

più alta del declino). Per queste ragioni più che anni di modernità, gli Ottanta sono solo una grande illusione alla quale seguirà, inevitabilmente, il crollo.

Agli ultimi due decenni sono dedicati il quinto e il sesto capitolo. Sono gli anni della seconda Repubblica, di Silvio Berlusconi che, lungi dal realizzare il sogno che annunciava, ha solo aggravato il decadimento etico, politico ed economico, complice anche una sinistra che ha affossato quello che secondo Crainz era stato l'unico buon progetto messo in campo, ossia l'Ulivo.

Il volume, apprezzabile per l'attento sguardo sociologico, difetta di una maggiore attenzione all'analisi politica, soprattutto per quel che riguarda gli anni della seconda Repubblica. L'autore, infatti, non pare attribuire grandi responsabilità alle innovazioni istituzionali di questa fase come la personalizzazione della politica e del potere, l'imposizione del maggioritario, la mitologia della società civile, l'attacco ai partiti. Anche per questa ragione, alla sinistra attribuisce l'incapacità di mettere in campo non un'alternativa di sistema, ma un'alternativa dentro il sistema.

(Francesco Marchianò)

Marc Humbert, Yoshimichi Sato (eds), *Social Exclusion. Perspectives from France and Japan*, Melbourne, Trans Pacific Press, 2012, pages 176, ISBN: 978-1-920901-69-1

This book - a collection of independent and self contained discussions - focuses, from the particular perspective of French and Japanese societies, on the crucial theme of social exclusion.

Both France and Japan were formerly among the most successful societies in the achievement of high economic growth rates and in the pursuit of social cohesion. However, since 1980, even these two countries have witnessed a "decline" of the middle class and a de-escalation of their economies, and first of all a growing imbalance in income distribution and the restriction of welfare resources.

Ensuring an overall education system that prepares young people to successfully enter the labor market - a kind of "magic formula" to avoid individual and collective failure, in which both France and Japan excelled for many years - is no longer sufficient today, and aspirations to join middle class society are largely frustrated.

These important transformations of recent decades pose the problem of social exclusion, the ways in which social exclusion is reinforced and the remedies for reducing social exclusion.

Previously, lack of housing (Chapter 7) and unemployment or job loss (Chapter 10) were distinct problems, experienced separately by the individuals affected and confronted separately by French social policy but today - with the extension of the exclusion phenomenon and the tendency for these two disadvantages to be lumped together - their "convergence" is clear, first of all, in the new protest movements.

In Japan work was formerly considered a priority and the sole valid means for enjoying full social and citizenship rights. Therefore focusing on a high level of employment was a primary policy goal. Today, however, Japan has to deal with a labor market characterized by stability for only a favored few, and by increasing fluidity for other groups of workers, with serious repercussions on social stratification (Chapter 2 and 4).

In addition to the interesting positive aspects highlighted up to now, the most evident limit is the following. We appreciate the comparative structure of the essay and we do not expect it to provide definitive answers. But it seems appropriate to provide a deeper analysis of the debate regarding the complex theme of social justice. The authors present a comparative examination of the inequalities active in Japan and France, the traditional "guide" and "benchmark" by which 150 years ago modernization and industrial progress were imported. The impression is that the view of this study of inequality in Japan applies a model mostly appropriate for the French reality. While this approach facilitates the comparison between the situations of the two countries, it is ineffectual in focusing in depth on the themes which are unique to and crucial for Japanese society. For example the (still strong) gender disparities - extensively analyzed by authors such as Chizuko Ueno and Yoshie Kobayashi - are dealt with just

superficially.

(Giulia Mascagni)

[Segnalazioni]

Chiara Saraceno, *Coppie e famiglie. Non è questione di natura*, Milano: Feltrinelli, 2012, pages 140, ISBN: 978-88-0710-487-9

Starting from the assumption «There is nothing less natural than the family», i.e. the hypothesis that the family is a social institution and as such the focus of particularly attentive and stringent regulation, Saraceno devotes her reflection to an analysis of the wide range of transformations that affects couples - from legal to social, with related repercussions and discontinuities of viewpoints and practices - and the increased responsibility which single individuals find themselves obliged ever more frequently to take on because of the retreat (and decline) of the welfare state.

Vicky Cattell, *Poverty, Community and Health. Co-operation and the Good Society*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pages 195, ISBN: 978-02-3001-997-3

The author examines the dynamics of the loss of social capital, the breakdown of social networks, and the weakening of local communities, in order to highlight their likely repercussions on health, well-being and happiness, especially for the socio-economically disadvantaged.

Luc Boltanski, *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*, Cambridge-Oxford UK: Polity Press, 2011, pages 191, ISBN 978-07-4564-964-1

In this book - a translation of *De la critique. Précis de sociologie de l'émancipation*, (Paris: Gallimard, 2009) - Boltanski deals with the problem of the new epistemological basis of a sociology that is both critical and oriented toward personal autonomy.

Colin Crouch, *Europe and Problems of Marketization: from Polanyi to Scharpf*, Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2013, pages 66, ISBN: 978-88-6655-336-6

The result of a *Lectio Magistralis* delivered by the author for Reading "Cesare Alfieri" 2012, the essay analyzes the risks posed to the construction of a true European democracy by the separation between policies drawn up at the EU level and social policies that are devolved to the national level. This paper anticipates the publication in August, 2013 of Crouch's *Making Capitalism Fit for Society*, Cambridge-Oxford: Polity Press, 2013.

John Scott, *Conceptualising the SocialWorld: Principle of Sociological Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pages 333, ISBN 978-05-2171-136-4

This book brings together a number of diverse sociological paradigms that are often treated in isolation or regarded as contradictory or incompatible. Scott argues that theorising in sociology and other social sciences is characterised by the application of eight key principles of sociological analysis: culture, nature, system, structure, action, space-time, mind and development. He considers the principal contributions to the study of each of these