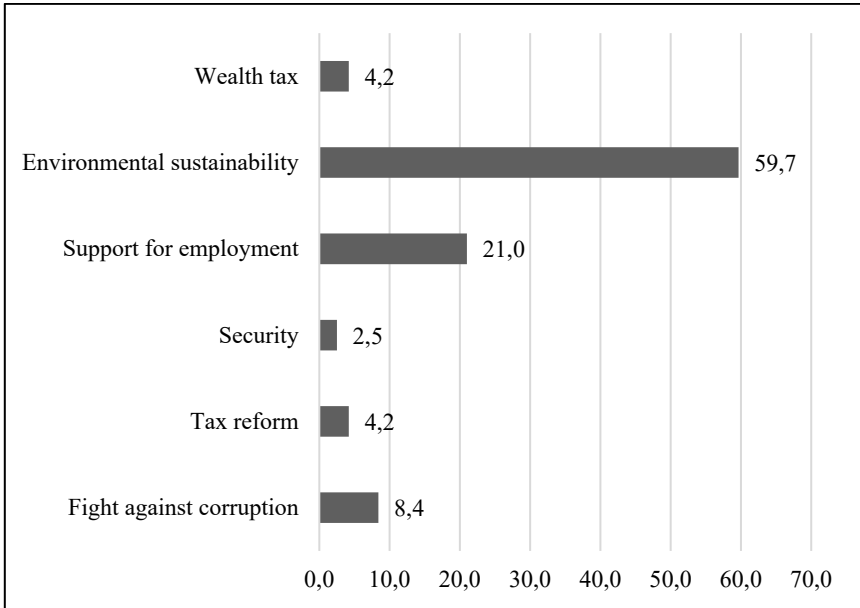
Graph. 21 - Political party as answers to the problems of the future



Graph. 22 - Currently the most authoritative institutional organs



Graph. 23 - Political commitment/political sensitivity



Graph. 24 - Measures for relaunch

Table 1 - Interest in the political events of the country VS Sex (Values in %)

21. Interest in the political events of the country	1. Sex		
	F	M	Total
No	5,0	0,0	5,0
Yes	68,9	26,1	95,0
Total	73,9	26,1	100,0

Table 2 - Requested Local administrator quality VS Educational attainment

		5.Educational attainment						Total
		Master degree	Graduates triennial	Educational qualification	Secondary school	High school	Post-graduate qualifications	
16. Local administrator quality	Listening and Empathy	5,0	1,7	0,0	0,0	3,4	2,5	12,6
	Ability to attract funding	0,8	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,8	1,7	3,4
	Ability to mediate and search for compromise	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,8	0,8
	Ability to choose employees and delegate	20,2	1,7	0,8	0,0	13,4	9,2	45,4
	Ability to organise and manage human resources	0,8	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,8
	Knowledge and academic training	4,2	0,0	1,7	0,0	0,8	6,7	13,4
	Decision-making and the ability to make unpopular choices	4,2	0,8	0,0	0,0	0,8	2,5	8,4
	Idealism and Perseverance	0,8	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,8
	Management and enhancement of public heritage	1,7	0,8	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,7	4,2
	Pragmatism	2,5	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,5	0,0	5,0
	Resoluteness and consistency in positions	1,7	0,0	0,0	0,8	0,8	0,8	4,2
	Open-mindedness and open-minded employees and decision-making capacity and extensive information (Other)	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,8	0,8
Total	42,0	5,0	2,5	0,8	22,7	26,9	100,0	

Table 3 - Channels of political information VS Educational attainment (values in %)

		5. Educational attainment						
		Master degree	Graduates triennial	Educational qualification	Secondary school	High school	Post-graduate qualifications	Total
20. Channels of political information	Web Agencies	1,7	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,7	3,4	6,7
	Local newspapers and TV	1,7	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,7	0,0	3,4
	Political organisation	0,8	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,8
	National newspapers	30,3	3,4	2,5	0,8	12,6	17,6	67,2
	Online Newspapers	4,2	0,8	0,0	0,0	3,4	1,7	10,1
	Social Media	0,8	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,8
	TV Talk show	1,7	0,8	0,0	0,0	1,7	2,5	6,7
	National news	0,8	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,7	1,7	4,2
	Total	42,0	5,0	2,5	0,8	22,7	26,9	100,0

Table 4 - Educational attainment VS Currently the most authoritative institutional organs (Values in %)

		23. Currently the most authoritative institutional organs									
		The secretary of my party	Judiciary	None of these	Pope	EU Parliament	BCE President	President of the Board	President of the Republic	Mayor	Total
5. Educational attainment	Master degree	0,0	0,0	4,2	10,9	10,9	0,0	7,6	7,6	0,8	42,0
	Graduates triennial	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,5	0,8	0,0	1,7	0,0	0,0	5,0
	Educational qualification	0,0	0,0	0,8	0,0	0,8	0,0	0,0	0,8	0,0	2,5
	Secondary school	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,8	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,8
	High school	0,8	0,0	0,8	5,9	1,7	0,0	8,4	5,0	0,0	22,7
	Postgraduate qualifications	0,0	1,7	0,0	2,5	4,2	3,4	7,6	7,6	0,0	26,9
Total		0,8	1,7	5,9	22,7	18,5	3,4	25,2	21,0	0,8	100,0

4.1. Data discussion

Profile of respondents

The data on residence in city halls, level of education and political affiliation or sympathies tell us that we are facing a clearly marked movement: progressive middle-high bourgeoisie, which does not accept that the city is left in the hands of a class of administrators considered incompetent and unable. Also important is the background of political experiences of the participants. Many of them belong to an age group that has lived, directly or indirectly, the political season of youth movements in the 70s, and therefore has a representation of very different political classes, such as preparation, skills, leadership and charisma, compared to the current ones. Very significant, moreover, is the fact that the main channel of information declared by the interviewees is a national daily newspaper, a trend that is exactly the opposite

of the average of the rest of the citizenship, and which therefore denotes a quality and in-depth information about national and citizen political facts.

Self-representation of respondents

In question 24, “Do you consider your commitment to improving the city solely as a citizen’s duty or do you think it is linked to your ideas and political sensitivity?”, we cannot fail to note that the percentage of those who answer “I consider my commitment solely as a citizen’s duty” is as high as 47%. This means that we are witnessing a political-cultural mutation in a group of politically aligned citizens, and that in their lives they had made political participation to the left a creed and a value, for which, today, it is more significant, more “sensible” to participate in civic life as a duty and as a simple citizen, rather than as belonging to a political party, specifically the left.

Main problems of the city in the opinion of respondents

Very significant, in fact, is that practically the only problem perceived as serious is that of waste management. A sign of a condition starting socially without particular discomfort. Equally significant, however, is that respondents themselves, when asked what are the most urgent interventions for the city, do not remain at all linked to problems in their neighborhood, but indicate in the redevelopment of the suburbs the most urgent issue. In the second place of the question in the previous point, the problem of the integrated waste disposal system appears. Finally, if we move the question to the perspective of the entire country, it is obvious that the problem of eco-sustainability occupies a large part of the concerns of the members of the movement, which cannot be surprising if we consider that the profile of these participants is that of citizens concerned not with issues related to their neighborhood or their surroundings, but with universalist values of citizenship.

Judgments on local administrators, the political class and the political system

Then there is the relevant issue of judging the local political class. In this case, in addition to the obvious and predictable “*J’accuse*” (question 12) against the local administrators, considered the only responsible for the situation of bad governance that characterizes the capital, it is interesting to note that in the opinion of the interviewees the main cause of the inability of the latter is due to two fundamental reasons: 1) the inability to choose valid collaborators, and to delegate tasks, and 2) the low level of preparation and

training of administrators. A further relevant note concerns judgments about national political classes. If the theme of the party crisis continues and increasingly accentuates its state of irreversibility (0.8% has confidence in his party secretary), one aspect that deserves attention is the judgment on the Prime Minister. The latter is positioned, as a first response, at the top of the list, with a very clear novelty compared to the traditional responses of Italians, who generally saw the President of the Republic, or the Pontiff, at the top. The reason for this change is certainly to be investigated, but it certainly reflects a strong identification of the electorate of the PD with the current figure of Giuseppe Conte, who, even though he does not belong to the party of the interviewees, evidently has confidence in the institution he represents.

To be noted, finally, the collapse of confidence in the judiciary, which had always represented a constant point of reference in the appreciation of citizens, always standing, until yesterday, in the highest positions.

5. Final considerations and conclusions

As Emma Amiconi states,

Tutti per Roma has the obligation to keep up the image and credibility it has gained; because it has become a reference point for many citizens and also for some political forces, and already maintaining this reputation would be a great success.

Now we can say that after a period of difficulty due to work in progress and the search for a precise identity, occurred due to conflicting positions within the group of the six founders, they have found their way by focusing on the enhancement of methodological skills, strategic capabilities, civic and social sensitivity, that today would be needed especially by political parties, and encourage the growth of a “political culture” reasonably linked to the idea of general interest. All this was made possible above all thanks to the strong charisma and great organizational skills of the movement’s leader, Emma Amiconi. *Tutti per Roma, Roma per tutti* is now engaged in the political debate for the selection of a reliable candidate in the next municipal elections and is working to create different channels of discussion to encourage the birth of a shared project on the future of the city. In contrast to what seems to be the political trend of the moment, marked by the rhetoric of “the one is worth one”, the element of novelty represented by this civic movement consists in the fact that their goal is not simply to change things for the sake of doing so, but to make them work. Finally, we have to give an account of the results of the research in relation to the main hypothesis formulated in

the introductory part (about the other hypotheses the reader can find an answer in the explanations given so far in the paragraphs concerning the qualitative and quantitative part). Whether a movement like “All for Rome” can be considered an example of a process of substitution from forms of political participation to forms of civic participation is evident from the same history and past experience of its participants, who come, for the most part, from experiences of political participation in the Left, and who have decided to leave to devote themselves mainly to civic engagement. The answer to question 24 (Graph 23) is very instructive. The fact that about 61% of respondents say that the reason for their civic participation is also due to a need for political commitment is significant. This seems to support our initial hypothesis about an ongoing substitution process: civic participation is taking the place of political participation in citizens’ motivations. Not only that, but also the response of the remaining 39% (it commits itself only because it considers it a civic duty) would have been unimaginable a few decades ago, and demonstrates the strong changes taking place in Italian political culture.

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7. Party System of Modern Russia: Institutional Frames and Public Legitimization

by *Nataliya M. Velikaya*

1. Introduction

The essential nature of the party system in the framework of the “individual case” analysis cannot be considered outside the context of the content and course of the political process and the features of the political regime functioning. To qualify the political regime in Russia with the concepts (about democracy, about transit) that describe transitional regimes in terms of “hybridity”¹ as systems that are somewhere in the middle during political transformations on the “democracy–non-democracy” scale, have become a kind of reference point. According to Carothers, “hanging” in the middle of the road can be either a consequence of formless pluralism or the dominance of a certain political force, including a political party or a group of interests². In this sense, the evolution and state of the party system is an important indicator of democracy and opportunities for sustainable development of society.

2. Parties and the new authoritarianism

After the beginning of Putin’s third term, show trials against participants in a number of protest actions, the defeat of the reform movement and the annexation of Crimea, many political scientists and publicists, who previously

¹ S.P. Huntington (1991), *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, London; E.V. Shakirova, *The concept of a hybrid political regime in modern political science as an analytical framework for the analysis of Russian policy*, “Historical, philosophical, political and legal sciences, cultural studies and art criticism. Questions of theory and practice”, No. 6. Part 2. pp. 203–210.

² T. Carothers (2002), *The end of the Transition Paradigm*, “Journal of Democracy”, Johns Hopkins University Press, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 5–21.

believed that Russia continued to experience a “democratic transit”, came to the conclusion that Putin’s political regime has passed into a state of stagnant authoritarianism and is now unreformable. Based on this logic, G. Golosov³ considers it inappropriate to use the term “hybrid” in relation to Russia, given that it can be described using more precise concepts – for example, “electoral authoritarianism”, or Nisnevich and Ryabov, indicating a whole set of authoritarian tendencies in the analysis of the Russian modern political system⁴. Unlike traditional authoritarian dictatorships, neo-authoritarian regimes are more flexible, often position themselves as supporters of universal values of human rights, claim that their policies are guided by generally accepted democratic standards and use various democratic institutions for legitimization⁵. In this sense, the party system in neo-authoritarian regimes also acquires hybrid characteristics, either partially realizing its functions, or replacing some other political actors⁶. Having almost no positive experience of parliamentarism, Russia has been building its political system on two different bases. On the one hand, there was an attempt to imitate and borrow the experience of developed democracies and adapt Western institutions to the Russian reality. On the other hand, the elite groups after a successful privatization were looking for the new ways to exclude a redistribution of property and to stay in power. As a result, Russia has developed a personalistic regime with elements of corporatism, where the dominant institution is the presidential power, which corresponds to the ideas of Russian society about the optimal political model. The personalistic perception of political power is deeply rooted in the political culture of Russia. 20% of Russian citizens are convinced that Russia needs leaders, not parties. It is no coincidence that the leaders of the trust rating over the past 20 years are the President, the Army and the Church, which in different years occupy different places in the top three. (see figure 1-dynamics of respondents’ attitudes to public structures and institutions of power) According to the latest wave of monitoring, the Army (64%) and the President of the Russian Federation (61%) are almost equally trusted. It must be said that over the past 10 years, the dynamics of the President’s rating has been decreasing, and since 2017, the President has been inferior to the Army (see figure 1).

The level of trust in the President correlates with a positive attitude to the

³ G.V. Golosov (2008), *Electoral authoritarianism in Russia*, “Pro et Contra. Election and political system”, N1, January-February, p.22-35.

⁴ Y. Nisnevich, A. Ryabov (2016), *Sovremennyye partiinyye systemy: scenario evolucii i razvitiya*, “Polis. Political Studies”, No. 3, pp. 85-109.

⁵ S. Levitsky; L. Way (2010), *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010, p. 536.

⁶ N.M. Velikaya (2019), *Opposition as a mirage of Political Field in Russia*, in J. J. Wiatr (edited by), *New authoritarianism. Challenges to democracy in the 21st century*, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Oplanden, Berlin, Toronto.

political system of society (see Table 1 - Trust in the institutions of power, depending on the attitude to the political system of society).

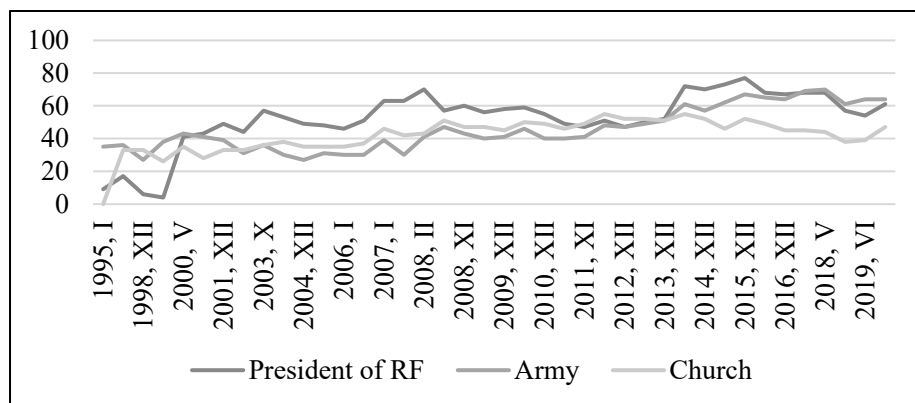


Fig. 1 - Dynamics of respondents' attitudes to public structures and institutions of power. (Russian Federation, % of the respondents, answer option "I trust")

Table 1 - Trust in the institutions of power, depending on the attitude to the political system of society (Russia, 2020)

Political institutes	Answers	Consent to judgments about the political system of our society			
		I am completely satisfied with politics	There are many disadvantages, but they can be eliminated	It needs to be radically changed	Can't answer
President RF	Trust	97	61	14	39
	Don't trust	0	18	63	19
	Can't answer	3	21	23	42
Government of the RF	Trust	85	37	4	18
	Don't trust	4	31	76	31
	Can't answer	11	32	20	51
The Federation Council	Trust	63	20	3	11
	Don't trust	4	31	71	28
	Can't answer	34	49	26	61
The State Duma Administration of the President of the RF	Trust	40	19	3	15
	Don't trust	7	39	78	31
	Can't answer	53	41	19	54
Administration of the President of the RF	Trust	60	32	7	21
	Don't trust	2	26	72	24
	Can't answer	38	43	22	56

Recent changes in the Constitution of the Russian Federation adopted, according to the results of the "popular vote", the reset timing of the current

President and amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation inevitably raise the question of its possible nomination as a presidential candidate in the next election. On the question of whether V. Putin should go to the elections in 2024, opinions were divided. 47% of respondents answered in the affirmative, demonstrating the credibility of V. Putin. However, almost a third (30%) of respondents are convinced that the current president should not be re-elected, which shows the existence of a conflict zone in the sphere of political relations. A very high percentage of undecided people - 23% - is also noteworthy. As for parliamentary institutions and political parties, due to the peculiarities of the domestic party-political system, which is characterized by a low level of competition and the dependence of legislative authorities on executive ones, they have traditionally received a low level of approval for decades. In this sense, Russian realities differ significantly from the general European trends, where the level of support for the legislative and executive authorities does not show such deep differences.

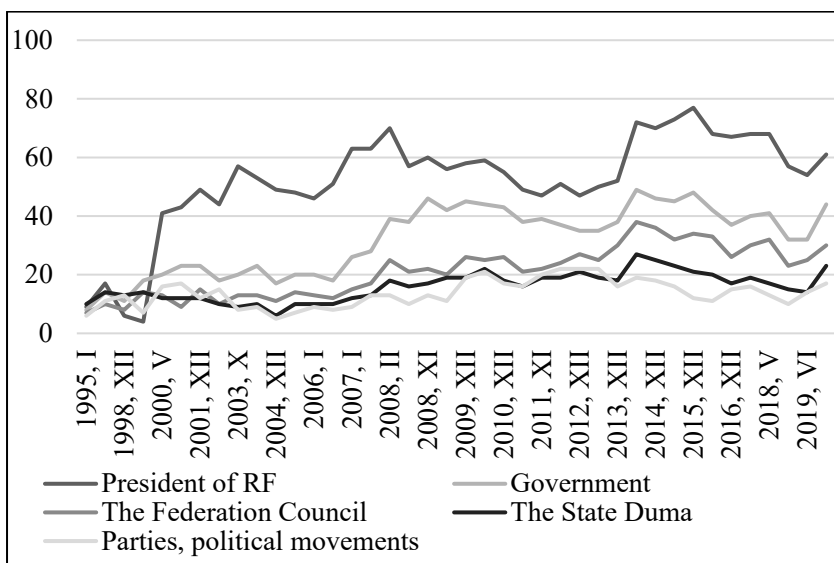


Fig. 2 - Dynamics of respondents' attitudes to public structures and institutions of power (Russian Federation, % of the number of respondents)

As in most post-Soviet States, a political regime was formed in Russia with a steadily limited role of parties⁷ and with power structures regularly changing legislation and having the technologies of electoral struggle well-

⁷ B. Makarenko; I. Lokshin (2015), *Sovremennyye partiinyye systemy: scenario evolucii i razvitiya*, "POLIS, Political Studies", No. 3, pp. 85-109, cit.p.102.

mastered. Almost every electoral cycle, new rules of the game were set for the participants of the political process. Thus, during the period from the end of 1988 to June 2017, 151 changes were made to the electoral legislation and the law on political parties⁸. These changes were related to party registration rules, new entry barriers for parties, experiments with majority, proportional and mixed electoral systems, the abolition of the “against all” column, the rejection of direct elections for governors, etc.

Not only it limited the possibilities of developing party democracy, but also reduced the field of public policy, deprived citizens of the opportunity to participate in the normal political process, even through the elections, which are run more and more rare in the country. As a result, the party landscape in Russia remains mosaic, uneven, and mobile (see figure 3).

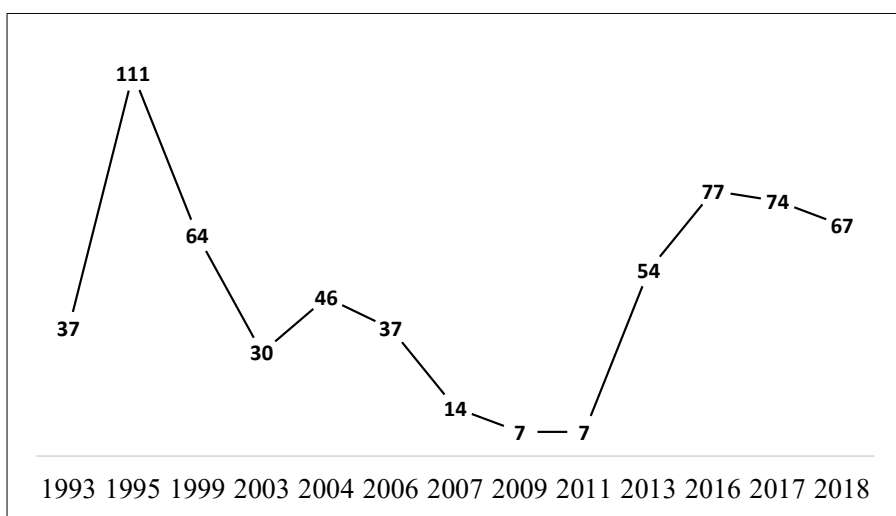


Fig 3 - Number of registered parties of the Russian Federation by year. Source: Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation. List of registered political parties // Electronic resource. URL: <http://minjust.ru/ru/nko/gosreg/partii/spisok> (accessed: November 20, 2018)

It is obvious that such uneven activity in the sphere of party building was determined not only by the objective conditions of party genesis, but also by the institutional framework set by the authorities. We can distinguish several stages of party building.

The first stage – until 1999 – was characterized by a fairly high level of political activity in the context of the party spectrum fragmentation.

This was followed by attempts to stabilize the party system and introduce some strict party-building frameworks, which, however, did not preclude the

⁸ GOLOS, Chronicle of Legislature: <https://www.golosinfo.org/timeline/>

active use of various political technologies. During Putin’s second term the Federal law “On political parties” of 2005 was adopted, which significantly limited the possibilities for registration and re-registration of political parties, and by 2009 only 7 registered parties remained in Russia.

The fourth stage was associated with the liberalization of legislation on parties and elections in 2012 and a return to a multi-party fragmented system: the procedure for registering parties was simplified, which gave a new impetus to the activation of electoral activity of newly registered political parties, including those who claimed to be the opposition.

At all stages the attempts to create the most-favored-nation regime for the so-called party in power has been held since the 1990s. During the entire three electoral cycles, **a monocentric party system** was created, where other parties were consistently excluded from participation in the electoral process both by legal means (by creating high entry barriers, difficulties with registration by the party, problems with registration as election participants, etc.) and by illegal ones (restricting access to the media, using technologies to break up lists, or forcing candidates to refuse to participate in the campaign, up to open threats).

Despite the change in the total number of registered and participating parties, only 4 parties have been elected to the State Duma in the last four convocations (since 2003), and the number of effective [Gelman, 2008] political parties has decreased from 7.8 in 2001 to 1.9 in 2016.

Table 2 - The dynamics of participation of parties in elections to the State Duma

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of registered parties</i>	<i>Number of parties participating in the election</i>	<i>Number of parties entered the State Duma</i>	<i>Turnout, percentage</i>
1993	37	13	8	54,81%
1995	111	43	4	64,76%
1999	64	28	6	61,85%
2003	30	23	4	55,67%
2007	14	11	4	63,78%
2011	7	7	4	60,21%
2016	74	14	4	47,88%

Source: Central election Commission of the Russian Federation (CEC of the Russian Federation). Archive of election campaigns and referendum campaigns // Electronic resource URL:http://www.cikrf.ru/banners/vib_arhiv/gosduma/ (Accessed: November 20, 2018).

At the same time, the political representation of the parliamentary opposition has steadily declined: today, representatives of 6 parties have only 107 seats in the Duma, of which two parties the Political party of Growth and party “Rodina” – have one mandate each. It is obvious that the right-wing

democratic parties are now in the most vulnerable situation, after being defeated in the 2003 elections they didn't manage to regain their positions.

Table 3 - Factions of the State Duma of the Russian Federation (number of seats out of 450)

<i>Parties</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2016</i>
United Russia	315	238	343
Communist Party of Russian Federation (CPRF)	57	92	42
Liberal Democratic Party of Russian Federation (LDPR)	40	56	39
Just Russia party	38	64	23
Other parties	/	/	3

Source: State Duma of the Russian Federation. Official website of the state Duma of the Russian Federation // Electronic resource. URL: <http://duma.gov.ru/duma/factions/> (Accessed: 20 November 2018)

The representation of other parties in regional legislative assemblies is also low. The measure of our Parliament's powers according to the Fish index is 0.44. With this amount of power, the Parliament, as the Russian philosopher V. Rozanov said, turns into a "state-owned club on government support", an appendage of the Executive branch, approving the proposals of the President and the government. We would call this model "limited partisanship", in which the party Parliament formally opposes the non-partisan government by virtue of the principle of separation of powers, but in fact, the parliamentary majority, the government, and the presidential administration are perversely united. The Parliament does not have any levers to remove the government or influence its activities.

It is natural that the number of our fellow citizens who saw more positive things in the activities of the opposition was constantly decreasing and fell from 17% in 2004 to 7% in 2014⁹. Parties, being a constant object of manipulation by the authorities, have become the most dysfunctional institution of Russian politics. The level of trust in parties as political institutions and in the Parliament is much lower than the level of trust in the President, the Army, and the Church (see table 1).

A fairly high level of trust in the President and executive authorities demonstrates not just the loyalty of the population to the existing course, but in the context of the general passivity (both civil and political) of the population it confirms the idea that modern authoritarian regimes are based on the passivity of citizens. With a high level of trust and approval, they are not supported by concrete actions. Passivity is a basic feature of the population

⁹ B. Makarenko; I. Lokshin (2015), *Sovremennyye partiinyye systemy: scenario evolucii I razvitiya*, "POLIS, Political Studies", No. 3, pp. 85-109

of modern Russia, which is confirmed by the data of the European social survey (ESS), conducted every two years in most European countries. The so-called party phobia can be clearly seen in Russian society. It is expressed not only in a low level of political participation, but also in a negative attitude towards parties as political institutions. For example, over the past 10 years, not more than 3-6% of Russians participated in the work of a political party, group, or movement (figure 4).

Non-competitive political regimes not only restrict the legal framework for the registration and functioning of parties, but also do not let the conditions for an open and competitive process to be created. At the last State Duma elections in 2016, there was a unique situation when the average turnout in 13 regions was almost twice as high as the average turnout in the other 72 regions, which suggests serious violations of the electoral process¹⁰.

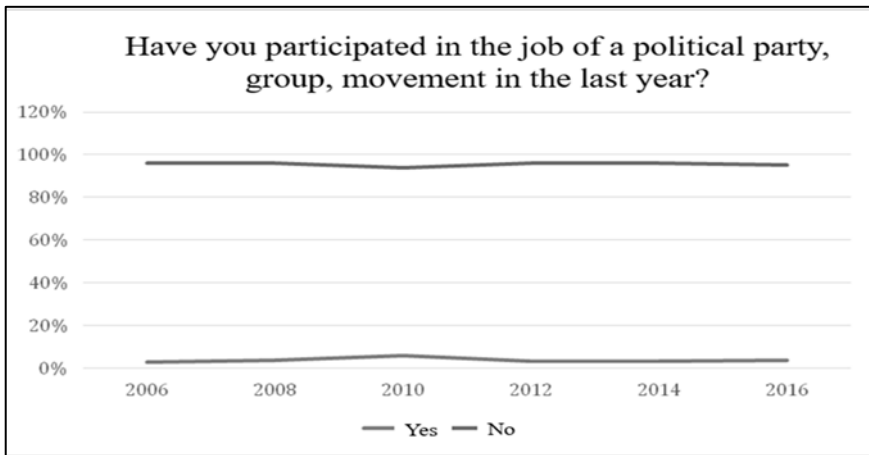


Fig. 4 - Participation in the work of political parties, groups, movements¹¹. Source: European Social Survey. European social survey in Russia. URL: <http://www.ess-ru.ru/>

The specific organization of the electoral process and numerous suspicions of fraud not only forced members of different political parties to take action – from court appeals to going out on the streets, but what is more important for the society, forming the belief that the results of any elections can be rigged, and now it is happening in favor of “United Russia”. Under

¹⁰ Among the leaders in turnout are Bashkortostan, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkar and Karachay-Cherkess republics, Mordovia, North Ossetia, Tatarstan, Tuva, Chechen Republic, Kemerovo and Tyumen regions, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous district. 81.4% of voters in these regions voted for United Russia, which is, of course, abnormal even for competitive authoritarianism.

¹¹ According to ESS (2006-2016).

these conditions, the opposition becomes more of a decorative element, and the possibility of its coming to power is almost invisible, primarily due to the lack of conditions for the appearance of a capable systematic opposition. Moreover, the authorities are trying to instill in society that any political opposition that asks the authorities tough questions is an enemy of Russia, does everything for foreign money and wants to stage an orange revolution. And society firmly believes in this. Negative connotations of this term's interpretation prevail in public discourse and in the mass media. According to the FOM, in 2014, only 36% of our fellow citizens believed that there was a political opposition in Russia, while 27% were sure that there was none. Even more questions arise when we look at the dynamics: the number of those who believe that there is no opposition in our country has grown from 19% in 2007 to 30% in 2013¹².

The process of opposition maturing and turning it into a significant element of the political system is a long and ambiguous process, especially since hybrid regimes use different ways to systematically weaken and control the opposition. In Russia, they use: the construction of additional institutional barriers (in the form of registration difficulties and high entry barriers); restrictions on access to the media; manipulations during the voting process; openly repressive actions aimed at leaders of opposition movements. Party building, as defined by the institutional framework, has led to the formation of a kind of quasi-party system, where parties cannot be considered significant actors in the political process. In this system, the party in power is not the ruling party, but rather a tool for mobilizing electoral support for the ruling elite, a personnel reserve for the administrative system that selects people loyal to the regime. And the opposition (primarily the parliamentary one) serves as additional support for the regime, ensuring the legitimacy of elections and attracting its usual electorate to the polling stations, and acts as a buffer that extinguishes political and social conflicts. This opposition is not a real alternative to the current power. It is no accident that significant bills are usually passed in the Duma not only on the basis of the parliamentary majority of the party in power, but also thanks to representatives of other factions. As a result, the confidence ratings of political parties are low and very far from the electoral results of those parties that actively participate in the elections. The leaders in the rating of party sympathies in 2020 were United Russia and the All-Russian Popular Front (10% each). The LDPR and the Communist Party received 7% and 8%, respectively (see Figure 4). The

¹² FOM Omnibus (Public Opinion Foundation). Resource of data: «FOMnibus» – All Russia Survey respondents from 18 and older. 19 October 2014. 43 subjects of Russian Federation, 100 settlements, 1500 respondents. Statistical error not more than 3,6%. <https://fom.ru/Politika/11785>, (data obrashcheniya: 20 November 2018).

parties with the lowest level of support were Just Russia Party (2%), Party Yabloko (2%) and the Party of Growth (1%).

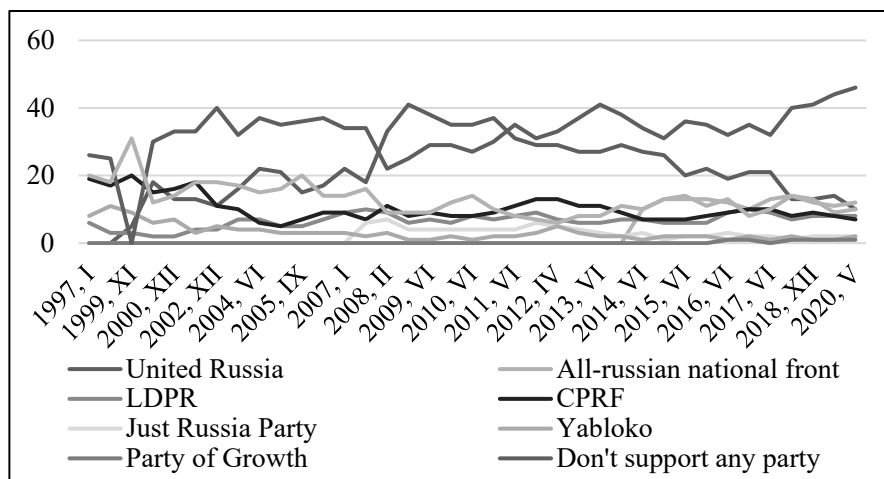


Fig. 5 - Dynamics of respondents' support for political parties and movements (Russian Federation, % of the number of respondents)

Interestingly, despite very high electoral successes, United Russia has shown a significant decline in its rating in recent years: from a maximum of 41% in 2008 to 10% in 2020. The level of support for the parliamentary parties LDPR and Fair Russia varies in recent years in the range of 2-3 points, which suggests the presence of a stable nuclear electorate of these organizations, but the Communists (Communist Party) in recent years have lost their supporters (from 13% in 2011-2012 to 7% in 2020). The low level of support for parliamentary parties suggests a shift in favor of new systemic political parties participating in the current electoral cycle in regional elections, as well as in favor of non-systemic opposition. It is interesting that during the last electoral cycle, new parties began to take away votes primarily from the parliamentary opposition. So, in the elections of the Lipetsk City Duma, “Communists of Russia” received 9.62% of the vote, CPRF -13.02%, “Russian party of pensioners for justice” (RPPJ) - 10.07%, and Just Russia only 6.78%. In the Oryol City Council, the “Russian party of pensioners of Russia” (RPPJ) scored 4.66%, and Just Russia Party - 4.9%. In the Vladimir City Council, the RPPJ scored 5.53%, and the Just Russia - 8.73%. However, the participation of a couple of dozen political parties in regional and local election campaigns does not yet give grounds to count on the evolution of the regime towards competition, and the results are very discreet. According to the results of the regional elections in September 2020, the mandates in

regional legislatures were given to the populist parties like “New people” (1 seat) and “For the truth” (7 seats) that were created specifically before these elections. One can notice that majority of these new parties are kind of spoilers which take off voices mainly from parliamentary parties, but not from United Russia, so called “party of power”.

3. Conclusion

There is no significant dynamics in the assessment of the political system, political culture and related political values and orientations, demonstrating a high level of continuity. The transformation of the political system follows the path of increasingly strict regulation of political and opposition activities. The weakening of the legal and parliamentary opposition inevitably leads to the strengthening of protest movements, which we can call non-systemic, because of their unequivocally negative attitude to the current political regime. However, if we talk about formal institutions and the prospects of the parliamentary opposition, we can hardly count on the emergence of other serious players in the political space. Partly because the current government is quite satisfied with the current balance of power, where each player has its own place and there is no point in destroying the existing balance of power by introducing new actors, partly because new parties are used as a counterweight and a mechanism to minimize the results of systemic parliamentary parties. It can be stated that no significant civil society institutions have yet been formed in Russia, which could resist the growth of negative trends that reduce the competitiveness of the political system. Weak political parties were quickly entangled in strict regulations and still remain a kind of simulacrum of the political system, without significant support from mass groups of the population. Ideological attitudes of people do not correlate with political behavior and socio-economical situation. Political apathy and political alienation are the main strategies of Russians in political sphere.

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8. At the Threshold of Production of the Future: New Actors in the Labour Market, New Social Perspectives

by *Tatiana Yurievna Sidorina*¹

1. Introduction

Modern society is undergoing dramatic changes. Industrial civilization as a civilization of labour is becoming a thing of the past.

The changes involve not just the attitude to labour, but the sphere of labour itself and its professional structure. New professions in information epoch are replacing old industrial occupations, changing stereotypes about everyday life that formed over centuries.

The scale and types of activity that are in demand are transforming, new working practices are emerging, and labour legislation needs revision. The growing opposition between labour and capital raises the issue of the role of labour as a resource of global development.

In the conditions of the shrinking welfare state, labour and the needs of a worker increasingly fall outside of the state control. The notions of social guarantees and corporate culture are turning into a simulacrum². Due to the disorganization of Western capitalism, big corporations and long-term liabilities to the workers and physical locations of workplaces have become obsolete. The number of corporations has shrunk twice since the early XXI century.

The corporate culture, offering rather generous remunerations for the labour of corporate employees, has become rare. For example, in many sectors and cities inside the US Rust Belt, there has been a dramatic fall in the incomes and employment indicators. Similar shifts have been seen in other economically developed countries,

¹ Doctor of Science, Tenured Professor, Professor of Faculty of Economic Sciences, Laboratory for Comparative Analysis of Post-Socialist Development, HSE University, Moscow, Russia; E-mail: tsidorina@hse.ru. The research leading to these results has received funding from the Basic Research Program at the HSE University.

² Z. Bauman (2001), *The Individualized Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge; J. Urry (2019), *Kak vygliadit budushchee?*, Delo, Moscow.

where industries left the former industrial sector centers structured around big vertically integrated corporations³.

In the industrial production era, labour determined the mode of life of the people. What do we see today? Is life still labour-centered? Has labour preserved its former value? How is the problem of preserving human capital solved in the new conditions? What determines the prospects of labour participation in modern conditions? What can compensate for mass redundancies in different spheres of activities?

The current situation is contradictory. On the one hand, the loss of work threatens a significant part of the global working age population and their sources of subsistence. We see the formation of new relations and new tasks needing new approaches for their solution in this new social group. On the other hand, new groups of people are emerging whose education, training, and skills have allowed them actively enter the dynamic innovative economy and adjust to its demands and prospects.

Long before the postindustrial transition, the Club of Rome that are the ideologists of postindustrial, information society, predicted changes in the area of labour⁴. Predictions were made that the greatest demand in the information society during the rise of cognitive capitalism will be for non-industrial sectors of economy⁵. Self-realization would expand with the total mobilization of abilities and aptitudes, including feelings and emotions. According to French philosopher A. Gorz⁶, an individual should become an enterprise for itself.

Until just recently, this vision looked like an unlikely prospect. Today, the traditional forms of employment (primarily of the industrial epoch) and the legal frameworks that supported became outdated. Indeed, according to the ideologists of post-industrialism a similar fate is also in store for types of activity that replaced industrial labour⁷. Notably, this is the case in the service

³ J. Urry (2019), *Kak vygliadit budushchee?*, Delo, Moscow, p. 159.

⁴ D. Bell (1973), *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Basic Books, New York; M. Castells (2010), *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, Vol. 1. The Rise of the Network Society*, 3rd ed. Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester.

⁵ A. Gorz (2010), *Nematerial'noe. Znanie, stoimost' i kapital*, GU VSHE: Moscow; A. Corsani (2008), *Total'noe proniknovenie. Kapitalizm, biotekhnika i neoliberalizm*, "Politicheskij zhurnal", vol. 27; B. Paulré, *Kognitivnyj kapitalizm na marshe*, "Politicheskij zhurnal", vol.2.; R. B. Reich (2010), *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism*, Vintage Books, New York; J. Urry (2019), *Kak vygliadit budushchee?*, Delo, Moscow.

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sector, which was promising in the second half of the XX century. It is losing its sustainability, as the reduction in employment due to the introduction of online educational practices illustrates. Instead, there is a growing demand for highly professional specialists, and new social groups with new strategies and lifestyles are forming in the modern economic context⁸.

A specific feature of the modern situation in labour is its polarization. What patterns of working practices do we observe today.

2. Materials and methods

This article can be considered more as a social theory study than an empirical sociological study. Hence, to find an answer to the question raised, I will turn to a wide scope of literature dedicated to the problem under discussion. The methods include the analysis of sociologic, philosophic and methodology literature on the problems of investigation, induction and deduction methods, and the method of heuristic argumentation. When considering social phenomena, I am striving to expose global tendencies reflected in the social changes, propose their classification, typology, and systemization. I have borrowed empirical materials from the statistical data given in the cited literature.

Results

In the late XX – early XXI centuries, the emergence of the precariat has been more and more actively discussed⁹. What are the life strategies of this social stratum?

⁸ Z. Bauman (2001), *The Individualized Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge; J. Urry (2019), *Kak vygliadit budushchee?*, Delo, Moscow; Z. Bauman (2000), *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge; U. Beck (1999), *Chto takoe globalizatsiya?*, Progress Traditsyya, Moscow; A. Gorz (2010), *Nematerial'noe. Znanie, stoimost' i kapital*, GU VSHE, Moscow; R. B. Reich (2010), *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism*, Vintage Books, New York; G. Standing (2011), *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, Bloomsbury Academic, London and New York; R. Florida (2002), *Kreativnyj klass: lyudi, kotorye menyayut budushchee*, Moscow.

⁹ V.N. Bobkov; O.V. Veredyuk; R.P. Kolosova; T.O. Razumova (2014), *Zanyatost' i social'naya prekarizatsiya v Rossii: vvedenie v analiz*, TEIS, Moscow; D. Bogenhold, *Social Inequality and the Sociology of Life Style: Material and Cultural Aspects of Social Stratification*, "The American Journal of Economics and Sociology", Vol. 60, n.4; A. L. Kalleberg (2012), *Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition*, "American Sociological Review", vol. 74, n.1; S. McKay, S. Jefferys, A. Parakevopoulou, J. Keles, *Study on Precarious Work and Social Rights*, Working Lives Research Institute, London Metropolitan University, London.

Survival model

First, let us discuss the strategies of “benefits dependency”, which was relevant not only in the XXth century, but also in preceding epochs, and is still discussed now.

A subsistence allowance

Since the times of Social-Darwinism and until now, the theorists and practitioners of neoliberalism have viewed poverty through the prism of man’s responsibility for his material status. According to contemporary versions of this position, the focus of social history is an individual able to turn into an enterprise¹⁰, and not depending on hiring relations, which are melting away in the modern world, closely followed by the disappearance of unemployment. Thus, if somebody turns out to be unemployed, this will be only due to insufficient demand for their knowledge.

Such people should take care of improving the situation themselves. They should profit by timeouts, pauses, and intervals in the working activity and the prolonged free time. This also supposes that the unemployed should gain knowledge with higher demand in the market than the knowledge already possessed¹¹.

Yet, the success of this policy in reducing unemployment, life uncertainty, and breaks in employment are quite moderate. Consequently, A. Gorz points at the necessity of introducing a subsistence allowance, which has been discussed since 1995. This should not only help to cope with unreliability and different breaks in employment, but also give people forms of self-activity, the social and cultural value of which is not measured in economic categories¹².

A basic income

A possible solution against the rising unemployment level, which threatens to spread poverty globally, may be the introduction of a basic income guaranteeing money allowances needed for subsistence to everybody irrespective of employment. Such measures will help solve the problem of poverty, technological unemployment, and economic inequality. The guaranteed basic income will decrease the costs of administering social programs by

¹⁰ A. Gorz (2010), *Nematerial’noe. Znanie, stoimost’ i kapital*, GU VSHE, Moscow.

¹¹ *Ivi*, p.37.

¹² *Ivi*, p.38.

removing the need for eligibility checks, and will let people be engaged in activities they like, ignoring market demands.

On the other hand, the introduction of the basic income is extremely hard to implement depending on the political situation, and it involves huge costs. Besides, the desire to get this basic income may initiate a new wave of migration as the conservative Swiss People's Party warned. Due to such fears, when on the initiative of a group of Swiss activists from Generation Grundeinkommen ("Basic income generation"), writers and intellectuals, the necessary number of signatures (125 thousand) was collected for a referendum on introducing a basic income of 2500 Euros¹³, only 23% of the Swiss population voted in favor and the initiative was rejected.

Not long before Switzerland, the government of Finland planned to introduce similar allowances of 800 Euros a month. Though 69% of the Finns supported the initiative, the plan was rejected due to the worsening economic situation¹⁴. Nevertheless, since January 1, 2017, the Finnish Government has guaranteed a minimal basic income to 2000 unemployed people. The participants of the experiment were paid 560 Euros monthly, which was approximately equal to the unemployment benefit, but was not annulled if a person found a job, and it did not exclude other social benefits. The goal of the experiment was to determine the effect of the basic income on the efficiency of job search. The lifting of Finland's image on the world stage was one of intended side effects.

The described measures and possible scenarios of overcoming uncertainty and instability in employment are mostly measures of passive participation. According to historical evidence, such practices may result in dependency on public alms (the Speenhamland case (1795), Welfare State of the XXth)¹⁵.

3. Paid public labour, practices of solidarity and communalism

In conditions when the image of politics suffers due to the inability of the state to influence economic problems, the role of political parties is declining. Conversely, the movement of politically active citizens striving to raise their role in the life of the state and society is becoming more widespread.

¹³ The Government of Finland is planning to pay 800 Euros to each citizen. — <http://www.rosbalt.ru/main/2015/11/03/1457528.html> (the reference date: 15.07.2017).

¹⁴ Switzerland will hold the first in the world referendum on basic income. — <http://www.rbc.ru/society/01/02/2016/56aebd7f9a794702d9cb8064> <http://www.rbc.ru/society/01/02/2016/56aebd7f9a794702d9cb8064> (the reference date: 15.07.2017).

¹⁵ T. Y. Sidorina, *Gosudarstvo vseobshchego blagosostoyaniya: ot utopii k krizisu*, RGGU: Moscow.

For example, some European countries have witnessed the development of new public associations, based on joint household or other types of cooperation. In fact, against the background of globalization we have seen a revival of small community values where individuals feel more needed and valued than in impersonalized public structures¹⁶.

U. Beck considers the practices of civil society as a possible means of overcoming the after-effects of the transition to post-industrial labour. He highlights the prospects of paid public work as a manifestation of civil initiative¹⁷. Paid public work in modern conditions could become the basis of a new public pact. From this viewpoint, Beck writes about the necessity of creating a system of new guarantees, of strengthening social networks for local self-sufficiency and self-organization:

Public work should be organized in such a form so as not to turn it into a simple collector for the unemployed: it should be attractive for all <...> It should not replace hired labour but complement it. Community work could become one of the three pillars – alongside hired labour, serving as the main economic guarantee, and private work – which form the basis for education and/or self-realization.¹⁸

Beck notes that such work could become attractive for the young people too. According to Beck, this work should be based on two principles: «*good-will* or *self-organization* and *public financing*, which could transform community work into an attractive alternative».¹⁹

4. The model of new labour and a new lifestyle

On the one hand, changes in labour activity account for the growth of social uncertainty, inequality, and economic instability. Masses of people find themselves on the sidelines of life, losing their jobs and any possibility of providing for themselves and their families. On the other hand, in conditions when long-term employment is becoming redundant, when new forms of employment emerge, such as flexible, part-time or contractual work, an individual gains new time resources. New groups of workers appear, adapting to newly emerging conditions.

¹⁶ A. Montanari, *New forms of solidarity and communalism*, paper presented at Third ISA Forum of Sociology, Vienna, July 2016.

¹⁷ U. Beck, *Chto takoe globalizaciya?*, Progress Traditsyya, Moscow.

¹⁸ *Ivi*, p. 10.

¹⁹ *Ivi*, p. 244-245.

Drifting with the stream

The ability to adjust to a changing situation, to apply a set of knowledge to different activities, to make proposals that meet the employer's demands and to change employment is highly valued today. In response to such challenges, a sizeable group of people emerged drifting with the stream and meeting the requirements of the ever-changing environment. These are sort of amphibia, possessing a set of requested professional practices, able to exist in conditions of a regular change of workplace, occasional work, when periods of paid work interchange with the out of work periods.

Highly skilled professionals

The new global labour market demands a new type of workers – representatives of the so-called creative class, including highly skilled professionals. In the modern economy of knowledge, creativity is gaining greater importance, and more value is derived through the creation of radically new, or transformation of already existing forms of labour. Unlike other productive factors, creativity is inseparable from its bearers – creative managers and professionals comprising the new “creative class”. The American economist and author of the creative class concept Richard Florida has stated that the job of these specialists:

(...) is the development and creation of innovations: scientists, engineers, university professors, poets, writers, artists, actors, designers, publicists, columnists, analysts forming the public opinion, and the periphery – specialists working in knowledge-intensive sectors: advanced technologies, finance, law, healthcare, business management. These people participate in the creative solution of problems, the terms of employment... become flexible, a horizontal career is becoming widespread²⁰.

These specialists work in the field of immaterial labour and the cognitive economy. Thus, so-called design-studios are widespread today creating, for instance, online-services and applications, image sites. The interest in the designer profession is growing and new educational institutions are appearing in this field.

A key source of economic growth is talented people, especially in the information sector. The new type of specialists in this field are highly mobile, work independently online, are self-employed and take responsibility for

²⁰ R. Florida (2002), *Kreativnyj klass: lyudi, kotorye menyayut budushchee*, Moscow.

themselves, their existence and his future. Due to its niche status, this social layer is too small to be a structure-forming social element. However, its appearance in the system of working relations is in line with dramatic changes in science and means of communication.

Is labour-centrism in the past?

The emergence of new groups of workers able to adjust to new social and economic conditions has challenged traditional accounts of identity formation. These accounts were rooted in the workplace, leaving precious little time for cultural leisure outside of the workplace. Now, with the reduction of industrial labour and “the end of labour in its classical understanding”²¹, the transition to new working practices of the information epoch has resulted in the problem of “individual self-realisation”:

The labour ethos was substituted by the ethos of personal self-realization, supposing numerous possible models. A worker started appraising his work, above other things, for the free time it leaves, for free attendance, for studying in parallel with work, for reading during work hours, for a long vacation, for an early retirement, that is, according to the values of the civilization of leisure. [...] At some moment the symbolic Rubicon was passed: free time outnumbered working time and, first by statistics, and then by essence, it became the main type of social time²².

Having gained new time resources, a modern human does not know how to use it. It turns out that leisure and activity according to one’s own choice are not available to everyone for most.

It’s so happened that most part of the population does not know what to do with these unexpected 2-3 thousand hours a year, and in no case is intending to spend them on education. Following labour, newly acquired resources of spare time have become a field of social stratification, but according to other criteria, which is the ability or inability to cope with their freedom.²³

Free time is another challenge for modern mankind. Some people fall into a depression after losing a job, some fitfully try to find new sources of subsistence. At the same moment, the time freed from industrial work can become a salvation. It may be dedicated to supplementary education, acquiring

²¹ Z. Bauman (2001), *The Individualized Society*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

²² M. Mayackij (2009), *Kurort Evropa: esse*, Ad Marginem Press, Moscow, p.49.

²³ *Ivi*, p. 52-53.

skills necessary in new conditions. The problem of free time is related to the problem of leisure. Leisure does not mean doing nothing. The state of leisure supposes that an individual “bothers” to engage in spiritual interests, which make his life substantive and fruitful, bringing sense and dignity to it.

Leisure is a precondition of any free thought and free activity.

In the society of risk and uncertainty, the significance of knowing how to use one’s leisure time meaningfully is growing. People need to be versatile: the more skills, the more possibilities.

Life style as a criterion of stratification

In place of the class model of social stratification that was rooted in the workplace, scholars have flagged up life style as a new element of structural differentiation²⁴. As a concept, life style describes the mode of life of new social groups that corresponds to the requirements of the information epoch. Life style may include practices of organizing daily household routine, paid work, consumption, leisure, tastes, attitudes and values, engagement in the activity of public and religious organizations and groups, as well as plans for the future, the horizon of planning of which is also specific for each of the lifestyles²⁵.

Groups of individuals following a similar lifestyle may, due to this fact, be considered as real social groups. Differences between such groups are not a result of cabinet speculations, but are obvious to any social actor. The lifestyle group (which some authors name by the term of “milieu”) makes it possible to shift from attempts to forecast social behavior by a set of resources to a direct analysis of behavior. At that, under such an approach, the very character of relationship between resources and behavior may become part of the research agenda.²⁶

²⁴ A. L. Kalleberg (2012), *Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition*, “American Sociological Review”, vol. 74, n.1; S. McKay, S. Jefferys, A. Paraksevpoulou, J. Keles, *Study on Precarious Work and Social Rights*, Working Lives Research Institute, London Metropolitan University, London.

²⁵ S. McKay, S. Jefferys, A. Paraksevpoulou, J. Keles, *Study on Precarious Work and Social Rights*, Working Lives Research Institute, London Metropolitan University, London; I.C. Mochmann; Y. El-Menouar (2005), *Lifestyle Groups, Social Milieus and Party Preference in Eastern and Western Germany: Theoretical Considerations and Empirical Results*, “German Politics”, vol. 14, n.4; O.I. Shkaratan, *Sociologiya neravenstva. Teoriya i real'nost'*, NIU VSHE, Moscow; S. Koroatev; O. Shkaratan; E. Gasiukova (2016), *Notes on the Issue of Social Stratification in Russia: Lifestyle Aspect*, “Filosofija. Sociologija”, vol. 27, n.4.

²⁶ S. Koroatev; O. Shkaratan; E. Gasiukova (2016), *Notes on the Issue of Social Stratification in Russia: Lifestyle Aspect*, “Filosofija. Sociologija”, vol. 27, n.4, p. 279.

The evolution of lifestyle has taken on new forms under the new conditions. In the case of “the creative class”, the problem of spare time finds a solution in various leisure practices, which creative professionals can allow themselves. The absence of daily working hour norms promotes the emergence of new lifestyles that are no longer based on the “job-home-job” or “job and only job” pattern. The paradox here is that although work no longer determines their lifestyle despite their greater dependency on work and a culture of overtime, referred to, for example, by British journalist and researcher M. Bunting.²⁷

5. What happens in Russia in conditions to the growing certainty in labour?

As concerns Russia, I would like to compare the labour situation in the USSR’s last decades with the first decades of the XXI century among specialists with higher (university) education from different age groups.

Last Soviet decades

Young specialists

Concerning young specialists, the situation can be described using the following categories: their jobs were assigned by placement in a sustainable situation with guaranteed employment, but the choice of job was practically absent. The wages were low. For three years, it was not possible to change the place of work. Consequently, many young specialists stayed at the first place of employment due to habit, inertia, years of service, merit record or lack of a better alternative, etc.

Workers with a record of service

Concerning experienced workers, the situation with employment included the following categories: they received privileges distributed according to the number of years served, stable benefits, habit, team, colleagues, career growth, sick-list benefits, possibility of finding a job for relatives and friends, contacts, regular bonus awards, stability, understanding of the situation at work,

²⁷ M. Bunting (2004), *Willing Slaves: How the Overwork Culture Is Ruling Our Lives*, HarperCollins, London.

relations within the team, partnership. Thus, after 10-15 years of work, a professional had practically no desire to change their place of work.

First decades of Russia

Young specialists are a generation drifting with the stream of uncertainty. The situation with employment is unstable. There is no assigned job placement. University graduates search for jobs on their own. The field of search is rather wide, but the options are averaged by the level of payment and forms of activity. Hence, it is easy to change places of work and types of activity. The loss of a job is not a serious threat, as there is an alternative choice of similar jobs. That is why people may take temporary jobs, part-time jobs, make breaks in employment, go to other regions or countries for freelancing, for the summer, etc. Of great value are modern professional skills mastered by today's young people, which meet the demands of a wide range of modern activities. The issue of career growth is less relevant than in the Soviet period. Young workers of this social layer are office employees, managers of the low and medium chain, the IT specialists, advertising, mass media, and freelancers. Creativity is welcomed. It gives more options of finding work, but this creativity is not individual. It is closer to the ability to re-adjust easily, acquire new skills, and undergo retraining and supplementary education.

This social layer forms its own lifestyle - the style of those drifting with the stream, able to adjust to uncertainty. The principle of "here and now" is typical for the epoch of globalization. There is mobility in everything. The basic skills are the knowledge of foreign languages, computer skills, mastery of software, such as Photoshop, Presentations, Statistics, and Illustrator. This set is sufficient to find a job easily demanding not professionalism, but exactly this set of skills. There is no concern for social benefits and allowances, or social security. The health status of young specialists usually does not require regular medical care.

Professionals (workers) with a record of service

The situation with employment is not stable. There are redundancies and a scarcity of new job places. People have to change jobs searching for work. However, the lack of diverse skill sets makes it difficult to change the habitual place of work. Unlike young people for whom the starting wage level in different sectors is approximately the same, for workers with a record of service a job change leads to a fall in pay, as well as the loss of status and social benefits. Their ability to adjust to changes is poor, and they prefer stability. Age is an obstacle in job-searching. For a person who has worked in the profession for a

long time with a sustainable status, it is difficult to shift to the freelancer lifestyle – not any work could be transformed into the freelance format. These negative consequences stem from uncertainty that has seized the Russian society.

Professionals in the search for a new job face a loss of status and wages. If a suitable job cannot be found, they risk falling into a precariat status with the loss of social guarantees at work, and relying on low social guarantees of the state.

The prospect for workers who have not yet attained the level of high professionalism is in lower status positions, unstable income, a shift to a lower step in the social hierarchy and, possibly, – to the precariat group. Loss of social guarantees at work and low social guarantees of the state follow as a result.

6. Discussion

The phenomenon of liquid modernity is transforming into overwhelming reality²⁸. The winners are those who are able to adjust to changing modernity and its liquidity. They can attune their abilities and talents to the wave of modern requirements, be creative and respond to new demands. A consequence of this should be a transformation of the style and mode of life. The question is, could we accept the wisdom of the old saying: «The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new» (Socrates).

The concept «from each according to his ability, to each according to his need» is quite relevant today. Yet, the socialist prospect of selfless labour in Russia and the development of sciences without commercialization have undoubtedly failed, as did the metaphor uttered by poet Vladimir Maykovsky «he ploughs the land, then writes the verses»²⁹.

The transition of Russia to the model of market economy has leveled out the differences in the labour aspect between Russia and the West. When capital is opposed to labour, man cannot run away from labour. The threat of loss of work has clearly demonstrated that labour is essential for humans – both as a source of subsistence, as an activity, and as a mode of life.

What can the state offer in case a person loses their job? Could it be an unemployment benefit, poverty relief, or Welfare State charity? This will hardly solve the problem but, according to history, will sooner lead to moral decay and degradation. To continue to be human, people have to work.

²⁸ Z. Bauman (2000), *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

²⁹ V. Maykovsky (1927), Poem *Khorosho*.

In present-day economic and labour market conditions Russia is more and more shifting to the Western model of labour relations, for which the competitiveness of workers of different specialities is most essential.

About 4 decades have passed after the Perestroika (“Restructuring”). Yet, the country has not overcome the mythologemes of the socialist epoch and the after-effects of the planned economy, including a utopian vision of the prospects of labour in Russia and the pathos of the civilization of labour. This resulted in a delayed development of the labour environment, the rudiments of social dependency, and lack of initiative.

Another essential factor (from the future oriented prospect) is the development of technologies, which has overtaken Russia and other countries. The information era has not bypassed Russia. The development of technologies promotes redundancy of workers, which has its negative aspects, primarily the loss of jobs. It also promotes

the formation of new hybrid forms of lifestyle, which become especially atypical in the rural areas. On the one hand, rural people in Russia have preserved simple habits of the purely patriarchal way, village life. On the other hand – a village dweller drives a car to get to the city, uses the Internet and the mobile phone. An agrarian specialist, getting an education in town, lives and works in the village (and sometimes he lives in town, spending his nights there and days - working in the village). In the working time he is engaged in agrarian labour, while on weekends he goes to town to visit a cinema or a theater or a supermarket³⁰.

So, the Russian situation is complemented by numerous aspects. Do Russian citizens have the necessary adaptation abilities and resources, do they have the conditions and possibilities to exist (survive) in the conditions of liquid modernity? Today, much is written about the degradation of the middle class and the failures of the small and medium business in Russia. Despite all the problems and difficulties experienced by the welfare state in the West, its principles are still active, as well as the principles of European democracy, the social guarantees and their legal provisions. An ordinary Russian faces the dilemma: to acquire the abilities of an amphibian man, “a new anthropological and socio-cultural hybrid”, to mutate in line with the changes presented by the liquid modernity, or to turn to the past.

³⁰ S.A. Smirnov, *Antropologiya nomadizma*, <http://www.antropolog.ru/doc/persons/smirnov/smirnov29> (the reference date: 31.07.2019).

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9. Post-Globalization, Post-Virtualization, and New Inequalities

by Dmitry Ivanov*

1. Introduction

By the end of the 20th century, Modernity was transformed by globalization and virtualization of society, but now economically and socially advanced countries enter the post-globalization and post-virtualization age. New tendencies of social change have strong impact on social structures including patterns of social inequality. Three tendencies of inequality structures reconfiguration are considered here:

- 1) spatial configuration of inequality is changing as super-urban areas get richer and more unequal than the rest of society;
- 2) social stratification is reshaped as traditional middle strata are squeezed and the rich are becoming a new modal strata;
- 3) temporal inequality structures are raising as trends generated in the consumer markets differentiate people maintaining the lag between “*having now*” and “*having later*”.

2. Post-globalization and new spatial inequalities

The newest challenge to sociology studying inequalities is the paradox of globalization turned into post-globalization. Globalization processes made sociologists to reassess conceptual means and frameworks of analysis. Concepts of networks and flows promoted at the end of the 20th century by J. Urry, S. Lash, M. Castells, A. Appadurai, B. Latour look more relevant than traditional concepts of institutions and interactions that dominated sociological theorizing and social development discourses during two centuries. However, sociologists consider globalization effects on social inequality

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mostly in the frameworks of the world-system theory and various theories of global disparities. Problems of social inequality are presented in the context of globalization and its consequences in terms of the GDP / the living standard gap between the “core” countries and countries belonging to “periphery” and “semi-periphery” of the global economy¹, or between two groups of nations identified as “global North” and “global South”². That model of international gap should be revised as socioeconomic differences do not coincide with national borders and wealth and power are concentrated in networks of super-urban areas playing a role of “command centers” in transnational economy.³

Super-urbanization is a radically new phenomenon that differs from urbanization, which was a key component of modernization. The world has become super-urbanized as more than 50% of the world’s population live in urban areas since 2010. According to the United Nations reports on urbanization, there were 6 megacities with populations exceeding 5 million in 1950, by 2010 this number had risen to 60 and by 2018 to 81⁴. About the quarter of the world population is concentrated in five and half hundred cities all having more than 1 million inhabitants.

In this super-urbanized world transformation of social inequality patterns should be considered not only in the context of gap between urban and rural areas but also in the context of gap between super-urban areas and the rest of the world. According to research data of the Brookings Institution, the largest 300 metropolitan areas contain only about 20% of the world’s population but they generate nearly half of the world’s GDP⁵. Another research conducted by McKinsey Global Institute has revealed the top 600 cities by economic output concentrate 22% of global population and provide more than 50% of global GDP⁶. The super-urbanized areas outperform national economies they belong to and therefore open new dimension of inequality – disparities between the super-urban points of access to flows of resources and the surrounding regions (Table 1).

¹ I. Wallerstein (2004), *World-System Analysis: An Introduction*, Duke University Press, Durham.

² G. Arrighi (2001), *Global Capitalism and the Persistence of the North – South Divide*, “Science & Society”, vol. 65 (4), pp. 469-476.

³ S. Sassen (2005), *The Global City: Introducing a Concept*, “Brown Journal of World Affairs”, vol. 11 (2), pp. 27-43.

⁴ United Nations (2014), *World Urbanization Prospects*, New York, UN DESA; United Nations (2019), *World Urbanization Prospects 2018: Highlights*, New York, UN DESA.

⁵ The Brookings Institution (2012), *Global Metro monitor: Slowdown, Recovery*, Metropolitan Policy Program; The Brookings Institution (2018), *Global Metro monitor 2018*, Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings.

⁶ McKinsey Global Institute (2011). *Urban World: Mapping the Economic Power of Cities*.

Table 1 - The largest cities per capita GDP premium relative to region, %

City	Region	Per capita GDP premium (regional per capita GDP = 100%)
New York	USA	133
Los Angeles	USA	122
Paris	Western Europe	159
London	Western Europe	144
Tokyo	Japan	119
Osaka	Japan	99
Moscow	Russia	257
St. Petersburg	Russia	131

Source: McKinsey (2012) and Rosstat (2019).

Contrast between high level of social development and lower one cannot be identified only with global “North/South” divide. Brexit and Trump’s campaign in 2016 have showed sharp social divides inside “global North”. Voters in small towns and rural areas less involved into transnational networks and flows are against political agenda supported by super-urban population. Protests in Hong Kong in 2019 demonstrated once again that large cities and megacities, being more cosmopolitan and liberal than conservative majority of nation, are detached from social reality maintained by institutions of nation-states and super-urban areas generate problems for traditional policies oriented to ideology of “national interests”.

The economic and social divide between the group of the largest cities and the rest of the world supports the idea that globalization has resulted not in the “world society” or “worldwide sociality” but rather in networked enclaves of globality. In such metropolitan areas as New York, Los Angeles, London, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Moscow, Istanbul, Seoul, Toronto and other megacities interconnected by cross-border material, human, and symbolic flows, people experience globality as borderless, mobile, and multicultural life. Therefore, “globalization” does not mean planetary spread of social structures but rather localized displacement of habitual social structures by intensive flows.⁷ It follows that the distinction between “core” and “periphery” in the global socioeconomic order should be revised. The “core” now is dispersed into networks of cosmopolitan super-urban areas. Paradoxically, globality is very localized and because of that the subject-matter of global sociology is not the totality of societies and relations among them but networked (g)localities constituted by transnational flows. Globalization promising structural homogeneity and cultural unity is over. Post-globaliz-

⁷ A. Appadurai (1990), *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*, in M. Featherstone (Edited by), *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization, and Modernity*, SAGE, London.

ation is the rise of new barriers (trade wars, sanctions, antimigrant walls, quarantines etc.) provoked by development of networked super-urban enclaves of globality where flows of things, symbols, and humans make social life super-intensive and contrasting with the social life decline in surrounding towns and rural areas. The growth and decoupling of super-urban enclaves of globality are important drivers of new forms of social inequality.

Table 2 - National Gini vs Super-Urban Gini (Russia and USA)

<i>Country / City</i>	<i>Gini index (year of estimation)</i>
Russia	0,377 (2015)
Moscow	0,430 (2015)
St. Petersburg	0,420 (2015)
USA	0,469 (2017)
New York	0,547 (2017)
Los Angeles	0,532 (2017)

Source: World Bank, National Bureaus of Statistics.

The post-globalization challenge to habitual models of social structures in the super-urbanized world is characterized not only by concentration of wealth, power, and cultural dominance in the enclaves of globality. Compared to their countries, metropolitan areas outperform in economic growth and at the same time they are more unequal in terms of Gini index (Table 2). The combination of relatively higher levels of both economic performance and income disparity shows that the networked enclaves of globality represent two faces of inequality defined as exclusion and unequal inclusion. The inhabitants of small cities and rural areas are disadvantaged because they are excluded from flows of resources circulating inside the networks of large cities/megacities. Nevertheless, people involved into such flows are disadvantaged too as they are included to be workforce for the newest form of postindustrial capitalism arising in networked enclaves of globality. People migrate to super-urban areas searching higher living standard and quality of life but they are faced with new dimension of social life – fullness measured by intensity of flows structuring fluid existence of “*homo super-urbanus*”.

The divide between the super-urban areas and the rest of territories and communities has impacted social development in two ways. Attracting resources of all kinds and generating new social structures, such metropolitan areas as New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, London, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Moscow, Seoul, Istanbul, and other megacities become centers of new sociality creation. Social life in the access points to transnational networks and flows of material, symbolic, human, and technological resources is an existence full of cyber-physical experience. There different social realities are mutually penetrated and take form of *augmented reality* integrating physical and digital, material and symbolic, modern and “postmodern” components

of human life. There is an augmented sociality while small cities and rural communities are losing resources which are “washed away” by outflows of human resources redirected towards super-urban hubs. Augmented sociality is in sharp contrast with an exhausted sociality apart network of globality enclaves. Globalization was expected to be planetary spread of Modernity institutions but now we are faced rather with localized displacement of habitual social structures of Modernity by intensive life in a regime of *Augmented Modernity* in the super-urban areas while in the rest of communities outside super-urban hubs of augmented sociality tendency toward an *Exhausted Modernity* can be seen.

3. Post-virtualization and temporalization of inequality

Alongside with post-globalization making super-urban enclaves the points of access to networks and flows which contribute to formation of new spatial inequalities, tendencies of post-virtualization reshape stratification and stimulate temporalization of inequality. Post-virtualization arises because after virtualization of social reality in the late 20th century this reality does not disappear, as postmodernists presupposed, but it is becoming more intensive and taking new forms.

Virtualization of society cannot be reduced to the spread of digital technologies or to Internet development. That process is just one of the aspects of the recent socioeconomic change. Virtualization in general is a replacement of physical reality by images simulating real objects properties. Virtual reality is a good metaphor and adequate model for so called “new economy” of brands, networked enterprises, financial derivatives, and consumer credits. Virtual reality is also an efficient tool to analyze politics based now on image making and media more than on traditional activities and organizations.

Economic institutions and the whole society become a kind of virtual reality when people manipulate virtual objects (images) while institutional norms require doing the real things. By the end of the 20th century institutions of capitalism were virtualized as branding and public relations activities transferred competition from the material production domain to the virtual reality of communications where socially constructed “special qualities” of commodity or company affect consumers and investors more than real things and doings. As a result, basic components of contemporary economic system cease to be a familiar reality, and virtual products, virtual organizations, and virtual money are increasingly created.

Virtualization of consumer goods and commodities is a process underlying the brands expansion. In the market supersaturated with similar products

the branding is an effective weapon to struggle for the consumer attention which is the scarcest resource of advanced economy. Brands created as images identified with some product or company are not only orientation tools for consumers at the marketplace. Images themselves have become the proper consumption objects for people who construct and maintain social and cultural identity buying and displaying branded things. Because of that at the edge of the 20th century the branding was formed into a particular professional field and had become a common technology of the virtual value creation.

Virtualization of society follows that economic logic and transforms all institutions. As a result, social relations take form of relations among images. Images and communications are more effective than institutions and interactions in their habitual physical form “face-to-face”. Social life since the late 20th century has been immersed in virtual realities of branding, image making, and communications through digital media. But it is not digitalization that makes society virtualized, rather virtualization of society makes digital technologies a requirement for human activities. Virtualization of society makes networks the prevalent social structures and the ICT main means of activities.

Tendencies of virtualization are evident in all advanced societies but in some their segments new tendencies can be seen. Virtual reality of images and communications is routinized and domesticated. Overproduction of images / constructed identities makes them less valuable and value-orientations are shifted to physical presence, real experience, something ‘analogous’ contrasted with all “digital”. That is a turn to post-virtualization. Post-virtualization meets post-globalization in super-urban hubs of networks and flows where alternative movements activists and businessmen create social spaces functioning as points of access to reality. Creative spaces, coworkings, anti-cafes etc. are places where different social realities are mutually penetrated and take form of augmented reality integrating physical and digital, material and symbolic, public and private, modern and “postmodern” components of human life. After virtualization of social reality this reality does not disappear, as postmodernists presupposed, but it is becoming more intensive and taking forms which can be characterized as “augmented social reality”. Social life in the mutually penetrated realities in the access points to networks and flows is that existence full of cyber-physical experience which has been defined above as a life in regime of augmented Modernity.

General logic of post-virtualization – routinization of virtual reality and creation of augmented reality, leads to more intensive work and consumption and to more intensive competition and social differentiation. By the late 1990s markets had been saturated by brands, and intensive commodification

of images has led to overbranding and triviality of virtualization strategy. Overproduction of virtuality has become obvious in crises of 2000 and 2008. They revealed an exhaustion of the virtualization logic of “new economy”. It requires another logic of competitive advantage creation. The competition among brand images is so intensive that in the struggle for the scarcest resource – targeted groups’ attention, it becomes a rational strategy to make images brighter and lighter. The goods/services should be aggressively beautiful to be intensively attractive for targeted groups. Such intensity can be maintained only for a relatively short period and because of that value creation process now is related more to trends, than to brands, not only in traditional fashion industry and show business but also in high-tech and financial industries. With the shift of competitiveness from brands to trends, the “new economy” is shifted from the logic of virtualization to logic of post-virtualization making glamour driving force of today’s capitalism.

The glamour now is not only lifestyle of “blondes” and “metrosexuals” schematized in the urban folklore or specific aesthetics realized in popular culture phenomena from Hollywood stars of the 1930s to glam rock of the 1970s. In the 2000s marketing and management gurus considered it to be one of ‘strategic cultural ideas’ for revolutionizing branding⁸. Defining glamour as an idea in the consumerism complex, experts recognize its power at consumer goods markets but they miss other economic realizations of logic of glamour. Financial analytics since the mid-1990s use the term “glamour” to designate specific strategy of stock traders buying not worthy but rather trendy assets⁹. Multifaceted glamour appearing in different economic activities and discourses could not be reduced to lifestyle of specific consumer group, pop-culture aesthetics, or consumerist ideology. Being since the 1930s specific aesthetic form/life style, the glamour recently became a common logic of various value creation processes and therefore it can be defined as the rationality of current capitalism that looks like glam-capitalism¹⁰.

⁸ J. Grant (2006), *The Brand Innovation Manifesto*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, Chichester, pp. 226-227.

⁹ L. Chan, N. Jegadeesh, J. Lakonishok (1995), *Evaluating the performance of value versus glamour stocks: The impact of selection bias*, “Journal of Financial Economics”, vol. 38, pp. 269-296; j. Conrad, M. Cooper, G. Kaul (2003), *Value versus Glamour*, “The Journal of Finance”, Vol. 58, Issue 5: 1969-1996.

¹⁰ D. Ivanov (2016), *New Forms of Inequality and the structures of Glam-Capitalism*, “Social Evolution & History”, vol. 15 (2), pp. 25-49.

4. Glam-capitalism impact on stratification

At the century edge the “onion-like” stratification with numerically dominant middle strata is replaced in economically advanced countries by the “pear-like” bimodal stratification (Figure 1). The majority of small business holders, professionals and high-skilled workers traditionally composing the middle strata are now much below the mean income level. In economically advanced countries they become new poverty strata.

In contrast to the habitual poor, the new poverty strata households have all attributes of normal middle class: job that provides money enough for current consumption, house / apartment big enough for the family, savings for durable consumer goods and vacation. But people feel poor because to maintain desirable level of consumption they have to get more sources – additional job and borrowings. Traditional middle strata are under pressure of extra-jobs and loan payments because they try follow the standard of well-being defined by rising group of entrepreneurs and professionals who capitalize on glamour and elaborate new consumerism patterns more influential than old-fashioned social virtues.

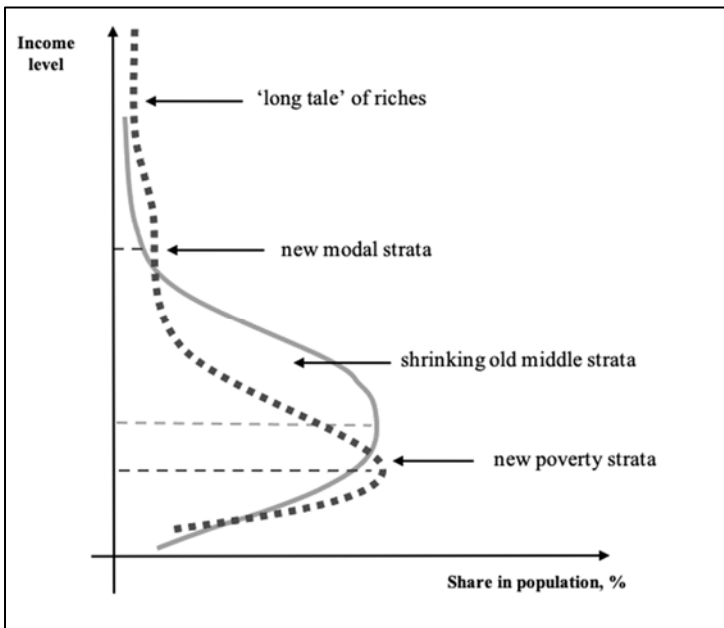


Figure 1 - Stratification Transformation (from “Onion” towards “Pear”).

Source: the author’s model based on U.S. Census Bureau data (available at www.census.gov)

The shift to the new form of stratification began in USA in the late 20th century and recent data are in good correspondence with the “pear-like” model (Figure 2). The new modal strata emerge around the income level \$145-155 thousand while traditional middle class consisting of households with annual income \$40-100 thousand is losing dominant position in new configuration of social strata. Numerically dominant is new poverty strata consisting of households with annual income \$25-40 thousand. Socially dominant now are not the middles but rather the rich and richest people composing the highest income quintile and the “long tale” which includes top 5% of households with annual income above \$195 thousand.

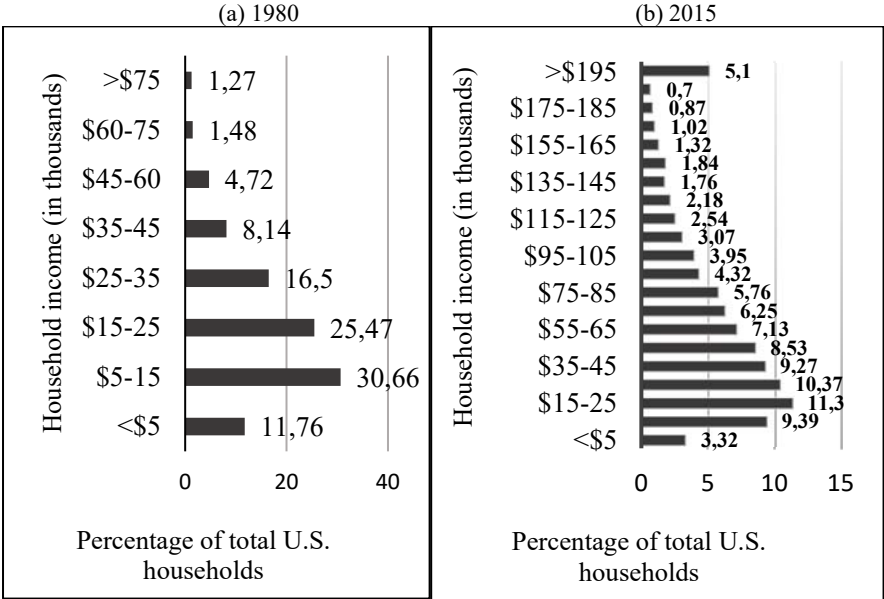


Figure 2 - Shapes of Income Distribution in USA in 1980 and 2015.
 Source: The author’s estimations based on data from (a) Money Income of Households, Families and Persons in the United States: 1980. Current Population Reports. Series P-60, No 132. U.S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census, 1982; (b) U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2017 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

American researchers characterize the majority of the riches as “shy millionaires” who have huge assets but prefer relatively modest lifestyle. Only 30% of 9 million of American millionaires can be characterized as cool “deal masters” and “status chasers”¹¹ But these 30% affect the whole stratification as the ambitious new riches entering the upper stratum remain the “hungry

¹¹ M. Penn, E. Zalesne (2007), *Microtrends*, Allen Lane, London.

middles” in their consumption patterns. They spend extraordinary amounts of money on the ordinary set of the middle strata wellbeing components: residence, car, clothing, vacation, entertainment. As a result they develop patterns of hyper-consumerism in the glamour style: “superhouse”, “super-car”, “megashopping”, “megaparty” and so on. Such patterns are adopted by glamers – protagonists of the glamour as a lifestyle, which are numerous among households with income \$100-250 thousand which are approximately 9/10 of the highest quintile. New modal strata emerging in the highest quintile are displacing traditional middle strata as the source of social normativity. The catchy businesses and lifestyles of glam-capitalists and glam-professionals become new sources of mass-media coverage and provide followers and imitators from lower strata with value orientations and modes of behavior challenging traditional virtues of petty bourgeoisie.

Glam-capitalists and glam-professionals do not represent the ideal type of bourgeoisie depicted hundred years ago by Max Weber in “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism”. Weber considered capitalist rationality as the “iron cage” of calculation, discipline, and modesty that makes life the permanent work accumulating the wealth¹² The rationality of glam-capitalism is quite different. It appears not in such work ethic but in the consumerism aesthetic. *Sweaty consumption* is the general activity under conditions of glam-capitalism. Glamers take everything just to consume. They consider all components of life as projects to be invested (financially, physically, and emotionally) while returns grow rapidly. As the growth rate has reached a maximum they tend to cancel the project and to go to the next start-up. For example, glam-capitalists demonstrate such unusual and paradoxical logic as they sell businesses which are just started and growing. To develop business just to sell it is the project logic evidently adopted by founders of ICQ, Skype, WGSN, MySpace, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp and many other start-ups.

Theoretical model of the shift from the ‘onion-like’ stratification toward the “pear-like” bimodal stratification is supported by empirical data from different countries in transition from industrial society to postindustrial one. In Russia, for example, statistical data on income distribution allow to reveal a gap between two modal strata: the lower modal stratum with monthly income US \$200-750 and the upper modal stratum with income above US \$1000 (Table 3). Unequal increments used by Russian Statistics Service to present income brackets make it difficult to analyze stratification correctly, but the tendency towards formation of strata above mean income level including the “long tale” of riches is obvious.

¹² M. Weber (2003), *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Dover Publications, New York.

It is obvious also that the bimodal configuration of income distribution among people correlates with the spatial configuration of inequality considered above. Moscow and St. Petersburg, two largest cities attracting flows of material, human, and symbolic resources are home for Russian glam-industries entrepreneurs and well-paid staff.

Table 3 - Stratification in Russia (2018)

	<i>Russia</i>	<i>Moscow</i>	<i>St. Petersburg</i>
Average monthly income per head, Russian rubles (in 2018 US \$1=RUR60)	33 178	68 386	44 999
Income groups	Share of income group in population, %		
Above 60 000	12,4	41,5	22,4
45 000-60 000	9,4	14,8	13,0
27 000-45 000	23,7	23,2	26,7
10 000-27 000	42,7	18,8	32,8
below 10000	11,8	1,7	5,1

Source: “Rosstat” – Russian State Statistics Service (www.gks.ru).

New shape of stratification is resulted from the rise of the glam-capitalism flow-structures. Structures of the glam-capitalism are flow-structures because they coordinate participants (actors and actants, humans and things) through direction and intensity of moves penetrating barriers and boundaries established by traditional institutional structures and by network structures of recent decades. Flows of people, money, goods, information are structuring social life under the glam-capitalism as they define intentions and outcomes of social activities. Involvement in flows is becoming a factor of social differentiation. People involved by their own intentions in the functioning of glam-industries and glamour-industrial complexes get access to more resources. Creative consumers get access to additional resources, despite glam-capitalists extract profits from consumers’ enthusiastic participation in flow-structures. However, there are refugees, economic migrants, victims of human trafficking who try to get access to resources provided by the glam-capitalism in networked enclaves of globality but are losing their autonomy and become objectified part of flow-structures.

5. Temporalization of inequality

Generating trends in the consumer markets, agents and structures of the postindustrial capitalism cause effect of temporality or fluidity of social inequality. Trendsetters make some object valuable and leaders of consumerism pay for that object much more than masses of ordinary consumers who are waiting for reduced prices in season sales. All three groups of actors involved in consumption (trendsetters, early adopters, and late consumers) get the same goods but their access to the value is different in terms of time. The temporal lags among them differentiate access to material, symbolic, and human resources, and especially to such symbolic resource as prestige of being the leaders of consumption flow.

The temporal inequality in recent years obviously emerges from trends in consumption of electronic gadgets and new media. Traditional view of “digital divide” between privileged minority having access to computers and the rest of people is not stable structure. Prestigious gadgets provide their owners with additional options to get information, to participate in communities, to work and to consume. Such gadgets can be attributes of social status but for relatively short time. They lose the function of social distinction as the majority of ordinary consumers get them. However, by that moment the function of distinction is shifted to other trendy media and differentiation among trendsetters, early adopters, and the latecomers is organized into the new consumer flow. For example, by 1995 in US more than 50% of adults owned desktop computers, but only 20% used mobile phones. By the year 2000 according to surveys of Pew Research Center cell phone became attribute of more than 50% of American adults and the “cell divide” disappeared by 2012 as share of mobile phones owners reached 87%. Trendsetters and leaders of consumerism have been swallowed by mass of ordinary consumers on that market, but the function of distinction was shifted to new trend of temporal differentiation emerged among enthusiastic users of tablet computers. The intensity of consumer flow on the tablets market reveals the dynamics of “tablet divide” as the newest trend of temporal inequality: only 4% of adults in US owned tablet computers in 2010, but 19% in 2012, and 42% in 2014.

The US consumer trends are paradigmatic for other economies and societies. Similar effects of temporal inequality can be seen in other countries. For example, in Russia mobile phone performed the function of social distinction in the early 2000s when, according to surveys by Russian Public Opinion Research Center, ownership of such device was characteristic for 5% of adults in 2002 and 17% in 2003. That trend of temporal inequality formation disappeared as usage of mobile phone became common life style attribute for the majority composed by 65% in 2007 and more than 90% by

2012. New trend of differentiation in the mid-2000s emerged on the base of Web 2.0. Surveys revealed only 5% of Russian adults used the Internet resources in 2006. The share of users in the adult population reached 21% in 2009, 37% in 2012, and 52% by 2015. The “digital divide” between Internet users and the mass of late coming consumers becomes narrow, but among people having access to the Internet new form of inequality emerged with expansion of social networking services. The national platforms *odnoklassniki.ru* and *vkontakte.ru* became open for users registration in 2006, and by the next year around 10% of the Internet users had accounts in social networks and therefore access to new media and “hand-made content”. Surveys of Russian Public Opinion Research Center show the rapid growth of users interested in such access to new kind of resources: 53% of the Internet users had accounts on social networking platforms by 2010 and new “digital divide” disappeared by 2015 as 85% of respondents declared membership in social networks. But the newest form of “digital divide” is the gap between the creative minority of Web 2.0 users (about 25%) who generate digital contents attracting attention and the passive majority of digital media consumers who pay attention and therefore work virtually for symbolic and social capital accumulation in its digital form.

Temporal inequality cannot be described in traditional terms of discrimination on a social “ladder” or exclusion from a “circle”. Distinction has to be made between the involved in flow and the outpaced by flow. For producers and consumers of trends consumption is becoming less object-oriented and more time-oriented. The time becomes specific value obtained for money, and money becomes the tool for time capitalization. The temporal capital is represented by trends permanently generated in the flow-structures. Rising significance of temporal organization of access to trendy goods allows to shift focus of analysis from traditional quantitative gap between “*having more*” and “*having less*” toward the temporal lag between “*having now*” and “*having later*”.

Temporal inequality adds one more dimension to contemporary configurations of inequality. Inequality now is not only hierarchical order differentiating higher positions and lower ones, or order of network differentiating core positions and peripheral ones. Inequality is also about different dynamic of access to resources. Differentiation of faster flows of resources and slower flows in the postindustrial consumer goods markets is specific social inequality form supplementing disparities based on institutionalized statuses and memberships in networked communities.

6. Concluding remarks

Emerging networks and flow-structures as well as gaps between enclaves of augmented Modernity and zones of exhausted Modernity reshape configuration of social inequality based during the two recent centuries on institutional regulation of access to material, human, and symbolic resources according to social status attained in frameworks of formal organizations. New forms of inequality raise structural complexity of societies entering the post-globalization and post-virtualization age. Now three types of inequality can be identified in current social practices of differentiation, discrimination, social conflicts, and social policies:

1) *institutional inequality* based on social status that establishes correspondence between: class and property, income and stratum, symbolic capital and prestige of life style, personal rights and gender, civil rights and ethnicity and so on;

2) *networked inequality* based on cultural identity that provides distinction between the included in network who have privileges of membership and the excluded from network;

3) *flow inequality* based on spatial and temporal mobility / creativity that provides involvement in flows and corresponding advantages of place and moment.

The new forms of inequality and structures of glam-capitalism look like structural mutations in the long history of Modernity. The habitual forms of inequality, which emerged in previous phases of Modernity, are dominating even in contemporary configurations, but the new forms should be taken into account to depict correctly multi-dimensional inequalities of our time and to define tendencies of contemporary societies' long-term restructuring.

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10. Participation and Sustainable Local Development in the Dodecanese Islands of Greece

by *Alexiou Aristeia, George O. Tsobanoglou*

1. Preamble

Citizens' Participation, under the process of Community Capacity Building (CCB), appears to be an effective instrument and, at the same time, a viable method to achieve specific community objectives in various areas of action, and an overall sustainable local employment development.

The subtle components of CCB can highlight critical issues of sustainable local development, based on recognised weaknesses in intra-Community mechanisms, support stakeholders in mapping the progress of fulfilling their own needs, achieving development objectives and ensuring the desired results by capitalizing on them within the Community, while exploiting external interventions.

Based on the implementation of the CCB evaluation mechanism on the three selected main islands of the Dodecanese Islands - that is, Rhodes, Kos and Tilos, it emerged that, although the apparent development path of citizens' participation showed significant resilience and strength, it was shown, at the end, that this was based on a series of "random" events rather than on a process of citizens' community participation steered in some way with specific Community objectives. More specifically, by looking for the elements that make up the capacity building of the community system, the dominant element that emerged from the focus groups and the interviews taken on the island of Rhodes, brought up the low level of citizens' participation in the local decision-making processes. Similar results came out from the island of Kos, with even lower ratings. There the negative climate emerged due to the local government's haphazard management of the social enterprise employment cluster. On the contrary, the case of the island of Tilos showed a different social environment whereby local government engaged actively all the sectors concerned with a dynamic inclusion policy for all towards sustainable

endogenous local development. The focus on endogenous participation led us to see the level of sustainability in these island communities providing evidence for directions for effective policy in times of the pandemic crisis. Community resources need to be gathered and activated democratically in view of sustainable futures.

2. Introduction

The current prolonged and unprecedented period of multidimensional social crisis makes it crucial to systematically study the factors that shape, stabilize and develop Community Capacity mainly focusing on its internal resources, in ways that also utilize external resources. The Dodecanese Islands were under Italian governance for 31 years (1912-1943). They were united with Greece in 1948. The Italian administration did impressive restoration works regarding the classical archaeological heritage of the Islands of Rhodes and Kos. They did impressive work for the medieval city of Rhodes and the famous Palace of the Knights of Rhodes. They also designed a special architectural style for the Dodecanese evidenced in the public administration, education, leisure activities, hotels, hospitals, road infrastructure based on a unique land registration system embedded in the territorial administration system. They also founded the agricultural cooperative system of Rhodes in 1915 (*Cooperativa Agricoltura Industriale di Rodi-CAIR*), which aimed to ensure food security for the islands' population, still in place but with limited industrial activity aside from wine production. The Italian administration invested heavily in rebuilding the heritage and physical infrastructure in this territory, imprinting in it defining elements of its state-of-the-art state governance administration by recalling a desired heritage of its own significant Past (*Mare Nostrum*). As a result of the above, when both Rhodes and Kos were annexed to Greece were in a very advantageous situation as their built environment was intact and unique to the rest of Greece as well as other organisation parameters built by Italian state administration. As there was not damage due to war-time activity, the islands were to become tourist destinations from early on at a moment the rest of Greece was literally in ruins because of war-time occupation and civil war that followed it.

Since its liberation, Rhodes had an early start with domestic tourism. The rest of Greece which was in ruins, as a result of the war-time and civil war devastation, had a keen desire to get to know the “new country”, the “Emerald Island”, as the travel literature described it, and the Greek cinema of the time was featured with films that set the island's sights. This was followed by the first cruises, visits by personalities of international repute from the

political and the art scene (Churchill, Tito, Zhivkov, Makarios, Onassis, Callas, etc.) and the first charters from Sweden landed in the early 1960s. Rhodes was soon to become a Scandinavian tourist colony. In the following years, with the evolution of major Tour Operators, the market expanded, and the Germans and English people became the main customers of Rhodes hotels.

Considering this background, we investigated the status of citizens' participation by utilising the domains of community capacity building empowerment at the apogee of this development. Are the current social development trajectories enable the use of local human resources and endogenous sustainable development?

A region's internal development processes and the intrinsic factors / dynamics that determine its ability and sustainable direction are multiparametric and difficult to determine. The systematic activation of the pursuits to achieve the goal of sustainable local development usually takes place in a process that is not linear. When social partnership is taken into consideration, conditionality is essential when participatory currents for action are tested.

At a theoretical level, the main objective of the present research, which is ongoing, has been to identify the dimensions and characteristics of each parameter of Community Capacity Building considered as an important evidenced-based policy for a "means" for community empowerment. This is a first study that applies a systematic analysis of Community Capacity Building (CCB) to a Greek region.

3. Participation in Community Building

Community Capacity Building was first mentioned 30 years ago¹. It incorporated a systematic analysis, on the one hand, of the needs and dynamics of a defined community, and, on the other hand, of the endogenous means of creating controlled conditions so that predetermined objectives are achieved.

For several authors an important part of sustainable, bottom-up, community development lies in the "capacity to act for the community" through which (community) the way to achieve the desired goals is facilitated, step by step, with the participation of the community's social resources. Thus, the concept of Community Capacity Building (CCB), although recent and with a relatively ambiguous conceptual framework, tends to be of particular importance for recognizing priorities and opportunities for the sustainable

¹ G. Craig (2010), in S. Kenny *et al.* (edited by), *Community Capacity Building: Critiquing the Concept in Different Policy Contexts in Challenging Capacity Building: Comparative Perspectives*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, e-book.

development of a region². The establishment of community capacity is even mentioned in the literature as an essential requirement to strengthen the processes for achieving sustainable local development.

According to a rather extensive literature review, nine (9) comprehensive/reconstituted areas were considered for the Evaluation of Community Capacity Building (CCB) in line with the model of weighting and hierarchically classifying the priority areas of action for sustainable development, based on the dimensions and sectors/subsectors developed, revised and compiled by other authors who measured community development skills³. The areas of social empowerment examined were: T1. Learning opportunities and skills development (LOSD); T2. Resource mobilization (RM); T3. Partnerships / Liaisons / Networking (PLN); T4. Leadership (L); T5. Participatory decision making (PDM); T6. Assets based approach (assets) (ABA); T7. Sense of Community (SC); T8. Communication (C); and T9. Development path (DP). At the same time, there were the sub-sectors: YT 7.1 Commitment to Action (CA); YT 7.2 Sense of “belonging” (SB); YT 8.1 Diffusion / Dissemination (D); YT 9.1 Shared vision and clear goals (SVCG); YT 9.2 Community Needs Assessment (CNA); YT 9.3 Process and outcome monitoring (POM); and YT9.4 Sustainability (S)⁴.

² R. Victorine (2000), *Building tourism excellence at the community level: capacity building for community-based entrepreneurs in Uganda*, “Journal of Travel Research”, vol. 38(3), pp. 221-229; H. Hackett (2004), *Community capacity building*, Paper presented at the conference of social assistance professionals in the provincial and municipal sectors, Retrieved 29, May, 2009; R. J. Chaskin, *et al.* (2007), *Building Community Capacity (Modern Applications of Social Work)*, Aldine Transaction, Piscataway; G. Craig (2007), *Community capacity-building: something old, something new...?*, “Critical Social Policy”, vol. 27, pp. 335–359; . Craig (2010), in S. Kenny *et al.* (edited by), *Community Capacity Building: Critiquing the Concept in Different Policy Contexts in Challenging Capacity Building: Comparative Perspectives*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, e-book; G. Lavarack (2005), *Evaluating community capacity: Visual representation and interpretation*, “Community Development Journal”, vol. 41(3), pp. 266-276. doi: 10.1093/cdj/bsi047; A. Noya, *et al.* (2009), *Community Capacity Building Creating A Better Future Together*, OECD, Paris; C. Vincent, C. Stephen (2015), *Local Government Capacity Building and Development: Lessons, Challenges and Opportunities*, “Journal of Political Sciences & Public Affairs”, 3:149. doi:10.4172/2332-0761.1000149.

³ S.C. Liberato; J. Brimblecombe, J. Ritchie *et al.* (2011), *Measuring capacity building in communities: a review of the literature*, “BMC Public Health 11: 850. doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-11-850.

⁴ G. Lavarack (2005), *Evaluating community capacity: Visual representation and interpretation*, “Community Development Journal”, vol. 41(3), pp. 266-276. doi: 10.1093/cdj/bsi047; S.C. Liberato; J. Brimblecombe, J. Ritchie *et al.* (2011), *Measuring capacity building in communities: a review of the literature*, “BMC Public Health 11: 850. doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-11-850.

4. Research Methodology

The evaluation of community capacity has traditionally used qualitative information to provide “thick” descriptive accounts, based on the participants’ experiences, which produce a large quantity of data such as transcribed interviews. This type of data is difficult and time consuming for practitioners to interpret. The implication to community development practice of using the spider web configuration is that it produces a visual representation of the participants’ personal experiences in a format that is concise and measurable. Visualization that uses the spider web of such a complex concept is an attractive and a useful tool, when sensitive issues, such as “developing local leadership” with stakeholders at the community level, are discussed. The use of visual representations for community capacities, discussed in two different cultural contexts, helps demonstrate how appropriate and flexible is to use the spider web configuration to plan, implement and evaluate community development status.

For our Case Study, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews took place on the three (3) Dodecanese islands, that is, on Rhodes, Kos and Tilos. We also undertook document analysis and focus groups with two participant groups: stakeholders and citizens on each island. In addition to the nine (9) comprehensive domains, major dimensions of Local Sustainable Development were taken into consideration and are depicted on the diagrams depicting the spider web tool. The attempt was aiming to help the participants analyze their own needs and issues, assess the domains and sub-domains of the CCB measurement tool for their community, by their focusing on employment creation, and to reflect on what had led them to their particular understanding of issues involved. The assessment period took place between 2012 and 2018.

5. Results

The target of building local capacity is of primary importance for local sustainable development. For the three under examination islands Rhodes, Kos and Tilos, the question of how to build local capacity for employment was the key issue. The critical aim of our research was to investigate - through the community capacity building concept - economic balances in the local employment creation system by focusing on the empowerment and participation of local residents with the appropriate skills and resources so they can achieve local development goals. In case of Tilos, the linkages with external agents supported the significant steps towards its energy self-sufficiency.

We asked the participants of the focus groups to justify their assessments over each domain and sub-domain, which were drawn from the literature review. The results appear as follows:

Table 1 - Overall Results for the Community Capacity Building, according to the focus groups and interviews on Rhodes.

(I) Domains for Evaluation of CCB <i>Scale: 0Absence-1 VL, 2 L, 3 M, 4 H, 5VH</i>	Mean
T1. Learning opportunities and skills development (LOSD)	2,4 L-M
T2. Resource mobilization (RM)	2,3 L-M
T3. Partnership/linkages/networking (PLN)	1,6 L
T4. Leadership (L)	2,0 L
T5. Participatory decision-making (PDM)	1,4VL-L
T6. Assets-based approach (ABA)	2,0 L
T7. Sense of Community (SC)	1,5 L
T8. Communication (C)	1,8 L
T9. Development path (DP)	1,6 L
<hr/>	
(II) Sub-Domains for Evaluation of CCB	
7.1 Commitment to Action (CA)	1,9 L
7.2 Sense of “belonging” (SB)	1,1 VL-L
8.1 Diffusion / Dissemination (D)	2,0 L
9.1 Shared vision and clear goals (SVCG)	1,8 L
9.2 Common vision and clear goals (CNA)	1,5 L
9.3 Process and outcome monitoring (POM)	1,3 VL-L
9.4 Sustainability (S)	1,7 L

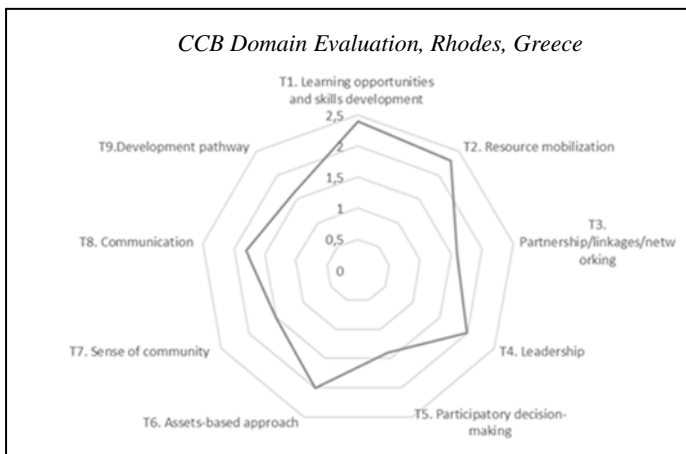


Chart 1 - Depiction of the Results on the Spider-Diagram. CCB Domain Evaluation, Rhodes.

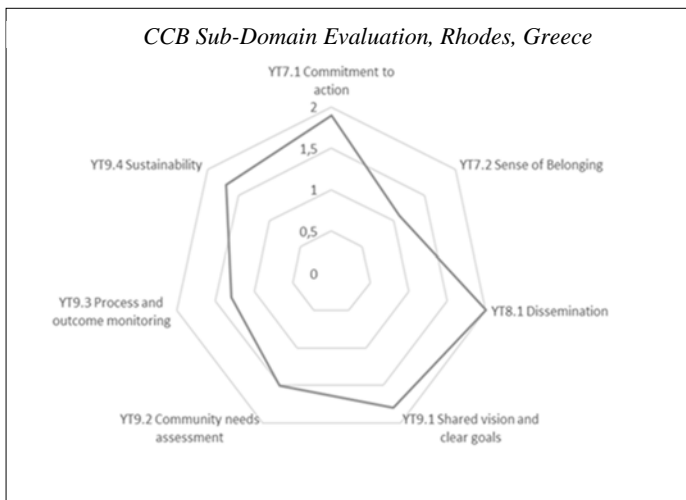


Chart 1.2 - Depiction of the Results on the Spider-Diagram. CCB Sub-Domain Evaluation, Rhodes.

Table 2 - Overall Results for the Community Capacity Building, according to the focus groups and interviews on Kos.

Domains for Evaluation of CCB	
	Mean
<i>Scale: 0Absence-1 VL, 2 L, 3 M, 4 H, 5VH</i>	
T1. Learning opportunities and skills development (LOSD)	1,2 VL-L
T2. Resource mobilization (RM)	1,2 VL-L
T3. Partnership/linkages/networking (PLN)	1,4 VL-L
T4. Leadership (L)	1,2 VL-L
T5. Participatory decision-making (PDM)	0,8 VL
T6. Assets-based approach (ABA)	0,9 VL
T7. Sense of Community (SC)	0,7 VL
T8. Communication (C)	0,9 VL
T9. Development path (DP)	1,1 VL-L
(II) Sub-Domains for Evaluation of CCB	
7.1 Commitment to Action (CA)	0,8 VL
7.2 Sense of “belonging” (SB)	0,6 VL
8.1 Diffusion / Dissemination (D)	1,0 VL
9.1 Shared vision and clear goals (SVCG)	1,3 VL-L
9.2 Common vision and clear goals (CNA)	1,3VL-L
9.3 Process and outcome monitoring (POM)	1,0 VL
9.4 Sustainability (S)	0,7 VL

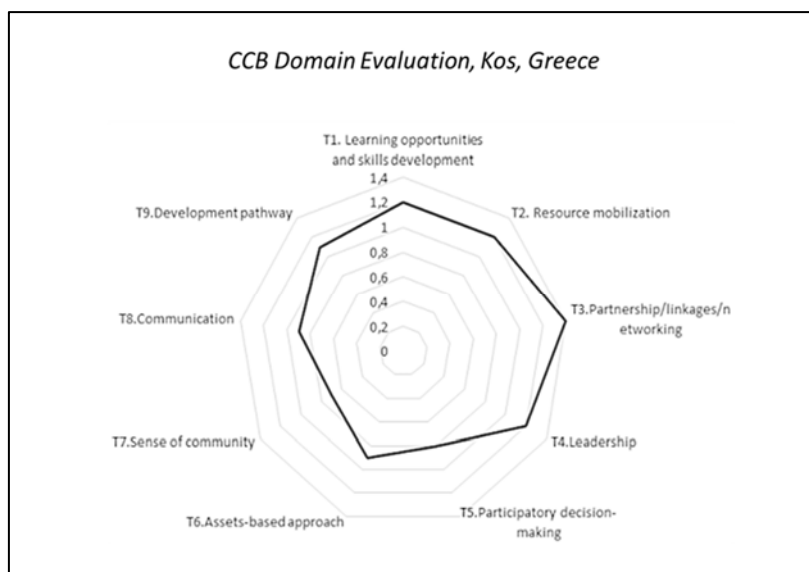


Chart 2.1 - Depiction of the Results on the Spider-Diagram.CCB Domain Evaluation, Kos.

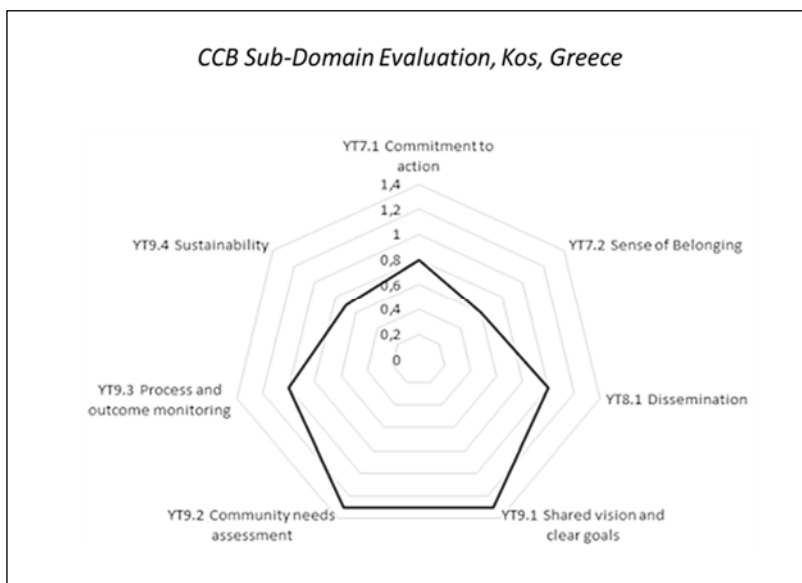


Chart 2.2 - Depiction of the Results on the Spider-Diagram. CCB Sub-Domain Evaluation, Kos.

Table 3 - Overall Results for the Community Capacity Building, according to the focus groups and interviews on Tilos.

(I) Domains for Evaluation of CCB	Mean
<i>Scale: 0 Absence-1 VL, 2 L, 3 M, 4 H, 5 VH</i>	
T1. Learning opportunities and skills development (LOSD)	1,8 L-M
T2. Resource mobilization (RM)	4,2 H-VH
T3. Partnership/linkages/networking (PLN)	3,1 M-H
T4. Leadership (L)	5 VH
T5. Participatory decision-making (PDM)	4,5 H-VH
T6. Assets-based approach (ABA)	4,3 H-VH
T7. Sense of Community (SC)	4,9 VH
T8. Communication (C)	3,9 H
T9. Development path (DP)	4,1 H-VH
(II) Sub-Domains for Evaluation of CCB	
7.1 Commitment to Action (CA)	4,9 VH
7.2 Sense of "belonging" (SB)	4,8 H
8.1 Diffusion / Dissemination (D)	3,9 H
9.1 Shared vision and clear goals (SVCG)	4,2 H-VH
9.2 Common vision and clear goals (CNA)	4,3 H-VH
9.3 Process and outcome monitoring (POM)	3,7 H
9.4 Sustainability (S)	3,9H

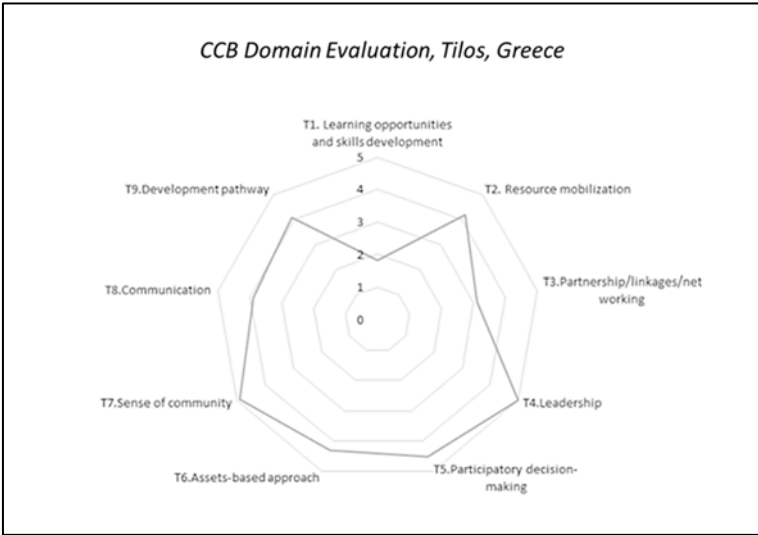


Chart 3.1 - Depiction of the Results on the Spider-Diagram.CCB Domain Evaluation, Tilos.

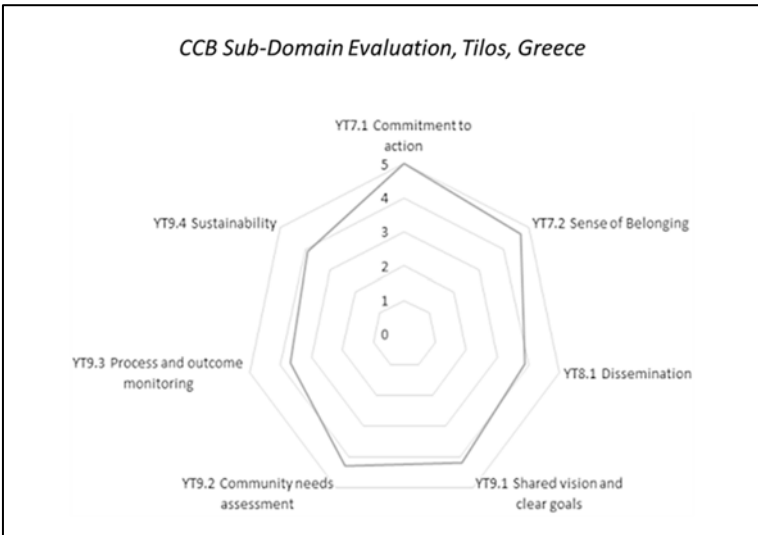


Chart 3.2 - Depiction of the Results on the Spider-Diagram.CCB SubDomain Evaluation, Tilos.

6. Discussion

On the one hand, the focus groups of the islands of Rhodes and Kos assessed the overall community capacity as being rather weak with the situation for Kos to be too sensitive to the point of alarm. In both areas, however, there is a need for community empowerment and participation. The case of Kos might require special mediation as it seems to be a conflictual environment between local government and local stakeholders in the social enterprise field. On the other hand, focus groups on Tilos revealed a sustainable approach, based on the actual needs, strengths and opportunities stemming from the local resources, that was taking into consideration the mainstream trends and a quite inclusive model of local government. Tilos received from medium to high ratings to all the domains and sub-domains except for “Learning Opportunities and Skills Development”. Tilos may consider developing educational facilities to promote sustainable eco-development utilizing its track record on this. Internal resources are those raised within the community and include land, food, money, people skills and local knowledge. External resources are those brought into the community by outside agency and include financial assistance, technical expertise, “new” knowledge, and equipment {Community-Based Tourism (CBT) operations}. All of this implies that the success towards local sustainability is often defined by how well communities are prepared to assume *full ownership and management* within a given period of time—an outcome that depends on effective capacity building. The respondents of each locality described capacity building in different ways. For example, the representatives of the island of Tilos characterized capacity building as: *«A process which, through time, leads to better management of local resources in conjunction with a healthy sense of community by the local government»*.

Being one of the smaller islands of the Dodecanese, Tilos, has revealed, through the strong and substantial activation of its local authority, outstanding dynamics towards green and sustainable development, high employment promotion and inclusive development that shows high empathy to the refugees. Tilos, is the first island in the Mediterranean to run entirely on wind and solar power, covering its needs at 120%. Tilos became active in solidarity with hundreds of refugees arriving on its shores. As the Mayor Ioakim Vravas said to our interview: *«When we speak about social inclusion, we shouldn't forget that the first and most important pillar is the integration to the labor market. And this is unique in the case of Tilos»*.

Population figures of Tilos indicate a decline in population between 1951 and 1991, due to migration either abroad (emigration) or to the other parts of Greece (internal or domestic migration). Between 1991 and 2011, a rather

sharp increase in the population, approximately by 200%, altered the previous decline. The Municipal Authority wants to raise the population of Tilos through sustainability energy/environmental projects and sustainable tourism. In the case of the island of Kos, the local government's approach to job creation was based in the promotion of social and solidarity economy. This, however, did not work out as planned, leading to a failure of their operation. Subsequently, this led to a very dire situation for those engaged in the formation of the social enterprises, the local government, and other stakeholders. The local authority had financed the start-up of twenty-nine (29) local social enterprises between 2011 and 2013. The aim was to combat seasonal unemployment, which is an acute socio-economic problem also in Rhodes, as tourism is based on all-inclusive seasonal tourist activity. Today, on Kos there only three (3) remaining such social enterprises. The worse is that, nowadays, there are bitter legal disputes and great animosity between those social enterprise members and the local authority regarding ownership issues for the property allocated for the operations of the social enterprises as startups.

The respondents of this focus group rated Very Low every domain linked with the sense of community by the local government, the effectiveness of leadership and the assessment of the local needs.

According to an updated analysis by the General Confederation of Greek Workers Work Research Institute (INE-GSEE 2018), interesting data has been reported regarding the labor market on Rhodes and Kos. They report to the fact that the much celebrated "miraculous tourist development" which has been achieved in the South Aegean Region is rather precarious as it is founded upon temporary and seasonally based employment contracts. The current crisis has greatly exacerbated the seasonality of the tourist industry on the two islands of the study. Rhodes and Kos have been emblematic tourist destinations in Greece; yet their sustainability is under question as this study shows that there is no linkage between political power holders and civil society stakeholders.

The empirical data and their analysis show aspects that highlight the true conditions regarding social cohesion and resilience at local level. Regional "resilience" is being tested, shaped, and defined by the continuous devaluation of labor's worth and wages, by "deregulating" local labor markets and the imposition of occasional, often uninsured, seasonal employment jobs (INE-GSEE 2018).

It is argued that tourist industry must be seen within a wider economic development framework, as the driver of the national economy, contributing

to the community capacity in general. The tourist success of Rhodes⁵ was the result of a series of historical conditions inherited from the previous era, as we mentioned earlier in this study, of certain important National State policy measures such as (minimal taxation) from as early on as the 1950s and the 1960s. Local community initiatives by local stakeholders and their Dodecanesean Diaspora communities in Africa, Australia and North America were very important in bringing capital and resources at the outset, but it seems this effort did not match local government organizational parameters at it remained rather ineffective in steering participation and coming to grips with such favorable conditions to advance the general interest. Our findings indicate a weak partnership level of cooperation among local stakeholders, both private and public. This is of particular importance for the community of the Island of Kos, the island of Hippocrates. This island has reached the threshold of growth, has exhausted its potential and has to be adapted to the new demands of tourism to make it competitive. We could argue that sustainable tourism should improve the current standard with new innovative actions, while promoting new alternative forms of tourism related to culture, sports and sea activities. There are growth motives and even more powerful in other but related sectors, such as agriculture and culture, which must be locally developed in line with past policies that developed the Agricultural Cooperative Agency of Rhodes (CAIR) on the two islands. A process of participation of all local stakeholders once in place would improve the conditions for sustainability. A sustainable development process based on a participatory “cooperative” model of local eco-tourist development, where all stakeholders participate, could develop four-season visitors’ sustainable endogenous development for the islands of Rhodes and Kos. Most recently, gastro-tourism and sports have started to gain importance in the Region. The South Aegean Region, including Rhodes and Kos, was nominated as a European Region of Gastronomy 2019 last year.

7. Conclusions

It is argued that tourism which is by far the driving economic sector of Rhodes, Kos and Tilos islands must be considered within a larger sustainable development framework and assessed more directly in terms of its ability to contribute to community capacity in general. At the same time, local governments ought to promote the participation process of all the stakeholders to

⁵ M. Logothetis, (2012). *The Development Model of Dodecanese and Tourism*, Rhodes, Foundation of Letters and Arts Dodecanese.

enter a process of a balanced local and sustainable development. *Prioritization of the areas of focus of CCB for Sustainable Development seems to be necessary, given that communities do not usually have the resources at their disposal to address all the domains as a part of the same strategy, unless assisted by an outside agent.* The ability of the communities to mobilize resources from within and to negotiate resources from beyond itself is an important step toward developing the skills and organizational structures necessary for community capacity to be build. The aim of the new regional competitiveness for employment objective is to anticipate and promote economic change by improving the innovative conditionality and attractiveness of EU regions and cities through investments in the knowledge economy (both in theory and applications), on social entrepreneurship and on university-enterprise cooperation with a focus on areas that represent a comparative advantage of a place, a *topos*. The local issue is emblematic when it comes to sustainable access to transport infrastructure, to energy and health. Supporting the adaptability of workers and enterprises, reinforcing participation in the labor market, and promoting social inclusion and sustainable communities is indicative of a local participatory regime.

Our study has brought up six issues as follows. First, policy makers at local level should specifically construct services and strategies that are based on the enhancement of participatory decision making and community capacity in the areas under examination. It is important that, while doing so, policy makers should pursue as broad an approach as possible with concurrent strategies aiming to stimulate capacity and activity at the community level, in the public, the private and the voluntary sectors. Second, policy makers should resist the conflation of the social economy and capacity building with just one or two sectors in a community. Capacity building and the stimulation of higher levels of social capital and networks will be best achieved through an understanding of the broader base of activities and organizations that create and contribute to the most positive forms of social capital and community capacity. Third, policy makers should maximize the inter-relationships between social economy (and community capacity) and other sectors and follow policies that boost either private sector entrepreneurship or the third sector in isolation. “Vertical” approaches in policymaking and service delivery must be complemented with horizontal interventions and strategies. Fourth, policy makers should ensure that support – for example, information, mentoring and finance – is focused on a broad range of people, services, and agencies. Support for organizations that lock in economic and social benefits to a particular community is vital. Such organizations might include local cooperatives, credit unions, time banks and other third sector or social economy as well as the re-evolution of the primary and secondary sectors, private

sector entrepreneurs and small businesses. Fifth, policy makers should create “civic infrastructure” – capacity for well-being and spaces for social interaction and networks. Community and business spaces and social networks without obvious economic benefits should be part of a comprehensive approach to capacity building. Spaces for people and groups to meet, for communities to come together, are important aspects of all places and are conscious elements within the creation of “new” business locations. Sixth, policy makers should understand that most decisions and support should be exercised within communities as much as is practically possible. Social capital or community capacity is less likely to be created or sustained from the outside. Ultimately, it is the community and its residents that have the strongest understanding, ability, and motivation to shape it for the better. Practically, these measures will help to build stronger, more resilient communities with greater community capacity and improved relationships between all sectors and individuals within a community. These principles help create the conditions through which new forms of social and economic activity might be generated within the given location. It also enables private sector employers to locate in an area and to build better, more economically and socially sustainable businesses in conjunction with local knowledge and networks.

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La passione per le conoscenze

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The Covid 19 pandemic has, among other things, fueled an international debate on whether the world will be different, more equal, or if it will stay the same after this crisis. It has raised questions on the role of the State, on the weight of the political sphere in an era when political power seemed to be losing the battle with the economic power. It has put globalization to question due to the risks derived from frequent travels and open borders on the one hand and from the restructuring of the strategies of international alliances on the other. It has implicitly evidenced that countries are not only made by individuals fiercely competing with each other on the basis of their own individual merits but that they are societies, made of people who form a community that will have more chances of overcoming a crisis if the state and its political institutions manage to organize and mediate the response to their legitimate (in this case actually *vital*) interests.

But the pandemic has hit a world where inequalities were already high under every respect: economic, social, political, geographical and of course also from a gender perspective. A globalized world of economic and political superpowers where nation-state politics as well as civic communities were trying to reorganize themselves in order to find their voice. Today, we wonder how the pandemic will affect these inequalities and the fiber of democracy itself.

Flaminia Saccà is Full Professor of Political Sociology at Tuscia University, Italy; President of the International Sociological Association – Research Committee Sociotechnics – Sociological Practices (ISA-RC26); Head of various research projects mainly on the changes of the political sphere and on the social representation of gender violence. Her many publications reflect her research interests.