

Vol. 10 • n. 19 • 2020
ISSN online 2239-1118



cambio

Rivista sulle
Trasformazioni
Sociali



Versione elettronica | Online version
www.fupress.net/index.php/cambio/index

Index

MONOGRAPHIC SECTION

- Introduction. The Emerging Intangible Globe Age 5
Giovana Camila Portolese, Natalia Brasil Dib, Antonio Russo
- Social discontinuity and systems thinking. Cultural differentiation and social integration in times of globalization 9
Rosalia Condorelli
- Corporate social responsibility and challenges for corporate sustainability in first part of the 21st century 31
Vasja Roblek, Mirjana Pejić Bach, Maja Meško, Friderika Kresal
- China soft power and cultural diplomacy. The educational engagement in Africa 47
Daniela Caruso
- Microcredit and Development: a comparative analysis between Brazilian and Italian experiences 59
Andressa Jarletti Gonçalves de Oliveira
- Philosophical re-thinking of international tax law: an analysis of harmful tax competition 73
Ezgi Arik

ELIASIAN THEMES

- Understanding halal food production and consumption in ‘the West’. Beyond dominant narratives 89
John Lever
- Civilizzazione, globalizzazione e le differenze che fanno la differenza. In onore e memoria di Johan “Joop” Goudsblom 103
Andrea Pitasi

OPEN ESSAYS AND RESEARCHES

- Solidarietà performativa. Critica sociale del capitalismo e nuovi soggetti della partecipazione 111
Lorenzo Bruni

POINTS OF VIEW

- On politics, emotional cultures and social change in times of crisis: an interview with Randall Collins 127
Randall Collins, Alessandro Pratesi, Angela Perulli

(RE)READING THE CLASSICS

L'identità degradata. Note sul dispositivo teorico di <i>Stigma</i> <i>Marco Bontempi</i>	133
Book Review - Standard	153
Book Review - Profiles	161



Introduction

The Emerging Intangible Globe Age

Citation: Camila Portolese G., Brasil Dib N., Russo A. (2020) *The Emerging Intangible Globe Age*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 5-7. doi: 10.13128/cambio-9914

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

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‘Everything solid melts into air’ (Marx-Engels 2018: 28)

‘The soufflé isn’t the soufflé, the soufflé is a recipe’ (Doctor Who, TV Series)

Maybe you like it more intellectual and are fascinated by Marx and Engel’s statement, or maybe you like it more popular, through mass media icons, and you prefer Doctor’s Who famous quotation, both above. In any case, and beyond their original contexts, the lessons for our times is clear: the unrestrainable process, which turns everything tangible into its intangible assets. Both statements probably meant something different from the meaning we can construct from them nowadays. Nevertheless, what we worked out from there leads us to an Intangible Globe Age which requires an interdisciplinary complex systems approach to be described and modelled, hence, future cannot be predicted but can be designed and invented.

Having stated that, it is a great honor and pleasure to present this monographic section of Cambio Journal in partnership with World Complexity Science Academy (WCSA – www.wcsaglobal.org). This section is designed from the perspective of a complex system approach to global social change. Since its foundation in December 2009, WCSA has been focusing on the study of complex systems theories which evolved through the key studies of Heinz von Foerster, Ernst von Glasersfeld, Niklas Luhmann, Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. Ulrich Beck applied the most important concepts of these authors in his works on sociology of risk and cosmopolitan vision. Neil Johnson (2009: 3-4) provided a basic definition of complexity studies according to which *complexity science* is considered ‘as the study of the phenomena which emerge from a collection of interacting objects’. However, what Johnson’s did not consider is that complexity is always observed by a system. This monographic section wants to build upon

these studies to approach complexity from a complex systems perspective. The aim is to facilitate knowledge sharing and circulation of strategic know-how and best practices in a transnational scale as, in the same vein, WCSA's initiatives are dedicated to the promotion of intellectual interactions among scholars, policymakers and entrepreneurs at a global scale. The synergy between Cambio Journal and WCSA is inscribed in this trajectory.

The opportunities and challenges of this Cambio's monographic section are therefore to stimulate the debate on topics related to the current global scenario and to contribute to the in-depth understanding of the structural changes in progress. To this end, an open field of research is adopted as a tool to interconnect and incorporate different social sciences areas, and to cope with the complexity of social phenomenon. According to this methodological and epistemological choice, the contributions selected to this monographic section explore different topics that range from social cohesion, international relations and corporate sustainability to credit and taxation policies.

Despite the thematic broadness of the studies conforming this monographic section, it is possible to identify a common framework among the essays: the interdisciplinary analytical approach. This complex system oriented approach is incorporated in every article. Rosalia Condorelli contribution inaugurates the section by claiming the reinforcement of policy-making processes as an instrument to face social integration crisis and proposing to bring the current debate on social cohesion into a complexity epistemological field. The scholar contends that the new acquisitions on systems working and evolutionary mechanisms offer a safer ground to frame the discontinuity of natural and social life as a creative phenomenon; thus subject to emergent, unexpected, surprising and unpredictable self-organization processes which are immersed in historical time of non-linearity and irreversibility.

Vasja Roblek, Mirjana Pejić Bach, Maja Meško and Friderika Kresal explore the realization of corporate sustainability concept in the fourth industrial revolution. The scholars sustain that the notion of corporate sustainability, built upon the principles of the United Nations Global Compact, allows the transposition of the concept of sustainable development to the business level. Daniela Caruso presents the particular features of China's educational cooperation programmes in the African continent and discusses how these programmes can be seen as a manifestation of the country's use of soft power and cultural diplomacy.

Andressa Jarletti Gonçalves de Oliveira analyzes the potential of microcredit regulation as a path to social and economic development. The author introduces a systemic view of the co-relation between development and the idea of social function under the Brazilian law. This represents a heterodox approach as systems and processes, not people, are the ones to shape the world order. Ezgi Arik contribution is an invitation to a philosophical re-thinking of international tax law with a particular focus on the current international standard on harmful tax competition set by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The author claims the review of the standard to turn it from the international to the global level, taking into consideration the recent developments in the global governance of taxation.

At a first glance, the topics of these papers can seem rather heterogeneous, notwithstanding, they provide a general frame based on the following features:

- They are interdisciplinary, mostly focused on a balance of sociological, economic, legal and politological studies.
- They cope with systemic problem setting and, as much as possible, with problem solving, for instance when discussing the social discontinuity and the legitimacy deficit of social integration in modern occidental societies.
- They also deal with global impact phenomena which requires broader policy-modelling such as: the globalization of education between China and Africa; the sustainability pillar of ecological and business strategies worldwide; the centrality of microcredit in development policies – not so different from Brazil to India – where it was conceived – and to Italy in its economically weakest areas; and the strategic function of taxation policies in the shift from an international-intergovernmental shaped world towards a multilateral, trans-supranational one with the new emerging role of the OECD.
- They provide descriptive analysis, however, with the challenge of focusing on global change scenario, whose emerging core are dematerialization and intangible asset portfolio, which represent the true face under the mask of globalization. The driving force of intangible assets underlies all the topics debated in this special

section. Putting it differently, it is the intangible 'fil rouge', among hypothetically heterogeneous topics, that bounds them together, as a key for gaining leverage and scale.

To sum up, the key element holding together all the works presented in this Cambio Journal monographic section is a common systemic vision; a complex system perspective, which provides a powerful instrument to analyze the dynamic multidimensional processes approached in the essays. The outcome is therefore a collection of studies that invites the reader to re-think systemically the emerging Intangible Globe Age.

We hope you enjoy the reading,

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Citation: Condorelli R. (2020) *Social discontinuity and systems thinking. Cultural differentiation and social integration in times of globalization*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 9-30. doi: 10.13128/cambio-8487

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Monographic Section

Social discontinuity and systems thinking. Cultural differentiation and social integration in times of globalization

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Abstract. Given the obsolescence of a linear, homeostatic and reductionist worldview unable to face current social discontinuity, the laceration of a stable universe of expectations marking world scenarios, this paper argues the heuristic power of System Theory in understanding and managing, by emergence, circular causation between system and environmental and micro-macro co-essentiality conceptual frameworks, social integration crisis in our culturally differentiated and globalized western modern societies. The discussion on normative multiculturalism validity (in particular neo-communitarian multiculturalism) and, therefore, on sufficiency of procedural foundations as device of cultural difference integration and social cohesion is controversial and far from reaching a turning point. To get out of this impasse and support policymaking processes able to face social integration crisis, the paper argues to bring the debate on complexity epistemological plan. Systems Thinking could give new lymph to current debate, hooking it to a safer ground, made so by new acquisitions on systems' working and evolution mechanism. So, Complexity language intervenes fruitfully to justify the caution with which normative multiculturalism is believed that should be considered, by anchoring this caution to configuration of a society projected to dangerously visit that range of maximum differentiation among its components which should be avoided being identified as the range of disorder and ungovernability. Not only, in the emergence logic, integration is just one of the many possibilities to which self-organization process being initiated by processes of signifying of recognition policies is open, but sociologically there are even theoretical reasons to believe that in itself the same functionalist device is such as to make this possibility little probable and does not lead where it promises. How to reduce complexity' how to fill up this relationality deficit that normative multiculturalism institutes and avoid the risk of a society unable to regain order with coherence? The Complexity framework is where the whole debate must be kept. Here, the integration proposal of pluralism and interculturalism can gain greater meaning, avoiding the risks of mono-culturalism, on the one hand, and social balkanization, on the other hand.

Keywords: cultural differentiation, social integration, social complexity, Normative Multiculturalism, Pluralism, Interculturalism.

MODELLING SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN INDIVIDUALIZED AND MULTICULTURAL MODERNITY: A SOCIOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Given the obsolescence of a linear, homeostatic and reductionist worldview unable to face current social discontinuity and uncertainty, the laceration of a stable universe of expectations marking world scenarios, this paper argues the heuristic power of System Thinking in the reflection on social integration and coexistence strategies in an era of globalization.

The social integration issue, that state of the society where individuals are willing to coordinate their actions and to cooperate with a low degree of conflict, their “making society”, their inserting into an orderly network of social interactions made possible by stabilization of mutual expectations, today assumes a specificity having to take into account a social and cultural framework rendered complex by individualization and current globalization processes, by the pluralism of values and interests and by a surplus of diversity given by multiculturalism. Contrasting to expectations, current social integration crisis, has betrayed the Enlightenment trust placed in the rationality progresses and its no longer sustainable reductionist systemic assumptions. Thus, individualization and globalization have complicated the sociological response to the *irritating* fact of society (Archer 1991), to the problem of the bond that ties individual and society, eroding the basis of traditional order and questioning *the sharing* as foundation of social order, as generative factor of regulation and unification of social behaviour and mechanism for creating unity (integration) and union (cohesion) from differences. Contemporary social theory is called to propose solutions that require the delineation of coexistence strategies even more articulated than in the past.

The idea that social order cannot be reduced to merely economic and contractual order is shared by modern social theory (from Simmel to Durkheim to the initial Parsons) which entrusts and can still entrust the possibility of social interaction processes and unification of behaviour to a platform of *common* and above all *shared* values as integrative communicative and interactional constraint, to *pre-contractual* elements (*consensus*) enabling compliance with the contract itself on which social order is founded (Rosati 2001:16). *Sharing, consensus*, produced according to Parsons’ perspective by a successful socialization process, is the device that ensures the existence of social systems, reduces the differences in unity, while solving the problem of integration and cohesion. As it integrates differences into a unified whole, ties actors into a common destiny built on the basis of common values, it generates stable identities, social bonds, a sense of belonging (*identification*) and responsibility for the production of common goods, those same goods that the collective organization establishes being a value and therefore good for itself and for individuals, ensuring cooperation and lowering the degree of social conflict. The progressive increase of social complexity in its dimension of symbolic differentiation, as excess of choice possibilities conferred to the individual after having been absorbed in the regulatory mechanism of structures of the traditional order and in those identification forms still operating in early modernity (i.e. the class membership, the State- nation), already breaks this mechanism and triggers the dilemmas of freedom. On the one hand, it triggers the identity problem as dilemma of agents who are free to build their own individual biographical project, to give meaning to life by channelling the choice in the direction of the *et...et* (Beck 1993), but who, for this, live a life without foundations, are more lonely and insecure, increasingly committed in wandering in the waves of freedom without a compass by which to set the route except their own autonomous and personal ability to give meaning to life. And on the other, it triggers the emergence of social integration and governance problems as dilemma of social unity and union, of the relationship between multiplication of differences and need to compact them into a unified and cohesive whole. By de-structuring the traditional order built on a homogeneous ethic universe, on claims of solidity, certainty and security, with interactions, identities, social bonds and social commitment stabilized through the profound sharing of values rooted in the common belief in an Absolute Principle (the one God, the one law of history), post-modernity, due to its own peculiar traits (moral individualism, pluralism of values and interests, *disenchantment* or rarefaction of a transcendent foundation of solidarity, separation between systemic integration and social integration) reduces the platform of shared and common values capable unifying individual behaviour and being at the basis of the relationship and interaction and their stability. By narrowing the area of consensus and breaking up the holistic bond between individual and collectivity, it exacerbates atomization and social fragmentation process, decisively trans-

muting the foundation of order from moral to functional and, ultimately, separating the foundation of integration from that of cohesion. We live in a state of incomplete integration, where the functional interdependence, as connective network of increasingly diverse individuals, leaves intact cohesion problems and social conflicts triggered by free choice, by pluralism of values and interests. If it is true that there are no net boundaries between hypercomplexity and disorganization, that all the more complex a system is, involving variety and freedom from rigid structural integrative restraints, the more uncertain and fragile it is, exposed to *the unexpected, the contingency* (Morin 1977), social complexity increase means recognition of multiple possibilities to represent the world and construct an one's own biographical project as well as relational uncertainty, instability, discontinuity, because there is no solid, unitary and shared value criterion (a communicative/integrative general meaning constraint) to which the action can be conformed and which regulates and stabilizes the relationship.

The uncertainty and social complexity increase follow the weakening of the culture integrative and relational function. And this the more differentiated, individualized and culturally differentiated, the modern contemporary society is. The already fragile foundation of social order is made more problematic by globalization which adds difference to difference. Relational uncertainty expands when the *alter* is a culturally different one, adding tension to tension. On what basis, what integrative bond, is it possible to build relationships and interactions, to make society with a culturally different *other*, socialized to orientation principles of social action being different, even opposite, conflicting with moral individualism and the individual liberty-equality binomial as value criterion that, while separating, nevertheless unites, governing the modern individualized action and expectations into social interaction process? Given the pluralism and in respect of the pluralism and difference, in a social context where the polytheism of values has expanded to include a surplus of diversity given by multiculturalism, how can unity be created from difference, taming cultural conflict? Reformulating the problem by an epistemological language, how can complexity be reduced?

The contemporary debate is controversial and far from reaching a turning point. The discriminating factor lies in a moral or functional foundation of social order. Although sociological interpretation as Luhmannian or Elsterian one consider that in second modernity the order has no longer anything to do with consensus, remaining only the possibility of a functionalist system, which is based on the interdependence of functions and professions, on established role expectations, working «on the basis of the principle of equal freedom in leaving others to their destiny» (Donati 2008:30-31), a large part of contemporary social theory reflects about the possibility of recovering that *a-priori*, that shared common moral base which *today*, in a secularized and multicultural world, is able to integrate, that binder which we "feel", connects and binds us, creates cohesion and cooperation, tames conflicts, makes coexistence and social order possible. On the contrary, contemporary social philosophy of Taylor (1992) and Young (1990) Kymlicka (1995) adapts to a functionalist system, legitimizing a *functionalist-procedural foundation* as solution to integration problems reinforced by multiculturalism – the sufficiency of compliance to a common legal code, to common procedural rules, capable of structuring social interaction and ensuring collective commitment, cohesion and order, even in the face of a profound differentiation or moral division.

Can we do without sharing as social connective device? Does the normative multiculturalism's proceduralism reduce complexity? From my perspective, the answer is sociological and epistemological one. In order to get out of this impasse and support policymaking processes able to face current social integration problems in culturally differentiated western modern societies, the debate should be brought on an epistemological plan. What is, in fact, the system concept with which theoretically prefigured integrative proposals operate? Following the terms of the debate, this aspect is not clear, while the decisive role of its clarification appears strategic.

Contemporary epistemology has redefined the conceptual contours of the system analytical category in anti-reductionist, non-linear, emergentist terms. Understanding the *creativity* or systems' complexity, their capability of producing multiple possibilities of meaning and behaviour in their morphogenetic process, that is, the emerging quality of social systems as outcome of *novelty, uncertain, unpredictable* and *surprising* result of the *circularity* and *non-linearity* of communication flows, could give new lymph to current debate, hooking it to a safer ground made so by new acquisitions on systems' working and evolution mechanism. Indeed, the new systemic knowledge that the instability, and, consequently, emergence, surprise and uncertainty dilate as the integrative constraints loosen,

justifies the profitable use of *far from equilibrium* or *at the edge of the chaos* epistemological concept as an analytic tool for its implications about conditions for self-organization and stabilization, leading us to try to reduce complexity, to fear and avoid risks, always possible, that systems can fall into that state of max differentiation, irre-lation, disorder, in which they no longer able to find new meaning convergence, do not stabilize and any, even minimal, predictability and controllability is lost. In this meaning, complexity language can intervene fruitfully in justify the caution with which a great literature retains that *normative multiculturalism* should be considered, by anchoring this caution to the configuration of a society projected to dangerously visit that range of maximum differentiation among its components which should be avoided being identified as the range of disorder and ungovernability, that is, as the range of conflict or social disorder condition. Indeed, not only, in the emergence logic, integration is just one of the many possibilities to which self-organization process being initiated by interpretation of recognition policies is open, but sociologically there are theoretical and empirical reasons to believe that in itself the same functionalist-procedural device is such as to make this possibility unlikely and to does not lead where it promises. Many forms of cultural conflict even where the recognition policy prevails, without caring enough about reciprocity and a platform, although minimal, of shared values, support this and show that it is not just a theoretical possibility. This being stated, how to reduce complexity, the *emergence* of an unrelated and conflicting sociality? How to fill up this relationality deficit that normative multiculturalism institutes and avoid the risk of a society unable to regain order and social bond with coherence? From my point of view, there are valid reasons to believe that the Complexity framework is where the whole debate must be kept. Here, the integration proposal of Pluralism and Interculturalism can gain greater meaning, avoiding the risks of mono-culturalism, on the one hand, and social balkanization, on the other.

To clarify these points, we must first deal the *emergence mechanism* in more details.

THE CREATIVITY OF NATURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE: FROM HOMEOSTATIC REDUCTIONISM TO SOCIAL COMPLEXITY

It is possible to interpret the crisis of social integration in post-modernity by linking it to all the transformations, (i.e. industrialization, individualization and globalization processes) that contribute to the development of social complexity increasing process and generate the obsolescence of reductionism and linear homeostatic equilibrium interpretative paradigms.

The assumption of linear reductionism - the idea of a phenomenal, natural and social, world, similar to a gigantic machine, understandable analytically by breaking it down, reducing it into its individual parts and reassembling it as *the* and *from* the sum of individual parts (in relational terms, as the sum of the individual intentions and interactions taken one by one), designed within the framework of necessary, linear cause and effect relationships (Leibniz principle of causal proportionality and efficient cause) such as to ensure predictability and control over events – justified the myth of order and its possibility cultivated by classic science (Newton and Laplace, and Spencer, Dilthey Keynes, for example). This assumption regarding all systems as systems in stable equilibrium, supported the Enlightenment's trust in *reason* and in the idea of a linear progress, of a predictable evolution of history, centered on the real possibility of an orderable cosmos and society project. However, the assumption of a world that is, all in all, simple and easily understandable in its simplicity has proved to be increasingly unsustainable. Social systems as well as natural ones prove to be refractory to the analytic-reductionist logic, manifesting characteristics far from stability and homeostatic equilibrium. This logic, which may be effective if the problem is limited to a specific area, with systems immersed in a stable environment, is ineffective in the face of emergence, surprising, paradoxical, counterintuitive effects (in this sense unexpected and unpredictable) of systems in response to input coming from their external environment and, especially for social systems, from their internal environment, that is, from subjects of the vital world never completely determined by social organization and by structure of its integrative constraints. Indeterminacy of systems – which are all the less determinable, the more their complexity increases, that is, the more their constituent components are numerous and differentiated and their interdependence is rich

– imposes itself as a fact. Fluid, unstable, discontinuous scenarios, abrupt, unexpected organizational changes (in Physics phenomenal manifestations as well as of individual psychic life and associated living) have overshadowed the Newtonian-Laplacian classical determinism paradigm. Eventually, its idea of the world gave way to the Emergence logic, from the overcoming of the dichotomy between Cartesian dualism/materialistic monism and vitalism/mechanicism by first Emergentism of Mill, Lewes, Morgan and Broad to the more current epistemological perspective of *organized complexity* or *emerging self-organization*, to that *non-linear determinism* on which Prigogine founded the *new alliance* between nature and society (Prigogine, Stengers 1979).

It is the idea of life itself, natural and social, as of an inert world, subjected to linear deterministic laws that wait for nothing more than to be discovered to make it orderable, predictable and controllable, to fail and to leave space to that of a life characterized by continuous disorganization and essentially *creative* self-organization processes, immersed in the historical time of non-linearity and irreversibility.

If for reductionism the connection or interaction between the parts of the system does not produce emergence and disorder turns off in an asymptotic stability, the intertwining of micro interactions now generates the macro, and the macro, *the whole. the system*, emerges from the micro as an entity that *is* and *has* something more and different from the sum of the individual parts, connoting itself with novelty and unpredictability features that cannot be reduced to or deduced from properties of individual elements (regarding social systems, of individual intentions and interactions one by one taken). This new systemic awareness reconfigures the relationship *system-environment* in terms of *co-essentiality*, *autonomy* (*autopoiesis* and *operational closure*) (Maturana, Varela 1984) and spontaneous organization, not programmed by an external organizing principle, and the relationship between micro and macro in terms of *co-determination* or *bottom-up* and *up-down* circular determination dynamic relationship, which finds one of its translations more effective in the metaphorical image that Morin (1977) uses to equate the idea of complex system with that of *unitas multiplex, solidal ring*, interweaving of interdependence relationships that proceeds by qualitative leaps, constraints and emergences, working with that part of disorder, the unexpected or contingency, which disorganizes the system and which, in turn, is a source of morphogenesis, of new order, of qualitatively new structural configurations, impossible in systems in stable equilibrium, in an endless and circular game of disorganization and new, emerging, self-organization.

The emerging self-organization or, better still, the *essential unpredictability* of natural and social systems, the intrinsic uncertainty of their development process, with which Prigogine clarifies the concept of complexity (Prigogine 2010) as system property to show a multiplicity of possible but not predetermined behaviors, of unexpected and surprising meaning-productions (*equifinality*), captures the idea that life is possible only *at the edge of the chaos*, in an intermediate state between maximum connection, (maximum order or organizational constraints excess that blocks the system in an immovable order) and maximum differentiation (maximum disorder or absence of integrative and organizational constraints and, therefore, destruction-death of the system). It is only here that the conditions exist for the emergence of coherent structures, for the initiation of self-organization processes that reduce disorder triggered by environment, the complexity or systemic uncertainty. Any environmental input as well as any social intervention or innovation can initiate a process of morphogenetic reorganization, which is unpredictable in its outcomes, open to all possibilities (including those of modelled interventions as one of the many self-organization possibilities), without excluding, however, that, always possible, of going *beyond* the edge of the chaos, entering into that state of max differentiation (disorder as equilibrium or system death-entropy) in which the possibility of internal reorganization is lost (for social systems, in a state of conflict that destroys the relationship and makes impossible social systems). Hence the knowledge that systemic complexity – its *emergence* capability, the *surprise*, *uncertainty* and *unpredictability* of self-organizing process – increases as the integrative constraints- in relational terms, the communicative/interactional constraints – loosen until it flows into *chaos*.

The *complex thinking* does not eliminate paradox, surprise, uncertainty from reality. It teaches us to better understand the world around us, unexpected and counterintuitive effects, social disasters, cultural conflicts, emerging and unpredictable manifestations of economic, political and social systems (Morin 2014), input-interventions that expose themselves to the possibility of unexpected effects, multiple scenarios all equally possible and indeterminate a priori emerging decision-making processes that lose control over their products, and to deal with error,

the illusion of solutions definitive, uncertainty and risk, inducing us to assume an attitude of intellectual humility that must deal with the systems' freedom and with the fragility of their stability.

In light of these contents, the metaphors of *network society*, *risk society*, *uncertain* and *liquid society* actually photograph *emergence*, the unpredictable outcome of social systems *creativity*, in post-modernity, due to regression of rigid institutionalized regulation criteria. The increase in social complexity structures for post-modernity a differentiated, individualized and globalized, and interconnected society, enveloping the daily life between meshes of a dense network of interdependencies without more boundaries of space and time and, for this, dangerously exposed to contingency, all the more *irritable* – sensitive to unexpected changes of initial conditions and subjected to emerging self-organization processes as well as to possibility of flowing into chaos – the more differentiated and interconnected it is (Luhmann, De Giorgi 1992). Therefore, this is a society characterized by rapid, unexpected and profound changes brought about by scientific and technological-digital progress, a poly-centered system (Petitot 1977) composed by multiple and interdependent nodes – individuals, groups, communities, organizations – which are tied together by social communication networks being no longer integrated centrally by a single shared order principle and guarantor of social system stability as a whole, and based on the autonomy of organizational criteria and decision-making logics of action subsystems as well as on the possibility of multiple memberships and multiple processes of identity formation and world representation, on the experience of cultural differentiation and on the separation between state and nation, society and nation, induced by globalization processes and glocalization, in the multifaceted articulation between forms of homogenization and cultural heterogenization of the 'global village'.

Therefore, the paradigmatic shift from Reductionism to System thinking has reconfigured in a new way the analysis of social system working and morphogenesis, understanding discontinuity and uncertainty as rule of social changes processes.

In particular, in *Systems Theory* Luhmann finds conceptual instruments suitable for a general theory of social systems (interaction, associations, organizations, society) capable of taking into account complexity and contingency of social world, the uncertainty that intrinsically structures the interaction and is celebrated to the maximum degree in modern functionally differentiated societies. Contingency, emergence, risk, decision uncertainty connote modern contemporary society which Luhmann (1984) theorises, complex in a complex environment, committed to reducing complexity and uncertainty through emerging processes of differentiation and self-organization. The transition from Parsonsian structural-functionalism to post-functionalism as *anti-humanist*, *anti-historicist* and *anti-normativist* and *constructionist* program of description and explanation of social reality in a framework of complexity and contingency finds in the concept of *structural coupling* between *system-environment*, – co-evolutionary unit of two differences or autonomies – the theoretical framework suitable for fixing that profound revision of Parsons' Agil. which began as early as the 1970s. In particular, after the 1980s, the conceptualization of *autopoiesis* and *self-referentiality* of the social in its relationship with the environment, developed into *Soziale Systeme* (1984), *Warum Agil?* (1988) and *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (1997), marked the definitive and conclusive detachment from Parsonsian normativism. The Luhmannian use of *autopoiesis* and *operational closure* concepts, borrowed from Maturana and Varela, and *emergence* concept leaves the mechanistic and homeostatic conceptualization of social systems behind, which still seems to affect the Parsonsian systematics with its idea of stable social systems tending to self-maintenance of order if disturbed (see Bailey 1984).

The Luhmannian revision involves all systemic levels, starting from the level of the relationship between Ego and Alter, conceived as a co-evolutionary unit of system /environment, in which each is environment for the other in the situation of double contingency, of mutual non-transparency, whose experience they reflexively live and where «the being depends on a selection that implies the possibility of not being and the being of other possibilities» (1976.509). Unlike Parsonsian normativism, the use of this conceptual category from Luhmann makes it possible to avoid the logical paradoxes created from the micro and macro theories starting from Old European metaphysical ontological tradition, that is, from the ontological assumption that society is made up of actors or men: the whole / part relationship model which considers individuals as elements or part of the whole. On the one hand, in fact, the conflation from bottom to up – the action determines the structure – does not solve the problem

of the social order and society as intertwining of interactions since the possibility of a stable interaction implies the systematic reciprocity of expectations and, therefore, *already* presupposes the existence of a structure, of an institutionalized regulatory framework capable of reducing the radical double contingency to at least a state of reciprocally calculable uncertainty in a similar way (Addario 2012). But, on the other hand, if individualistic approach must reintroduce into the model those structural constraints that it should have explained and which have to be assumed as ontological premise (*cit.*: 7), the conflation from up to down - the 'whole' or structure determines the action - does not explain the structure which is assumed as a ontological premise and leaves open the problem of individual conscience's autonomy of which social system is composed or *subjectivity problem*, and, consequently, of social change since the individual's role is reduced to that of mere executor or bearer of social structures and structures are understood in a framework of stability (*ibidem*). For its parts, Parsonsian theorization does not seem to overcome these logical aporias, solving the double contingency problem and social order starting from the assumption of strong, *a-priori*, value components as device for system integration by socialization process, that is, starting from an existing social system which has instead to be explained. Even here, while the Parsonsian model an analytical model, there is a logical contradiction: although personality system is external to social system, interaction process depends on and activates by *interiorization* of value and normative structures which model personality needs-dispositions and are *the condition* of interaction itself - the action finds itself to the level of the social system (*cit.*:8). And above all, social systems *have* a culture, in the sense of their tendency towards stability, towards self-maintenance of order. The classical Laplacian Newtonian theorization of systems as linear systems, whose evolution is extinguished in an asymptotic stability, is still evident in the Parsonsian theorization, which does not conceive of «random variability relative to the starting point» but «an ordered process of change» (Parsons and Shils 1951:107).

All aporias generated by the *whole/part unilateral relationship model* are challenged by the advent of complexity in sociology, by the *differentiation* and *autonomy (operational closure)* conceptualization between system and environment and the Luhmannian new *system/environment circular relationship model* - co-determination relationship between micro and macro - which considers the individuals as autonomous psychic systems (environment) from which communication (social system) emerges and as continuous source of environmental perturbation of social order, leading to question the systems' linearity and stability. Although communication presupposes subjects in its environment as a necessary condition of its constitution above the double contingency, the *structural coupling* between communication and subjectivity implies their reciprocal *operational autonomy*. Thus, the aporias are overcome. First, the two systems perturb each other, but respective autopoietic operations remain autonomous: a communication can be perceived by a subjective conscience and trigger a change of its state but cannot have a prescriptive function with respect to the meaning produced from this subjectivity, which self-produces a change in an autonomous way with respect to a given communication (Addario 2012:13-14). In other terms, the events of communication and subjectivity are coincident, contemporaneous and correlated but always separate events (*ibidem*). In this respect, from Luhmann onwards, the redefinition of social systems as complex systems means a new understanding of social systems as systems that have no culture, referring to structural discontinuity, to emergence or unexpected and unpredictable variability of structural configuration to which systems are open in their relationship with environment.

In more details, by assuming a higher level of conceptual abstraction, that is, by assuming as elements that make up the social system not the action, or actors which interpret the situation by their goals and beliefs, but the *pure* communication of meaning, the Luhmannian conceptual displacement of social systems from normative systems to pure communication systems solves the problem of order in conceiving the social dimension as an *emerging* reality. In so doing, the systemic production mechanism of von Foerster's *order of noise* (1960) is translated into a sociological language and extended to the process of social system formation. Luhmannian theoretical approach is strongly anti-reductionist. The *noise* represented by the situation of double contingency, produced from psychic systems that try to communicate with each other (Luhmann 1984), becomes an opportunity for the creation of an order - an actualized meaning for action as selection between infinite possibilities of meaning - as need to adapt to environmental complexity and reduce uncertainty. The meaning convergence and stabilization *emerge spontane-*

ously from mutual conditioning and learning from responses to these conditioning (Addario 2012: 20), by selection among multiple possible meanings. Social systems (the stabilization of a particular selection of expectations that would be exposed to the risk of being disappointed due to double contingency mechanism that makes uncertain the outcome of action) are far from being *only* the mental copy of the behaviour complementarity (Luhmann, 1984, 1997), because they always include other possible behaviors. Social systems appear understandable *only* as a reality *emerging* from the redundancy that characterizes the meaning as *excess of possibilities*, resource that, due to its charge of unpredictability and contingency, makes possible and understandable the emergence of increasingly richer order forms. By analogy to *dissipative structures* of Prigogine and von Foerster's *non-banal machines*, Luhmann's systems are historical, dynamic systems as well as undeterminable systems in their attempt to reduce the complexity, the uncertainty of double contingency, of the infinite multiplicity of possibilities of meaning to bring it back into a dimension that can be experienced as an expression of an actualized meaning for action, and this through an incessant circular process of production and reproduction of their constituent elements, of communication through communication (Luhmann, 1984). Therefore communication, the operation that identifies social systems, emerging reality from the double contingency, unexpected synthesis of the perspectives of Ego and Alter, to longer leaves room for any form of reductionism. Referring to social systems, it is *the meaning* to represent disorder and vital trigger of order, the driving force of evolutionary process of order forms and rationality as unexpected and unpredictable selections of infinite possibility of meaning in the complementary co-evolution between system and environment (ego and alter, each environment of the other). The Spencer-Brown's distinction logic (1969), already imported from Maturana and Varela as functioning model of cognitive process, inspires even Luhmann's formalist epistemology. A defining binary code (selected/rejected, true/false) guides the autopoietic process of meaning determining and system self-creation (1988). Thus, order can emerge from chaos, from uncertainty of reciprocal non-transparency. But the social systems autopoietic circuit continues to reproduce and feed itself. Social dynamic is a *continuous* differentiation process and uncertainty reducing. The system is constituted by differentiating itself from environment and, in this sense, is the reduction of that complexity, that uncertainty which the external environment as well as the internal one – the dimension of vital worlds – continuously reproduce, and which the system perceives as an ever looming threat to which it tries to adapt by increasing its own level of internal differentiation. From time to time, by differentiating and therefore, self-organizing, the social system reduces complexity but does not eliminate uncertainty, as it is always subject to external and internal perturbations. Self-organization by differentiation even increases the degree of systemic uncertainty and unpredictable emergence. In this sense, the meaning convergence and stabilization or actualized selection is in itself ephemeral in the face of continuous threats of the environment and in its continuous reference to other possibilities (*contingency*). In a Donati's effective concise expression, the social relationship becomes into Luhmann «communicative differentiation understood as a form of distinction according to contingency» (Donati 2009:246). The image of society as an emergent phenomenon of *permanent self-production* can rightly be derived.

The epistemology of autopoietic self-determination of action makes radical Agil's revision, marking the abandonment of any residual role of culture as the center and summit of the action system. Social system autonomy from the point of view structural (*self-organization*) and operative (*autopoiesis*, social system which autonomously produce the communicative elements of which they are constituted, translate, by distinction logic, into their specific symbolic code the environmental information stimuli transforming them into communications in accordance with their specific function) closes the possibility of a normative conception of social integration which implies an unity of the system or a central link. In modernity, order has nothing to do with the consensus. According to Luhmann, it concerns the autonomy of individual social subsystems, which must follow their own rationality and operating logic, in order to maintain their specific functional differentiation. In this sense, it is dis-integration to be the condition for order. In this framework, AGIL is simply the «autopoietic mechanism of the social system» (Donati, 2010:151), «an automatic way of functioning on the part of the social system» (*ibidem*), which functionally differentiates to reduce environmental complexity, performing an indefinite number of functions – well beyond the four parsonian functional pre-requisites – and especially not normatively ordered or guided (*ibidem*). There is no center or summit.

Nevertheless, the conception of the culture as a pure emerging fact of communication process, of the values and goals as selection of pure contingency, simple functions among others, pure contributions to emergence of action (Luhmann 1984, 1997), has given rise to new problems. For some, Luhmannian theory has made more abstract the substance of institutions, as emerging facts, and more precarious their existence (Belvisi 2010:50). In what sense is it possible to realistically reduce the social to pure contingency? This aspect marks the difference with the neo-Parsonians, where culture has an autonomous role, although in a context of greater contingency in its concretization in the world of everyday life, and it is the content of the communication (Alexander 1990). Where, then, do the luhmannian system/environment complex unity and its implications lead? Does thinking of society as order from noise, of values as pure form, adaptive selection of contingency, perhaps end up by showing us the image of an order without society, of a death of the social? Many agree on this aspect (i.e. see Donati, 1991). Looking from another perspective, it is also true that many interpreters of social system from an anti-reductionist-emergentist perspective (for example, just to name a few, Bailey (1994), Sawyer (2005) or, even earlier, Byrne (1998), Reed and Harvey (1992)) have seen in the complexity the possibility to overcome the tension between critical sociological realism and postmodernist vitalism, between the search for a general theory and instances of contextual explanation (Harvey and Reed 1997). If, on the one hand, Cilliers (1998) supported the compatibility of Complexity with Postmodernism (emphasizing the lack of stable sources of meaning and of a rational teleology of history, the dismissal of the possibility of social causality and of a systematic social investigation in favor of uncertainty, unpredictability and surprise), on the other hand, the construct of emergent self-organization allows Byrne (1998; Byrne and Callaghan, 2014) to underline the compatibility between sociological realism (the idea of a stable order of meaning in line with the conception of a world deterministic, endowed with an intrinsic order) and social non-linear determinism or emergence. The theoretical position of Complex Realism grasps the potential of the Theory of Complexity to go beyond the dichotomy between Postmodernism and Realism, linking determinism and unpredictability, order and disorder (Reed and Harvey 1992). It remains within the modernist program of progressive thought and, at the same time, rejects the canons of reductionist and postmodernist positivism

In conclusion, facing to coexistence problems and cultural conflicts given by multiculturalism, the luhmannian system / environment relationship model emphasizes a reflection on role of the culture. On the one hand, complexity and co-determination relationship between micro e macro, lead us to recognize the creativity of social systems, the space of freedom and unpredictability of the meaning and the emergence of the social from the intertwining of interactions of actors who interpret the situation and never rigidly flatten themselves on the integrative constraints of social organization. On the other hand, there are reasons not to neglect the autonomy of the culture and renew its integrative power in the framework of a de-reified conception, as dynamic process which emerges from micro interactions, orients relationships, and continues to be made through relationships and for relationships, for the creation of a whole human community with a common and sharing moral basis built together.

At this point we can go back to the initial problem: how can the crisis of social integration and cohesion in our modern culturally differentiated societies be faced?

First, having nullified any claim of being able to drive social systems, any claim of certainty and predictability, the fact of *emergence* urgently places decision-making processes ahead of the demand for intervention strategies aimed at attempting to reduce social uncertainty, complexity, to avoid the risk, always possible, of disorder/chaos, promoting (not prescribing or determining) virtuous processes of self-organization, integration and social cohesion by balancing differentiation and connection/integration

Second, the awareness of a weak, not mechanically necessary, link between decision and future, input (decision-making processes) and output, protects from the most insidious heuristic implications inherent in a linear and non-emergentist approach to reality. Insisting on predicted solutions, while underlying problems still remain or perhaps worsen, proves to be a reliable indicator of non-systemic thinking, strong in its linear and reductionist determinism. In this sense, therefore, not only does a reductionist theoretical orientation risks being metaphysical in the Popperian meaning of the term but risks worsening the situation it intends to solve. On the contrary, Systemic Thinking, far from offering reasons for inaction given the uncertainty of the result, leads us to a new type of action rooted in a new way of thinking which promises and allows us to better understand reality (Ceruti

2007), readjusting complexity reduction strategies from time to time, cautiously avoiding more or less dangerous insistences.

That being said, a non-systemic way of proceeding, which operates with criteria that expel the consideration of relational emergence from conceptual frameworks, does not seem to be extraneous to normative multiculturalism

DOES NORMATIVE MULTICULTURALISM'S *PROCEDURAL MODEL* OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION REDUCE COMPLEXITY?

Normative multiculturalism's integrative model, both in its communitarist and pluralist versions, raises several doubts from a sociological, epistemological, methodological and ethical point of view.

Emphasizing ethnic roots, identity construction enveloped within the safe meshes of network of community traditions and bonds against an individualized modernity that has worn down, loosened and deformed the intertwining of the community fabric until it loses all ability to hold the self's formation process, it is well suited to the idea of a functionalist system, specifying itself in a integration functionalist-procedural model that considers compliance with common rules sufficient and does not require cultural integration in settlement societies, moral adherence to the spirit of values underlying the rules. The crucial question is knotted around the request of *public* recognition of differences by the host society through *special rights*, and *sectional institutions*, self-governed by individual cultural groups.

In the normative communitarian multiculturalism social vision the primary good to be protected is group freedom, whose recognition is articulated in the framework of a concept of equality that overturns the terms of the liberal model, presenting itself in terms of an equal right to remain different in the context of a non-neutral, color sensitive State, sectional, particularistic laws and a differentiated citizenship, all devices that from the liberal and pluralist perspective appear, instead, cause of inequality and social segmentation. The origins of this recognition and tolerance significance, exempt from an explicit qualification that refers to reciprocity, not specifying the modes of exercise in a relational perspective between the groups, stem from the theoretical communitarian core with its primacy of community over individual and its critique of the assumptions that govern the individualistic and liberal modern society (moral individualism, universalism of individual rights, neutrality of the State) responsible for a modernity that has fragmented social ties and identities, and in particular with its critics of Rawls' individualistic Neo-Contractualism with its primacy of *the justice over the good* and universalism of rights and juridical norms (1971). In brief, also in reference to the management of cultural differences in our globalized Western societies, the main battleground between communitarian and liberals about the foundation of political subjectivity repeats. In broad terms, the Neo-Aristotelians/Neo-Kantians opposition grasps the core of the question. By emphasizing the primacy of *the good* as a criterion to which every ideal of justice must be related, communitarians place it within a community ethos, as source of identity, self-esteem and self-determination, whose recognition is essential to guarantee effective realization of individuals, while liberals, referring to the Kantian theorization of modern individualism that rises the individual as goal and never as a means of the action, place this possibility of identity self-realization and self-determination in the universalism of the norms, in the recognition of freedom and equality universal rights. The emphasis of liberals on individual dimension and of communitarians on community dimension or particularism of ethics raises the question of the conflict between individual and community rights, between universal juridical rights and collective cultural ones.

This communitarian theoretical nucleus, whether it is based on a neo-positivistic matrix (Taylor 1992; Walzer, 1999; Sandel, 1982) or on a neo-Aristotelian one (MacIntyre 1981), is identified in the acceptance of a *cultural relativism* justified by the assumption that values are far from being able to acquire a status of objectivity and universality as they are embedded in the different concrete human communities and, therefore, relative to them. Hence, from questioning the legitimacy of a universal reference criterion, that incommensurability of cultures - all worthy of *equal* value and *equal* respect (Taylor 1992) - which justifies their recognition in their indivisible and intangible totality of meaning as condition to protect the community integrity and, consequently, the same identity of

individuals who recognize themselves in it. This unitary perspective emerges in respect to multiculturalism management, although among communitarians the theoretical references that justify the primacy of community over individual are different

Nietzsche or Aristotle? McIntyre wonders provocatively in the pages of his *After the virtue* (1981). The reasons for the radical refutation of individualism and liberalism privileging individual rights all lie in this passage, in the *after virtue*, in the progressive disappearance from the public scene of an ideal of good produced, shared and enjoyed together, in the loss of a *collective telos* which was sacrificed to the Enlightenment project to found an autonomous, rational and secular morals, capable of tracing, outside of any teleological and theological perspective, the founding criteria of the rules of conduct in nothing more than in the individual, in his free choice of his own ideal of good. It is precisely this reduction, this passage from the ideal of a good life for man from the community foundation to free individual choice which preludes to the failure of the Enlightenment project, to that fragmentation of morals and individual identity which for the Neo-communitarians appears typical of the contemporary age. In McIntyre's peculiar reconstruction, it is the *Übermensch* which is the final product of this process of historical and cultural change that has seen the faith in Aristotelian teleology and in the classical tradition of the virtues fall into disrepute in favor of a rationalist individualism unable to universalize individual motives as ethical principles. The *emotivism*, the progressive reduction of ultimate objectives to objects of free choice which are, for this reason, not rationally justifiable, the process of justification always having to refer to a choice that is no longer justifiable, not guided by any unifying criteria, marks the gap between present and past, between the fragmentation of contemporary moral discourse, understood as a place of incommensurable, interminable, absolutely insoluble by rational means, dissensions on issues of public interest, and what ethics once was, that ideal of a good life for man rooted in the Aristotelian search for the "golden mean", for wisdom and the contemplation of truth, or in a solid theological terrain as in the Middle Ages. Aristotle and Nietzsche are the extreme poles of this social and ethic change process, the emblems the most representative of two contrasting ethical conceptions, of two antithetical visions of man, of a contrasting model of actor and social world. At the end of his intellectual journey, there is no longer anything that the man of ancient Greece as well as that of the Middle Ages and even that of 1700 Pennsylvania is susceptible to share with the modern 'emotivist self', principle of authority to himself, solitary inhabitant of a disenchanting and void of telos and meaning universe, citizen of nowhere, separated and prior to its bonds, whose goals have been relegated to the context of contingency, identifying a more free to build his own biographical project but fragmented, disoriented, unstable, isolated and more lonely man.

The belief that the history of our life cannot be separated from the history of those communities in which it is inserted, from which we draw our identity (McIntyre 1988), directs jointly the communitarian reflection against that unencumbered, independent, pre-social self (Sandel, 1982), against what Walzer has defined as a nullifying process of self-formation, self-creation acted by men and women who are entrepreneurs of themselves (1999: 30), redefine their goals in an incessant and never definitive work of construction and reconstruction rather than fixing them once and for all on a solid sense of membership to a group with its values, beliefs, practises and on a spontaneous identification between expectations of personal fulfilment and interest collective. «There really cannot be individuals of this sort», Walzer says (1990: 20-21). For communitarians, looking upon contemporary ethics means, therefore, recording the loss of whole pieces of the process of meaning construction, the loss of concepts such as *unity*, *history*, *narration*, entirely void of meaning and erased from the cognitive horizons of modern man. The reference to the *situated self* in opposition to an *unencumbered self* (Sandel 1982), the consideration of a *frame of reference* by the light of which we can build our own identities (Taylor 1992), the insistence on the *virtus tradition* (McIntyre 1981) are all ways, different in formulation but substantially the same, to refer, instead, to a life project rooted in a telos established and shared in a collective way and on which a conception of a life understood as *unity* can be structured.

With Taylor, the primacy of community over individual is justified in reference to the Meadian Theory of self formation as a *social product* emerging from the relationship with the significant other and the generalized other (Taylor 1992). Mead provides him with more appropriate to the contemporary world sociological and psychological categories to theoretically support the recognition of the right of everyone to form his own identity not only as an

individual but also as a culture (Taylor 1992: 63). The substance of the conclusion does not change. Taylor rejects the ethical neutrality of law and identifies its dangers, assimilating the non-recognition to a form of oppression that damages the psychological integrity of the individual, preventing him from realizing his own identity and imprisoning him in a false, distorted and reduced way of being (Taylor 1992; however, on the concept of oppression see the critical details of Sartori 2000: 67-68).

Cultural relativism and incommensurability among cultures implies that cultural difference is only to be recorded (Zamagni 2002:3). It requires an attitude of simple acknowledgment. Hence, the justification of legitimacy of the *struggles for the recognition* derives as well as the proposal of a *differentiated citizenship* that ensures to members of different cultural communities the right to pursue the complex values of their own culture on public sphere, and, consequently, to respective communities the right to self-manage by the recognition of *collective rights*. According to Taylor, it is the feeling of authenticity, that same sentiment which modern sensibility advocates, to ask today to Western contemporary democracies an active commitment towards identity policies. In this framework, also the walzerian proposal for a type 2 liberalism can be placed. Walzer (1999) challenges liberalism on issues connected with social democracy and related to the sense of community membership, the management of social conflict, the role of passionate engagement in politics. The type 2 liberalism is the response to the fact that inherited communal identities continue to survive in spite of the territorial and social separation due to the four mobilities – geographic, social, marital and political mobility – produced from economic globalization process and favored from technological progress. This explains why, according to Walzer, the type 2 liberalism proposal, which recognizes the individual as holder not only of individual rights to freedom and life but also of other rights that do not derive from our humanity but from collective goods with a local and particular character, is a necessary corrective of the type 1 liberalism, with its endorsement of moral individualism's social disruptive effects – from institutionalization of weak social ties to the inconsistency of identity, to social isolation and political disengagement – , as well as the only condition for fully realizing the promises of liberalism's freedom, justice and equality.

At the same way, the *good society*, Iris Young writes in what is among the most articulate theoretical formulations of ideological multiculturalism, «does not eliminate or transcends group differences» (1990:163). *Justice*, given the qualities of inevitability and, above all, desirability of the group differentiation in modern social processes, «does not require fusion (the melting away) of differences, *but rather institutions that promote the reproduction and respect of group differences without oppression*» (1990: 47, our Italics). This public respect of community life is the condition for promoting peaceful relationships among communities (also Thompson 2002).

The request of differentiated public institutions recognition returns in the pluralist version of normative Multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 1995a; 2018). On the one hand, Pluralist multiculturalism sets a threshold to the recognition by admitting the non-recognition of traditions opposing liberal principles (for example, in the case of Islamic culture groups: polygamy, infibulation, talaq divorces, arranged marriages and so on). On the other hand, it supports the implementation of interventions able to make liberal institutions truly accessible and usable by immigrants (for example, school curriculum adjustments, adapting standards for job selection to curriculum, modifying times and workplaces, dress code adjustments) and the recognition of institutions conforming to specific traditions of immigrant communities, in particular schools, hospitals, houses, and cemeteries. The request of a differentiated citizenship, of including “pieces” of minority group culture in our institutions, seems to remain in the social-democratic domain (Zamagni 2002). However, as we will argue later, even this position does not eliminate the integration problems implied by the communitarian version.

The differentiated citizenship as integrative strategy is shared from all normative multiculturalists (see also Modood 2007, 2018; Meer and Modood 2013). The *salad bowl* seems to be the most suitable metaphor for expressing the multiculturalist idea of a social coexistence project where all differences coexist, distinctly and publicly recognized, without annulling themselves or merging into a single cultural and social reality (melting pot).

Therefore, normative multiculturalism, even pluralist normative multiculturalism which appears to be less radical than the communitarian on some points, leaves open problematic issues.

Sociologically there are good reasons to believe that normative multiculturalism model is not sufficient for integration, for producing unity from difference. Although, in emergence logic, integration can be one of the many

possibilities to which self-organization process being initiated by processes of signifying of recognition policies is open, the functionalist-procedural device is such as to make this possibility unlikely. Indeed, the lack of attention given to reciprocity and to every effort towards a platform, albeit the least, of common meanings shared between groups risks exacerbating differentiation, segmenting society into separate communities, unable to communicate, which do not share anything significant, making mutual adaptation between groups difficult. The risk of dangerous *isolationist drift*, establishing a sociality that does not find points of unity and union, characterized by closed, unrelated groups which have strong intra-group bonds and weak inter-group bonds (Donati 2008), destined to remain increasingly stranger to each other and potentially in conflict on the level of important relational orientation values (e.g. gender equality), does not go unnoticed. From this angle, normative multiculturalism appears far from a culture conception as source of relationship and integration and, for this, susceptible to a dynamic formation process. The communitarian implication is to reify cultures, understood as homogeneous entities, fixed and immutable blocks, impermeable to innovation and exchange processes (see Benhabib 2002) as well as that to admit a process of self's formation which is not dynamic, which blocks social agents in rigid identities. Terms such as *social balkanization*, *tribalization*, formation of *parallel societies* (e.g. Touraine 1998; Heller 1996; Baumann 1999; Barry 2000; Carens 2000; Sartori 2000; Benhabib 2002; Tibi 2002; Donati 2008; Sen 2006a, 2006b; Malik 2014; Guidikova 2014; Cantle 2016) have been used to indicate the normative multiculturalism peculiarity of eroding the foundations of community coexistence, its inability to forge a common and shared identity while it fragments social fabric into a multiplicity of non-communicating social worlds, into a multi-communitarianism (Wieviorka 1998) or pluralism of monocultures, of traditions that coexist side by side without meeting, without sharing anything (Sen 2006a), and, ultimately, complicating and problematizing the conditions of integration, cohesion and social peace. According to Sen, the history of multiculturalism is one of the many examples of how fallacious reasoning can trap people into the inextricable quagmire which it has created (Sen 2006b:35).

Sociologically the idea of a externalized integration, which allows groups to survive without integrating culturally, indifference towards reciprocity and culture as relational fact (Donati 2008: 30), appears to lead to emergence of a fragile sociality. It leaves the problem of cohesion intact and offers no mediation and solution to cultural conflicts, rather justifying for this a theoretical leap backwards, a problematic return to the Hobbesian state. Communitarization promises to strengthen cultural divide lines between groups and preludes to mutual separation rather than social integration, intolerance rather than tolerance, conflict rather than peaceful coexistence. In other terms, the procedural foundation of social integration raises serious doubts about its power to reduce social complexity.

From a sociological perspective, even the model of cohabitation and integration proposed by pluralist multiculturalism does not get rid of those relational short-circuit problems and balkanization issues previously observed. As certain institutions are thought to be separate from those of host society, including schools that preside over socialization, the main question remains open. There would always be a lack of that meaning bond, that platform of shared values at the base of cohesion and integration, that enable "to make society", a common world, reducing the risk of a segmentation of the social fabric into non-communicating, in potential conflict, sub-communities.

Epistemologically, considering systemic complexity, the normative multiculturalism project is not enough to favor system self-organization, to reduce uncertainty of this process, the system emergence property by balancing differentiation and integration. Due to its peculiar traits, it ends up modeling a society risking overcoming the edge of the chaos, falling into that state of max differentiation, unrelation, which should be avoided being identified as the range of disorder and ungovernability. Indeed, in relational terms, this range corresponds to that where interaction processes are not governed from mutual common value and behaviour expectations, and are so disordered - disunited, disjointed, incoherent, discontinuous, conflicting- that they are no longer able to find meaning convergence and to be mutually coherent and coordinated, social systems do not stabilize into a new order in response to environmental perturbations, self organization and morphogenesis become impossible since adaptation process finds no stopping point, and any social controllability and predictability is lost. Today, many forms of cultural conflicts, many signs of difficult coexistence between *us* and *them* revealed by proceeding on this path without caring enough about symbolic reciprocity are proof of this and show that we are far from a merely theoretical possibility. Contrary to expectations, Islamic radicalism cases (infibulations, forced marriages, polygamy,

honor-based violences, Condorelli 2018) as well as fundamentalism events and signs of xenophobia and nationalist extremism are not infrequent even in social contexts oriented in a multiculturalist way such as Great Britain, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway. They are all expressive of a separate sociality generated from the intertwining of action of a plurality of subjects oriented by a unilateral interpretation of recognition policies. In particular, *Sharia courts* and *faith school* recognition have not kept away multi-ethnic Great Britain from cultural tensions, Islamic radicalism and fundamentalism episodes (the numerous attacks on the London underground are well known as well as the Islam4UK demonstrations for the inclusion of the Sharia in the liberal Europe British Law), describing UK society as a collation of close and separates communities, with parallel lives in separate institutions, incapable of meaningful interchanges, lacking a meta-community as a common ground of union between ethnic-cultural differences (Cantle 2001). All this makes us reflect on consequences of ethic relativism and political correctness attitudes, capable favouring that illiberal confusion (Sen 2006a) which leads away from the Enlightenment roots of European culture, and, consequently, produces social fragmentation and uncertainty.

However, the need for the recognition of group rights and religions in the public sphere continues to be confirmed as *nation-remaking project* (Modood 2018; Kymlicka, 2018).

Methodologically, Systemic thinking, then, leads us to consider with caution this insistence. It suggests a way of proceeding which operates in reductionist terms: it expels the consideration of emergence and unpredictability from conceptual framework, and, for the reasons previously said, exposes the Normative Multiculturalism to the judgment of being a metaphysical theory in the Popperian sense of the term.

Finally, even the serious problems that the group rights recognition raises on an ethical level have not gone unnoticed, that is, the risk of legitimizing those cultural traditions that generate intra-group discriminatory practices, as in the case of the condition of women in sexist societies (see Condorelli 2018), and perpetuating and endorsing forms of social injustice protected by the *politically correct* (Sen, 2006c). Ethic limits deriving from the axiological relativism have been widely treated in academic debate. For Heller, the rule of multiculturalism can become an instrument of abuse and imposition when the decisions of individuals are prejudiced or subject to generalized preferences (Heller 1996: 34). Which means, according to the author, that Multiculturalism, as a *utopia* of the same opportunities for all the communities and for the individuals recognized in them, is destined to remain an incomplete utopia if it reifies cultures, if freedom, as a superior value, that is, the possibility to belong or leave any cultural community, native or not, as an act of free choice (*ibidem*), is not incorporated into the same utopia. If this possibility (as in the case of mixed marriages or acts of conversion to another faith) is not accepted, but sanctioned, impeded by force or even death, multiculturalism risks falling into that *illiberal confusion* mentioned by Sen (2006b), into that protection of forms of intra-group oppression that deny that instance of freedom, equity, and social justice that normative multiculturalism would want, instead, to guarantee. Boudon seems to have put an end to the question by saying: «that the ‘cultural’ rights of groups and subgroups must be recognized is one thing, that this should imply the acceptance of axiological relativism is another» (Boudon 1999: 45).

To be precise, within Multiculturalism there is a wide range of intellectual positions. The variety of ways in which the difference recognition is theorized finds further specifications in the Habermas’s approach, in some intermediate positions as Honneth’s one. There is to be seen whether and to what extent the critical considerations here presented can be addressed to these theoretical positions.

Habermas’s perspective presents interesting peculiarities which mark a significant difference with Kymlicka and Taylor (Habermas, 1996, 1998). The qualifying aspect is that Habermas excludes that the valorization of cultural differences requires collective, ethic, rights recognition, since it is ensured by juridical universalism, by the system of individual rights understood as praxis based on universalistic and trans-cultural criteria. It is, in fact, the condition of *co-originary* of private autonomy and public autonomy that makes not necessary the recognition of special group rights and sufficient the recognition of full citizenship to immigrants, especially second generation, born in the host society (*ius soli vs ius sanguinis*) so they are able to participate in democratic political dialectics and to reach a possible public recognition of their interests simply by following the rules of democracy and pluralism. In other terms, Habermas proposes a political integration, according to *patriotic constitutionalism* which implies an acceptance of the rules of production of laws and democratic power, considering that moral integration

cannot be demanded by a liberal state. The “solidarity among strangers” is that of a law community. All we need is a procedural legal democracy, capable of guaranteeing both private and public autonomy by ensuring a transversal, not mono-cultural, participation in the public arena. Habermas insists on the integrative function of the norms and procedures of law democratic production. The difference with neocommunitarian multiculturalist are evident on more levels. Beyond the many reflections that this intellectual position has aroused, one aspect appears relevant for the purposes of this work: Habermasian Theory implies the sharing a democratic ethos as *a priori* of social action (i.e see Rosati 2001). The importance of this assumptions is evident as a condition to prevent the risk to destroy the democracy by using democratic tools in a purely functional and anti-democratic way. The question will be argued again in the next paragraph.

For his part, Honneth’s recognition Theory proposes an original conceptual integration between Hegel and Kant, between the particularism of recognition of community forms of life and values, related to individual self-esteem and the liberal and habermasian universalism of juridical principles, related to individual autonomy. By finding in Mead an empirical justification to the communitarian positions and a way to reinterpret heghelian positions by more updated sociological and psychological categories, the identification of three degrees in the recognition process corresponding to three moments of identity formation process – that of primary relations, that of juridical relations and that of the ethical community – realizes the conceptual union between *self-determination* and *self-esteem* which cannot be preserved regardless the possibility of putting shared group values into practice. Starting from belief that the solidarity cannot be structured by law universalism but only by value and forms of life sharing, the Honnet’s multicultural solidarity with its consequential recognition of particularism of ethics is a solidarity between anonymous which does not solve social balkanization problems. According to many interpreters the Honneth’s attempt to connect *self-determination* and *self-esteem* does not seem to resolve the intrinsic collision between the universalism of juridical principles and the particularism of ethics (i.e see Rosati 2001). In other respects, this approach is placed in an intermediate position and opens to perspectives of inter-culturality where individual self-realization is endorsed by referring to a network of inter-subjective relationships of mutual recognition., Dwelling on his aspect, however, the mutual respect of anthropological needs for security, recognition of one’s dignity, identity and form of life, appears be ensured on a not institutional basis, unlike the Normative Interculturalism. Social integration and conflict problems as well as ethical problems seem to remain open.

From my perspective, these problems seem to remain open even in Margalit’s recognition Theory (1996). The theorization of the *decent society*, as society which bases its solidarity on the *non-humiliation* of its members as normative principle of orientation of social institutions, requires 1) the need of different cultural identities recognition as well as political citizenship as corrective of that status disparity condition capable of legitimizing a dialectic similar to humiliating and undignified slave/master one, 2) the commitment by institutions not to produce and not to use humiliating collective representations. Although in line of principle this perspective is acceptable, those identity making processes that are linked to group traditional cultural practices which humiliate the human dignity such as sexist ones should not be underestimated. The recognition question still shows itself in all its problematic nature.

Currently the debate is focused on the relationship between normative Multiculturalism and normative Interculturalism. In the next paragraph the terms of this controversial debate will be argued.

In conclusion, considering the sociological, epistemological, methodological warnings dealt with here, how to reduce complexity? How to fill up this relational gap that normative multiculturalism, in its pluralist and communitarian version, institutes and avoid the risk of a society undermined from an anomic differentiation process and unable, for this, to re-organize in new order configurations?

REDUCING COMPLEXITY: THE *SHARING* IN PLURALIST AND INTERCULTURALIST INTEGRATION MODEL

A sociality capable, in the respect of pluralism, finding points of unity and union through sharing of common values is the central core of the Pluralism and Interculturalism model integrative strategy

Pluralism recommends that least bit of assimilation that is necessary to create integration (Sartori 2000: 56). All the reasoning focuses on the need of a moral foundation of integration and cohesion consisting in *sharing*, albeit the least, of common values as a means necessary to activate relationships and cooperation (Baubock 1996; Putnam 2007) and to reduce complexity in the face of procedural foundation inefficiencies. It is to the *reciprocity* of tolerance that Pluralism consigns the possibility of the society in an individualized, pluralistic, social context and especially in a multicultural one. *Reciprocity*, understood as a reciprocal disposition to openness and acceptance, implies the recognition of coexistence rules of host society and of those individual liberty and equality values underlying the rules and role expectations by those who are hosted, and the recognition of traditional values of those who are hosted by host society, provided that these values are not contrary to those of liberty and equality. On the one hand, reciprocity tempers the sharing as conceived in the assimilationist model. On the other hand, reciprocity avoids the isolationist drift of normative multiculturalism. By fostering a relational meaning bond capable of forging that behavior unity and sense of belonging, that stable social union which can, consequently, strengthen efforts at collective commitment and reduce the level of relational conflict, pluralistic sharing and mutual tolerance can, in principle, remedy the differentiation excess which prevents the system's self-organization, the possibility of its stabilization in a new pluralistic and multicultural social order. In short, it can build that relational bond and that possibility of dialogue between groups capable of balancing respect for difference and need for social integration. In this meaning Sartori sees in pluralistic reciprocity the condition for living together in difference and with differences, without which recognition policy and integration reciprocally exclude (2000: 114). So, Pluralistic sharing renders coexistence possible and is the condition for *undifferentiated citizenship*, that recognition of individual universal rights which enshrine individual freedom and equality values Understanding and reforging one's identity in reference to modern moral individualism values, and, for this, feeling itself as citizen and placing on social scene as holder of individual, non-collective, rights, is that point of unity and union that channels mutual behavior expectations on a shared binary, makes social interaction and solidarity possible, tempering cultural conflicts as well as pluralistic-democratic society destruction risks which can result from an anti pluralistic, anti liberal and anti democratic use of universal individual rights (e.g the right to vote). In this respect, Habermas' integration proposal is significant (Habermas 1996). The Habermas' integration as political integration, according to a *patriotic constitutionalism* which implies an acceptance of legal power and law production process rules in a pluralistic society and liberal State which cannot require moral integration, works by involving the sharing of the democratic ethos governing this process as *a priori* of social action

This position is *sociologically* correct. However, it is impossible to deny all the difficulty of "the sharing" in reference to individuals already socialized to other value contents which reject it, intending to remain rooted in their ethnic roots. Starting from this consideration, some perplexities seems to be raised even by the idea of multicultural society proposed by Touraine (1998) and based on the notion of *subject*. The reassessment of the subjectivity, of the non-social of the social, appear to Touraine functional to the intercultural communications and democracy, as a fundamental condition for combining the universalistic principle of equality between human beings and the particularism of ethics. Radical criticisms are addressed at cultural relativism perspective as well as to instrumental logic of the market reducing everything to profit. Only *subjects*, individuals who constitute themselves as such and as actors into collective movements by desengaging both from community holism and the market logic, can recognize each other, *equal and different*. Utopia? The one and the other side, both a strong and persistent attachment to the profit logic and many cases of Islamic radicalism or fundamentalism expressing a strong closure towards individualism which is the prelude to *the subject*, show how much the Touraine multicultural society vision is placed on a ground that is difficult to till.

Facing these perplexities, Normative Interculturalism appears a possible solution. In this sense, Interculturalism is configured as an interactive project of coexistence in difference and with difference and a model of integration that assumes the need for a core of shared values whose construction—here lies its novelty—is conceived with in a *mutual learning process* among cultures. Therefore, it bases *sharing* on a reciprocity concept which, on the one hand, incorporates that of pluralism (reciprocity oriented to sharing of individual liberty-equality binomial and democratic ethos that mark modern Western societies), on the other, "expands" it in the context of a *bi-directional*

adaptation process (Rodriguez-Garcia 2010; Rattansi 2011; Barret 2013; Bouchard 2015; Guidikova 2015; Cantele 2016; Zapata-Barrero 2017; Levrau and Loobuyck 2018), namely a process of *mutual fertilization* or *enrichment* of cultures for the formation of an *enriched identity* contrasting to the strengthened and homogeneous identities created from Multiculturalism. In the attempt to reduce complexity by knotting the threads of sharing and relationship and de-reifying every cultural reification, *bi-directionality* goes to the more proper meaning of reciprocity, completing the path of recognition in terms of a circular relational process open to a possible *morphogenesis* of all the identities involved in the relational circuit (cultural majority and minority groups). It is not a matter, in fact, of erasing the differences (homogenizing assimilation or solution by subtraction), nor of crystallizing them, separating them, estranging them, and ultimately opposing them (multiculturalist isolationism or solution by addition), but of encouraging all groups, minority groups and the host society's cultural majority, to engage in a significant dialogue in the public sphere aimed at a process of *mutual learning* able to lead to unity from and of difference, to sharing of a common symbolic code as necessary condition for mutual understanding and relationship. Compared to pluralism, therefore, inter-culturalism insists on the possibility that minority groups propose changes to host society, if it can be shown that these changes are in the best interest of the proposing cultural group while do not violate the rights of any other group (Rodriguez-Garcia 2010; Cantele 2016). In so doing, Interculturalism emphasizes the semantic negotiation, the *demiotic* (Baumann 1999), dialogic, processual nature of the culture, understood not as a fixed, static, entity but dynamic process of constructing meanings, with others and through others. Hence, a new way of conceptualizing the citizenship, understood as a *bottom-up* process governed by that condition of *collective rational reflexivity* on values, as Donati called it, necessary for promoting those that favor a humanization of relationships that they inform and are worthy of be pursued as citizenship rights by the entire political community (Donati 2008: 44).

Intercultural dialogue generates sharing and requires sharing, a common meaning bond which allows relationality and dialogue between groups, and a more solid basis for cohesion and integration. In this regard, the debate on the criteria that can drive dialogue, make it possible and leads it to a peaceful conclusion is significant. Since the beginning, in fact, in order to dialogue on values, as dialogue is not a colloquy at the end of which everyone goes on his own way, with his own convictions intact, but aspires to build a common world and an enriched identity, the Interculturalist strategy has required serious reflections on criteria governing the value selection process, orienting dialogue and making possible the mutual sharing. In this regard, while cultural specificities are allowed the recognition of the right to preserve their own identity, Interculturalism institutionalizes this recognition within parameters of the respect for human dignity which, although it finds its codification in European Constitutions, is established as a meta-cultural heritage enables, regardless of any cultural specificity and dogmatic beliefs, to discriminate between cultural differences that can be accepted and confirmed and those that cannot be part of a common world of symbolic meanings. In so doing, Interculturalism ensures the possibility of intercultural dialogue and conflict composition. On the one hand, it is possible to build that enriched common base, capable of forging bonds between groups and peaceful social cooperation. On the other hand, the intercultural solution responds to principles of social fairness, avoiding that confusion between cultural freedom, fundamental for human dignity, and defence of cultural traditions that dehumanize relationships, as not taking into account the human values of freedom of choice and equality (Sen 2006b).

From a sociological perspective, according to Donati, overcoming multiculturalism requires a theoretical revision of rationality, i.e a conceptualization that expands rationality beyond its classical dimensions, both from the still too restrictive functionalist Durkheimian conception and from the Weberian conception, overcoming the idea that values cannot be judged when they are the expression of a common feeling. In more specific terms, in Donati's perspective, given that each culture differs according to the effects that its symbolic values produce in the relationship they inform, the recognition of cultural diversity (accepted and confirmed rather than rejected and dismissed) emanates from exercise of a public reason applied to relationships. This is a reflexive faculty that evaluates rationality (the good reasons) of any culture, relating this rationality judgment not only to its content of instrumental rationality (of means) or of situated purpose or of relational normativity, but to its ultimate sense of conformity to what is worthy of human being to that which, as such, is inalienable, non-negotiable, that is, to its content of

symbolic rationality (rationality exercised on values) or rationality of dignity (Donati 2008:109). What matters, therefore, is whether or not certain symbolic values produce a humanization growth of the individuals involved in relationships that values orient. Following this line of reasoning, for example, according to our author, we can recognize infibulation, polygamy, repudiation, arranged marriages, the relationship between man and woman marked by various forms of social and legal discrimination against women, and why not Islamic veil, as irrational practices, as well as the Barbagia code that legitimizes revenge. And this is not because these practices violate human rights – an all-Western conception, on which, therefore, identity conflicts are triggered – but because, explains Donati, they are lacking to produce a growth of humanization of the woman, of her dignity as proper characteristic (property) of the human (*ibidem*). It is thus, through reflexive rationality, that it is possible to activate a mutual exchange of symbolic meanings capable of leading to a morphogenesis of the cultural identities involved and to the formation of a common world, of a new State and culture laicity, which confers cultural citizenship to values if and as they respond to what is worthy of the human individual, regardless of justifications based on faith. The adoption, therefore, of what Donati called a relational paradigm ensures the effective feasibility of the intercultural project for the foundation of that *societarismo costituzionale* where the overcoming of multiculturalist isolationism is identified and the possibility of cosmopolitanism can be based.

In other terms, the benefits of the inter-cultural approach reverberate over all parties involved. Reciprocity oriented by human dignity appears to act as a catalyst for positive changes within different cultures: for minority cultures, mutual comparison could be an incentive to open up to liberal and democratic values, and, for post-modern Western societies it could act as an incentive to revisit certain extremisms of individualization and secularization process that marks them (i.e. see Marzano, 2002)

In this respect, a qualifying aspect of the Interculturalist integration model is a new understanding of the concept of secularism. While this model it does not question the secular nature of the State in the sense of its neutrality with respect to religion, it enhances the relational resource of different religious expressions which occupy and which are destined to occupy the Western public sphere more and more permanently by recognizing their inclusion in the public debate sphere, sphere that, however, remain secular as far as it always keeps firm the reference to respect for human dignity as a principle of reason which must preside over dialogue in the public sphere regardless of considerations related to dogmas of faith. In other words, the Interculturalist model operates using a concept of secularism understood as an *open secularism*, where the dialogue between different religious groups is submitted to a criterion of mutual “moderation” between faith and reason. Thus, this reciprocal “moderation” function appears to be the keystone of all Interculturalist discourse, which enables overcoming the limits of assimilationist models, on the one hand, and the problems of ethical relativism involved in multiculturalist ideology, on the other, achieving integration, new order with coherence.

Some successful Interculturalism attempts are exemplified by the Canadian debate on Sharia courts, held in 2005 in Ontario. The public debate between supporters of religious rights and supporters of women’s rights, among neo-traditionalist Muslims, liberal Muslims and non Muslim women and men, led to prohibition of all forms of arbitration based on religion, and this through peaceful negotiation processes driven by the primacy of the meta-cultural rule of respect for dignity and freedom of woman on both collective rights recognition and classic public space secularism principle

The Canadian case shows how other controversial issues in the West could find appropriate solution, as well, such as, for example, the issue of the head veil for Muslim women. The controversy, in France and in other European countries, lies in the fact that the prohibition is usually justified by appealing to Secular State principle. At this level, the question seems bound to constitute a perennial source of identity cultural conflicts. Instead, by reasoning on the protection of those women who do not freely choose to wear the veil as a symbol of their religious and cultural identity but undergo this practice, a public debate which refers to super-ordinate, secular, principle of human dignity respect seems better to dissolve the tangles that induce identity conflicts. It is interesting that this principle is invoked by many secular Muslim feminists against both the manifestations of tolerance on the use of the veil as well as the requests in this sense made by Islamic feminists and assessed expressive of a naive multiculturalism (i.e. see the ever relevant contribution of Tamzali 2010).

In conclusion, conceiving culture as a process and multicultural society as network of crossed identifications (Baumann 1999) can avoid the impasse in which normative multiculturalism halts, by balancing cultural differentiation and the need for integration and social cohesion. So, Interculturalism enables to safeguard the possibility of regaining that shared symbolic code capable *sociologically* of constituting an integrative, connective, constraint and relational bond, and, reveals a greater possibility of reducing complexity, socio-cultural conflict, and producing social organization

CONCLUSIONS

The challenge of “society shaping” with cultural diversity in times of globalization, reconciling respect for pluralism and difference and the need for integration and social cohesion, is a sociological and epistemological problem. As here argued, while reflection on *the system*, how it works and how it evolves according to acquisitions of contemporary epistemology is not a matter of contemporary debate on the issue in question, the discriminating heuristic power of this preliminary clarification proves to be decisive.

In modern poly-ethnic democracies, the notion that social cohesion and civic equality must require cultural homogeneity is a hardly sustainable idea for the same reason that an ossified humanity, that is, a culture not being a process, was already inconceivable to Lévi-Strauss in his *Race et Histoire* (1952). But if the idea of cultural homologation is unsustainable in an era of super-diversity, similarly it is problematic to support the idea of separation, of estrangement between cultures that are in the same social space, of the closure in communities of similar ones, in islands of uniformity (Bauman 2005), both the one imposed from above and the one in which the multiculturalist dream seems to shatter. In the framework of system consideration as an intertwining of constraints and emergence, able to self-organize and to survive by forming new integrative constraints and not get lost in *chaos* only if they are in an intermediate position between connection and differentiation (*at the edge of chaos*), neither too connected nor too differentiated, unrelated and irregular, disordered to the point of no longer finding internal organization forms, procedural integration seems to exhibit serious limits. In the absence of those minimum requirements of reciprocity and sharing as condition of social system existence, there is a risk of not reducing social complexity, exacerbating differentiation, establishing a Balkanized sociality, with closed and reified cultures and groups destined to remain estranged to each other, and amplifying the potential for social conflict. Indeed, fundamentalist tendencies, the various - world -*ism* to which History has accustomed us, with their concentration camps and lagers, ethnic cleansing, enslavement, *shahids* of militant neo-asceticism, rampant Christian-phobia and gender oppression, mixophobic and xenophobic tendencies, fear of cultural diversity within its gated communities (Bauman 2005), the estrangement and mutual opposition between *us* and *them* with its cultural ghettos (it does not matter whether they are imposed or even wanted by individuals who want to remain separated), appear to be fomented whenever cultures are reified and the impossibility for groups of mutually engaging in meaningful communication, in an intimate and profound way, in a human way (Sennett 1996), arises. Therefore, it seems unrealistic to think that a new positive cohabitation can arise from the *salad bowl model*.

The solution against fear of nihilistic danger that frightens the detractors of polytheism cannot reside in what, in the end, can be considered an anachronistic leap back in time. That’s how the communitarian multiculturalism appears to Bauman to be. One cannot but recognize, for Bauman, that the openness toward dialogue encouraged by pluralism – the pluralizing hermeneutics of Marquand – teaches, on the contrary, to lay down arms, to discolor the intransigence of the singularizing hermeneutics in the art of mutually negotiating meanings (Bauman, 1999).

The solution, then, has to be found in the de-reification of any cultural reification, in overcoming the relational gap between the cultures that leads to that social balkanization which not resolve conflicts but rather compromises peace and social integration.

In conclusion, taking into account, on the one hand, the need to form a national liberal conscience as condition for the recognition of individual universal rights, through scholastic and juridical inclusion, and, on the other hand, the need of a cautious recognition of collective rights that is not only affirmed in principle, far from

any evaluation whatsoever (in fact, one thing is recognition of places of worship or special cemetery, recognition of significant religious festivity and work permits for worship practices, support for food codes and slaughter practices, another thing is the recognition of *faith schools* or *Sharia courts*), Interculturalism can reconcile integration, cohesion and diversity, by repairing the relational gap among identity differences where the axiological relativism of the normative multiculturalism integration model lands. And it can do so, not merely because it admits the creation of civic, public, dialogic space, but above all because it anchors the possibility and resolution of dialogue to mutual sharing of the inalienable trans-cultural value principle of human dignity as integrative communicative/interactional general meaning bond that comes *first*, before any reason without faith, that impoverishes and empties reason itself of any humanism, and before any faith that prevaricates reason, discoloring it into violence.

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Monographic Section

Corporate social responsibility and challenges for corporate sustainability in first part of the 21st century

Citation: Roblek V., Pejić Bach M., Meško M., Kresal F. (2020) *Corporate social responsibility and challenges for corporate sustainability in first part of the 21st century*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 31-46. doi: 10.13128/cambio-8486

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

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Abstract. The term corporate sustainability represents a crucial part of the concept of sustainable development. The main goal of the companies, which adopted corporate sustainability practice is to fulfil a sustainable development agenda and brings a balanced approach to economic and social progress and environmental management. The purpose of the article is to highlight the importance and issues of corporate sustainability in the context of awareness and approaches to social responsibility in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The paper aims to make order in the plurality of definitions of concept «corporate sustainability» and its practical understanding in terms of «corporate social responsibility». It does so through a literature review and the analysis of different attempts of definition. It identifies the main challenges these concepts bring with them.

Keywords: corporate sustainability, corporate social responsibility, the fourth industrial revolution, management, technology.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the social awareness of social responsibility, we are feeling the effects of a long-lasting neo-liberal policy in the 21st century, which was accompanied in the seventies by the coup d'état of the multinationals South America (Agee 1975; Cockcroft 1989) and in eighties of the 20th century by economic reforms in the English Prime Minister Thatcher (Schmidt and Thatcher 2013; Scott-Samuel et al. 2008) and USA president Reagan (Clark 2013). These neoliberal economic reforms had fundamentally changed the so-called welfare state by reducing state ownership of companies, [reducing

workers' rights, reducing social transferences and encouraging the emergence of globalisation by reallocating traditional industries such as textiles and footwear to less-developed Asian countries. Thus, in the mid-1980s, society witnessed the emergence of globalisation processes whose consequences are perceived as continuous violations of both ethical and social principles in production. All these social inequalities raise the question of how to achieve more balanced social development with the aim of a fairer distribution of income in the world since today ownership of capital is concentrated in 1% of the population (Roblek et al. 2018). The fourth industrial revolution or Industry 4.0 also has important role in this process, for which it is not clear today whether, like the three previous industrial revolutions, it can create more jobs than technological development can abolish. Industry 4.0 is now present in the human environment with technologies that affect important sociological aspects of the industry.

The fourth industrial revolution emerged around 2011 as a German political economy development programme which evolved in the technological evolution in the society. The concept of the fourth industrial revolution is very well known in Europe and the USA. Meanwhile, the Japanese government introduced its government program named Society 5.0. With establishing of the Society 5.0 Japanese wish to bring up better, supper smart and more prosperous human-centred society, with the support of the economy (Fukuda 2020). Suppose the third industrial revolution brought computerisation, the emergence of the internet, robotisation and digitalisation (Roblek, Erenda, Meško 2018). In that case, the main idea of Industry 4.0 is to introduce technologies that enable deep integration of business and engineering processes so that that production can be carried out according to organisational performance management and at low cost (Wang et al. 2020). The Industry 4.0, based on a combination of digital, cyber-physical and biological technologies, represents the path of new product or service development that will enable both competitiveness and contribute to regional development (e.g. smart regions) (Roblek, Meško, Krapež 2016; Roblek, Anthopoulos 2018).

The question is whether Industry 4.0 enables the sustainable development of companies, both from an economic point of view of sustainable business growth and from an ecological and social-social point of view. Sustainable companies have become the driving force of the market economy in the 21st century. We speak of a market and free economy when the necessary conditions for the free movement of goods, services and labour are in place when the capital market is developed, when the legal system and property rights apply and when human rights and freedoms are protected. The country's economic policy is significant for the long-term development of enterprises and the creation of new businesses. As a rule, only growing companies create new value in the broader sense, which is reflected in the form of capital gains, for the state in the form of taxes and contributions paid, and for workers in the form of personal income. As a rule, only growing companies enable the development of the local and national community and ultimately improve the visibility of the country where their products or services originate. In a global, highly competitive environment, in which a relentless battle for the favour of customers and purchasing power is fought, only a carefully selected strategic position is appropriate and successful. The strategy of sustainable growth leads to this. Zook and Allen (2010) define sustainable growth as (1) mutual real growth of revenues and profits over a long period, with (2) the return for owners being higher than the total cost of the company's capital. Companies that operate according to a sustainable growth business philosophy follow the mission of sustainable value creation and build their sustainable development, balancing the pressures of the internal and external environment, mostly in their core business (Bertoncelj et al. 2016).

Corporate social responsibility (CRS) plays an essential role in ensuring a sustainable business policy. From a macroeconomic perspective, CSR is understood as a special relationship between global companies, governments and citizens, and at the micro-level as a relationship between companies or firms and the local social environment. The second definition is derived from the relationship between companies and stakeholders. However, both point out that companies are not entirely independent of the environment, as they operate in a social context and feel the influence of the state and the community in which they operate. In practice, the concept of social responsibility is often equated with the concept of business ethics, but different authors distinguish between them in their models and theories and do not link them together. It should be stressed that these two concepts are closely related. In both cases, the well-being of stakeholders is paramount, and social responsibility means the broader ethical view that is expressed in (Bertoncelj et al. 2016; Roblek et al. 2014).

The goal of this conceptual paper is to highlight the importance and issues of corporate sustainability in the framework of corporate social responsibility awareness and approaches in the first half of the 21st century.

THE CONCEPT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The emergence of the CSR and its meaning

Corporate social responsibility has its roots in the social activism of the 1960s and 1970s. Public awareness of issues such as equal opportunities for all, racial equality and health and safety at work was first promoted by a more detailed examination of business practices than previously appeared to be the case, and then by placing these obligations within the legal framework (Heath & Waymer 2017; Frederick 2018).

The debate on CSR was triggered by the publication of the book *Social responsibilities of the businessman* (Bowen, 1953), which discussed CSR. Later the terminology changed, and social responsibility was characterised by various derivations, e.g. corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship or corporate sustainability. The term is also associated with a related area of corporate reputation, where the underdeveloped CSR is a significant threat to reputation, and where the developed CSR is an insurance against damage to reputation that is visible in corporate governance based on best practice. Such management, in turn, is reflected in triple performance reporting - economic, environmental and social performance (three aspects are collectively referred to as 3P: «profit», «work» and «people», i.e. profit, nature and population, i.e. people). More recently, scientists have criticised existing models and suggested that CSR programs should be the focus of attention rather than business obligations or public-driven motives (Moore 2003). Others argue for more extensive involvement of dialogue (which is an integral part of CSR programs) between organisations and their stakeholders (Haas 2003; Roberts 2003). Such discussions reflect the recognised status of CSR as a fundamental issue in business. This is also reflected in the generally accepted definitions of CSR.

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 1999) defines CSR as their ongoing commitment to ethical behaviour, economic development, and improving the quality of life of employees, their families, local communities, and society at large. It mentions five priority areas: human rights, employee rights, environmental protection, and community involvement and supplier relations.

According to the Green Paper (European Commission, 2001), most definitions describe CSR as a concept according to which companies voluntarily include social and environmental considerations in their business and communication with stakeholders. CSR can play a crucial role in sustainable development while promoting European innovation and competitiveness. The European Community has also issued an outstanding Green Paper (Green Paper on Promoting a European Framework for CSR), which seeks to lay the foundations for the promotion of CSR in all countries of the European Union.

The European Commission published a new CSR policy in 2011. The revised document redefines corporate social responsibility as the responsibility of companies for their impact on society in the period after 2008 when the Member States of the European Community. The European Commission considered that in order to ensure consistent CSR, companies should initiate a process of integrating social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer issues into their business and core strategy in cooperation with stakeholders. According to the European Commission proposal, the companies should ensure that the creation of shared values for owners/shareholders, stakeholders and the company as a whole, is optimised. The strategy would also enable the identification, prevention and mitigation of potential negative impacts (European Commission 2011). As a follow-up to its strategy, the Commission published a Commission Staff Working Document (SWD (2019) 143) in March 2019. It provides an overview of the progress made by the Commission and the European External Action Service EEAS in implementing CSR/RBC and business and human rights (European Commission 2019).

Due to the complexity, the CSR process in small, medium-sized enterprises and especially micro-enterprises is likely to remain informal and intuitive. However, the Commission called on large companies and companies with

an exceptionally high risk of adverse effects to carry out risk-based due diligence procedures in their supply chains as well.

Customers must also be aware of the risks associated with outsourcing. It is not only a moral question whether products manufactured under impossible conditions in factories are bought Southeast Asia or Africa in factories, thus contributing to the high profits of the multinationals at the expense of violating workers' ethical standards and using child workforce. There is also the critical question of the trust that is created between buyers, producers and sellers. Confidence in producers is one of the critical issues in the economic and political debate in the European Union. Food manufacturers occasionally cheat in order to make a profit by replacing more expensive raw materials with cheaper ones. A recent example of such large-scale fraud dates back to 2012 when an Irish inspection found that some minced meat pieces contained horse meat DNA. A more extensive investigation revealed large quantities of a mixture of beef and horsemeat labelled and named as beef. The producer replaced part of the beef with cheaper horsemeat, thereby fraudulently making extra money. In this case, there were no serious health problems, so the case was considered from food quality (BBC 2013).

There are also several cases where counterfeit food has endangered the safety and lives of consumers. The case of the deliberate falsification of milk quality by the addition of melamine has received a great deal of attention. Melamine is a substance used in the manufacture of plastics and is characterised by very high nitrogen content. The determination of the amount of protein contained in milk serves as a measure of milk quality. Since such a laboratory determination was based on the measurement of the nitrogen contained in the milk, the producer was able to increase the quality of the milk by adding melamine. The milk was first diluted with water, and then melamine was added to give the analysis results the appropriate protein content. Milk was also dehydrated and used in infant formulae, with serious health consequences. Important factors were the frequency of consumption of foods prepared from adulterated milk and the low body weight of infants. Exposure to melamine contamination has led to the poisoning of over 50,000 children, four of whom have died (Pei et al. 2011).

The European Commission has responded to the phenomenon of food fraud by setting up a particular working group in which representatives of the Member States agree on possible measures. All Member States agree that more attention needs to be paid to training competent inspectors, strengthening the coherence and improving coordination between the various competent inspection bodies. For example, in 2015, the first coordinated sampling of all Member States was carried out during the same period and for the same food categories. They identified possible cases of fraud about these foodstuffs (inadequate labelling, counterfeiting, etc.). In addition to the measures taken at EU level, each member state also takes action at the national level, taking into account the specific situation of its country. Italy, for example, has set up a particular fraud detection unit, which includes police officers in addition to food inspectors. This unit uses police investigation methods in combination with official inspections in its work and successfully uncovers food fraud. Other member states have similarly organised themselves - by setting up select investigation units (European Commission 2020).

It should be emphasised that socially responsible business has not always been positively received in the past. In the 1970s, debates took place in which social responsibility was rejected. As an example, we cite the view of Hetherington (1973: 37):

there is no reason for shareholders to be willing to become more involved in charitable activities that affect the reduction of their dividends or the market value of their shares.

The debate on social responsibility was stimulated in the United States in the 1970s by an article by the Nobel Milton Friedman (1970), which made it clear that companies should not concern themselves with issues that are not directly related to their core mission of increasing stock value or profits. Also, the John Ladd had the same view and wrote in his article in the same year that people should not ask moral questions about companies because such questions are not a fundamental part of corporate culture and are even excluded from corporate vocabulary (Toth 2008: 13).

The beginnings of CSR in the United States date back to 1970, when charitable donations were introduced,

particularly from large American multinationals. Besides, USA companies began helping minorities, investing in the development of the local communities where they operated, and improving the working conditions of employees. Awareness of the importance of social or non-financial issues should encourage them to act in a socially responsible manner, partly because of the increasing pressure on companies to focus on optimisation rather than profit maximisation. As the importance of CSR increased in the 1970s and 1980s, so did the companies concern for reputation (Clark 2000: 364). In the 1980s, American companies mostly forgot about social responsibility and its favourable business impact. The importance of socially responsible conduct in the business world increased again in the 1990s – partly due to a series of corporate scandals that shook the public. Many companies again decided to introduce and implement more socially responsible business practices. The focus was on creating value for stakeholders in companies with more efficient processes and on reducing the previously narrow focus on profitability. Consumers and workers were no longer primarily interested in making money, but began to attach more importance to internal, personal rewards and developed a more holistic view of work and life (McAlister 2005: 14). The result was the development of human intellectual, social capital and the introduction of business ethics programs and initiatives for a more open dialogue between companies and their stakeholders.

Development of modern theories of CSR

The modern theories of CSR described below have opposed starting points. In the discussion about CSR, stakeholder theory and stakeholder theory dominate. According to the former, profit for shareholders is the most critical moral obligation of a company. The second emphasises that other groups in society, such as local communities, have an interest in corporate governance in addition to shareholders. Typically, the types of corporate social responsibility are based on the stakeholder theory, which states that companies have a responsibility that goes beyond profit (Dontigney 2014).

It is assumed that the term «Stakeholder» was created as a kind of deliberate game with the word shareholder («stockholder»). It was introduced in 1962 when the Stanford Research Institute first used the term «stakeholder view». The term indicated that, in addition to shareholders who are or may have been influenced by an organisation, other groups have an interest in that organisation (Andriof et al. 2017).

The best-known definition, which is still widely used today, is R. Edward Freeman (1984), who defined interest groups as «any individual or group that can or will be influenced by the achievement of corporate objectives». In his book, he introduced the public to the first concept of interest groups Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach. Among the opponents of the participatory approach of denying the idea, the most popular and still most used expression of the idea that business has social responsibility is linked to Milton Friedman his assertion that «business of business is business».

One of the basic assumptions on which a company operates is that management is the intermediary between the owner of the capital and the organisation. However, Freeman says that changes in legislation and business in the 20th century have given other groups the right to influence the organisation, and these include employees, suppliers, customers, the government, local government and the administration (Mainardes et al. 2011).

In political terms, the theory of interest groups contrasts with a «free market» approach (based on supply and demand). The theory also reflects the general expectation that the needs of individuals and the community should be respected. According to McEwan (2001), the earliest analysis of interest groups was conducted by the General Electric Corporation in the 1930s. The company identified four «main stakeholders» - shareholders, employees, customers and the general public. In 1947, Johnson & Johnson similarly identified customers, employees, directors and shareholders as «explicit business stakeholders».

The stakeholder theory is developing in several directions. Andriof and Waddock (2002) recognise two main areas, the analytical and the broad narrative field. In the essay Revealing Stakeholder Governance, Andriof and Waddock provide an overview of the development of concepts of corporate (social) responsibility and corporate social performance – which helps to shed light on the book Unfolding Stakeholder Thinking (Andriof et al. 2017).

Authors show how the concept of CRS has evolved: from a part of the corporate social contract to the concept of increasing shareholder profits, from the modern meaning of social responsibility on a conceptual and strategic basis to the present where it has become part of corporate practice.

The corporate social performance is another theoretical concept of responsible business, which is a response to the emphasis on shareholder returns. Corporate social performance is characterised by a fusion of accountability and accessibility, encompassing principles, processes and policies (Wood 1991, after Andriof *et al.* 2017), emphasising a more pragmatic dimension in business and social relations. The term corporate citizenship was used in the late 1990s instead of corporate social performance to show that companies can be considered legal entities and residents of states as corporate citizens.

The opponents of the interest group theory, except for Milton Friedman, argue that there is some contradiction in this view. For example, McEwan (2002) cites Sternberg (1994), who distinguishes between the ethical duties of management, which should promote the interests of shareholders (to increase the long-term value of the company), and the need to understand the expectations of other stakeholders. The argument against the stakeholder theory is that, if it is taken seriously, business is prevented because the goal of stakeholders – a balanced profit for all groups – excludes the profits of certain groups. It says that business is automatically excluded as an activity that maximises long-term stock value, as are the various goals of maximising profits for customers and improving benefits for employees. In her view, this separates corporate responsibility from the «fundamental obligations» we all have to each other. Managers have a moral obligation to act within the accepted boundaries of «decency» (which excludes fraud and theft, violence and forcing the participants to act against their interests) and «distributive justice».

Harrison (2000: 125) explained CSR as the responsibility of a company to plan and manage stakeholder relations. Davis (in Wood 1994), however, explained it as the company's attitude towards issues that go beyond the purely economic, technical and legal requirements that the company has, and at the same time as its response to them. This relationship allows for positive social impact, along with the achievement of economic profits, which is the traditional goal of the company. Daft (1994: 160) defines CSR as the duty of management to make decisions and act in a way that contributes to the well-being of the company and society. Social responsibility means that the company is responsible for its activities that affect people, the community and its environment. The company must recognise the adverse effects on society and try to correct them, and this may mean that it has to forgo part of its profits if its activities seriously affect a stakeholder of the company. Körner (2005) understands CSR as something more than a distinction between the interests of owners and stakeholders. He sees social responsibility as a new pattern of corporate behaviour in response to a changing and ever-changing world.

Market actions are a response to competitors in the market and prevail, as the company fulfils its first and most important social responsibility by responding to market developments - regular market operation. The second element covers actions that the company is obliged to perform due to government regulations or agreements concluded with stakeholders, such as union contracts. Voluntary actions do not require a particular explanation; they are decided by the company entirely voluntarily, without the pressure of law or other regulatory elements (Steiner and Steiner 2003: 145-147).

Schwartz and Carroll (2003: 503) classify definitions of CSR into two main groups. The former argue that companies should only be fulfilled by maximising profits within the limits of the law and with the lowest possible ethical barriers. At the same time, the latter defines more far-reaching obligations of companies towards society by helping to solve social and environmental problems in their markets. Carroll takes a different direction, trying to increase the mere economic performance of companies and other expectations that companies have of companies. Therefore, he says, corporate social responsibility combines the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic expectations that society places on a company over a while.

The responsibilities are ordered according to the traditional involvement of managers in particular areas. Responsibilities are categorised, from those directed inwards to those directed outwards to external stakeholders.

Carroll (Carroll and Buchholtz 2000: 31) developed his definition based on the theories of Bauer, Davis and Blomstrom, McGuire and Epstein. Bauer says that corporate social responsibility means taking seriously the

impact a company has on society through its business activities. Davis and Blomstrom interpret corporate social responsibility as the obligation of corporate decision-makers to act in a way that protects the well-being of society as a whole and contributes to its improvement in addition to pursuing their interests. McGuire says that the company has not only economic and legal obligations but also obligations that go beyond them. However, Epstein argues that social responsibility is primarily linked to the achievement of those corporate goals that have a positive impact on stakeholders.

Definitions of CSR can be divided into four groups (Garriga, Melt 2004):

- The instrumental ones assume that the fundamental role of the companies is to increase the value of the assets for the owners and consider only the economic aspect of the cooperation of the company with the society;
- The political ones emphasise the social power of companies, in particular the power that arises in the company's relations with society as a whole and the responsibility that goes hand in hand with political power. Because of this power, companies must accept specific social duties and rights and participate in social activities;
- Inclusive ones are based on the belief that social needs must be incorporated into managers' business decisions; the operation, existence and growth of companies depend on society and the environment;
- Ethical assumes that the company's relationship with the social environment is permeated by ethical values so that the understanding of CSR is purely ethical. Companies should take social responsibility because it is an ethical imperative.

Instrumental definitions have the longest tradition among them, and they are also the ones that are most strongly anchored in practice. The predominant motive is the creation of economic value (Windsor 2001: 226). Although some managers express an interest in serving local communities and society in general and supporting philanthropic activities, the prevailing view is that social responsibility only makes sense if it serves as a strategic tool for achieving business objectives and increasing corporate value. Managers should respond to the needs of the most critical (strategically important) participants rather than society in a broader, abstract sense (Clarkson 1995).

If we combine these definitions, we can conclude that the concept of CSR means the sustainable operation of the business that contributes to improving the well-being of society as a whole, taking into account the interests of all stakeholders and their interests, including profit, and consistently respecting ethical and moral principles.

In the following, we focus on the importance of corporate sustainability as a derivation of CSR.

CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of companies results from the concept of sustainable development. In this context, the term essentially refers to the role that companies play in meeting the sustainable development agenda and provides a balanced approach to economic and social progress and environmental governance. Corporate sustainability can thus be understood as the transfer of the concept of sustainable development to the corporate level. The importance of corporate sustainability has been underscored by the United Nations establishment of a global association of companies and NGOs that follow the universal principles of the UNGC UN Global Compact in their activities and strategic orientations (UN 2013: 4). These define corporate sustainability as a concept that gives a company long-term value in financial, social, environmental and ethical terms. The ten principles cover the areas of human rights, labour standards, environment and transparency, and the fight against corruption. As the largest global corporate UN Global Compact initiative, it supports socially just business and markets and helps to create new forms and markets (UN 2013: 3). On 25 September 2015, 193 countries adopted the 17 goals of the sustainable development agenda for 2030. In the years following their adoption, the goals correspond to the private sector approach to achieving global goals. These goals are People, Planet and Preparedness: eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, promoting the fight against inequality and focusing attention on saving the world from the threat of climate change (UN 2017).

Corporate sustainability was scientifically defined by Elkington (1999) based on the triple bottom line concept, according to which corporate goals are inseparably linked to society and the environment in which the com-

pany operates. Although it would make short-term economic profits, its business practices would not be sustainable because of failure at the expense of social and environmental impacts.

Van Kleef and Roome (2007: 44) described sustainable corporate governance as such corporate governance that recognises the need for integration into social, environmental and economic systems and focuses on management and relationships in its implementation. Environmental, social and economic requirements of many different stakeholders in their network.

In their model of corporate sustainability, Aras and Crowther (2007) considered four elements of sustainability and combined them in a two-dimensional matrix. They divided the matrix into internal and external, and short and long-term orientation. The model element shown in Figure 1 illustrates organisational effectiveness.

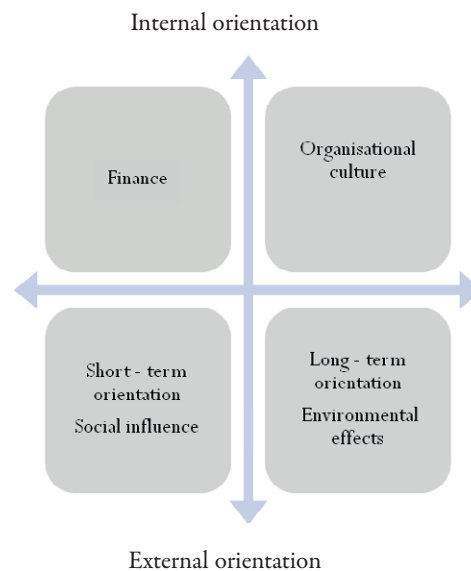


Figure 1. Corporate sustainability model (adapted from Aras, Chrowter 2007)

Model elements in figure 1 are demonstrated organisational effectiveness:

- Financial aspect - the maintenance of economic activities, which is the main reason for corporate activity and the principal cause for organising corporate action;
- Environmental impacts – preserving the environment is vital for future generations;
- Social impact – ensuring equality before the law, which includes activities that limit the power, guarantee human rights, decrease corruption, promote education for all and ensure world peace;
- The organisational culture – emergence of spiritual and cultural values – corporate and social values should be aligned with the values of the individual. Today, as a rule, the governing capital and social elites of individuals do not take into account the proposals of citizens.
- In the 21st century, every company is closely intertwined with environmental, social and governance (ESG). The primary factors of ESG can be described as (Henisz et al. 2019):
- E - environmental criteria: the company's energy resources, waste generation and the environmental impact of the company and its effects on living beings;
- S - social criteria: ensuring good relationships and nurturing goodwill (an intangible fixed asset) of the company in the environment in which it operates. S includes employment relationships, diversity and inclusion;
- G - governance: ensure that company meet the external stakeholder's needs. It presents a company's' internal system of procedures, practices and controls established to provide effective management decisions.

The ESG issues that create value for the business by (1) facilitating revenue growth, (2) reducing costs, (3) minimising regulatory and legal intervention, (4) increasing employee productivity, and (5) optimising capital expenditures and investment. The fact that ESG creates value for companies negates the main foundations of the debate on corporate social responsibility in the United States in the 1970s.

In cases in which companies try to comply with environmental legislation and more general sustainability concerns, social criteria overlap with environmental and governance criteria in the business environment (Henisz, Koller, Nutall 2019). It is essential that companies identify and prevent violations before they occur or to ensure transparency and dialogue with regulators.

Leading sustainable companies must demonstrate a high level of competence in addressing social and economic challenges in different areas (Bertoncelj *et al.* 2016; Bonini 2012: 103-105; Wheelen, Hunger 2012: 72):

- Strategy: implementing corporate social responsibility principles into business strategies;
- Financing: ensuring financial returns and transparency;
- Customers and products: investing in customer relationship management and product and service innovation;
- The human factor: maintaining workforce capacity and employee satisfaction;
- Governance and stakeholders: ensuring standards of corporate governance and involvement of different stakeholder.

In 2010, the ISO 26000 standard was developed with instructions for companies to conduct socially responsible, i.e. ethical and transparent business that contributes to the health and well-being of society. Representatives of governments, NGOs, industry, consumer groups and labour organisation's from around the world participated in the preparation of the standard and reached an international consensus (ISO ORG 2013). In order to ensure the company's corporate governance standards, the company has adopted codes of conduct that require public reporting following the guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative. The importance of sustainable reporting is in the collection of information about the environment, society and governance (ESG). The financial markets used these reports for the evaluation of the company's values. In practice came in the past years for circumventing stock market rules, because some companies were planning on a speculative effect on the value of their shares at the time of publication. From this reason, policymakers must formulate rules for ESG reports which goal have to be to ensure value-relevant transparency. The ESG reports are improving market efficiency and strengthen the growing confidence of investors, companies, institutions and practitioners in the materiality of ESG information (Aureli *et al.* 2020).

CSR AND CHALLENGES OF ENSURING CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY IN THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE 21ST CENTURY

The importance of CSR and corporate sustainability in the context of the fourth industrial revolution

The crucial political goal which runs parallel to the technological development of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0 is that countries implement the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by 2030 written in Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda brings the explanation of the dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), and seeks a balance between them that will have a significant impact not only on their implementation but on further socio-economic development (UN 2019), because today, 41% of global GDP is accounted for by the industrial and manufacturing sector, which accounts for 15.6% of global GDP (value-added), reflecting the increase in the ecological footprint. Production is responsible for 20% of greenhouse gas emissions and consumes up to 54% of the energy generated (International Monetary Fund 2019). Especially emerging and developing countries seek to make up the development deficit. Over the past 30 years, their economic development has been linked to the use of natural resources. Concurrent, the industrialised countries are becoming increasingly aware that future economic and social development is closely connected to changes in the consumption of natural resources (replacement of obsolete resources with available ones) (Dominici, Roblek, Lombardi

2016). In the last 30 years, humanity has known the fact that producers will not be able to work with the same resource intensity in the future. Therefore, today we must create opportunities for the industry sector to remain competitive and sustainable. Organisational management (Piccarozzi *et al.* 2018), and the ecological and social aspects of Industry 4.0 have a vital role in by achieving new challenges. However, Birkel *et al.* (2019) point to a lack of integrative research in the field of social, ecological and economic aspects. Namely, it is challenging to establish a system that enables both economic profitability and the improvement of environmental and social aspects and provides value creation to the industry. Thus, we face the contradiction of the challenges and at the same time, the potentials of Industry 4.0 within each dimension of the Triple Bottom Line. The Industry 4.0, on the one hand, promotes and facilitates sustainable development (Ngjeqari 2016; Beier *et al.* 2018), but the convergence of digital transformation and sustainability is not yet developed (Beier *et al.* 2018; Kiron & Unruh 2018).

In recent years, the results of some studies show the connections between Industry 4.0, sustainable management, and disruptive technologies. For instance, De Man and Strandhagen (2017) discuss the impact of Industry 4.0 on business models sustainability. In their study, Kamble, Gunasekaran and Dhone (2019) focus on the impact of Industry 4.0 technology on lean production processes in order to achieve sustainable organisations. Besides, Ghobakhloo (2019), in his study, presents the influence of addictive determinants for implementing Industry 4.0 policies in the context of sustainability. The benefits of Industry 4.0 in the case of sustainable development can be divided into those that i.) improve productivity, adaptability and resource efficiency (big data for quickly configuring production systems and maintaining systems); ii.) reduce the waste, overproduction, and energy consumption (e.g. surplus of renewable energy shared with other installations); iii.) cooperate between servitisation and stakeholders (e.g. closed-loop production systems); iv.) information technology competency-related job opportunities; v.) improving the quality of work tasks (e.g. age management) (Dimovski *et al.* 2019; Kiel *et al.* 2017).

However, despite being aware of the sustainability goals in the framework of establishing Industry 4.0 policies and strategies, the adverse effects of technological progress cannot be avoided. Sustainability is a transversal issue that runs through all parts of the manufacturing chain. As part of the production, companies plan to dismantle process and recycle the raw materials used in their products. Sustainable organisations are thus actively involved in the creation of a raw material logistics backbone, which is an essential part of the development of a closed-loop economy (Suarez-Eiroa *et al.* 2019). However, the strategy of lean and green management ensures the efficient use of resources. Thus, due to the digital transformation of production and new technological solutions of products (for example, electric cars), redundancies are predicted in the coming years. Mercedes Benz has already announced that it will lay off 15,000 employees by 2022. The entire automotive industry predicts that 80,000 employees will be laid off in the period 2020-2023. Thus, we see that the digital transformation of companies (robotisation, the introduction of the industrial internet, the growing presence of autonomous technologies and the cyber-physical environment) has a substantial impact on social and economic aspects. One consequence will be that within the entire value chain (not only in the automotive industry but also in other sectors), the middleman will become superfluous (Sonnemaker 2020). Countries, together with companies, will have to find a solution for all these people, who will become redundant. Consideration will need to be given to adopting new sustainable policy programs that will offer various new forms of employment or go in the direction of Germany, where testing of the Universal Basic Income (UBI) began in August 2020, under which 120 citizens will receive € 1,200 a month for three years (Payne 2020).

One of the solutions to the negative consequences of the technological development of the fourth industrial revolution is social innovation. In the 21st century is present a collective effort to broaden the definition of social innovation and increase its importance. According to this effort were adopted the Vienna Declaration term at the 2011 conference Challenge Social Innovation Conference. It promotes social innovation as an indispensable alternative to technology-oriented innovations that cannot solve the problems of the transition from an industrial to a service and knowledge society. According to the declaration, «such fundamental social changes require the inclusion of social innovations in a paradigm shift of the innovation system» (Vienna Declaration 2011).

The Vienna Declaration (2011) addresses the significant societal challenges identified in the European 2020 Strategy, which calls for social innovation in the fields of unemployment, climate change, education, poverty and social exclusion.

The European Union also stressed the importance of social innovation and corporate networks. The Committee on Economy and Social Affairs thus adopted the following position:

Social innovation and collaborative networks must be fully used in order to boost participation by the public and civil society in general in designing and managing EU policies, utilising distributed collective and bottom-up projects that strengthen more direct democracy (EESC 2016, C13/104).

Social innovation is considered an extremely complex concept, for which we now know many different definitions, the meaning of which derives either from the meaning of the adjective «social» or the verb «innovation» itself. The importance of the approach in the definition of social innovation is based on the advocacy of a change in the «paradigm of the innovation system». This shift corresponds to the transition from an industrial society to a knowledge and service-based society. This approach argues that there is less need to recognise social innovation as a complement to innovation than to change the overall concept of innovation, making it more inclusive and comprehensive (Hochgerner 2012: 92). This approach is based on the theoretical framework developed by Schumpeter in his theory of economic development (Schumpeter 1976).

In the case of a stronger emphasis on the meaning of the adjective «social», the emphasis in defining social innovation within the theoretical framework of social sciences is on distinguishing social innovation from other forms of innovation - in particular, «economic» and «technological» innovation - in that social innovation is more than «it merely requires the side effect and outcome of technical innovation» (Howaldt, Swarz 2010: 8).

The third form of definition focuses on the adjective and noun «social innovation». Within this definition, social innovation aims to address societal challenges for the benefit of society.

Thus, within this definition, we can see the meaning of the Stanford Social Innovation Review, where they have developed an example of a definition that focuses on purpose and results. Social innovation has thus been defined as «a new solution to a social problem that is more efficient and economically sustainable or an existing solution where the value created belongs primarily to society as a whole and not to individuals».

Martinelli (2012: 172) proposed a definition that would result from a more direct emphasis on the social outcomes achieved in practice and with the results of social justice:

[...] 'social innovation' as opposed to other narrower notions of innovation, is characterised by satisfying human needs that would otherwise be ignored, empowering individuals and groups, and changing social relationships.

Other definitions illustrate the distinct focus of social innovation that leads to the benefit of society:

(1) Social innovation is a component of social change that is «explicitly directed towards socially worthwhile goals» (Gillwald cited in Howaldt, Swarz 2010: 25), and

(2) «Only when the idea of solving a social problem (in the sense of regulating social affairs) is established and recognised can we speak of social innovation» (Kesselring / Leitner, cited in Howaldt, Swarz 2010: 25-26).

Challenges of business ethics in the 21st century

Business ethics can be defined as a particular branch of ethics that emerged in the 20th century. In the post-modern period, more specifically in the 1980s, business ethics became a necessity for economics; it has not been sufficiently addressed before. In the postmodern period, the belief in immoral business has spread in the West, especially in the United States (DeGeorge 1990: 3-33), advocating the incompatibility of business and honesty. Prejudices about the separation between economics and ethics have been dragging on in various interpretations to the present day, which is much more sensitive to the moral dimension of successful economic activity and life in general. Business ethics, however, is not just a set of rules but implies the application of universal ethical rules in business activities (Frederick, Davis, Post 1988: 52). Ethical problems in the business world mostly arise from conflicts of interest between primary and secondary stakeholders and conflicts in individual stakeholder groups. Interest in business ethics has increased in recent years, on the one hand, due to public pressure due to various corrup-

tion scandals, non-compliance with environmental standards (Krausirpi, Honduras; Shell-oil-soaked Niger Delta; BP-Deepwater Horizon oil spill), after on the other hand, because of corporate strategy in response to these pressures (Ali 2019; Boatright 2007). An additional challenge for business ethics is the globalisation of the market. At the global level, there are no laws for companies to follow (Chan, Pollard, Chuo 2007; Stiglitz 2006), the impact of national regulations on companies is declining, and managers must decide in their day-to-day work which norms and values they will follow acted (Lindgreen *et al.* 2009). A very notable violation of human rights is linked to the fight against climate change. The question is whether it is ethical to buy an electric car? Amnesty International points out those human rights violations occur within the supply chain of raw materials (minerals and cobalt) needed to produce electric batteries. Child labour is exploited in the mining of cobalt in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is also a problem that the cobalt itself is exceptionally toxic to anyone who mines it. The OECD Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains this issue has therefore called on manufacturers of electric vehicles to publish their supply chain information (Broom 2019).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper addresses a crucial and poorly considered topic in the debate on sustainable development against the backdrop of a broader process of change that has affected capitalism in the early 21st century. Specifically, it focuses on the idea of «corporate sustainability» and its practical understanding in terms of «corporate social responsibility». In this paper, we discuss the importance and issues of corporate sustainability in the context of awareness and approaches to social responsibility in the early 21st century. The paper is conceptual and therefore addresses a question that cannot be answered by factual information.

When providing CSR policies, it is essential to be aware that a company is affected by various internal and external factors, in particular, the cultural characteristics of countries and regions and expectations of different stakeholders. For this reason, it is utmost important that the company uses the knowledge of its employees, establish a customer relationship management (CRM) and supplier policy, and formulate a marketing strategy that ensures market positioning and the creation of a company brand value (Villalba 2006: 33-34). The company's external impact is reflected in the organisational effectiveness, activities and importance of research and development by groups and individuals within the company. Organisational components for a one-off contribution to outsourcing include the involvement of all employees, autonomy, teamwork, integrated production technologies, organisational learning and excellence management.

To ensure corporate sustainability in the 21st century, it is also important that technological solutions will require the development of new solutions for the employment of workers. The 17 UN sustainability goals will have to be taken into account in order to prevent inequity, pollution.

A company can improve its efficiency and effectiveness if it knows the factors that influence it. There are many of them, regardless of the country in which they operate. Companies analyse the social and environmental characteristics of a geographical region and follow industry-specific guidelines relevant to the business activities of the industry.

For future research, we propose the development of new practices within Industry 4.0 in order to ensure sustainable business growth.

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Monographic Section

China soft power and cultural diplomacy. The educational engagement in Africa

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Citation: Caruso D. (2020) *China soft power and cultural diplomacy. The educational engagement in Africa*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 47-58. doi: 10.13128/cambio-8510

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Abstract. The concept of soft power has recently become more integrated in China's diplomatic strategy and foreign policy: this work discusses the "Soft Power with Chinese characteristics" and is polarized on the application in African countries. The realm of higher education represents the focus of China's most systematically planned soft power policy and cultural diplomacy; this is evident in Africa where Beijing has committed to the development of human resources. The paper aims to examine the China's use of the soft power and cultural diplomacy and, specifically, the investment in education and human resource development in Africa. It discusses the main aspects of China's education aid ranging from: (1) Confucius Institutes (C.I.), which are providing language and culture-related training in host countries; (2) longer term scholarships and short-term training (3) school construction and stand-alone education projects and, more in general, the development of capacity building for the structural transformation C.I. appears similar to other cultural institutes then, in order to better understand the importance of this soft power instrument, the inter-related dimensions of a network communication approach have been examined. China claims partnership is at the heart of its higher education cooperation with Africa and, if this seems most obvious in the Confucius Institute, several of other modalities rely upon a Chinese partner to deliver staffing, local or overseas training, and/or administration. From this point of view, based on bilateral consultations and dialogs on equal footing, the China-Africa educational exchange and cooperation seems to satisfy the demands of Africa in educational development.

Keywords: China, soft power, cultural diplomacy, education, human resources.

INTRODUCTION

Using soft power has progressively become very important in order to improve Beijing's international interests. China's utilization of hard power only is insufficient if it wishes to be an active player on the international stage. Country has employed various tools of soft power's sources including

Chinese culture, language, arts, aids, trades and investments to promote its influences abroad. China's interest in using soft power comes from its demanding national interests; these include trying to secure a peaceful environment for its economic growth, to accommodate for its increasing energy needs, and to minimize the influence of other powers, particularly the United States.

Since the end of the Cold War, the expanding of relations between China and Africa seems to be the most important dynamic in the foreign policy of the continent. The implications of Beijing's renewed engagement with Africa is a process of deep significance such as has been shown by the unprecedented interest among the media, academic quarters, governments and international organizations as well ; it has had just one previous episode when the Premier Zhou Enlai promoted an African political meeting in 1963-64. The strategic partnership with Africa appears as very powerful in terms of prosperity through 'win-win' cooperation, nevertheless, many people; see it as a threat more than a cooperation looking forward mutual benefits.

China's investment aims at establish and accelerate infrastructure for African culture and innovation: according to the China Investment Global Tracker¹ investments and contracts in sub-Saharan Africa have reached an amount of \$299 billion from 2005 to 2018, and in 2018, during the FOCAC² meeting in 2018, Chinese president Xi Jinping vowed to invest a further \$60 billion into African nations. If the continent can successfully navigate the issues raised by Chinese neo-colonial ambitions such as the fear of "debt trap" diplomacy, with \$130 billion in loans from China to African nations since 2000, they will be able to ascend from this trajectory into global power

In addition to the economic interests, there are also some important issues behind China's investment in African nations. From the political point of view, it aims at discouraging them from recognizing Taiwan as an independent country (Brautigam, 2009; Eisenman & Kurlantzick, 2006; Lengauer, 2011; Lum et al., 2009). China is known for not requiring any political conditions to its aid except for the accepting the One-China policy. Therefore, it does not aid countries recognizing Taiwan as a sovereign state (Brautigam, 2009; Lengauer, 2011). Then, in a strategically perspective, China also use foreign assistance to be supported within the international organization; since Africa has a large voting part within the United Nations if that countries vote with China it will make more easy to achieve foreign policy goals.

China's investments in African nations run along two lines: investment in visible infrastructure and investment in education (Ding, 2008; Provost & Harris, 2013; Thompson, 2005; Tingting, 2014; Yang, 2015) and scholarships for university study in China have also been an important component assistance in the projection of China's soft power. Similarly, Confucius Institute (CI) is also often referred to as China's soft power investment in African countries (Bodomo, 2009; Ding, 2008; Kragelund, 2008; Lengauer, 2011; Liang, 2012; Nye, 2012a, 2012b).

SOFT POWER, DIPLOMACY AND THE CULTURAL ATTRACTION

The nature of power changes over the times and, the real unprecedented challenge would have been to manage the transition to a new geopolitics based on global interdependence, while the vision of a multipolar world would progressively establish itself. According to Joseph Nye in his famous book entitled *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (1990), the managing of Soft Power assures that others want the desired results, coopting people rather than force them. In other words, it is a valuable tool for managing international and political relations without resorting coercive measures, rather using intangible tools such as ideology, culture and institutions; it is, in short, the power that is obtained through cultural attractiveness and ideological fascination and the possibilities; it offers to pilot relations between states through inculturation attempts capable of affecting the

¹ CGIT is the only comprehensive public data set covering China's global investment. <https://www.aci.org/china-global-investment-tracker/>

² FOCAC , Forum on Africa and China cooperation, (中非合作论坛, Zhōng fēi hézuò lùntán) . it is a think tank to discuss investments in Africa on the basis of equal consultation with the involved African countries. <https://www.focac.org/eng/>

socio-political systems of other countries (Li Lin & Leng Hongtao, 2017). And, if regimes use force to impose themselves on the world, democratic countries should use this instrument as a key method in the management of political affairs; soft power not only has the ability to persuade and guide, but it also holds the power of cultural fascination and attractive becoming an indispensable component for the affirmation of a country in the period of globalization. Then, the soft power policies are mainly based on three resources: culture, political values and the content of foreign policies as well. Culture, as a superstructure, plays an important role in the contact countries. (Nye, 2005) Therefore, it represents the foundation of soft power but also its most powerful penetration tool; if a culture aims at running attraction, it must be advanced and keeps up with social progress.

The value system propagated by a country influences its foreign policy and, in summary, relations with other states; so, it happens that a power can be more or less seductive according to its political ideals, which represent the reflection of a nation in the world and a subject of international recognition. Western countries are bearers of the ideals of liberal democracy and, although the system has undeniable flaws, it represents a model for many countries in the world to aspire to.

Another concept closely related to the Soft Power is Cultural diplomacy: it is the set of activities undertaken directly or in collaboration with the diplomatic authorities of a state, aimed at promoting foreign policy through the promotion of cultural exchanges. It is an important part of contemporary diplomacy, which includes the promotion and diffusion of the national language of the sending state into the receiving state, supporting and maintaining contacts with expatriate communities and promoting the political and cultural values of the sending country. However, the overall structure and intensity of diplomatic and cultural activities may vary, depending on the state and its foreign policy priorities and ambitions. (Nisbett, 2016).

“Cultural diplomacy” it is a relatively new expression but a very ancient tool to manage international relations. Normally, the meaning of the word “diplomacy” has been limited to the relations between governments, but in the past fifty years diplomacy is supposed to expand its target group to include public organizations and, to some extent, even media, private companies that are commercially interesting and civil society in the host country (Bound et al. 2007). According to the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy,³ the final goal is to promote peace and stability through relationships; in this way C.D begins an important alternative to international relations based on strength. Then, these kinds of activities carried out by appointed institutions which intend to promote the cultural features of the country and, the response of local authorities, the media and the number of visitors during the initiatives, also points out the failure or success of a policy. Finally, the objectives of peace and stability could be considered the very ambitious goals of Cultural Diplomacy: after all, the role of diplomacy has always been to preserve and to keep the peace. Academic research has constantly been concerned with making distinctions between cultural diplomacy and soft power as they are both, closely associated with cultural relations, public diplomacy, cultural imperialism and propaganda (Rawnsley, 2017).

There is certainly a profound intertwining of cultural diplomacy, cultural relations, soft power and public diplomacy; however, this intertwining seems to be more pertinent to the processes than to the objectives. Ultimately, it can be said that if the soft power of a country aims at standing out, the goal of cultural diplomacy is reaching out; nevertheless, the boundary separating the two concept is a fine line and, sometimes, the fields could fit each other.

During his keynote speech at the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. President Hu Jintao for the first time stressed the need to enhance Chinese culture as the country’s “soft power” (软实力, Ruǎn shíli) to keep its unity: «We must enhance culture as part of the soft power of our country to better guarantee the people’s basic cultural rights and interests». He also has proposed some highlights in order to affirm Chinese culture as an unfailing driving force for the nation and, among these «... to vigorously develop the cultural industry, launch major projects to lead the industry as a whole, speed up the development of cultural industry bases and clusters of cultural industries with regional features, nurture key enterprises and strategic investors, create a thriving cultural market and enhance the industry’s international competitiveness» and «... to step up the development».

³ <http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en>

SOFT POWER WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

Discussions about soft power really took off in China in the mid-2000s. As the issue moved beyond academic explorations of Nye's theory and Chinese theorists expanded the original conceptual framework to formulate soft power with Chinese characteristics, it captured the attention not only of China's leadership but also of the public.⁴

The topic is currently hot as, the theory seems to resonate with some traditional Chinese concepts; for most Chinese scholars first translated and discussed Nye's theory the main concept that power flowed from the perceived success of institutions shaped by virtues, fits well with the Confucian ideal of leadership by moral elites (德治天下, dé zhì tiānxià). Hence, the soft power theory helped Chinese intellectuals who were trying to grasp what China could do to increase its cultural attractiveness. First of all, the idea of soft power can arguably be traced back to Mencius, who said that «right causes gain support, while unright causes do not» (得道多助, 失道寡助, dédào duō zhù, shīdào guǎ zhù). Then, Chinese strategists, Daoist thought and Confucian thinkers all recognize that power can be derived through benevolence (仁, Ren), righteousness (義, Yi), propriety (禮, Li), wisdom (智, Zhi) and trust (信, Xin) that are the five Confucian principles of good governance such as a right society.⁵

So, Chinese scholars remark that soft power ideas are deeply embedded in Chinese theory and praxis and the notion of realizing goals through attraction can be traced thousands of years back in Chinese philosophy (Chou, 2014; Huang & Ding, 2006; Ding, 2008).

This ethical justification is very important for the policy makers and, more in general, for the Chinese thought as it always tries to renew the ancient pivotal teachings by linking the past to the present.

Nevertheless, two main schools have emerged around which the discourse on China's soft power is centered. The mainstream view, held by China's leading sociologists and philosophers, is that the core of soft power is culture, echoing the opinion first expressed by Wang Huning.⁶

Since the introduction to China in the 1990s, the "soft power" concept was closely linked to "culture", which could possibly explain the distinctive importance that "cultural factors" enjoy in the Chinese discourse: so cultural soft power tackles the challenges of modernization by placing emphasis on cultural safety and national image construction through exemplarity.

However, it is not difficult to understand this idea if we consider that in Chinese tradition, culture has always been and, strongly remains, the main pillar of a civilized society. The 12th five-year plan for 2011-15, approved at the National People's Congress session on March 14, includes a massive expansion of the media, publishing, movie, animation, television series and performance sectors for export. According to the Ministry of Finance the government planned to invest 171 billion yuan in 2015 with the aim to improve culture, sports and media sectors as, they retain, the world needs to know about Chinese culture, a development which will help boost the country's attractiveness, and capacity to use 'soft power' to increase its influence on the global stage. (SCMP, 2011). Culture plays a role in constructing national psychology, forming national character, forming national tradition, and shaping national spirit.

⁴ The focus on the importance of soft power liven up a major debate both inside and outside of academia. e.g.: A popular CCTV series *The rise of great nations* (大国崛起 Da guo jueqi), reportedly commissioned by China's leadership, ran in 2006. The series was greatly acclaimed, introduced various new features also in terms of visual presentation, and immediately attracted a huge audience. More: Gotelind Mueller, "Documentary, World History, and National Power in the PRC- Global Rise in Chinese Eyes", Taylor&Francis 2013.

⁵ The five most important ideal ethics. Generally, they interpret the basic moral standards of being human beings. Ren, referring to kind and generosity, teaches people to be caring, thoughtful and selfless. Yi tells us that when others are in troubles, we should help them out of the problems, so we should have the ability to distinguish the right and wrong. Being polite and respectful is li. Zhi explains wise person, who deliberate and understand daily life. Xin is belief, trust and innocence. More: Encyclopedia of Philosophy Online.s.v. *Chinese Philosophy: Confucianism*, by Donald M. Borchert, http://resource.library.utoronto.ca/a-z/more_info.cfm?id=441936

⁶ Known as «the Chinese Kissinger», Professor Wang is the theorist who has most influenced leadership in Beijing over the past 30 years, from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao. He is said to be one of the architects of Xi's "Chinese dream".

The minority view, held by some international relations experts, does not deny the importance of culture but focuses instead on how soft-power resources are used concluding that political and economic power are at the core of soft power: more broadly, it is fair to say that China's soft power heavily relies on its economic influence. The only common denominator for all Chinese intellectuals remains a demand for a concept of soft power with Chinese characteristics, insisting on the importance to distinguish the soft power theory originating from the "American discourse", such as to enhance a Chinese soft power by developing a theory taking in account the local traditions and needs. (Zhao, Li & Cai, 2011).

The culture school has had the greatest impact on policymaking: China's leadership has embraced the central role of culture in the exercise of soft power and the concept of "soft power" has been redefined as "cultural soft power" in the Chinese context. It strives to foster the exchange of views and ideas, promote knowledge of other cultures, and build bridges between communities. Ultimately, it seeks to promote a positive vision of cultural diversity, highlighting it as a source of innovation, dialogue and peace. However, it would be a mistake to believe that building a positive image based on strong cultural identity is only important in international relations; the fundamental reason why the Chinese nation has strong cohesion and centripetal force is the sense of self-identification of cultural psychology and the sense of cultural belonging beyond the region.

Cultural security represents a matter of national security. The survival and development of a country are inseparable from the nourishment of culture and, especially when dealing with the relationship between countries, cultural interests must be considered; then, in this way, it becomes a powerful attractor in the international arena and, in the world, it projects an image of strong identity without showing muscles. Concluding, we can say that China's interest in using soft power comes from its demanding national interests; these include trying to assure a peaceful environment for the economic growth, to adapt for its increasing energy needs, and to stem the influence of other powers.

Then, with the aim to promote own culture, a set of tools, including the Chinese language as well as traditional and popular cultures are widely implemented as charming instruments to wield and project China's soft power. Cultural diplomacy is also viewed as an effective way to promote an understanding of China's ideals, support Chinese economic goals and enhance Chinese national security in subtle, wide-ranging, and sustainable ways. However, when observed from a narrower cultural perspective, it is hard to separate China's strategies of attraction from its economic power: few countries have the financial resources to be able to open cultural centers across the globe, to promote exchange towards mutual understanding and, more in general to invest so much funds in the field of culture. Currently, China has more than 500 Confucius Institutes and classes around the world; although some have been closed following concerns of meddling with academic freedom on university campuses, most developing countries welcome them, especially considering that, they teach an increasingly useful language, while also offering scholarships to study in China.

MEASURING CHINESE SOFT POWER

Culture, ideology and institutions are not measurable in the same way military and economic resources are.

Therefore, while the soft power concept currently widely accepted and used, understanding its practical application remains difficult. Evaluation and measurement may be hard due to the number of influencing factors also because soft power efforts can bring results only in a long distance time. However, a number of international ratings evolved during the past several years (e.g. Soft Power 30); at the same time, such rankings have several weaknesses if we discuss about China. First, they represent the western point of view focused on the parameters important for western policymakers overlooking important characteristics for non-western cultures. (Chang & Nagy, 2016). They also may be subjective due to financial reasons. Besides that, while some of the ratings aim to evaluate resources or assets of nations' soft power, other focus on results like influence or reputation. Evaluation of instruments used to enhance a country's soft power and their effectiveness is important and, in many cases, even significant resources of soft power do not guarantee strong positions in this context. Comparing certain countries'

positions in different ratings helps to understand a country's standing in terms of soft power, identify strong sides and analyze whether a state's soft power potential transforms into the desired outcomes. For example, attractiveness can be assessed through the various tools of analysis and by quantitative method used to investigate the results of specific initiative, (e.g. an increase in cultural tourism). Nevertheless, if we expect evaluations to be able to offer accurate data in an area of such high complexity then we are expecting too much. However, the rich tradition of evaluation studies in the fields of public policy, combined with studies coming from different disciplines and new digital tools should provide an excellent basis for insights into policy outcomes. (Singh & MacDonald, 2018).

Most of China's appeal resides in its successful story, especially in the eyes of developing countries. Moreover, in forty years of reforms, over 850 million people have been brought beyond the poverty line (World Bank, 2019) and this data has a lot of importance in the international image;

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic is an obvious example of China's soft power. It made clear that Beijing government has been able to provide assistance in various forms because of its economic capabilities.

Even in this case, reactions have been mixed and, however, is too early evaluating the world response. Also taking in account the growing, strong tension strategy implemented by U.S, it can be argued that countries benefiting from China's assistance will not forget the deed. In order to fight coronavirus pandemic in Africa, tens of thousands of test kits and protective suits have been delivered across continent in the last months. In the same time, on June 17, 2020. Xi Jinping chairs the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19 delivering an important keynote speech in order to improve further cooperation. Particularly, Beijing's commitment is not only to continue in supporting continent' response to pandemic emergency, but also to cancel the debt of relevant African countries in the form of interest-free government loans that are due to mature, by the end of 2020, within the FOCAC framework (Xinhua,2020).

THE CHINESE SOFT POWER IN AFRICA

Chinese policy makers have emphasized the peaceful nature of China's rise by offering free aid and infrastructural development to developing nations, respecting the sovereignty of others, opposition to superpower hegemony, advocacy of level playing field in interstate relations and focus on multiculturalism.

China is taking good steps for its projection of cultural power and influence beyond its borders. It is found that the movement of intense cultural and intellectual engagement between multiple actors inside and outside the country is to make others understand what China is and what the world really means to China: «Harmony is most precious» (和为贵, Hé wéi guì), Beijing insists.⁷ It lays stress on international cooperation while addressing the issue. Nevertheless, following its phenomenal economic growth over the past few decades, most of China's appeal resides in this successful story, especially in the eyes of developing countries and it is undeniable that the China has been able to provide assistance in various forms because of its economic capabilities

Beijing's political cultural charming action in Africa has made China a major player on the continent and, the source of the success in China's African policy is sometimes seen in China's political and economic attractiveness. On the other side, China has done many efforts in order to build a positive image targeted to the audience in Africa, especially to promote a win-win (雙贏, shuāngyíng) approach aiming to reach mutual economic benefits from cooperation. However, soft power is about dynamic relationships between an agent and the subject of attraction. Hence, the general growth of Chinese soft power and its success depends on not only whether China can show at the best own image to African countries, but also whether African countries are willing to get this. What motivates increased relations between China and African countries are the interests in natural resources, nevertheless the assumption of Chinese neocolonialism could be a mistake. Relations between the countries are very far from to be two polarized positions and, I suggest that reality is somewhere in the middle, with the potential for deeper mutually beneficial relationships coexisting with some level of exploitation.

⁷ Harmony serves an important role in promoting the goals of Confucio (551–479 BC) social and political philosophy,

CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES

The connection between teaching Chinese as a foreign language and the role of China on the international stage has grown in importance since 2004 when the Confucius Institutes (孔子学院, Kǒngzǐ Xuéyuàn) programme was launched and, the first one was established in Nairobi in 2005. Funded by the Chinese government these institutes are targeted to offer Chinese language and cultural programming to the public. For the African countries, the initiative seems to be a good chance in order to enhance their university degrees and to increase the job market. Usually, the rise of the Confucius Institutes over the last years has been seen as a form of cultural diplomacy, such as the British Council, Goethe Institute or Alliance Française initiatives around the world. Nevertheless, there are important differences between these programs and the Confucius Institutes; In Africa, China's insistence the spread of Confucius Institutes is not demand-driven, rather an object of a particular FOCAC target. This means that the foreign party takes the precedence whilst the Chinese party plays the role of providing assistance. In other words, unlike other training modalities, China does not have a target for Confucius Institutes expansion in Africa. According to the Chinese Language Council by June 2019, China has established 53 Confucius Institutes and 41 Confucius Classrooms in 44 African countries, making them important platforms for African students to learn Chinese language. The first Confucius Institute was established at the University of Nairobi in Kenya, in December 2005, has enrolled more than 15,000 students over the past 14 years (Hanban, 2019). One of the main differences that distinguish the Confucius Institutes from the other foreign cultural and language institutions is the approach: they are not located on the main streets of the world's national and regional capitals, but rather in the heart of their major universities. In Africa they have been established in the University of Nairobi, Rhodes University, the University of Cairo and a further thirty African sites. As their principal focus is the promotion of Mandarin and Chinese culture, C.I. are public bodies affiliated with the Ministry of Education such as their parent body, Hanban, the Chinese Language Council and Confucius Institute Headquarters.

The initiative may be classified as a form of soft power, or cultural diplomacy, but those terms seem to be restrictive as they are they are responding to a widespread vocational interest, evident in many countries, in acquiring Chinese linguistic and cultural expertise instead of creating the demand. Nevertheless, this demand also represents a visible effect of the Chinese presence in the enterprises, industries and business affairs and their appreciation of workers with Chinese language skills. (Nordtveit, 2006). The main educational function of the C.I. is the promotion of Mandarin and Chinese culture also in order to work towards a better image of China around the world. Institutes offer short and long-term programs in Chinese, international Chinese language examinations, and Chinese culture courses and many extracurricular activities such as film screenings, art exhibitions or sports and they occasionally consult firms and individuals interested in China. All this is supposed to make Chinese a global language and to encourage trade and investment between the Chinese and the host economy

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

One area of cooperation that has seen a dramatic increase since the previous FOCAC is China's investments in human capital and professional training and Beijing announced higher targets for government-sponsored training opportunities for Africans in China.

Since the mid-1990s, China has been supporting the capacity building for the developing countries expanding training programs for officials. This also has been done thanks to a wide range of investments in longer and short term Another concept closely related to the Soft Power is scholarship: for example, from 2010 to 2012, China has trained a 27,318 officials and technical personnel from 54 countries and regions in Africa in the fields of public management, energy, health, social security, and manufacturing (Omoruyi et al., 2018). During the Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Beijing launched *African Talents Program* to train 30,000 African professionals in various sectors (Eisenman & Heginbotham, 2018)

In 2006 at the third FOCAC meeting Beijing launched the training support for 15,000 African professionals in China such as their respective countries: including short and long term courses it also involved educational professionals from all levels, The 2009 FOCAC meeting again increased investments aiming to reach up to 30,000 African professionals from various sectors (FOCAC 2006, FOCAC 2009, King 2007b). One example are the training sessions of the International Poverty Reduction Center ⁸ focusing on China's poverty reduction experiences for civil servants of developing countries.

No doubts that Beijing has been extremely proactive in the efforts to improve the education in Africa. China has made it a key pillar of its engagement and, thousands of African students are going to China supported by affordable tuition and generous scholarships.

Differently from traditional aid, China has focused efforts on scholarships for higher education, TVET, training program and language education rather than basic education related aiming at EFA (Education for All) or the MDG (Millennium Development Goals) goals.

Another difference between China aids and others donors in education is that they are not based on the direct financial investment but appear as products and services, nevertheless they are also oriented to a win-win cooperation and reciprocity approach.

Finally, the education assistance seems to be closely related to the general aid framework for social and economic development of beneficiaries than for education itself. (King, 2010).

According to the Unesco Institute for Statistics (UIS), in 2014 the country has become the second most popular destination for African students studying abroad, after France Most of those heading to Chinese universities hail from Tanzania, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Morocco, Eritrea and Cameroon.

At the FOCAC 2018's Xi announced the goal of training 1,000 Africans, hosting 50,000 workshops (in areas as diverse as party politics, sports medicine, agriculture, etc.), awarding 50,000 government scholarships, a big increase from 30,000 in 2015, and sponsoring 2,000 student exchanges (Xinhua, 2018)

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

By school construction, Beijing aimed to look towards EFA Agenda and the MDGs.

Since 2007 to 2009, Chinese government has built 207 rural schools in Africa (Niu, 2014a). According to The White Paper on China's Foreign Aid 2014 that outlines China's official aid policies, principles and practices, China has committed its pledge with building 150 primary and secondary schools in Africa

While in the preface the document notes China's position as a developing country, the White Paper states that the country's foreign aid represents part of its efforts to fulfil its international responsibilities, and in particular: «from 2010 to 2012, China continuously intensified its efforts of foreign assistance in education by way of constructing and maintaining school buildings, providing teaching facilities, training teachers, offering more government scholarships for foreign students to study in China, and assisting with the development of vocational and technical education, for the purpose of helping other developing countries improve their educational level and support their balanced and equitable development in education». (Information Office of the State Council, China, 2014).

In a first phase China's completes and delivers projects based on the request from beneficiaries; China leads surveys and provides feedback relating to the plans submitted by beneficiary. Then, after construction has been completed, the African partner is in charge for the school management. (Yuan, 2011). This kind of aid represents an approach in order to reach mutual benefits, on the other side, prevents corruption, and funds waste. Finally, the approach contributes to make more visible the educational cooperation and the donor country as well.

Besides primary schools, China also built schools for both, vocational training and higher education. They helped Ethiopia to build the EthioChina Polytechnic College (ECPC) between 2005 and 2007. China also has

⁸ IPRCC - founded by the government in cooperation with UNDP <http://www.iprcc.org> (中国国际扶贫中心, Zhōngguó guójì fúpín zhōngxīn)

been responsible for the construction of a new Fendell campus of the University of Liberia, a Science and Technology University for Malawi which was just opened to students in 2013 (King, 2013).

CONCLUSION

A country's soft power is heavily dependent upon its global image and international prestige. In the case of China, the central government has developed top-down strategies for enhancing soft power, which in conjunction with public diplomacy, are designed to cultivate a positive international image of the country but, the intangibility of soft power qualities, make it difficult to measure in terms of efficacy.

It is not easy to draw a complete political and economic framework of Chinese educational investments in Africa, however should be taken into account that China's support for Africa has a long history and cannot be included just in the narrow concepts of cultural diplomacy and soft power. China is engaged in a special South-South cooperation where education and the higher level of education plays a significant role in boosting the sustainability of China-Africa relations.

Universities as platforms are connecting vocational training, formal higher education, academic research and think tanks from the two sides together, transferring China's development lesson to Africa. Overall, these various cooperation programs seem to be a signal a determination to take the relationship between China and Africa beyond the purely commercial level. Beijing has an Africa aid program since the 1950s when Egypt was the first African recipient of aid from China, in 1956. Every country in Africa, with the exception of Swaziland, has been a beneficiary of Chinese aids. Chad, Burkina Faso, and The Gambia, have switched their foreign policy recognizing Beijing instead of Chinese Taipei (Brautigam 2008, p. 12-13). Much of the world considers Beijing an imperialist threat and its politics in Africa a form of neo-colonialism; nevertheless, despite to the country rising Beijing still supports and promotes the *Eight Principles for China's Aid to Foreign Countries* stated by Zhou Enlai in 1964 :

1. The Chinese Government always bases itself on the principle of equality and mutual benefit in providing aid to other countries. It never regards such aid as a kind of unilateral alms but as something mutual.
2. In providing aid to other countries, the Chinese Government strictly respects the sovereignty of the recipient countries, and never attaches any conditions or asks for any privileges.
3. China provides economic aid in the form of interest-free or low-interest loans and extends the time limit for repayment when necessary to lighten the burden of the recipient countries as far as possible.
4. In providing aid to other countries, the purpose of the Chinese Government is not to make the recipient countries dependent on China but to help them embark systematically on the road of self-reliance and independent economic development.
5. The Chinese Government tries its best to help the recipient countries build projects, which require less investment while yielding quicker results, so that the recipient governments may increase their income, and accumulate capital.
6. The Chinese Government provides the best-quality equipment and material of its own manufacture at international market prices. If the equipment and material provided by the Chinese Government are not up to the agreed specifications and quality, the Chinese Government undertakes to replace them.
7. In providing any technical assistance, the Chinese Government will see to it that the personnel of the recipient country fully master such technique.

8. The experts dispatched by China to help in construction in the recipient countries will have the same standard of living as the experts of the recipient country. The Chinese experts are not allowed to make any special demands or enjoy any special amenities. (Zhou Enlai, 1964)

That core concepts are largely reclaimed in the *China's African Policy White Paper* of 2006 that has enhanced and consolidated China's strategic vision for in Sino Africa relations.

1. Sincerity, friendship and equality. *China adheres to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, respects African countries' independent choice of the road of development and supports African countries' efforts to grow stronger through unity.*
2. Mutual benefit, reciprocity and common prosperity. *China supports African countries' endeavor for economic development and nation building, carries out cooperation in various forms in the economic and social development, and promotes common prosperity of China and Africa.*
3. Mutual support and close coordination. *China will strengthen cooperation with Africa in the United Nations and other multilateral systems by supporting each other's just demand and reasonable propositions and continue to appeal to the international community to give more attention to questions concerning peace and development in Africa.*
4. Learning from each other and seeking common development. *China and Africa will learn from and draw upon each other's experience in governance and development, strengthen exchanges and cooperation in education, science, culture and health.* (Information Office of the State Council, 2006)

China's policy objectives makes clear that the main goal in increasing cooperation with Africa is rooted in a "win-win" approach enhancing Chinese investment opportunities and, in the same time, brings economic opportunity to Africans without interfering in the internal affairs. Of course, this kind of approach is extensively adopted in the education: for example, learning Chinese language should be perceived just a tool to improve business and economic relationship between with China and Africa more than a form of enculturation. In the same time, the vocational training initiative represents a tool focused on the improvement of the local capacity building than an exploitation of labour force. Moreover, cooperative connection in education have been developed under the FOCAC leading and based on shared benefits and interests; such educational cooperation would help Africa nations to break away from globally marginalization and promote education as well as inclusive and sustainable development.

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Monographic Section

Microcredit and Development: a comparative analysis between Brazilian and Italian experiences¹

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Citation: Jarletti Gonçalves de Oliveira A. (2020) *Microcredit and Development: a comparative analysis between Brazilian and Italian experiences*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 59-72. doi: 10.13128/cambio-8484

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Abstract. Under favorable conditions, credit can improve the quality of life by financing essential assets and services, such as housing and education, also by fostering entrepreneurship. Although finance inclusion can widen social and economic opportunities, the successful usage of microcredit depends on the costs (rates of interests) and on the methodology applied to grant credit. Hence, through a bibliographic review, the paper presents a comparative analysis of three remarkable experiences on microfinance. Firstly, the Brazilian Community Development Banks (CDB), inspired by the Grameen Bank and devoted to reaching the poor of the poor. Secondly, the programs applied by some Public Development Banks (PDB) in Brazil to foster entrepreneurship through microcredit. Third, the Italian Credit Cooperatives (*BCC - Banche di Credito Cooperativo*), essential in the provision of credit for small enterprises and households. Despite their peculiarities, there are some similarities in their governance and methodologies applied to grant credit. The local dimension, the relationship lending to capture soft information for risk analysis, and the purpose of serving the community providing financial services instead of generating and distributing profits are standard features. These experiences could inspire a proposal for microfinance expansion, based on the ground principles of mutuality, solidarity, cooperation, and localism.

Keywords: development, microcredit, solidarity finance, relationship banking.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last 20 years, the role of financial inclusion and microcredit in alleviating poverty arises in the debate on development policies. Successful experiences such as the Grameen Bank created by Muhammad Yunus demonstrate that access to microfinance services might benefit people to cross the poverty line through the creation of social and economic opportunities.

¹ This study was financed in part by Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – Brasil (CAPES) – Finance Code 0001.

On Economics, the debate about development also has changed. Some counter-theories emerged, questioning the utilitarian approach, which focusses on the Gross Domestic Product - GDP to measure development. The capability approach, theorized by Amartya Sen, proposes a broader and more complex informational basis to assess development, taking into consideration the personal characteristics and the social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental factors that could influence the quality of life. The notion of development as freedom focuses on the agency aspect of human life and considers the real freedom people have to live the life they choose. This perspective presents the task for public policy-makers to identify and remove unfreedom barriers.

In this sense, it is worth discussing if and how access to microfinance can contribute to increasing agency and foster development expanding socio-economic opportunities. Some studies question that access to microcredit, by itself, might not be efficient in improving the quality of life and alleviating poverty. It depends on two main factors: the methodology adopted in granting credit and the rates of interests applied to the loans.

This paper focuses on the methodologies of three different experiences on the field of microfinance, the Brazilian Community Development Banks - CDB, the programs of Brazilian Public Development Banks - PDB, and the Italian Cooperative Banks - BCC (*Banche di Credito Cooperativo*). Despite the differences in the legal status, the target public, and on the socio-economic environments that surround these financial institutions in Brazil and Italy, the three analyzed models have in common the principles of mutuality, solidarity, cooperation, and localism, that guide the granting credit processes. As will be seen, they are driven by stakeholder orientation, they focus on the generation of social impact on the community they serve and adopt alternative banking practices.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 addresses the theoretical notion of development and discusses the conditions under which the usage of microcredit can contribute to development by the creation of social and economic opportunities. Section 3 presents a comparative analysis of Brazilian CDB, Brazilian PDB, and Italian BCC, identifying the main features, the similarities, and differences of these microfinance institutions. Section 4 points out the final considerations.

DEVELOPMENT AND MICROFINANCE

Among the various conceptions of development, we adopt the notion proposed by the capability approach, which suggests a new direction to the development debate, increasing the role of human dignity and quality of life in the discussions.

The capability approach, theorized by Amartya Sen, focuses on what people can do and be in their real lives. It sees human life as a set of “doings and beings” so-called *functionings* and suggests evaluating the quality of life through the capability to function. This approach assesses several conditions of the real-life that need to be fulfilled to give people the freedom to lead the kind of life they choose. It considers the variability of personal characteristics and the social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental factors that may impose obstacles to people’s freedoms and influence their abilities to convert goods into functionings (Sen 2003, p. 44). In this sense, development is a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy, increasing the free agency (Sen 1999, p. 2-10).

This theory criticizes the utilitarian approach, which evaluates success in social achievement by the size of the total utility created (Sen 1987, p. 30). The criterion of sum raking measures the progress of a country by looking only at the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *per capita*, which was strengthened by the “trickle-down theory” suggesting the benefits of economic growth are bound to improve the poor. However, there is no evidence increased economic growth does automatically enhance the quality of people’s lives without any specific action in this direction, particularly for those whose existence is marked by inequality and deprivation (Nussbaum 2011, p. 47). Indeed, a country can reach a high-ranking position in GDP, even though people still living on poverty and other deprivations.

The capability approach suggests assessing development according to the real opportunities and freedoms people have to lead the kind of life they value. This perspective focuses on real human lives, taking into consideration

a wide range of variables, including personal characteristics and all the environmental factors that could contribute or impose barriers to the agency's freedom to choose and to act.

Capabilities are substantial freedoms, what one person can be and do in his/her life. Nussbaum classifies three main types of capabilities. *Basic capabilities* are the innate human equipment, «the innate faculties of the person that make later development and training possible». *Internal capabilities* are the states of a person, personal characteristics (intellectual, skills, bodily and health conditions), trained traits and abilities, developed through the interaction with the social, economic, cultural, and political environment. *Combined capabilities* are the freedoms and opportunities created by the combination of the internal capabilities and the external factors that surround the person. *Functionings*, in turn, are the actual realizations of capabilities (Nussbaum 2012, p. 20-25).

The notion of freedom of choice is quite central to the capability approach. A free and sustainable agency emerges as a major engine of development. *Agency* includes each person's pursuits and choices, moral concerns, and conceptions of the good to different states of affairs (Sen 1985, pp. 201-212). A person's agency achievement refers to the realization of goals and values that one has reasons to pursue (Sen 1992, p. 56), which depends on the real opportunities and freedoms (capabilities) one has.

The capability approach presents the task to government and policy-makers to improve quality of life, identifying and removing obstacles to freedom, in a continuous process in which the removal of a barrier can reveal another hurdle, and so on (Sen 1999, p. 3-4). Moreover, it suggests promoting development through policy choices that protect and support agency, improving and developing capabilities, rather than treat people as passive recipients of benefits (Nussbaum 2011, pp. 30-31). The notion of human development applied here requires unfolding the innate power of human beings towards active striving.

The capability approach enlightens the public policy debate in two ways. Firstly, setting the goal to achieve human development through the expansion of substantial freedoms. Secondly, applying a specific methodology, taking into consideration development as a multidimensional process, which requires the assessment of a broader informational basis to address urgent human issues. Some problems like poverty and social deprivation are multifaceted and need a more comprehensive analysis to identify the adequate strategies to face them. For this reason, only access to credit, by itself, might not be efficient in alleviating poverty.

At the level of implementation of public policy, it might pay attention to two other concepts: *fertile functioning* and *corrosive disadvantage*. A fertile functioning is one trend to promote other related capabilities, where one achievement in one area is likely to have benefits elsewhere. Access to literacy and good education, access to credit and land ownership could be fertile functionings. A corrosive disadvantage is the opposite, a deprivation or disadvantage in one domain that has significant effects in other areas of life. Drug addiction, homelessness, or over-indebtedness are corrosive disadvantages. The point of looking for *fertile functionings* and *corrosive disadvantages* is to identify the best intervention points for priority policy. (Nussbaum 2011, pp. 44-45).

Access to credit can be both, a fertile functioning or a corrosive disadvantage. When it contributes to widening social and economic opportunities, the benefits generated could impact positively in several areas of human life. However, the reserve side of credit is over-indebtedness, a social phenomenon whose adverse effects affect the person herself, her family, and the whole society.

Some experiences in the field of microfinance improve the quality of life, especially for poor people. The notorious example of the Grameen Bank, in Bangladesh, demonstrates the potential of microcredit and other financial services, helping millions of people to cross the poverty line by giving them access to credit to foster entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, the efficiency of microcredit to alleviate poverty is not unanimous and has been put in check (Morduch, 1998). Hence, it is worthy of investigating under which conditions microfinance could contribute to human, social, and economic development.

Microfinance is generally understood as the provision of small credit loans (microcredit) and other financial services to poor people and small enterprises. The usage of microcredit for poverty reduction and social change is often associated with institutions such as the Grameen Bank and NGOs. They provide credit and other financial services to poor people considered not creditworthy, contributing to disseminate microfinance as «the most humane part of the international financial system» (Schmidt 2010, p. 101).

Access to credit can contribute to a fairer distribution of the opportunities for personal, social, and economic development. The lack of access to financial services is one of the reasons why massive long-term poverty is perpetuated (Schmidt 2010, p. 101). Over the last 40 years, the global microfinance movement attempted to broaden financial services in poor and low-income communities, aiming to unlock their productive potential by financing small businesses, also by stimulating saving to create more stable lives (Armendáriz & Morduch 2010, p. 1).

The current debates about the role of microfinance in facing poverty and fostering development focus on the dilemma between the sustainability of the financial institutions and the achievement of the social mission. Sustainability is crucial for microfinance institutions to achieve the objective of alleviating poverty in the long-term for a simple reason: they need to survive to offer financial services continuously. It requires a balance between the social goals, the efficiency, and the cost coverage of the institution (Schmidt 2010, p. 107-109).

The 1990s was a period of expansion of microfinance institutions (MFI), inaugurating new approaches to microcredit practices and raising the debates on the ethical conflicts between the development goals and the so-called *commercial approach*. The challenge is how to achieve financial sustainability without compromise the objectives of social change. Financial sustainability requires to cover the costs of granting microcredit, which depends on a wide range of factors, such as the administrative costs (naturally higher on managing small loans), the size of the loan portfolio and its capacity to absorb the costs, the rates of interest applied to the loans, the level of revenues, the repayment rates, default and losses. At the macro level, the economic environment of the MFI also counts. One way to cover the costs is by transferring them to the MFI customers, applying higher rates of interest to the loans. The core dilemma is that, on the one hand, fully transferring the costs to the customers might elevate the rates of interest to a level that hinders using credit for the achievement of the social goals. On the other hand, cost coverage and sustainability are crucial to allow the MFI to survive, grown, and reach more customers broadening the social impact (Schmidt 2010, p. 109-114).

In other words, just offering microcredit to poor people is not enough to improve their quality of life and, in some cases, can lead to over-indebtedness (Armendáriz & Morduch 2010, p. 145-146). The lack of access to credit and other financial services is one barrier to social and economic opportunities. However, the high rates of interest applied to the loans impose another obstacle for those who need credit to expand their freedoms. The fact that the rates of interest applied by MFI still lower than those charged by moneylenders does not imply that these costs are adequate for the “unbankable” people. The successful usage of microfinance to promote development depends on both the costs and the methodologies applied to grant credit.

Regarding the costs, the discussions about the interest rate levels matter because they constitute a significant source of inequality in the distribution of assets and income. The traditional financial system runs under the assumption that poor people also small enterprises are not creditworthy or represent high risks. So, financial institutions, in general, apply higher rates of interest for poor borrowers than to wealthier clients that can offer more collaterals. However, the high repayment rates reported in microcredit experiences challenge this assumption². In many cases, the high prices charged to the poor are due to the lack of competition or monopolistic situation in the credit market. Indeed, the interest rates depend mostly on the mission and the perspective of the financial institution. Since microfinance evolved combining the goals of social and financial sustainability, it is necessary not only to broaden access to credit but also to do it under interest rates that do not exceed certain limits (Hudon 2007). For instance, while Yunus suggests interest rates no more than 15% per year plus operational costs, most MFI charge rates of interest up to 35% per year, and in large financial institutions, the rates applied to customers go from 28% to 100% per year (Hudon & Ashta 2013).

The high operational costs are the standard justification for the high rates of interest on microcredit, because of the small loan sizes. Nonetheless, Hudon and Ashta (2013) argue that the leading cause is the commercialization of MFI since their RoE (return on equity) remains excellent even in crisis periods. To make financing inclusive for poor

² Grameen Bank, in Bangladesh, historically has repayment rates over than 98%; the Grameen America Report 2018 pointed out a repayment rate of 99% in the USA; the program Crediamigo, biggest microcredit program in Latin America had a repayment rate in 2018 up to 98,7%.

people, it is still necessary to reduce relative prices and increase relative productivities since the target public does not have the required endowment to move further. The additional capabilities obtained by the borrowers, thanks to the transactions, should also be taken into consideration in this analysis (Hudon & Ashra 2013, p. 284-289).

Considering RoE is one of the determinants of the rates of interest, the three types of microcredit-grating institutions analyzed in the next section have in common that none of them distribute profits. Despite their differences in the legal status, in the target publics, also in the social and economic environments that surround them, it is possible to notice some similarities. Firstly, the purpose, since Brazilian CDB, Brazilian PDB, and Italian BCC are driven by the social and development goals rather than profit-maximization. Second, they are stakeholder-oriented and adopt a view that takes into consideration the interests of all the parties involved, and not only the interests of shareholders (often profit-maximization for distribution). Third, their banking models are oriented to relationship lending to capture soft information for risk analysis, enforcing the long-terms relations with the customers on the communities they serve. Finally, their activities are guided by the principles of mutuality, solidarity, cooperation, and localism

Mutuality and *solidarity* require the incorporation of the logic of solidarity financing to use financial inclusion as a tool to combat poverty and reduce social inequalities. It means to shape the costs, methodologies, and process of granting credit according to clients' needs and the social goals, not under the profit-seeking aims of traditional banks.

Cooperation claims stakeholder-oriented governance and alternative banking practices based on trust and collaboration, such as the model of relationship banking. Cooperation also means making partnerships, tying diverse public, private, and third sector agents acting towards the same development goals. As analyzed in the next section CDB, PDB, and BCC, seek and firm partnerships to broaden the social impact of microfinance. Moreover, cooperation leads to thinking of collective strategies of production and consumption, and the creation of alternative instruments for collecting and support with microcredit, such as the social currencies widespread in Brazilian CDB. (França Filho et al. 2012).

Localism values the ties to the territory involving the dimensions of community and neighborhood relationships and applying microcredit under a community-based development. The successful usage of microcredit for social transformation depends on the creation of the nets of consumption and production, enforcing community bounds (França Filho et al. 2012).

Mutuality, solidarity, cooperation, and localism could enlighten new paths on microcredit, conciliating the challenges of achieving financial sustainability and widening social impact reach. An adequate methodology suiting the needs of the clients is crucial to the successful usage of microcredit and matters to obtain a good repayment rate (Hudon 2013, p. 283).

Hence, it is worthy of discussing the main similarities and differences between the methodologies of the three models of Brazilian CDB, Brazilian PDB and Italian BCC, all of them successful experiences in granting microcredit and achieving both financial stability and development goals.

THE EXPERIENCES OF BRAZILIAN CDB, BRAZILIAN PDB, AND ITALIAN BCC

The three microfinance experiences analyzed in this section have some common features, especially the stakeholder orientation, the relationship lending model to grant credit, and the local roots. Another key factor that justifies the comparison between these microfinance models is the role they play in financial inclusion. The different socio-economic contexts in Brazil and Italy contribute to identifying different strategies to foster access to microfinance to promote human, social and economic development.

The first difference in the socio-economic contexts is that while Italy is developed country poverty still an issue in Brazil. Half of the population does not have access to essential services, such as basic sanitation, and earn income up to half a minimum wage (in March 2020, less than US\$100 per month). Among a population of 210 million inhabitants, there are around 40 million "unbankable" people, a significant lack of access to financial services.

The field of banking in Brazil is unique. The financial system is exceptionally concentrated; banks operate in an oligopoly, leading to high rates of interest (IMF, 2003). Despite the spread of community banks (there are around 114 in the whole country) and the programs of some public development banks, more than 90% of micro-credit loans are granted by traditional banks, under extremely high costs. For example, on the two leading public banks, the current rates of interest charged on fixed loans for natural persons are between 47,94% and 53,25% per year. In turn, some widespread MFI that target low-income borrowers apply rates of interest from 782,22% per year to 1.690,78% per year.³

At the macro level, credit is crucial to the Brazilian economy. Small business and consumption are its driving force. Credit is the fuel. The increase in consumption, especially on the base of the pyramid, stimulates the appearance of new small and medium enterprises (SME). 99% of Brazilian enterprises are SME, which are responsible for 60% of formal employment. Both SME and consumers depend on credit to meet their needs. Then, the high cost of credit is a barrier to their freedom and an obstacle to socio-economic development.

Another critical factor is the reduced market share of the credit cooperatives in Brazil. In 2018 they represented only 2,97% of the balance of transactions in the financial system (Bacen 2018). They have prevalent performance financing business activities, especially agricultural production, in general, under lower rates of interest than the market average. In the field of microcredit, they are responsible for 24% of transactions with SME. However, their reach is still insufficient to meet credit demand (Pauli 2019, p 81).

In this context, the microfinance inclusion promoted by Brazilian CDB and Brazilian PDB focus on the usage of microcredit as a tool to face extreme poverty and promote development, by fostering productive activities and essential consumption.

In turn, in Italy, the microfinance inclusion is devoted to promote social inclusion and face unemployment. In 2011 was created the Ente Nazionale per il Microcredito (National Agency for Microcredit), a non-economic public body that has the mission to facilitate access to credit for microenterprises and deprived social groups, promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment. Among the channels utilized to grant credit, we highlight the BCC, that act in cooperation with the Ente Nazionale per il Microcredito.

The credit cooperatives (BCC) play a crucial role in the Italian financial system. They are often small banks and represent 53% of Italian financial institutions. Despite their total weight in the loan market is less than 10%, they are essential channels providing credit to small and medium enterprises, also for household loans (Zago & Dongili 2014). Italian BCC provide microcredit and other financial services where conventional banks are less present. Their local rootedness is linked to their support to the local development (Lang, F., Signore, S, Gvetadze, S., 2016).

Hence, despite the different social and economic contexts where they operate, all the three experiences analyzed in this section have an important role to play in promoting development through financial inclusion, fostering entrepreneurship.

The Brazilian Community Development Banks - CDB are inspired by the Grameen Bank, which adopts a specific methodology on granting credit to alleviating poverty and promote human development. Before analyzing the Brazilian CDB, it might point out some features of the inspiring model. Since the beginning, the main goal of the Grameen Bank was facing the financial apartheid in Bangladesh, offering credit loans for poor people considered not creditworthy. The Grameen Bank is devoted to reaching the poor of the poor, giving them access to credit to start a business activity. Hence, the primary aspect is that microcredit is used to foster economic opportunities and generate income, not for consumption (Yunus 2007, 44-54). It was necessary to develop a proper methodology in granting credit to accomplish these goals.

Regarding corporate governance, the Grameen Bank was created as a *non-loss, non-dividend business*, which means that the profits it earns are reapplied to promote the development goals. The borrowers become shareholders of the bank, which is stakeholder-oriented since it aims to use microcredit to foster entrepreneurship and social impact for the whole community, instead of generating profits for distribution.

³ Source: www.bcb.gov.br, access in 30.03.2020.

The methodology applied to grant credit is quite peculiar. The financial activities are developed locally, in the community centers, following the idea that the bank comes to serve people. The loans are granted based on trust without collaterals, thus requiring only the formation of a group of five people that intend to have access to microcredit. Group lending and progressive lending are standard features in its banking practices. Related to credit pricing, the Grameen Bank grants credit under simple interest, not using compound interest as the traditional financing system. The interest rates are fixed according to a cross-subsided criterion, the poorer the borrower, the lower the interest rate. The repayment rates are, on average, over 98% (Yunus 2017, p. 233).

Considering poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, the methodology includes a whole package of services, offering not only access to credit but also management training, coaching, and advice for business planning (Yunus 2017, pp. 74-83). This kind of guidance and support applied with credit granting is crucial for the removal of unfreedom barriers, helping people to convert the access to resources (credit) into capability expansion, as well as increasing agency and active striving.

The model of Grameen Bank inspired the emergence of Community Development Banks (CDB) in Brazil, with the same mission of using microfinance to improve the quality of life of poor people. Most Brazilian CDB are OSCIP entities (Civil Society Organization for Public Interest) or NGOs. They are stakeholder-oriented; the borrowers are often also the owners of the bank, which do not distribute dividends since the focus is on promoting local development to the communities they serve. Historically, the community banks in Brazil emerged in contexts of poverty, social deprivation, and the absence of essential public services. They are the results of the self-organization of civil society to solve government and market failures. The participatory structure of these institutions, governed by collective choices, makes the financial services more inclusive (Hudon & Meyer 2013).

The methodology applied to grant credit combine microcredit lines for production and local consumption to generate income and work throughout the community. They adopt the concept of «integrated territorial development,» fitting a multidimensional wealth creation that is both quantitative (job creation, increased income) and qualitative (social cohesion, reducing domestic violence, access to education). CDB understand development as «strengthening endogenous force in the community: they promote the regional capacities by creating and stimulating local networks of producers and consumers». Moreover, they offer a wide range of financial and non-financial services, including vocational training programs and support to start-ups (Meyer & Prates 2013).

CDB grant loans in two different currencies: (i) productive loans are given in the national currency; (ii) consumption loans are offered in a locally circulating social currency. By stimulating both supply and demand, they re-organize poor economies, funding stream to production (microcredit), and encourage local consumption. This combined strategy slows down the extraction of financial resources from the community, stimulating internal development, and creating employment for community members (Meyer & Hudon 2018).

The usage of alternative monetary instruments such as social currencies and local credit cards⁴, widely accepted in the communities' exchanges, contributes to the local socio-economic development. In a 2008 survey to evaluate ten years of Banco Palmas, the first and most remarkable community bank in Brazil, 94% of respondents believed that the social currency contributed to the development of the neighborhood; 98% agreed that the bank helped the community, and 90% confirmed that it improved their quality of life. The results were the generation of income and employment and an increase in the local consumption from 20% in 1997 to 93% in 2009, also enhancing community ties (França Filho et al. 2012). This model of community development bank mixing microcredits and the complementary currency has been replicated in more than a hundred communities in Brazil (Meyer & Hudon 2018).

The costs of the loans are distributed based on the cross-subsided criterion to provide fair rates of interest according to the credit lines. The table below synthesizes the pricing method of Banco Palmas microcredit lines:

⁴ About the usage of social (or complementary) currencies by the Brazilian CDB, see Meyer & Hudon (2018). Money and the Commons: An Investigation of complementary Currencies and Their Ethical Implications. *Journal of Business Ethics* (2019) 160: 277-292; Fare M., Freitas C. De, Meyer C. (2013). Community currencies in Brazilian community development banks: what role in territorial development? The case of Banco Palmas. In: *International Conference on Social and Complementary Currencies*, 2., Haia, Holanda, Anais... Haia.

Microcredit Lines of Banco Palmas				
Goal	Essential consumption	Start a business	Foster informal activities	Promote established enterprises
Target Public	Poor of the poor	Beneficiaries of social programs	Informal sector	Entrepreneurs
Currency	Social currency	Oficial currency	Oficial currency	Oficial currency
Rates of interests	Free of interest	Up to 1,5% monthth	from 2% up to 2,5% month	The higher the capital, the higher the rates

The business model is oriented to relationship banking, capturing soft information for risk analysis. The credit granting and collection is based on neighborhood relations and solidarity, imposing a control that is much more social than economic. The average repayment rates are up to 95%. (França Filho et al. 2012).

Group lending and progressive loans are also standard features, betting in long-term progressive transactions. To achieve sustainability, they focus on the reduction of costs through cooperation with other agents. They firm partnerships with supportive organizations such as university incubators and with funding institutions such as municipalities, state governments, government departments, foundations, and NGOs (França Filho et al. 2012).

The usage of microfinance inclusion to promote local and regional development is also the strategy of some of the Brazilian Public Development Banks (PDB) programs. We highlight two of these programs. *Crediamigo* is a program implemented by the Banco do Nordeste, the first public development bank to focus on microcredit programs in Brazil, recognizing the role of microfinance in social and economic development (Lavoei et al. 2011). It is the biggest program of microcredit for oriented production in Latin America. In 2018 it reached more than 3,3 million clients in the two main credit lines *Crediamigo* and *Agroamigo*, in more than 4,7 million credit transactions with the total amount of R\$11,4 billion (Banco do Nordeste 2018).

The microfinance program started in 1997, in the Northeast, the poorest region in Brazil. The management of the program focuses on peer selection and mutual enforcement to achieve the long-term sustainability of the lending group. Nonetheless, the attainment of self-sufficiency was not a priority for *Crediamigo* since it was created by a regional development bank, a financial institution already established and experienced in financial sustainability. Regarding the costs, the program is self-sustainable; it remunerates capital invested in market interest and does not uses public funds (Neri & Buchman 2008). It is profitable and has a rate of non-performing loans lower than 2%, reaching only 1,3% in 2018 (Banco do Nordeste 2018).

The microfinance program offers different credit lines according to the financed activity, fostering rural production and entrepreneurship in urban areas. The requirements to access credit are legal capacity, run, or aim to start a business activity and a group of friends entrepreneurs. The initial loan always started as through a lending group based on a solidary guarantee. The amounts of the loans are progressive, starting with small capitals and growing up according to the repayment performance. The microfinance program also provides non-financial services, such as professional training, guidance and support to help their clients to shape business strategies and integrate the entrepreneurs to the competitive market (Neri & Buchman 2008).

To widen the reach of the program towards poorer clients, Banco do Nordeste firmed a partnership with Instituto Nordeste Cidadania, an OSCIP entity that coordinates the activity of granting microcredit for oriented production, through professional credit agents. The relation is based on the interaction of the credit agents and the borrowers on their business, following the idea that bank goes to people. (Neri & Buchman 2008).

The role of the credit agents is crucial to the *Crediamo* program. They act collecting soft information for defining the credit needs, interacting directly with the clients in their social environment, helping them to shape the business strategies, and monitoring the business performance. The interactions with the credit agents result in a more close relationship with the clients of the microfinance program. This model of proximity financing is also essential for the microfinance program run by Fomento Paraná.

Fomento Paraná is a public agency created in 2000, a branch of the State of Paraná, in the South of Brazil, where the socio and economic index are better in comparison to the Northeast. Since 2001, this agency starts running microcredit programs, inspired by the Grameen Bank. In the beginning, the focus was to finance the productive activities of informal entrepreneurs (SEBRAE/PR 2015). Later on, the agency launched two different programs aiming to generate social impact, summarized below:

Microcredi Programs of Fomento Paraná			
Program	Loan size	Rates of interests	Target Public
Solidary Credit	Up to R\$4.000,00 (U\$800 in March 2020)	Free of interest	Poor population/ Beneficiaries of social programs
Microcredit Entrepreneur Bank	up to R\$20.000,00 (U\$4,000 in March 2020)	On average 10% per year	Formal or informal entrepreneurs

The role of the credit agents is crucial in all the stages of the program. The credit agents go to the clients, capture, and process soft information, analyze the sustainability of the business and the credit needs, also monitor the results. The credit loans are shaped to meet the specific needs of each client according to the business models and the surrounding environment (Pauli 2019, pp. 86-90).

The program counts on a public fund (*Fundo de Equalização do Microcrédito*) created to support it to offer credit under lower rates of interest. Considering the main objective of the program is to promote socio-economic development fostering entrepreneurship, the rates of interest are reduced when the borrowers attend the professional and management training offered by SEBRAE, other public branch destined to support micro and small enterprises (*ivi*: 90-91).

The sizes of the loans are progressive according to three stages of the business: the beginning of activities; consolidation (minimum of six months of revenues, even if informal); and expansion (minimum of six months of revenues under the formal establishment of the enterprise). The loans can finance working capital or fixed assets investments. Among the social impact generated, in an analysis period from 2010 to 2015 comparing the clients of the program to other micro-enterprises that did not access it, there was an increase in the survivance of the enterprises and their employability. The loans destined to fixed assets investments, which involve more administrative costs to fit the client necessities, produced higher impacts than the loans for working capital (*ivi*: 116-145).

The programs run by Banco do Nordeste and Paraná Fomento bring new paths and methodologies for PDB to promote development fostering productive activities. Besides using microcredit as a strategy to alleviating poverty, these programs have a significant role in providing credit for micro and small enterprises directly. Broaden access to credit to foster small enterprises is also one of the driven missions of the Italian *Banche di Credito Cooperativo* (BCC).

The credit cooperatives adopt a different approach to the market, distant from the capitalistic view, recognizing the centrality of human beings (worker shareholders, consumers, borrowers) in economic relations instead of focusing primarily on the capital (Zamangi, 2008, p. 32). The cooperation and mutuality, prescribed in the art. 45 of the Italian Constitution, embases their moel of economic activity (Cartabia 2017: 18-21).

The mission of the BCC is to produce mutual benefit and the common good, enhancing social cohesion and promoting sustainable development of the territory where they operate (Zago, & Dongili 2014, p. 4). They are stakeholder-oriented since they aim to generate a social impact on the local community. Regarding governance, they have widespread and inclusive ownership. In 2018, there were more than 1,3 million shareholders in Italian BCC. The local dimension is also determinant to the organization of the BCC. Their members must live or operate in the same territories where BCC undertake their activities, in most cases (93%) small cities with less than 5.000 inhabitants (Federcasse 2019).

Their activities must be prevalent toward members. Hence, the interest rates charged for loans to members are lower than those to non-members. According to legal regulation, BCC must allocate at least 70% of their annual profits to legal reserves and at least the other 3% to specific funds for the development of cooperation. They have a limited profit-seeking nature and focus on providing financial services under favorable conditions to their members (lower rates of interest on loans and higher on deposits). BCC also act broadening access to credit to groups usually excluded from the financial system, contributing to financial inclusion. Efficient management is crucial to accomplish all these goals and to maintaining intertemporal sustainability with a proper level of services to members (Zago & Dongili 2014, p. 4).

They operate collecting deposits and savings from their members and reinvesting the resources into the territory, financing activities from the real economy, such as crafts and manufacture, agriculture, tourism, non-profit, construction industry, and commerce, while granting credit for households. In other words, BCC finance both local production and consumption. The proximity financing leads to a better knowledge of local economic agents, strengthening the social capital of the local community and contributing to local growth (Capolare et al. 2014).

From 2016 to 2019, it is estimated that the microcredit granted by BCC contributed to creating more than 3.800 new jobs in Italy. To widen social impact, they also firm partnerships with other institutions, such as universities, social impact investment funds, and third sector entities (Federcasse 2019).

The BCC embrace relationship lending, which means «a bank intermediation model based on the development of a privileged, collaborative and repeated lending relationship with the firm, in respect of which the bank invests in the collection of private, or soft, information.» The customer's soft information (integrity of corporate ownership, skills and management capabilities, corporate networking opportunities, entrepreneurs' future strategic projects, etc.) get into the lending processes, contributing to widen access to credit, improve the quality of the loan portfolio and reduce the default rates. Different than traditional banks that adopt intermediation oriented to an Originate-to-Distribute model, BCC act as financial partners of their clients aiming to maximize the profitability of the overall relations in the medium and long term. Italian financial system relies on relationship banking because most firms depend on bank loans as the primary external funding source for their activities (Cotugno et al. 2013, pp. 574-575). BCC also support enterprises in hardship, renegotiating the loans in case of default, suspending interest, and extending the loan duration (Federcasse 2019). This pattern indicates another remarkable feature of the BCC: the anticyclical role, keeping open channels even in periods of a financial crisis.

Besides widening access to credit under a relationship lending base, BCC also play a crucial anticyclical role in the financial crisis. They meet an unsatisfied credit demand, continue granting loans even in periods of the credit crunch. The anticyclical role is important for financial inclusion since lack of access to credit can be an obstacle to social and economic opportunities, even in a developed country like Italy. During the financial crisis in 2008-2009 and right after, BCC maintained the credit offer while the traditional financial system restricted access to credit (Di Colli & Girardi 2012). The financial crisis affected BCC, not because of over-lending in pre-crisis, but because their main clients are households, also small and medium enterprises, which have more difficulties in recovering. The small size of their loan portfolios is challenging to absorb the losses and, in general, bailouts go preferentially for big banks. Some banks are too big to fail, and others seem too small to matter.

The 2008-2009 financial crisis motivated a reform on the system of BCC in Italy, focusing on intensifying the level of capitalization of credit cooperatives and the stability of the whole financial system. The reform was implemented in two rounds, starting in 2016 with the Decree-Law 18/2016, converted in Law 49/2016 and following in 2018, with the Decree-Law 91/2018, converted in the Law 108/2018. The regulation imposes new conditions for BCC to operate, such as an increase in the minimum numbers of shareholders and a mandatory adhesion to a *Capogruppo* (Parent Bank), to build a cross-guarantee between the group and each credit cooperative itself. The *Capogruppo* is a joint-stock company, constituted under a high requirement of minimum capital, in which 60% of the share capital must belong to the BCC. Different from the credit cooperatives, the *Capogruppo* can launch a public offering on the market to raise capital. The reform is quite recent to evaluate the impacts on BCC. The main challenge is how to conciliate the profit-seeking purpose of the *Capogruppo* and the identity of BCC. The prevalence of the commercialization approach over the foundational principles of

mutuality, localism, and solidarity throughout the belonging community can undermine the driven mission of BCC (Manara, Broccato 2018).

Despite the differences in the legal structures, surrounding environments, and specific methodologies applied to grant credit, it is possible to notice some similarities of Brazilian CDB, Brazilian PDB, and Italian BCC. All of them share the goals of using microfinance inclusion to promote the development and generate social impact in the localities where they act. Regarding their governance, none of them are profit-seekers; they all try to reach the balance between financial sustainability and the social mission.

The local dimension is also a remarkable feature, running their activities under the basis of proximity and solidarity finance. They manage the application of resources based on principles of trust and mutual help and are very rooted in the territory. Moreover, they adopt microfinance practices to mobilize local investments, promoting consumption and production, and valuing the relations of proximity (França Filho et al. 2012).

They practice “alternative banking”, characterized by the following features. The organizational goals are not guided by profit-maximization to benefits shareholders but for social and economic development. Hence, the governance structure is stakeholder-oriented. The business models focus on more cautions and long term strategies to achieve social and public missions, according to the needs of geographic areas. Finally, they invest in relationship lending seeking longer-term business horizons involving sustainable returns (Mettenheim 2012).

The table below summarizes the main features of the three models:

	CDB	PDB	BCC
Mission	Human development	Local and regional development	Mutual benefit/ common good
Orientation	Stakeholder	Stakeholder	Stakeholder
Legal status	NGOs, OSCIPs	Public Agencies Public Banks	Credit Cooperatives
Governance	Community	Public	Collective
Target Public	Poor of the poor	Poor people Small business	Householders Small/medium enterprises
Modality of loans	Group loans / individual loans / progressive loans	Group Loans / individual loans / progressive loans	Individual loans
Non-financial services	Professional training Guidance/support Community centers	Guidance/support Incentive for professional training	Not directly Financing social impact projects
Business model	Relationship lending	Relationship lending	Relationship lending
Rates of interests	Free in social currency Cross-subsided	Free in microloans Lower rates than the market average	Lower rates for members
Funding	Donations, Public funds, Revenues	Public funds Revenues	Cappo Gruppo Revenues and savings

The different environments that surround CDB, PDB, and BCC contribute to shaping different strategies and practices to promote development. These experiences can inspire the usage of microfinance towards the three dimensions of human, social, and economic development.

CDB are devoted to reaching the poor of the poor and presents a high potential to improve the quality of life for the most deprived populations. Hence, from a perspective of human development for alleviating poverty, widening opportunities, and increasing agency, the replication of the model of CDB might be the most appropriate strategy.

The programs run by the PDB focus on use microcredit to generate local and regional development fostering entrepreneurship. Although these programs have some limitations to reach the poorest populations, they broaden socio-economic opportunities by giving access to credit under lower costs, with guidance and support to undertaken business activities. The combination of credit and non-financial services allows a complete approach to social and economic development at the local and regional levels.

The BCC, in turn, do not combine credit-granting with non-financial services, such as professional training and business advising. Nonetheless, they are crucial for fostering the activities of small and medium enterprises and households' consumption, meeting a credit demand of those who often are considered not credit-worthy by the traditional financial system. They contribute to generating social impact by expanding production and consumption in the territories where they act. The usage of microcredit could be a strategy also to increase economic development at the macro level since both production and consumption are critical instruments for economic growth.

CDB, PDB, and BCC apply different methodologies to grant credit to different target publics in the peculiar context of their surrounding environments. Despite their specificities, all of them run the microfinance activities according to the ground principles of cooperation, mutuality, solidarity, and localism. We suggest these principles should be the basis to foster the usage of microfinance, addressing the three dimensions of human, social, and economic development.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main goal of this paper was to discuss if and how microfinance inclusion can contribute to expand freedom and promote the three dimensions of human, social, and economic development. As has been seen, the successful usage of microcredit to foster development goals depends on the methodology adopted to grant credit and the rates of interests applied to the loans. The paper focused on the methodology issue; hence the next steps are deepening the investigation about costs, especially the impact of the corporate governance, default rates and RoE (Return on Equity) on the interest rates

The main contribution of the paper is the comparative analyzes of the methodologies applied by the CDB, PDB, and BCC, identifying the main features in the microcredit granting processes. Despite their different environments, target publics, and legal structures, they drive their activities under the same ground principles (mutuality, solidarity, cooperation, and localism) and adopt alternative banking practices. Their methodologies and governances result in new strategies to use microcredit to promote development in the three dimensions of human, social, and economic development.

The study of the methodologies of CDB, PDB, and BCC contributes to identifying their business models, based on solidarity and proximity financing, and alternative banking practices as inspiring paths to achieve the development goals through microfinance inclusion.

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Citation: Arik E. (2020) *Philosophical re-thinking of international tax law: an analysis of harmful tax competition*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 73-87. doi: 10.13128/cambio-8481

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Monographic Section

Philosophical re-thinking of international tax law: an analysis of harmful tax competition

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Abstract. This study aims to re-think the harmful tax competition philosophically and through which to open a new route for further studies. With this aim, harmful tax competition is examined from epistemological, theoretical and methodological perspectives. As a result of this study, it is contended that the OECD failed to justify the assumption that tax competition under specified circumstances is regarded as “harmful” around the world in the same way and it harms global welfare. By doing this, the OECD does not take into account that the meaning of harmful tax competition can be constructed differently by different societies. In fact, based on the different meanings of construction, the same kind of tax competition may be regarded as “beneficial” by some states and “harmful” by others. Therefore, to understand the challenges on the definition of harmful tax competition and solve them, more philosophical analysis is needed.

Keywords: harmful tax competition, international tax law, epistemology, constructionism.

INTRODUCTION

The changes in international tax order bring new challenges and new measures should be taken to stabilize the international order. As it is evidenced, the unilateral and bilateral measures are not sufficient anymore to counter these challenges and a multilateral approach based on the cooperation among states is needed (Head 1993: 666, OECD 1998: 52). The OECD has been dealing with the harmful tax competition for a long time, but these challenges remain unsolved. The reason behind this may be regarded as the failure to determine the nature of the challenges due to the unnecessary excessive focus on technical issues such as the characterization of the harmful tax practices rather than the philosophical ones. Therefore, in this study, harmful tax competition will be analyzed from the perspectives of philosophical considerations focusing on epistemology, theory, and methodology. Within this scope, a constructionist approach will be fol-

lowed as the part of epistemology by applying the interpretivist approach as a theory and the research methodology will be based on the heuristic inquiry.

This study does not aim to argue that these chosen philosophical considerations are the most suitable ones in the international tax law study and should be followed. Rather the aim is to create an awareness to engage the philosophical thinking in the international tax law study, because it may bring new insights and may be helpful to counter the international tax law challenges. Additionally, this study does not offer to explain in detail what harmful tax competition is. This may be a subject for another study. Rather the aim of this study is to re-think the harmful tax competition philosophically considering epistemology, theory, and methodology. With this aim, this study asks the epistemological question of “how do we know that the tax competition is harmful?”

Therefore, the study begins with a general explanation of the change of the international order. Then, it follows with the philosophical considerations by giving a short explanation of the constructionism, interpretivism, and heuristic inquiry. This part does not constitute detailed information on the concepts, but it forms a basis for the following parts. The following section focuses on the detailed inquiry on the harmful tax competition by seeking an answer to the several questions presented. At the end of this section, it is aimed to find an answer to the questions raised in the study.

CHANGE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER

The traditional understanding of international law centers the primacy of states and therefore, historically, it mainly consists of the consent-based body of norms (Head 1993: 619, E. Reynolds 2018: 662). However, this traditional understanding is currently under the transformation (Head 1993: 620). First, the change is realized gradually with the rise of international organizations in international law. Second, at the multilateral level, the new set of rules is established (Id. 621). Although the multilateral treaties are considered as consent-based norms, their consent-based characteristic is even changing towards the “mandatory multilateralism” (Criddle & Foc-Decent 2019: 274). Mandatory multilateralism stands as the lack of capacity by states to act unilaterally in international law due to the global concern of the subject matter (Id.). The reason behind this change may be considered as the inefficiency of solving international problems through the consent-based approach (Krisch 2014: 3). Mandatory multilateralism, on the other hand, may bring solutions equitable for all the contracting states (Criddle & Foc-Decent 2019: 276). The increasing political coordination among states and the non-state actors, economic integration, and global interdependence caused multipolarity in the international order which, in return, accelerated the internationalization of law (Varella 2014: 11-16).

The changing direction in the international order through departure from the consent-based approach and the internationalization of law caused also a considerable decline in state sovereignty. The traditional understanding of the sovereignty which prioritizes the individual states is no longer valid against the rapidly changing international order. The nation-states have common interests and goals in a globalized environment and international cooperation is needed to enable these common goals. Consequently, nation-states gradually join international organizations to fulfill their common aims, in return, they sacrifice their sovereignty at some level (Bello 1996: 1027; Koesrianti 2013: 267). Therefore, the traditional understanding of state sovereignty is in decline against the rapidly changing globalized, complex, and interdependent international order (Koesrianti 2013: 272; Higgins 1999: 82).

The changing order in international tax law is not much different than international law. The international tax law was mainly based on the bilateral tax treaties which reflect the consent and the primacy of states. However, with the rise of the OECD at the beginning of the 1960s as the international organization which has considerable influence on the tax norm development, the primacy of states weakened.¹ Especially together with the request by the G20 finance ministers from the OECD to develop an action plan to address the Base Erosion and Profit Shift-

¹ Christians (2010:14-15); Ault (2009:757-781) (stating the role of OECD with respect to norm developing in international tax law); Ring (2010:649-722) (examining the international tax policy formation through international tax organizations).

ing (“BEPS”). Upon the request by the finance ministers, the OECD published BEPS Action Plan on 19 July 2013 to identify actions needed to address BEPS related issues and introduced 15 different Action Plans to be taken to prevent BEPS (OECD 2013). As a result of the BEPS Project, the international tax law norms began to change direction towards multilateralism. All the measures, within this scope, such as drafting multilateral agreements (OECD 2015), developing guidelines, minimum standards, and establishing peer review (OECD 2017) of national practices show that the OECD norms have a law-like impact on international tax law (Christians 2016: 1608).

The growing importance of international organizations especially the OECD and consequently, the shift from the state-based approach in international taxation caused considerable discussions concerning tax sovereignty. In the literature, great importance is attributed to tax sovereignty, and especially the OECD is criticized on the grounds that it interferes with the tax sovereignty of states.² This concern is significant if the direct relevance of state sovereignty with the revenue collection and fiscal policy of the states is considered (Ring 2008: 158-159). Beyond the interference by the OECD to the tax sovereignty, it is also important to consider what happens if a state interferes with another state’s tax sovereignty while fulfilling its tax policy. However, it is still not clear how such interference can be resolved because there is not established hierarchical order of sovereignty among states (Id. at 229). The new developments in the international tax order through increasing interactions not only between states but also between the non-state actors led to a change in the perception of absolute tax sovereignty (Christians 2009: 99). This shift does not mean that the tax sovereignty of states is not important anymore, but it only evolved throughout the time (Ring 2008: 183).

As a result of these changes in the international tax order, the international tax system which worked once is no longer working properly. The OECD is working on the challenges by offering international solutions. However, the solutions offered by the OECD usually ignores the interests of the developing countries (Baistrocchi 2012: 547-577; James 2002: 5). The BEPS Action Plan may be seen as a solution for international tax law (OECD 2013). However, it does not bring new subjects to be discussed, but rather it only repeats the same issues that have been discussed for a long time such as harmful tax competition (Gonzalez-Barreda 2018: 279-280). These discussions were not sufficient enough to solve the harmful tax competition problems in international tax law, because of the inconsistent methodological focus by the OECD (Id.). The reason behind this may be regarded as the failure to determine the nature of the challenges due to the unnecessary excessive focus on the technical issues. Therefore, to understand the change and the demands of the new international order, we need to focus more on philosophical considerations such as epistemology, theory, and methodology rather than the technical aspects of international taxation such as the criteria determined by the OECD with respect to qualifying a tax regime as “harmful” (Bhandari 2017:1; Oats 2012: 9-10; Engle 2008: 103).

PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Philosophical considerations are usually neglected by the researchers especially by those working on the areas which have a practical dimension such as tax law. However, it is important to consider philosophical perspectives. The philosophical questioning of a subject constitutes a process and each step in this process is interconnected. Therefore, an epistemological question should be asked at the beginning of the research that is how do we know that we know.³ At this point, we try to find out the knowledge and the theory is used to determine the approach that we proceed to get that knowledge. During this process, we make assumptions about knowledge and justify the assumptions by using this theory (Crotty 1998: 7; Engle 2008: 103). The procedure that we adopt during the research constitutes the methodology of research that is the research design (Crotty 1998: 7).

The philosophical considerations are usually seen as time-consuming or unnecessary to develop the technical and practical issues such as the criteria developed to characterize the harmful tax practices. On the contrary,

² See *e.g.* in Biswas (2002).

³ Pollock (1968: 183); Cunningham&Fitzgerald (1996) (clarifying the epistemological considerations and the importance of knowing them for understanding a reading. With this aim they establish seven epistemological issues).

they are the building blocks of consistent practice to understand and tackle the global harmful tax competition challenge. Without a philosophical consideration such as epistemology or the theory behind the assumptions, the developed solutions may remain ineffective. Especially together with the changes in the current order, the theories may subject to change too, because they are usually inefficient in the changing order as they developed to justify the past assumptions.

In this paper, harmful tax competition will be considered from philosophical perspectives. Thus, the constructionist approach will be considered as epistemology, interpretivism will be used as the theory of this study and the research method will be considered as heuristic inquiry.

Epistemology: Seeking Knowledge through Constructionism

According to constructionism, there is no absolute truth, knowledge or meaning considered independent from the human being (Id.: 8-9). On the contrary of objectivism, which believes that the object is independent from any consciousness, constructionism accepts that there will never be an objective knowledge waiting outside in the world. Therefore, knowledge is not created by someone or something and waits to be discovered, but it is constructed (Id.: 43-44). Crotty gives the example of a tree (Id.) According to him, an object can be called as a tree because human beings construct the meaning. Therefore, the same object may not be called as “tree” by another human being, because she/he does not construct the meaning in the same way. Additionally, the same human being may not call a tree as “tree” after some years because the circumstances in which someone lives may be changed and the meaning of an object may no longer be constructed as “tree”.

A meaning, knowledge or truth may be constructed differently by human beings from different cultures. According to social constructionism, culture is an indispensable factor for shaping behavior, understanding, and thought (Id.: 53). Therefore, the knowledge that is constructed by human beings from different cultural backgrounds may be different. Social constructionism finds its place in international law as well. In the international order, the main actors are states and each state has different cultural features that shape the behavior of states (Krasner 2000: 97). Although the states are main actors on constructing common understandings or knowledge, other less powerful actors such as non-state actors, corporations or other groups have an influence on shaping the common understandings of states (Brunnee & Toope 2000: 70). If we think about a norm in international law, as a concrete example, we may take the customary international law. Is a customary international law posited somehow and has it been always there or is it constructed by states? Customary international law is formed through state practice and *opinio juris*. Therefore, a customary international law stands as a law in international law, not because a superior power posited it, but because it is constructed by the states as a law to be obliged and practiced for a long time.⁴

Instead of accepting something that we know is true, we should question how do we know that our knowledge is true. There should not be any absolute answer to this question, because it may differ based on the circumstances that it is constructed.

Theory: Justifying Assumptions with Interpretivism

The positivist approaches usually follow the natural science methods to understand and explain human behavior and there is no room for values in these approaches whereas, interpretivism examines the cultural and historical interpretations of social life incorporating the values (Crotty 1998: 67). Interpretivism in the legal context stands as the opposition to the theory of positivism which believes that the law is based only on the practice of the com-

⁴ *But see*, Verweij (2009) (stating that cultural approach should be applied to international law which focuses on how the contradictions interact with each other, rather than a rational-choice and constructivist approach on the grounds that international law is contested rather than constructed).

munity.⁵ According to the legal interpretivism, the nature of law constitutes interpretation in addition to the practice of the law by judges, officials, and others, because the law is an interpretive concept (Dworkin 1986; Stavropoulos 2016: 25-26). Dworkin contends that the law consists of the rules and also the values behind the rules so that the interpretation of the values and rules together constitute law.

Dworkin gives an example to clarify how the interpretation applies to understand what the law is. According to “the rules of courtesy”, courtesy requires for the peasants to take off the hats to the nobility (Dworkin 1986: 47). This rule may change throughout time because people develop interpretive approaches on the rule of courtesy. They can attribute a different meaning to the rule or their opinions on the courtesy may change. Therefore, one day the understanding of the respected people may not be considered as social superiors but as the older people or another (Id.: 48). Based on this change, a different interpretation of the practice of “the rule of courtesy” may emerge. Dworkin believes that the law is constructive and through its interpretive nature, it brings the principles and the practice together by keeping in mind the past so that the interpretive approach aims to reach the best result (Id.: 413).

Although Dworkin did not design interpretivism as a theory for international law in the first place, interpretivism finds its place in the literature on the application to international law. For instance, Çalı, in her research, examines the relevance of interpretivism with international law and draws possible internal and external objections, as well as responses to those objections with respect to the applicability of interpretivism to international law (Çalı 2009). In fact, Dworkin, in his later work also applied his theory as a moralized approach to international law (Dworkin 2013: 26). Therefore, despite the opposition exerted especially by positivists, interpretivism finds its place in international law theory.⁶

Methodology: Designing Research through Heuristic Inquiry

Heuristic inquiry as a research method is a process of “self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery” throughout the research based on inner awareness (Moustakas 1990:11). In the heuristic inquiry, a question or a problem presented by the researcher is intended to be answered by human experiences, beliefs or judgments (Id.: 15). Due to some subjective elements of heuristic inquiry, there are misconceptions⁷ about the objectivity or reliability of the research. Nonetheless, heuristic also stands as a qualitative research method and a way of doing effective research (West 2001). Although the heuristic methodology in social sciences is generally used in psychology, it may be beneficial to apply heuristic inquiry to law studies as well.⁸ In fact, the heuristic inquiry is needed for complex and uncertain circumstances and law aims to solve these kinds of problems. For this reason, the heuristic inquiry may be appropriate for law research to solve complex and uncertain issues (Engel & Gigerenzer 2006: 3-4). Especially in the adjudication, some cases are too complex to solve by only examining the law. As Dworkin states in “hard cases” finding the solution for the case needs a further interpretive approach by the judges considering the protected values behind a rule that is applicable to the case (Dworkin 1978). Therefore, it is inevitable for the judges⁹ to apply heuristics because the decision will be made by considering also the moral values of the individual judges.

Although it is not that common to follow the heuristic inquiry methodology in law or international law, heuristics may bring new insights to already discussed subjects from a different perspective. For instance, in the international tax literature, Christians examined several studies in international tax law that apply the case study in

⁵ There are different legal positivist scholars who employ different ideas about the law. With this definition of legal positivism, the ideas of Hart is mainly employed. According to Hart, the law is based on “the rule of recognition” which indicates the acceptance by the society *see in* Hart (1994).

⁶ Banteka (2018) (stating that Dworkin’s interpretivism fits for explaining the customary international law due to its descriptive and normative nature. The writer applies the theory of interpretivism to identify the customary international law).

⁷ *See in* Gigerenzer (2008) (misconceptions and the clarifications about the heuristic inquiry).

⁸ *Contra* Korobkin (2004).

⁹ He calls the judges for the hard cases as “*hercules*”.

their researches to enhance the different theoretical, methodological approaches used by scholars in international tax law (Christians 2010: 349-351). Christians identified only one study following the heuristic inquiry methodology conducted a historical study based on one country's experience. The aim of the study was to show that the existing literature inadequately theorizes about the tax havens (Boise & Morriss 2009); Christians 2010: 350). Thus, I believe that heuristics may bring new perspectives to any areas of law and that applying heuristic methodology may lead to a totally different conclusion in order to solve problems related to the same subjects.

PHILOSOPHICAL RE-THINKING OF HARMFUL TAX COMPETITION

Seeking an Answer

Harmful tax competition is one of the frequently discussed issues both by scholars¹⁰ and the OECD. If the harmful tax competition is a challenge for international tax law and if the OECD is working to solve this challenge for more than 20 years, why the OECD did not succeed? Is the OECD asking the wrong questions to detect the real reasons behind this challenge? Maybe the OECD is asking the right questions, but it may be looking at the answers in the wrong places. These are the questions that cannot be answered in this study yet.

According to the works of the OECD, in case that a country has a preferential tax regime offering a lower tax rate, it will most likely fall under the scope of "harmful" tax competition. If the OECD has an assumption with this regard, is the OECD able to justify its assumption through a theory? At this point, instead of directly accepting this assumption, I would like to question "how do we know that the tax competition is harmful?". Do we call tax competition "harmful" because it is objectively harmful independent from any consciousness or it is constructed during the time in this way? If the knowledge of harmful tax competition is constructed, is it constructed in the same way all around the world? Is it possible to construct the meaning for the exact same tax competition in different ways in different societies? Is it possible for the same society to qualify the same tax competition as "harmful" today and "not harmful" in the future because the value attributed to the tax competition changed?

These are neither an exhaustive list of questions nor all of them are aimed to be answered in this study. Rather these questions are presented to examine the harmful tax competition from a different perspective to reach the knowledge. Firstly, it is beneficial to examine the general historical background of harmful tax competition to question how the meaning has changed during the time if it has changed at all.

Historical Background of Harmful Tax Competition through the Lens of the OECD: From 1998 to 2015

Raise of the Discussions

OECD stands as the leading international organization with respect to international taxation issues. At the very beginning, the work of the OECD mainly focused on double taxation problems caused by the different laws of the different jurisdictions. Although the focus of the prevention of double taxation remains, the main focus of the OECD shifted towards the prevention of double non-taxation. Therefore, the discussions in the international tax law and the OECD currently concentrate on the restriction of the harmful tax competition.

However, this main focus has changed throughout the time from the prevention of double taxation to the restriction of the harmful tax competition (Morriss & Moberg 2012: 3). It is important to understand why and how this change occurred in the first place because a tax policy change develops throughout a process. In fact, there were three main economical changes in the world after the Second World War ("WWII") that enabled the increase in tax competition (Id.: 23). First, together with technological developments, the cost of international

¹⁰ See e.g. Martin (1940); Avi-Yonah (2000); Roin (2000); Littlewood (2004); Keen & Konrad (2012); Kudrle (2017); Fellerr & Schanz (2017); Stewart (2018).

businesses decreased and the number of international transactions increased (Id.). Second, with the financial liberalization, capital markets internationalized and trade in capital goods became easier (Id.: 24). Finally, the development of new financial products enabled businesses easier access to credit and reduce their costs. All these factors enabled the businesses to engage in international transactions through structures that decrease their tax liability and consequently, states began to implement tax rules to prevent the decrease of tax liabilities of businesses.

Therefore, the competition between states to attract foreign investments increased and it enabled the shift of the investments from high-tax jurisdictions to low-tax jurisdictions. Finally, this shift impacted negatively tax revenue for the high-tax jurisdictions. Until this point, it is inarguable that the tax competition increased among states and some states benefited from this competition, while others not. However, the real issue which is debatable was whether this tax competition is “harmful” or not. From the lens of the OECD, the answer to this question would probably be yes.

In fact, in 1996 the G7 countries in the Lyon Summit issued an Economic Communique stating that besides the benefits of globalization, it creates new challenges by enabling the harmful tax competition between states.¹¹ Therefore, G7 countries requested from the OECD to work on this issue and prepared a report by establishing a multilateral approach so that the countries work individually and collectively to limit these practices. Although this was not the first time in the international tax history that harmful tax competition issues emerged¹², the G7 request accelerated the discussions on the topic. In fact, since then the OECD is the leading international organization working on the harmful tax competition.

Based on the request of the G7 countries, the OECD prepared and published a Report on Harmful Tax Competition in 1998 (“1998 Report”).¹³ In this report, the OECD prepared a campaign to prevent harmful tax competition through tax havens and preferential tax regimes. The main aim of the OECD in this report seems to be the protection of the economic interest and revenues of G7 countries and the other OECD Member States (Littlewood 2004: 442). It is understandable that tax competition is “harmful” from the lens of the OECD because it is harmful to the OECD Member States and the OECD is there to protect the interests of them in the first place. Therefore, we may assume that under specified circumstances set by the OECD, tax havens and preferential tax regimes are constructed as “harmful”. However, does it mean that the concept of harmful tax competition should be constructed in the same way all around the world, for instance also by non-OECD countries? This question should not be intended to answer now, but it should be kept in mind.

The OECD Work on Countering Harmful Tax Competition

The OECD issued two cornerstone reports on harmful tax competition.¹⁴ The first one is the 1998 Report on Harmful Tax Competition and the second one is the 2015 Countering Harmful Tax Practices More Effectively, Taking into Account Transparency and Substance (“2015 Final Report”) within the scope of the BEPS Action Plan. The main findings of these reports will be examined respectively. In these reports, the OECD mainly focused on the technical issues on the criteria of determination of the harmful tax practices without justifying why the criteria set under the reports should be accepted globally.

In the 1998 Report, the OECD focused on geographically mobile activities such as financial activities and aimed to develop a better understanding of tax havens and harmful preferential tax regimes. The report considered

¹¹ The Communique can be reached through <<http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/>>.

¹² See e.g. OECD (1987), Tax Havens: Measures to Prevent Abuse by Taxpayers, in *International Tax Avoidance and Evasion: Four Related Studies*, OECD Publishing; OECD (1987), Taxation and the Abuse of Bank Secrecy, in *International Tax Avoidance and Evasion: Four Related Studies*, OECD Publishing.

¹³ OECD (1998), Harmful Tax Competition: An Emerging Global Issue, OECD Publishing.

¹⁴ OECD has various researches and reports on the harmful tax competition. However, only two of the reports will be examined under this study, because they are seen as the most important ones in the international tax law history with respect to the harmful tax competition.

these two types of practice as “harmful tax practices” (OECD 1998: 8). In addition, in this report, the OECD stated these harmful tax practices erode the tax bases of other countries, distort trade and investments, affect the location of financial activities, diminish global welfare and damage the fairness (Id.). The OECD also aimed to include the non-member states for the cooperation to eliminate the harmful tax competition on the grounds that these practices are harmful not only for the OECD countries but also for non-member states. In the report, it is contended that the globalization also enabled the states to develop preferable fiscal regimes to attract investments to their countries (Id.: 13). Therefore, according to the 1998 Report, it could be said that globalization and consequently national states’ behavior are primarily to be blamed for the emergence of harmful tax practices.

The OECD gives definition and lists some factors to identify harmful tax practices by differentiating between the tax havens and harmful preferential tax regimes. According to the 1998 Report, although a tax haven does not have a clear meaning, a country which operates its public services with no or nominal income taxes and offers the non-resident countries a place to avoid taxation is a tax haven (Id.: 20). The harmful preferential tax regime is defined as the regime which has significant income tax but it has also some features that enable the harmful tax competition (Id.). However, both of the definitions are vague and subjective to characterize a country as a tax haven and a country that has a harmful preferential tax regime (Littlewood 2004: 459). In fact, as per the 1998 Report, due to the broad characterization of the harmful tax competition, it can be stated that the OECD intended to label almost any tax competition as harmful (Id.: 465).

In addition to the general explanations, the OECD specified the factors to identify tax havens and harmful preferential tax regimes. Accordingly, no or only nominal taxes, lack of effective exchange of information, lack of transparency and no substantial activities are listed as the key factors identifying the tax havens (OECD 1998: 22). Key factors on determining the harmful preferential tax regimes are listed as no or low effective tax rates, “ring-fencing” of regimes, lack of transparency and lack of effective exchange of information (Id.: 26-28). The factors determining tax practices as “harmful” are too broad that almost any tax competition may easily fall under this scope.

The 1998 Report also emphasized the need for a coordinated approach at the international level to counter the harmful tax practices (Id.: 38). The OECD stressed that individual actions are not able to solve the problems completely, rather a multilateral approach is needed through cooperation and the OECD declared itself as the appropriate forum to undertake the task.¹⁵ The OECD presented recommendations for the national level such as the adoption of CFC rules and the adoption of the exchange of information rules (OECD 1998: 40-46). At the bilateral level on the tax treaties, the measures proposed e.g. were a more efficient exchange of information between treaty partners, the revision of the entitlement of the treaty benefits, the consideration of the termination of the tax treaties with the tax havens, and the consideration of not entering into tax treaties with tax havens (Id.: 46-52). Finally, with respect to the multilateral level recommendations, the OECD presented the guidelines to apply a common approach to restrain the harmful tax competition and invite the member states to implement these guidelines (Id.: 56). The OECD also emphasized that non-member states should be kept in the dialogue to enable the expansion of global economic growth (Id.).

The 1998 Report created a long-lasting effect on the international tax law environment. Several reports and a number of discussions in the literature followed the 1998 Report.¹⁶ The discussions, without even fading away, re-emerged in 2013 even stronger with the OECD BEPS Action Plan (OECD 2013). Upon the request of the G20 finance ministers from the OECD to develop an action plan to address BEPS issues, BEPS Action Plan was

¹⁵ *Id.* at 52; *contra* Persaud (2002:23-24) (questions the appropriateness of the OECD to develop an international regime concerning harmful tax practices and proposes that IMF or World Bank may be proper organizations as having more inclusive approach for developing countries); lewood (2004:481) (questions the appropriateness of the OECD to undertake this task and presents the UN as another and maybe a better organization to handle the harmful tax competition).

¹⁶ *See e.g.* OECD (2000), *Towards Global Tax Co-operation: Report to the 2000 Ministerial Council Meeting and Recommendations by the Committee on Fiscal Affairs*, *OECD Publishing*; OECD (2001), *The OECD’s Project on Harmful Tax Practices: The 2001 Progress Report*, *OECD Publishing*; OECD (2004), *The OECD’s Project on Harmful Tax Practices: The 2004 Progress Report*, *OECD Publishing*; OECD (2006), *The OECD’s Project on Harmful Tax Practices: 2006 Update on Progress in Member Countries*, *OECD Publishing*.

introduced to deal with the shortcomings of the competition-based actions of the states instead of the cooperative approach (Brauner 2014:58). Therefore the OECD developed 15 Action Plans and Action 5 was dedicated to “countering harmful tax practices more effectively, taking into account transparency and substance”. Based on the BEPS Action Plan, the OECD published the 2015 BEPS Report¹⁷.

The similarities between the 1998 Report and the 2015 BEPS Report are impressive and it is inevitable to question whether nothing has changed for almost 20 years, and we still stand in the same position with respect to the harmful tax practices.¹⁸ In fact, there are not any substantial changes with respect to the countering harmful tax competition in the 2015 BEPS Report compared to the 1998 Report¹⁹. Therefore, the most considerable change was the states were held accountable causing the harmful tax competition due to their tax regimes in the 1998 Report, while the multinational enterprises were held accountable due to their aggressive tax planning in the 2015 Final Report. Besides this shift, the OECD has been dealing with the same issue for nearly 20 years and if the OECD changes nothing in its approach to tackle with harmful tax practices, it is more likely that the OECD and tax scholars will be dealing with the same subject for another 20 years or more.

Finding an Answer

In this part of the study, the previously presented questions should be revisited. The main epistemological question of this study was “how do we know that the tax competition is harmful?”. Therefore, instead of accepting the proposition of the OECD with respect to the harmful tax competition as the only truth without questioning, the aim here is to re-think the harmful tax competition philosophically. The change in the international order affected the international tax order as well. For instance, bilateral treaties in international tax law were once sufficient enough to eliminate the challenges at the international level. However, these bilateral treaties are not sufficient enough anymore, and consequently, a multilateral and cooperative approach is needed to counter these challenges. Within this regard, the call of the OECD for a cooperative approach was totally right. However, the OECD failed to justify, through a consistent theory, the assumption that the criteria developed by the OECD to qualify the harmful tax practices applies to all countries regardless of their status of developing or developed (Dwyer 2000: 52).

The international tax order is not the same today as it was 50 years ago and it constantly changes. The new international tax order needs more inclusive approaches to encounter the challenges. However, the approach of the OECD with respect to the harmful tax competition remains the same which is the protection of the interest of its member states in the first place. This state-centric approach of the OECD should be enhanced with a more social constructivist approach and also the inclusion of the non-state actors to the process (Webb 2004). Therefore, the OECD should have been more inclusive especially for transnational private actors such as transnational corporations (TNCs)²⁰, accounting and law firms²¹, and also non-governmental organizations (NGOs)²² in the inter-

¹⁷ OECD (2015), *Countering Harmful Tax Practices More Effectively, Taking into Account Transparency and Substance*, OECD Publishing.

¹⁸ *Contra*. Avi-Yonah (2009) (examining the 1998 Report since the commencement date and finding the work of OECD as success on the grounds that there was no decline in the tax revenues of OECD member countries.).

¹⁹ Gonzalez-Barreda (2018: 279-280) (stating that the issues discussed in BEPS Action Plan have been analyzed since the beginning of the problems in international taxation at the OEEC/OECD level. Therefore, the writer contends that the topics are not new, and BEPS Action Plan does not offer any significant revelations with respect to the content. However, it brings new formal matters such as the multilateral instrument).

²⁰ Muchlinski (2010: 10) (stating that multinational enterprises have considerable influence on law-making processes through lobbying activities, even though they are not considered as law-makers under the traditional international law); Webb (2004: 790) (stating that the structural power of the transnational corporations weakens the OECD's efforts on countering with harmful tax competition).

²¹ Webb (2004: 794) (stating that the private actors such as transnational accounting and law firms provide advice to the transnational corporations which leads the development of offshore financial centers and tax havens).

²² Webb (2004: 794) (stating that although the NGOs may have considerable influence on the countering harmful tax competition initiative, the OECD usually does not consider them as part of the tax policy formation process); For instance as the non-profit

national tax order (Id.). For instance, the Business and Industry Advisory Council (BIAC) stands as one of the most important non-state actors concerning international taxation issues. The BIAC presented its opposition to the OECD's harmful tax competition project (BIAC 1998). Although the OECD was not completely responsive to this opposition, through the participation of the BIAC in the process, the OECD widened the scope of the determination of the legitimate tax planning (Webb 2004: 821). Therefore, the OECD accepted the inclusion of a private non-state actor to the norm making process. Nevertheless, the OECD should have more inclusive for the non-state actors as they may be considered as the representative of the social community which expresses the needs and thoughts of the important actors.

As a matter of fact, inclusive concepts and theories are needed for a better understanding of the position of all participants in the global order (Noortmann 2011: 77). In the traditional international order, the main actors are accepted as states and the non-state actors are accepted as the objects that are subject to the consent of states (McCorquodale 2009: 142). However, rather than focusing on the subject or object division in the international order, all actors may be considered as "participants" which contribute to the processes in the international legal system at some level (Id.). The same considerations are directly applicable to the international tax order. The OECD as a leading international organization concerning tax matters follows a state-centric approach and fails to look from a cosmopolitan vision²³. The OECD claims that the harmful tax competition is a concern at the global level and needs coordination, yet refrains from an inclusive approach that accepts the participation of all actors to the processes. If the harmful tax competition is a global challenge (maybe even crisis), it is not possible to find a solution with an approach that differentiates between states and the other actors, developing countries and developed countries or member states and non-member states. The OECD should be aware that the meaning can be constructed differently in different societies. If the OECD manages to construct the meaning of the harmful tax competition which is beneficial for all countries without differentiation between developing and developed countries through a common construction of the meaning, then the OECD may become successful in its work to counter the harmful tax competition as a global challenge.²⁴

The main problem with respect to the OECD project was the objectivist epistemological approach to "harmful tax practices" on the grounds that countering harmful tax competition defined by the OECD fosters global welfare. However, the factors and definitions listed by the OECD are vague and variable for the different social, legal, and economic contexts (Townsend 2001: 254-256; Gonzalez-Barreda 2018: 280). The forms of tax competition, which enable the sector-specific tax privileges, amongst others, are usually accepted as harmful around the world, because they may lead to the misallocation of resources which is harmful under an international competition perspective (Trandafir 2010: 174-175; Teather 2002: 61). Besides these sector-specific tax competitions, the construction of other forms such as low tax rates, and even tax havens which do not offer sector-specific tax privileges are not perceived as "harmful".²⁵ Especially the less-developed countries aim to attract foreign investments through

organisation the Center for Freedom and Prosperity (CF&P) had considerable work on fighting to preserve jurisdictional tax competition, fiscal sovereignty, and financial privacy *see* at <https://archive.freedomandprosperity.org/Glance/glance.shtml>); Ring (2008: 188-196) (examining how the CFP used the tax sovereignty arguments for challenging the OECD initiative on countering harmful tax competition).

²³ Beck (2006: 7-8) (stating that cosmopolitan vision considers the differences, contrasts in the world society and by awareness of these finding the sameness among them and overcoming the boundaries between internal,- external, us-them and national-international.); Ring (2009: 586) (stating that although the cosmopolitan theory of justice underestimates some complexities, nuances and disagreements, it may still contribute to tax competition discussions through a deeper examination and extension of the concept).

²⁴ It should be clarified that the discussions with respect to the legitimacy of the OECD acting as a world tax organization and developing the international norms which as applicable not only the member states but also the non-member states are recognized, but disregarded from the discussion and consideration at this point.

²⁵ Trandafir (2010: 175); Dywer (2000: 48-69) (stating that tax havens do not always cause harmful tax competition as opposed to the OECD); Keen (2001: 762) (stating that allowing preferential tax regimes may be good for beneficial harmful tax competition and prohibiting them may cause to harmful tax competition); Desai et al. (2006) (stating that tax havens do not always cause to harmful tax competition); Dharmapala: (2008: 662) (stating that tax havens can be beneficial for the efficient tax competition); Teather (2002) (claiming that tax havens may lead to beneficial tax competition).

no or low tax rates to foster economic growth, enhance the employment and eliminate poverty (Littlewood 2004: 412-413).²⁶ The Declaration on the Right to Development states that the right to development is an inalienable human right and everyone has the right to enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development.²⁷ At this point, states have positive obligations to create conditions that are suitable for the development of the population and also the individuals. Thus, if the states have a positive obligation to foster the right to development and if they decide to do it through preferential tax regimes to attract the investment, is it logical to claim to remove these regimes because they are “harmful”, even it is not constructed as “harmful” by the developing countries? The OECD initiative on countering harmful tax competition, by disregarding this fact, had negative effects on the economy of some developing countries which confutes the OECD’s claim on global welfare (Townsend 2001: 256; James 2002: 5).

Besides the adverse effect of the OECD’s project on the economy of developing countries, it is claimed that the OECD also interferes with the tax sovereignty of nation-states²⁸. This claim is especially relevant to the countries which are not a member of the OECD. It may be questioned why a state cannot determine its tax policy (e.g. low income tax rate) independent from any other states’ or international organization’s reaction. However, whether the tax competition initiative of the OECD directly constitutes the interference to tax sovereignty is doubtful. The world is changing continuously and the meanings of the concepts are evolving according to the needs of the new order. Therefore, the traditional concept of the tax sovereignty which is considered as more likely as absolute, is no longer valid. In fact, in the literature, Ring claims that the tax competition discussion may enable acceptance of a new approach to tax sovereignty which includes the cooperation of states (Ring 2009: 560-561). Nevertheless, even if the OECD may not interfere with the tax sovereignty of states, it still ignores other participants of the international tax order and different possible meaning constructions by different societies due to a coercive state-centric approach

If the OECD follows a coercive approach and interferes with the tax sovereignty of states, it is questionable why the non-member countries began willingly to join the harmful tax competition project of the OECD, why they began to eliminate the low or no tax rates, and their preferential tax regimes. In the literature, it is claimed that the tax havens and other countries with preferential tax regimes began to comply with the recommendations of the OECD because the work of the OECD is seen as the form of soft international law and even the non-member states are willing to comply with them (McLaren 2009: 452-453). Another scholar considers the harmful tax competition initiative of the OECD which prioritizes the international community over the individual sovereignty of states constitutes an implicit global social contract (Christians 2009: 100). Therefore the non-member states may also comply with the OECD’s initiative with the idea of responsibility towards forming a global economic order by sacrificing their tax sovereignty at some level (Id. 152).

Does the cooperative approach of the non-member states mean that the construction of the meaning for the harmful tax competition is changing and the project of the OECD is being successful? My answer to this question will be negative. The strategy of the OECD on the countering harmful tax competition is coercive²⁹ and state-centric as it is recommended in the 1998 Report to consider the termination of the tax treaties with the tax havens and consider not entering into tax treaties with the tax havens even with the ones that do not offer sector-specific

²⁶ For the literature concerning the adverse effects of the tax competition on African countries which leads to poverty in those countries *see e.g.* Oguttu (2015: 528) (stating that the tax incentives offered to foreign investors to attract the investment are harmful to the African countries in the long term); Rixen (2011:452) (stating that the tax competition decrease the corporate taxation which is in fact an important instrument in African countries).

²⁷ G.A. Res. 41/128, U.N. Doc. A/RES/41/128 (Dec. 4, 1986).

²⁸ *See e.g.* Townsend (2001: 254) (stating that the OECD initiative on harmful tax competition violates international taxation principles especially the national fiscal sovereignty); James (2002: 5) (stating that the measures developed in the OECD initiative had tremendously negative effects on non-member states’ ability to maintain the tax sovereignty); Biswas (2002: 1-2) (stating that the OECD with its harmful tax competition project interferes the fiscal sovereignty which is protected both by the sovereign states and by the international law).

²⁹ Townsend (2001) (considering the OECD as “Bully” due to its coercive and deviant effort towards non-member countries to counter harmful tax competition).

distorting tax regimes. Within this scope, it is not a matter of the compliance of the international soft law or social contract, but it is a matter of the game theory between the powerful states and the less powerful ones. Most of the non-member states are now willing to comply with these recommendations because otherwise, they will be out of the game. In other words, the OECD's project on harmful tax competition eliminates the negotiation power of the non-member states (Townsend 2001: 254). This coercive negotiation strategy of the OECD may accomplish its objective in the short term, but the long term solutions for the countering harmful tax competition objective needs a real cooperative and inclusive approach (not being left only on the paper as the OECD did in its project). The approach and the success of the OECD on the countering harmful tax competition are questionable because the OECD stands today at the same place where it stayed at least in 1998. However, the world is changing and the OECD should understand the needs of the changing world. The OECD, by ignoring this fact continuously, imposes particular pressure on developing countries within the framework of cooperation to eliminate the low or no tax regimes for countering harmful tax competition. The OECD may change this position through a consistent, cooperative, and uniting project so that there will be not any outsiders (developing, non-member countries) or insiders (developed, member countries).

CONCLUSION

In this study, the concept of the harmful tax competition from the lens of the OECD is examined and rethought philosophically. The OECD has been dealing with this subject for a long time. However, agreement on the concept of harmful tax competition still remains an unsolved challenge. This study contended that the reason behind this may be regarded as the failure to determine the nature of the harmful tax competition due to the excessive focus on the technical issues by the OECD with respect to the determination of the "harmful tax competition". Therefore, this study considered harmful tax competition with philosophical perspectives through epistemology, theory, and methodology.

It is contended that the OECD failed to justify the assumption that tax competition under specified circumstances is regarded as "harmful" around the world in the same way and it harms global welfare. By doing this, the OECD does not take into account that the meaning of harmful tax competition can be constructed differently by different societies. In fact, based on the different meaning construction, the same kind of tax competition may be regarded as "beneficial" by different states, while the OECD regards it as "harmful". The OECD, by ignoring this fact, imposes particular pressure on developing countries within the framework of cooperation to eliminate the low or no tax regimes for countering the harmful tax competition and failed. Therefore, this study concludes that to understand and solve the real challenges, a philosophical rethinking of the concept of harmful tax competition is needed in the international tax law level.

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Citation: Lever J. (2020) *Understanding halal food production and consumption in 'the West'. Beyond dominant narratives*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 89-102. doi: 10.13128/cambio-9001

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Eliasian Themes

Understanding halal food production and consumption in 'the West'. Beyond dominant narratives

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Abstract. In recent decades, the increasing visibility of halal food has become highly emotive and controversial, with halal meat in particular being seen as an indicator of the growing presence of Islam and what are seen to be 'barbaric' Muslim food practices. In this paper, I move beyond these dominant narratives to demonstrate how, as the UK halal market has expanded, and the range of halal food options has increased, Muslim consumers have been compelled to justify their halal food choices in ever more complex ways. Within the sociology of food literature, the proliferation of food choice often draws on the notion of informalisation to illustrate the dissolution of structures governing food production and consumption. Here, drawing on insights from Eliasian sociology, I present a more compelling account of informalisation, not only to move beyond the notion of halal as a 'barbaric' practice, but to illustrate that Muslim and non-Muslim consumers have very similar concerns and anxieties about food production and consumption.

Keywords: figurations, food production and consumption, halal practice, informalisation, Muslim consumers.

INTRODUCTION

During the second half of the twentieth century the economic foundations of Western diets were transformed in ways that created possibilities to eat in much more varied ways (Warde 2016). In the intervening decades, ethnic food has become a central element of food markets in consumer societies (Belasco and Scranton 2001). The ongoing expansion of the global halal market must be seen in this light, and there is now an emerging body of research exploring how Muslims consume and practice halal in an everyday context in «the West» (Bergeaud-Blackler et al. 2015; Fischer 2011; Lever 2013; Lever and Fischer 2018; Siddiqui 2012; Toğuşlu 2015).

In Arabic, the word *halal* literally means «permissible» or «lawful». In relation to food in particular it signifies «purity» and is protected by certain Islamic principles, most notably the avoidance of pork and alcohol (Bergeaud-Blackler et al. 2015; Armanios and Ergene 2018). There are also important considerations about the slaughter of animals for food. Indeed, given the prior sacrificial significance of slaughter in near eastern culture (Fischler 2011), it has long been accepted that to be fit for human consumption meat must come from slaughtered animals. Over time, however, differences have emerged between *People of the Book* (Jews, Christians and Muslims) about the acceptability of stunning animals before slaughter (Lever 2019). Until recently, all meat produced by Christian and Jews was considered acceptable by the vast majority of UK Muslims (Lever and Miele 2012). In recent decades, however, the standardised industrial practice of stunning animals before slaughter has been contested by a growing minority of Muslims in line with controversy about war in the Middle East and debates about what it means to live a religious life in Western societies (Marranci 2009; Siddiqui 2012; Toğuşlu 2015; Armanios and Ergene 2018; Lever 2019).

In this context, halal has become highly complex, emotive and controversial – with halal meat in particular being seen as an indicator of the growing presence of Islam and what are seen to be ‘*barbaric*’ Muslim food practices (Mukherjee 2014; Grumett 2015). In the UK, much of the controversy revolves around the production of halal meat from non-stunned animals and perceived threats to animal welfare and national identity (Lever 2019), with much of the halal literature focusing on the underlying issues (that is, certification and methods of slaughter) (e.g. Lever and Miele 2012; Fuseini et al. 2020). In this paper, I move beyond the insights provided in this literature to demonstrate how, as the UK halal market has expanded, and the range of halal dining options has increased, Muslim consumers have been presented with increasingly difficult food choices.

Unlike other ethnic foods and cuisines, halal is not associated with a particular cuisine or national territory (Armanios and Ergene 2018). In the last decade or so, it has thus become a particularly attractive option for fast food restaurants, discounting pizza and pasta chains, and a wide range of eating establishments. While a number of Muslim requirements have already been met in the global food industry to allay Muslim anxiety about contamination (from pork and alcohol) during industrial production (Bergeaud-Blackler et al. 2015; Armanios and Ergene 2018), these developments have increased market complexity and consumer anxiety considerably.

Within the sociology of food literature, the notion informalisation is often used in this context to illustrate the dissolution of structures underpinning the proliferation of food choice (Warde 1997; Warde and Martens 2000; Warde 2016; Paddock et al. 2017). While these accounts provide useful insights, they fail to fully recognise, I contend, Wouters’ (1977; 1986; 2008; 2011) claim that processes of informalisation increase demands for greater self-discipline and emotional self-management within the contours of the civilising process (Elias 2012). Indeed, as questions of what to eat, where to eat and how to comport the body become more open to judgement, Wouters’ work suggests that the need for more elaborate forms of justification increases, and that consumers require greater self-discipline when deciding what and what not to eat. Drawing on this conceptual apparatus and body of work, in this paper I explore the increasingly complex food choices Muslim consumers encounter when deciding what is and is not acceptable halal practice.

The paper starts off by outlining the research context and the methods employed. It then explores how notions of anxiety, anomie, and informalisation have been used in the sociology of food literature to contextualise the dissolution of structures governing food production and the proliferation of food choice from the late 20th century onwards. This is followed by an investigation of the ways in which traditional halal practices (arriving via migrants from South Asia) intersected with various developments in the food industry and global politics to lay the foundations for the emergence of the UK halal market. Drawing on empirical material from a study of halal production and consumption in Manchester, I then provide a detailed analysis of the changing practice of halal consumers, which helps us to move beyond simple discursive understandings of halal as a ‘*barbaric*’ practice. I conclude with some reflections on the implications of this analysis for understandings of consumption practices and the future trajectory of the civilising process.

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODS

Empirically the paper builds on research undertaken over the last decade (Lever and Miele 2012; Bergeaud-Blackler et al 2015; Lever and Fischer 2018). More specifically, it draws on a small qualitative study of middle-class Muslim consumers in Manchester in the UK, which examined how historical, political and institutional settings shape the market for religiously certified food products and particular forms of consumer understanding and practice¹.

Religious food consumers were selected and recruited via a snowball sampling strategy initiated with personal and professional contacts, which facilitated purposive recruitment from across the wider city region. Although the Muslim population in the UK and Manchester is highly diverse, the vast majority have roots in South Asia, and our sampling strategy pivoted towards this demographic by default. Muslim consumers from other countries and regions were also recruited, but the political contestation revolving around halal meat at the time appeared to hinder wider recruitment. It was also difficult to recruit older Muslims, who didn't recognise the significance of the research to the same extent as younger participants.

Data were collected via semi-structured interviews to explore overarching themes of religion, regulation and consumption identified in the literature (Bergeaud-Blackler et al., 2015; Fischer 2011; Lever and Fischer 2018; Sid-diqui 2012; Toğuşlu 2015). Interviews were complimented with sustained periods of participant observation (visiting food businesses, certifiers, religious and community-based organisations) to develop a close understanding of the pressures and challenges faced by participants. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, before interview and observational data were open coded in excel to identify key themes revolving around the overarching themes identified above. Analysis of various texts, notably certification requirements and online food guides, was also conducted. Pseudonyms are used throughout the paper protect the anonymity of participants, who are listed in Table 1 below.

INFORMALISATION AND THE PROLIFERATION OF FOOD CHOICE

Within the sociology of food literature, informalisation is often understood to illustrate the dissolution of structures governing national food cultures and cuisines (see Poulain 2012). Fischler (1980) and Warde (1997)

Table 1. Muslim Consumers in Manchester.

Name/ Gender	Age	Occupation	Country of birth (cultural heritage)	Marital status/ children
Ahmed (M)	Late 40s	University Professor	Egypt	Married/ 3 children
Iffat (F)	Late 20s	Lawyer	UK (Pakistan)	Single
Imran (M)	Mid 30s	Community Worker	UK (Pakistan)	Married/ 3 children
Hussein (M)	Late 30s	Restaurant Manager	Egypt	Married/ 2 children
Javid (M)	Early 40s	Secondary School Teacher	UK (Pakistan)	Married/ 3 children
Khadija (F)	Mid 30s	Pharmacist	Nigeria	Married/ 3 children
Omar (M)	Late 30s	General Practitioner	UK (Pakistan)	Married/ 3 children
Rabia (F)	Early 20s	Cook/ Waitress	UK (Pakistan)	Single
Rida (F)	Mid 20s	Trainee Lawyer	UK (Pakistan/India)	Single
Shabbir (M)	Mid 60s	Engineer/ Bus Conductor	Pakistan	Married/ 3 children
Saeed (M)	Late 40s	Research Fellow	Bangladesh	Married/ 3 children
Tabraiz (M)	Early 40s	Imam	South Africa	Single
Ibrahim (M)	Late 30s	Businessman	UK (Pakistan)	Married/ 2 children
Abid (M)	Early 40s	Imam	UK (Pakistan)	Married/ 3 children
Farrokh (M)	Late 40s	Shop Owner	UK (Pakistan)	Married/ 2 children

¹ This was part of a larger study of kosher and halal food production and consumption in Manchester in the UK and Copenhagen in Denmark.

both drew on Durkheim's notion of anomie to emphasise the loosening of social-constraints associated with the proliferation of food choice in this sense. Given these trends, the question underpinning much research in food scholarship in recent decades has not surprisingly focussed on the question of «why people eat what they do?» (Warde 2016: 80). If this was simply a matter of free choice, it would stupefy most individuals, and many studies have not surprisingly focused on the nature of consumer anxiety. This situation is evident most clearly in Fischler's (1980) notion of gastro-anomie, which suggests that while humans can, as omnivores, consume and digest a wide range of foods, they must also avoid foods that are biologically harmful. Consequently, as the food industry has expanded, and food has choice proliferated, Warde (2016: 80) argues that the anxiety associated with the paradox has also increased to facilitate a «crisis of gastronomy».

Recent studies drawing on informalisation have emphasised the changing significance of the meal and eating out among the middle classes (Warde 1997; Warde and Martens 2000; Paddock et al. 2017; Warde 2016). While people eat outside the home more often than they did twenty years ago, Paddock et al. (2017) suggest that the casualization and simplification of eating out means that the middle classes now spend less time eating, do not dress up to the extent, and eat alone more frequently than they once did. While these accounts provide useful background information into the changing contours of halal food consumption and practice, I argue that informalisation is better viewed as part of the increasing demand for greater self-discipline and emotional self-management (Wouters 1977; 1986; 2008; 2011) when deciding what is and is not acceptable. Warde (2016) appears to recognise the significance of Wouters' work in this sense. But there is increasing recognition that by positioning practices (rather than individuals and social structures) at the heart of social analysis ontologically, theories of practice fail to adequately consider the ways in which relations of power shape and contextualise practices (Sayer 2013) in the face of «global flows of capital, corporate interests, brands and advertising» (Evans 2019: 511).

Wouters' discussion of the relaxation of societal, workplace and sexual relations from the 1960s onwards (and the ensuing deregulation of a plethora of social practices) provides a much more insightful way, I contend, of examining the pressure created by the ongoing expansion of global food markets. Indeed, while Wouters' account of informalisation reflects changes in the balance of power between diverse social and cultural groups, it also reflects, he argues, «the discovery and expression of hitherto concealed emotions as a prerequisite for knowing oneself» (1986: 4). As we observe throughout this paper, these trends emphasise a central aspect of the European civilising process (Elias 2012); that is, the long-term shift, within increasingly complex figurational settings, in the balance between external *social constraints* (control by *other people* and external institutions) and internal *self-restraints* (control by oneself, without the immediate presence of other people). There is, we could say, in this context, a tilting of the balance of habit (and hence practice) in the steering of behaviour and feeling, from the former towards the latter.

For Elias (2012), figurations can be understood through the notion of «social dances». A social dance lasts for an extended period of time; those dancing at the start are unlikely to be dancing at the end; the music will change; people will arrive and leave; but the dance will go on. Conceptually, figurations are thus always in flux, a process of becoming (Stanley 2017). They highlight the asymmetrical power relations that bind individuals and groups together in dynamic networks of social, economic and political interdependence that exist independently *of*, but not *without*, the individuals and groups that comprise them; and which cut across the agency–structure divide (in cities, states and markets, for example) to facilitate unanticipated and often unintended outcomes (Connolly and Dolan 2017).

In a foundational text in the sociology of eating, Mennell (1985) uses these insights to explore the increasing pressure towards self-control around eating from the late Middle Ages onwards. While *diminishing* contrasts between social groups were a central feature of these developments over the long term, he argues that *variety* in food choice was also central to the emergence of consumer societies during the late twentieth century. Indeed, as social relations became less unequal, and processes of informalisation (Wouters 1999) spiralled with complex figurational settings, Mennell (1985) shows that the practice of eating became ever more complex, and that it became increasingly difficult to disentangle the aesthetic and nutritional aspects of food habits from each other.

This complex interplay of food habits has continued to grow in consumer societies (Belasco and Scranton 2001) in line with the rise of «immigrant cuisines» (Mennell 1985) – and a potential «global cuisine» (Mennell

et al. 1992) – to which the rise of the global halal food market can now be aligned (Bergeaud-Blackler et al. 2015; Armanios and Ergene 2018; Lever and Fischer 2018). Indeed, as the empirical analysis of halal consumption and practice in this paper demonstrates, the underlying process of informalisation not only allows us to understand the increasingly complex food choices Muslim now encounter in “the West”, it also allows us to see that Muslim and non-Muslim consumers have (very) similar rather than (extremely) disparate concerns about food production and consumption. It is to these issues that I now turn.

TRADITIONAL HALAL PRACTICE

The presence of Muslims in the UK can be traced back at least three centuries to the activities of East India Company, but it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that Yemini sailors known as *lascars* started settling in port towns and cities in greater numbers (Ansari, 2009). Muslim cafes were still evident around Manchester and Salford docks in the early 1950s (Halliday 1992). However, concerns about halal food did not emerge until migration from the Indian subcontinent began to increase in the following decades (Lever and Fischer 2018)².

South Asian migrants were the carriers of religious food practices and in the absence of halal food such practice could be difficult to maintain. Shabbir remembered how he practiced halal in this context:

When we came in this country in 1966, we used to buy from the Jewish shop because we know... they slaughter our way... I'd also... go to the farm, have the chicken, and halal slaughter it myself.

As Manchester's south Asian Muslim population expanded, however, south Asian cafés and grocery stores selling halal meat and other south Asian foods began to proliferate. Many south Asian café owners were originally factory workers who went into business to provide food for their fellow workers (Buettner 2008). Saeed, originally from Bangladesh, remembered his childhood in Manchester in this context:

I remember coming down to an Asian cafe in Rusholme for halal lunches of samosas, breads and curries for workers in my uncle's factory in Ancoats [in central Manchester].

Working-class cafes continued to serve south Asian customers in the coming decades. Over time, however, relations between a new generation of UK consumers (eager to escape the limitations of the nation's culinary practices) and South Asian restaurateurs (eager to expand their business interests) changed in unforeseen ways to facilitate the rise of «curry culture» (Buettner 2008).

As social relations became less unequal and processes of informalisation spiralled throughout the 1960s (Wouters 1999), the number of south Asian cafes, restaurants and chefs grew rapidly, and a younger generation of UK consumers were gradually recruited to the culinary tastes of south Asian gastronomy (Buettner 2008). Although not the sole influence, students played a significant role in these developments, and many of the first south Asian restaurants targeting non-Muslims opened near university campuses (Jamal 1996). Wilmslow Road stretching out through Fallowfield to the south of the city centre past the University of Manchester was a typical city high street in the late 1960s. Less than two decades later, however, numerous south Asian cafes and restaurants had appeared on what would soon become known as the *Curry Mile*.

These developments also laid the foundations for the emergence of south Asian food manufacturers and wholesalers. Some of these businesses, anticipating wider processes of supermarkization and globalization (Kjærnes et al. 2007), eventually started supplying mainstream supermarkets with south Asian products (samosas and chutneys, for example) for the first time (Werbner 1999). As we shall see, it was in this changing figurational context that traditional halal practices became ever more aligned with the mainstream food sector – developments that would, over time, increase the pressures face by Muslim consumers considerably.

² Similar concerns emerged around Jewish migrants and kosher practice a century earlier (Lever 2019).

TOWARDS MAINSTREAM HALAL PRACTICE

Although there were debates about the presence of halal food throughout the post-war period, it was not until the early 1980s that debate intensified as a result of controversy over the provision of halal meat in schools in Bradford in West Yorkshire (Lever 2019). The ensuing political fallout led to the emergence of the nation's first halal certification body – The Halal Food Authority (HFA)³, which emerged in 1994 to protect Muslim interests (Ansari 2009). Over the next decade or so, the HFA operated largely unchallenged, aligning traditional halal food practices with the formalized rules and standards of the European regulated meat industry that require all animals to be stunned before slaughter (Lever and Miele 2012). From the early 2000s, however, as war in the Middle East intensified debate about what a religious life in ‘the West’ entailed, halal food began to take on a wider significance for growing numbers of Muslim consumers (Marranci 2009; Siddiqui, 2012; Lever 2013; Toğuşlu 2015; Armanios and Ergene 2018).

It was at this juncture, as the global halal market began to expand (Bergeaud-Blackler et al., 2015), that the more orthodox Halal Monitoring Committee (HMC)⁴ emerged. The UK Muslim population was also expanding at this time, numerically and also geographically out of the inner city areas where they had originally settled (Lever 2019)⁵. In this increasingly complex figurational setting, the HMC set out to realign halal meat production with traditional halal practices, thus intensifying debate about halal considerably (Lever and Miele 2012). While the HFA had quietly aligned traditional Muslim food practices with scientific consensus about the animal welfare benefits of pre-slaughter stunning over the previous decade, the HMC set about challenging this position by presenting traditional halal practice and non-stunned slaughter as “authentic” halal (Lever and Miele 2012)⁶. As animals must be alive at the time of slaughter for meat to be considered halal, the HMC claims that the standardised stunning techniques used throughout the food industry heighten the risk of death before slaughter, thus leaving «a huge doubt into the halalness» of industrially produced meat and poultry⁷. From this point onwards, the HMC thus became increasingly popular among Muslim butchers, cafés and restaurant owners in areas of towns and cities with a large Muslim population – in and around the Curry Mile in Manchester, for example.

CONTROVERSY, MARKET TRANSPARENCY AND MISUNDERSTANDING

When the UK halal market was starting to expand around the turn of the twenty-first century, stunned halal meat and poultry were often produced at different times, or on different production lines (within the same slaughterhouses and meat processing factories), as non-halal meat and poultry⁸.

As the market for non-stun halal meat and poultry continued to expand and become more visible through the HMCs work with the branding agency National Halal⁹ and corporate retailers such as Tesco¹⁰ (see Figure 1), it became increasingly controversial (Lever 2019). Indeed, as an emergent process of *formalisation* – characterised by nationalism and anti-Muslim sentiment – spiralled alongside the prevailing process of *informalisation* (Wouters 1986; 2011), many UK food businesses and their certification partners responded by making halal meat from stunned animals harder to identify by removing information about slaughter methods. While this helped to protect commercial interests in the larger market for stunned halal meat, it also intensified debate in the much smaller market for non-stun meat, thus increasing misleading media reports about the role and place Muslims in wider

³ The Halal Food Authority (<https://www.halalfoodauthority.com>).

⁴ The Halal Monitoring Committee (<https://halalhmc.org>).

⁵ Between 2001-2011, the UK Muslim population expanded from 1.55 million to 2.71 million (ONS, 2015).

⁶ A useful account of debates about the spiritual aspects of meat production is provided by Farouk et al. (2014).

⁷ <https://halalhmc.org/resources/issues-of-mechanical-slaughter-and-stunning/> (consulted on 5th July 2019).

⁸ Very often, the only difference was the recital of a prayer by a Muslim worker at the time of slaughter (see note 13 below)

⁹ Today National Halal promotes itself as the most ethical and established halal food brand in UK and Europe (<http://nationalhalal.com>).

¹⁰ Tesco is a multinational retailer based in the UK.



Figure 1. National Halal Meat Centre, Tesco Manchester.

society (Lever 2019). As Elias (2012) argued in *On the Process of Civilisation*, while some things are essential for society to function effectively (Lever and Milbourne 2017), things that offend civilised sensibilities – in this case, halal food – *must* be hidden from public view though a wider process of quarantine and concealment (Lever 2019).

Research conducted over the last decade confirms that debates among Muslims about slaughter practice and stunning methods are characterized by a high level of misunderstanding (Lever and Fischer 2018). While Rabia, for example, states that she only eats halal meat, this is because, as she understands it, all halal meat in the UK comes from non-stunned animals, when most actually comes from pre-stunned animals (Lever and Miele 2012; Lever 2019, FSA, 2019).

Although Javid believes that stunning is '*not really a big deal*', he also suggests that it can still be very difficult, given this lack of market transparency, to know who to trust and how to make an appropriate judgement when eating at international restaurant chains that offer halal food options:

A lot of my friends and family eat at Nando's because it is halal, I haven't got a problem with them eating at Nando's because it is halal as far as I know. I don't eat at Nando's... largely because I can't see how ... that amount of meat is slaughtered in a halal way over so many stores.¹¹

¹¹ Nando's is a South African restaurant chain that specialises in Portuguese-African food, including flame-grilled chicken.

Ahmed questions the motives of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)¹² in a similar way, asking how it is possible to sell “halal” chicken in some restaurants in Manchester and not in others:

[I]n KFC in the Arndale [Shopping Centre] you will find a big sign halal, but in the same branch in the Trafford [Shopping] Centre it doesn't exist, and when you ask, no this branch is not halal... how they can guarantee the whole process, I don't know.

Khadija has similar concerns, and to eliminate the possibility that any chicken she ingests may have been killed by stunning she only consumes non-stunned chicken:

Because there's a question mark on the stunning of the animal I go for the HMC, the Halal Monitoring Committee because they scrutinise the stunning especially on a small animal [chickens]. So, I go for HMC as opposed to the other [HFA].

Although Muslim anxieties about potential contamination from pork and alcohol during industrial production have been widely recognised (Bergeaud-Blackler et al. 2015; Armanios and Ergene 2018), it also appears that Muslim consumers have similar concerns to non-Muslim consumers – often about the same foods, including chicken (Jackson 2015).

In situations where halal business practices *are* visible to consumers, they are often adjacent to a wide range of practices that are again questionable for Muslims. For example, restaurants often sell halal and non-halal products on the same menu, thus increasing concern and anxiety in different ways. Khadija's insights are again instructive:

When I'm eating out in a restaurant... some of them say... the chicken is halal, but the beef isn't, so then you know how to order. So, you ask, wherever you go you ask.

Ahmed and Hussein have a different approach. When they find themselves in a situation where they are unsure whether their meat is halal, they simply recite *Bismillah* (in the name of God/ God is great) to alleviate any concerns, although they admit that they find the experience disconcerting¹³.

Ibrahim is far stricter, but he faces similar challenges, and he argues that selling halal meat in the same restaurant as non-halal meat is totally unacceptable:

What people don't realise is that halal isn't just about how it is slaughtered, it is a status, you can slaughter something halal, but if it's not a halal restaurant it is immediately cross-contaminated.

Similar trends are evident in neighbourhood shops, butchers and bakeries. While the shop owner Farrokh claims that «it is not possible to sell halal meat these days without HMC certification», Javid notes that this position is politically and commercially contested:

Most animals in the UK are stunned and there's a position within Islamic law that allows for that. So stunning... is a bit of a political issue... and it's often used commercially.

In this context, as Tabraiz notes, it is thus often «left to the individual to ascertain... which [certification] organisation... [is] more reputable».

While many Muslim consumers still take what their fellow Muslims say at face value, the increasing politicization of halal has lessened trust between Muslims considerably. Abid explained how going to a bakery with a friend not far from the Curry Mile led to a heated argument about what could legitimately be classed as halal. When his friend offered to buy him lunch, Abid chose a product that was sold as halal, but his friend refused to pay for it because it was not certified by the HMC. Abid explained:

¹² KFC is an American fast food chain that specializes in fried chicken.

¹³ This practice is usual before the act of animal slaughter, when slaughterers invoke the name of Allah (tasmiyya) by saying Bismillah (“In the name of God”) followed by Allah Akbar (“God is Great”).

So I got a chicken pasty and he said is it HMC. And the lady behind the counter said no it's not HMC, but I can guarantee it's halal, but he said he didn't want it. But then the lady behind the counter got a bit upset... She said look, "I'm telling you it's halal, you know you should be taking my word for it, it's halal, but you're not going to have it just because it's not HMC".

As this discussion illustrates, trust is as much of an issue as slaughter and certification practice for many Muslim consumers.

INCREASING MARKET COMPLEXITY AND INFORMALISATION

The processes of informalisation spiralled considerably after the 2008 recession (Paddock et al. 2017). By 2016 Muslims were estimated to be spending £4.64 billion (around 8% of the UK's total food and drink spend) on halal, with Muslims also claiming to eat outside the home more often than other socioeconomic groups (Stannard and Clarke 2020). Unsurprisingly, the number of online guides promoting eating out for halal also proliferated during this period (Armanios and Ergene 2018). Take the Halal Dining Club, for example, which promotes eating out for halal food in Manchester alongside sport, art and other cultural pastimes, and Halal Food Gastronomy, a similar online guide (see Figure 2). As these guides illustrate, the rise of the *foodie* – in this case the *Haloodie*¹⁴ – can be linked to the rapid growth in eating out during this period, and with varied and distinctive ways of eating foods that are often seen to be (but not always are) of a higher authenticity, quality or aesthetic register (de Solier 2013; Warde 2016).

This has changed the social etiquette around eating out for halal significantly, as Iffat noted:

Here in Spinningfields in Manchester alone there's about fifteen halal restaurants within a mile proximity. There's a halal Brazilian, there's a halal Italian, there's halal Turkish, Spanish... so it's all very readily available now, which is good... for the palate.

Second and third-generation Muslims are now much likely, it appears, to try a greater variety of cuisines than first generation Muslims (Stannard and Clarke 2020). But in complex figurational settings where it is increasingly difficult to know what to eat, where to eat and how to comport the body, it also seems clear that the need to be more questioning when deciding what is and is not acceptable halal practice has increased likewise. When Rabia, for example, eats out with friends and doesn't know the café or restaurant, she looks at the menu, and if she doesn't like what's on offer, she just orders fish. Rida makes a similar point. On the one hand, when she goes out with non-Muslim friends to places that don't serve halal food, she simply has the fish or vegetarian option. On the other hand, when she goes to an Asian restaurant with her family, she will order halal steak and chips or halal lasagne, although if she is unsure, she will always ask for confirmation of where the meat comes from.

When power and status of differentials between diverse social and cultural groups decline rapidly in complex figurational settings, as they have done in this case, Wouters (2008) suggests that embarrassment can become a problem, as things once seen as dangerous (for example, unacceptable food choices) come out into the open. Restaurants are potential sites of embarrassment (Warde and Martens 2000) for Muslim consumers in this sense, I contend, for it is here that contemporary halal practice is negotiated in the presence of (other) Muslim and non-Muslim diners (*and* waiting staff) alike.

While Khadija always asks questions about meat purporting to be halal in the restaurants she frequents, Saeed does not feel comfortable asking such questions, and he tends to make the decision about whether he will eat at a restaurant before he enters. He expressed these feelings strongly, stating that:

That's very difficult... when you see the restaurant's menu you take it that they're... halal ... I wouldn't really go in and ask a manager ... where do you source your meat from? ... I suppose there is a bit of a compromise ... you know, you don't really have that control.

¹⁴ The trademarked term and brand *haloodie* were first used by two UK entrepreneurs in 2013 (see <https://haloodies.com>).

¹⁵ This is a montage of freely available images in the public domain.



Figure 2. Halal Dining Options.¹⁵

Eating out, I contend, in this context, thus requires greater self-discipline and skill when deciding what to eat, where to eat, and what is and is not acceptable.

Another influential source of tension and anxiety around eating halal revolves around health, diet and nutrition. Medical discourses have had a pervasive influence on Western habits and food has become an important tool for medical interventions to encourage healthy lifestyles (Turner 1982; Warde 2016). This is particularly evident among UK Pakistanis, who are much more likely to suffer health problems than the rest of the population, particularly type two diabetes, because they follow a narrow meat-based diet (Lawton et al. 2007).

Imran has diabetes and he watches what he eats carefully, while Javid and Omar also recognise that the high consumption of red meat in Pakistani communities is highly problematic. Javid goes further, arguing that if what Muslims eat is making them ill, they need to start asking different questions linked to religious and spiritual considerations:

So the question should be how halal is your halal diet, because if it's leading to inevitable illness, and if health is safeguarded within the Quran, then the way we eat and the way we live has to be managed better in order for us to say that it is halal.

Interestingly, while Rabia understands little about actualities of halal meat production, she attaches great importance to what she regards as the spiritual aspects of halal, stating that she associates halal with «thinking about» – or «liking to think about» – animals being killed in the right way. Rida also feels more comfortable knowing that meat has been produced as halal in accordance with Islamic rules, although she agrees that halal is not necessarily healthier, and that it often contains many of the same unhealthy ingredients as non-halal food¹⁶. As we have seen, this feeds directly into her dining habits and halal consumption practices.

Iffat sums up the complexities around and health, religion and spiritually usefully, illustrating the cultural complexities involved when deciding what to eat and how to comport the body:

¹⁶ It has been argued that certifying nutritionally deficient products as halal is misleading in this sense (Tieman 2016).

I don't think it's healthier. I think it's a little bit more humane to the animal, that's what we're taught, we learn, and we believe, but I don't think it's healthier.

In this context, it seems clear that religious and spiritual considerations often overlap with concerns about diet, health and nutrition, for example, to emphasise ongoing debate about what is and is not acceptable halal practice among diverse groups of Muslim consumers (Siddiqui 2012).

Environmental and ethical issues are also increasingly important considerations (Armanios and Ergene 2018). Saeed notes that he tries to consider animal welfare and environmental issues whenever he can, and he argues that that the ethics of food consumption is a concern «whether you're a believer in a religion or not». Reflecting on this, he adds that for many Muslim consumers halal is now as much about ethics as it is about stunning and certification practices:

People when they're thinking about halal food will also think about how ethically sourced the food was... I mean if it was a battery farmed chicken, for example, it might be slaughtered in a halal manner, but the halalness about how it was raised and kept is often questionable.

Javid indicates that he has similar discussions with his wife about any new products they bring into the home, the overriding concern being to educate their children about what questions they should be asking to live a more appropriate lifestyle. While halal might be part of these discussions, he notes that this isn't always the case, and that they might also talk about the ethics and health implications of their food choices.

NEW QUESTIONS, NEW JUSTIFICATIONS

In complex figurational settings where it is increasingly difficult to know what to eat, where to eat and how to comport the body, the need to be more questioning when deciding what is and is not acceptable halal practice has clearly increased. It is worth returning to the notion the *Haloodie* briefly at this juncture, not least because it symbolises an important issue for many young Muslims in the UK. While Shabbir, the eldest member of our sample, stated a preference for eating traditional Pakistani food in the family home, younger Muslims with more varied tastes are starting to challenge traditional understandings of what can and cannot be classed as halal. In this context, as Armanios and Ergene (2018: 250) point out, «is this halal?» thus becomes an overriding concern of many young Muslims wishing to «to eat something beyond curry». Asking for halal fish and chips, for example, can thus be seen, they argue, as an expression of a more diverse Muslim identity and, I argue, of new and emerging forms of emotional self-regulation.

Imran and Omar suggest similarly that a new generation of Muslim consumers are much more questioning of food purporting to be halal than their parents, which often pushes them to look for new insights about how to live their lives. New technology is significant in this context, and Rida argues that the proliferation of halal forums on social media discussing the pros and cons of eating at fast food restaurants provide new sources of knowledge about halal. Yet she also notes that this situation places considerable cultural pressure on young Muslims, who have to make their own minds up about the acceptability of specific food and drink products when frequenting an increasing range of retail outlets and dining spaces.

For others, the search for new insight and meaning often involves returning to original religious texts and sources, as Khadija suggests:

I think people are questioning more, people are trying to study more because my feeling is... different types of food keep coming up and different types of cooking keep getting developed, so people are forced to ask these questions and they're forced to actually go back to the sources to study and make decisions.

Imran concurs, arguing that people want more certainty about halal these days, particularly the younger generation, who are highly educated, more questioning, and often more religious, than earlier generations. Halal con-

sumption, we could say, in conclusion, must be read against the backdrop against which it is practiced (Harris 1985; Mukherjee 2014).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Within the sociology of food literature, anxiety, anomie and informalisation have been widely used to contextualise the dissolution of the structures governing food consumption and the ongoing proliferation of food choice. While insightful, in this paper I have drawn on Wouters' account of informalisation, which, I have argued, offers far more compelling insights into the changing contours of food consumption and practice. While Muslim consumers encounter increased anxiety sourcing, purchasing and ingesting halal food in "the West", and feel compelled to justify their halal consumption and practice in ever more complex ways, as we have seen, these developments can be aligned with concurrent processes of formalisation which have led some halal production practices to be pushed from public view. Halal meat, we could say, in this context, is produced in ways that attract Muslim consumers and alienate (some) non-Muslim consumers simultaneously.

Significantly, the Eliasian-inspired account of informalisation presented in this paper moves beyond the notion that halal is a 'barbaric' practice, and to understand that Muslim and non-Muslim consumers have very similar concerns. As we have seen, younger Muslim consumers are developing new forms of self-regulation related to diet, health and nutrition, for example, and to ethical and environmental considerations. It seems wise to conclude that consumers everywhere face similar challenges, and that more research is needed to explore how the development of ethnic and religious food markets impact the contours of the civilising process in unforeseen, unanticipated and often profound ways.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the organisers at the 'Rethinking Halal: Genealogy, Current Trends and New Interpretations' Conference at Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) in June 2018 for an invitation to speak and develop the ideas for this paper.

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Citation: Pitasi A. (2020) *Civilizzazione, Globalizzazione e le Differenze che fanno la Differenza. In onore e memoria di Johan “Joop” Goudsblom*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 103-110. doi: 10.13128/cambio-9915

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Eliasian Themes

Civilizzazione, globalizzazione e le differenze che fanno la differenza.

In onore e memoria di Johan “Joop” Goudsblom

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Non bisogna mai cominciare dagli esperti perché, se si è completamente ignoranti, non si ha nulla da offrire, ed essi non saranno interessati al dialogo. Così bisogna prendere un po’ di dimestichezza con l’oggetto e rifletterci su, così che gli esperti ci prenderanno seriamente e potranno anche essere interessati alle nostre idee

J. Goudsblom (in Goudsblom-Pitasi,1996:123)

PROLOGO

La scomparsa di Johan Goudsblom (1932-2020), come accade ai grandi studiosi al loro trapasso, oltre al dolore per la perdita sia umana, sia intellettuale, porta con sé la sfida importante e complessa della sua notevolissima eredità scientifica e di come valorizzarla rendendola fruttuosa per il maggior numero di studiosi, studenti, policy modelers, imprenditori, professionisti e cittadini dall’intelletto curioso e vivace in tutto il mondo. Pertanto, ovviamente, si farà qualche riferimento biografico, si parlerà sinteticamente della tradizione sociologica (e storica) in cui s’iscrivono il suo pensiero e le sue opere ma si eviterà ogni impostazione noiosamente didattico – filologica che di solito tende a congelare le eredità in qualcosa di arido. Il messaggio di “Joop” è ben vivo, dinamico e vitale e questo saggio, nel suo piccolo, cercherà di dargli ulteriore energia, proponendo un filone di ricerca e formazione in buona misura eterodosso ma che al contempo è evidentemente debitore verso “Joop” e “La Scuola di Amsterdam” (Antonini, 2018). Là, ebbi l’onore di essere *Visiting Research Fellow* per un semestre nell’a.a. 1994-95, precisamente presso la *Amsterdam School for Social Science Research* (ASSSR), avendo come coordinatore Abram De Swaan e tutor Johan Goudsblom. Forse perché io sono piuttosto alto e decisamente robusto, il Professor Goudsblom mi parve da subito una mente potentissima in un corpo piuttosto esile, seppur di una certa statura, con una voce limpida, cristallina ma che sembrava venire da lontano, come se quel corpo esile fosse un

medium non abbastanza potente per darle vigore, come se la sua mente e il suo corpo andassero a velocità molto diverse e la voce cercasse di dare velocità nel mondo a quella mente. Lo ricordo generosissimo, nonostante i *cliché* sugli olandesi, e ben rammento quando lasciai il suo studio con una pila di volumi, molti suoi, che mi aveva regalato. Un grande gesto compiuto con la consueta mitezza e distanza, quasi metafisiche. Se mi definissi suo allievo sarei un millantatore, ma quel rapporto ha assunto varie forme attraverso un arco di poco più che tre lustri, iniziato con «Buongiorno professor Goudsblom» ... «Ciao Andrea» e finito con «Ciao Andrea!» e «Ciao Joop!» sul lungomare di Pescara nel 2011. Aveva 79 anni e mi fece capire con affetto ed empatia, ma anche con quella discrezione quel pudore tutto nordico, che si sarebbe ritirato a vita privata (era già in pensione da diversi anni), che avrebbe voluto andare a vivere poco fuori Amsterdam, dedicarsi alla pittura e alla propria autobiografia. Anni dopo, era il 2017, ero sullo Spui, là dove s'incrocia con la Kalverstraat, un angolino tranquillo con caffetterie e librerie in un fazzoletto di metri. In una vetrina di una libreria, vidi l'hardcover dell'autobiografia di Joop. Un libro già bellissimo graficamente che pareva ideato da van Gogh con un raffinato ritratto fotografico formale dell'autore, se ben rammento, in bianco e nero sulla quarta di copertina. Ne comprai tre o quattro copie, in prima edizione, una per me, le altre da regalare. E, nel frattempo, continuavo a ragionare su come accoppiare strutturalmente sociologia dei processi e sociologia dei sistemi complessi. Da quando, nel 1985 avevo letto *Nichilismo e Cultura* a quando vidi, trentadue anni dopo, la biografia di Joop in vetrina, ebbi la sensazione che si stesse per chiudere un cerchio importante. Da lì a poche ore avevo appuntamento con Abram De Swaan (già da un paio di anni per me confidenzialmente Bram) per una cioccolata calda e per parlargli di una sua possibile candidatura alla World Complexity Science Academy (WCSA) Medal, alla carriera. Come presidente di WCSA, ebbi l'onore di conferirgli il premio alla 8° WCSA conference che ebbe luogo presso l'Europarlamento nel novembre dell'anno successivo, occasione in cui potei formalizzare nell'agenda WCSA il filone di ricerca epistemologico – teoretico che è il fulcro del mio piano strategico d'investimento per la mia piccola parte di eredità di Joop. In quella stessa conferenza il premio WCSA alla carriera fu assegnato anche a Paolo De Nardis, per il suo contributo alla confutazione della vecchia sociologia sistemica e per il suo contributo alla macrosociologia in ambito di World Order Policy Modeling.

Avevo scoperto e letto *Nichilismo e cultura* già da liceale, uno dei due libri di sociologia che lessi da liceale (l'altro è, in questa sede, irrilevante), ma io arrivai ad Amsterdam nel 1994 seguendo le opere di De Swaan, non di Goudsblom: tuttavia, quando me lo trovai davanti per la prima volta, collegai subito quel cognome (che pronunciato in olandese per un orecchio italiano sembra un disturbo di onde radio) a quella copertina e l'emozione per me non fu poca. Gli strani giri che fa la vita.

UNA BIOGRAFIA INTELLETTUALE SINTETICA

Uno degli allievi prediletti, assieme ad Abram De Swaan, del grande Norbet Elias, fondatore della Scuola di Amsterdam ed anche nel pieno della sua maturità, Goudsblom non ha mai smesso di considerarsi un allievo e un continuatore dell'opera di Elias, arricchendola e ampliandola con applicazioni nuove rispetto alla voluminosa opera eliasiana. Ma Goudsblom ha sempre rifiutato l'idea che la sua opera potesse essere un superamento e dunque un'archiviazione dell'opera del maestro, anzi egli cercò sempre di portare avanti il link tra figurazione e (processo di) civilizzazione in senso strettamente eliasiano (Goudsblom-Pitasi 1996: 117-128, Tabboni, 1993: 269-271). Goudsblom è stato ed è, in termini di *Nachlass* intellettuale, un sociologo dei processi, un indiscusso maestro della sociologia comparativa (Sasaki, Goldstone, Zimmermann & Sandelson 2014: 631-633), un attento analista culturale dei vari *Zeitgeist* che la sua biografia gli poneva innanzi come nel comprendere e argomentare un paradosso tipico degli anni '80: il nichilismo non come negazione della cultura, bensì il nichilismo come fenomeno culturale e sociale tra innumerevoli altri (Goudsblom 1982), anch'esso inscritto tra le molteplici forme attraverso il processo di civilizzazione cerca di prendere il controllo il più possibile anche sulle più cieche forme evolutive, come il fuoco (Goudsblom 1996). Ovviamente queste poche righe hanno più la funzione di incuriosire, accostarsi all'opera di Goudsblom: una biografia intellettuale autentica richiederebbe almeno un volume intero. In questa sede invece cercherò, in modo eterodosso, di far tesoro della sua eredità intellettuale partendo da uno *statement* che certa-

mente avrebbe fatto drizzare i (non molti) capelli a Goudsblom, dati i noti punti di contrasto tra Elias e Parsons (questo un autore che, a mio avviso e non solo mio, ha causato parecchi danni alla sociologia, soprattutto due: il primo cercando di rendere assoluta una contingenza, cioè di credere che lo schema AGIL con cui descrisse gli USA del Secondo Dopoguerra potesse essere il “sistema sociale tout court” – cfr. De Nardis 1988; e l’altro sconfiggendo politicamente Sorokin nelle lotte accademiche harvardiane, senza averlo mai neppure lontanamente avvicinato come livello scientifico e dunque imponendo il banale schema AGIL più politicamente che scientificamente – cfr Pitasi 2018).

INVESTIMENTI DA UN’EREDITÀ

Da questo paragrafo comincia la presentazione della strategia d’investimento dell’eredità di Goudsblom ben sapendo, anche dalla simmeliana *Filosofia del denaro* (Simmel 1978) che gli eredi fanno un proprio piano d’investimenti col capitale, in questo caso intellettuale, ricevuto e che quel piano d’investimento non rispecchia necessariamente, anzi assai raramente accade, come avrebbe investito il “de cuius” se fosse stato ancora in vita. Se partiamo dal rapporto Elias-Parsons (Bortolini 2005), sociologia dei processi e sociologia sistemica non potrebbero essere più lontane. Mi piace ricordare che Matteo Bortolini, amico prima che collega, venne a trovarmi in quel periodo ad Amsterdam: io sommerso da una dissertazione dottorale sempre più voluminosa e complessa da consegnare al rientro dal mio Visiting e lui appena entrato in dottorato. In quei giorni avevo appuntamento con Goudsblom per intervistarlo sul suo libro sul fuoco (Goudsblom, Pitasi 1996). Poco istituzionalmente, portai Matteo con me e Goudsblom sorrise accogliente nei riguardi di entrambi. L’intervista ebbe luogo in inglese e Matteo la tradusse in italiano, ovviamente il suo nome fu inserito come traduttore e, del tutto inconsapevolmente (ma ad oggi lo considero un onore e un piacere), l’avevo fatto esordire nel mondo delle pubblicazioni. Un onore e un piacere, anche se prende ancora sul serio Parsons (Bortolini 2005), ma, al di là di me, un bellissimo gesto di apertura del Professor Goudsblom verso, all’epoca, un giovanissimo e sconosciuto studioso, gesto che ancor oggi il professor Bortolini ricorda con affetto, gratitudine e simpatia. AGIL, forse, era meno rigido e specifico di come lo considerava Elias, ma era assai meno dinamico e universalizzabile di come lo considerava Parsons (De Nardis 1988; Pitasi 2018). Le critiche di Elias, tuttavia, non furono la bordata che avrebbe affondato la sociologia sistemica parsonsiana. Tale bordata sarebbe invece arrivata da un altro sociologo sistemico che peraltro, in qualche modo, era stato interlocutore diretto di Parsons: Niklas Luhmann, il cui saggio *Warum AGIL? (Perché AGIL?)* (Luhmann 1993) fu appunto la bordata finale. Il nocciolo era che, sia sincronicamente, sia diacronicamente, un sistema non ha una funzione omogenea, come era implicito in AGIL:

1. È del tutto improbabile che, sincronicamente, scuola, famiglia, gruppo dei pari, chiesa e mass media trasmettano gli stessi identici valori e lo stesso identico modello di vita al bambino che invece si troverà, prima o poi – e più prima che poi – a gestire valori, stili di vita eterogenei, primo sguardo sulla complessità del mondo, della vita tout court.
2. Ammesso e non concesso che ciò accada sincronicamente (ma è del tutto improbabile), *tempus fugit* e, diacronicamente, il mondo cambia, gli scenari mutano e quanto appreso da bambino tende a rivelarsi in ampia misura e in tempi relativamente brevi, obsoleto. Una persona nata in URSS nel 1970, ad esempio, avrebbe avuto una formazione marxista-leninista dalle elementari alle superiori salvo poi arrivare alla fine delle superiori/all’università dovendo buttare nella pattumiera della storia suddetta formazione in concomitanza con la Perestrojka e i successivi sviluppi della Confederazione Russa.

Warum AGIL? Dimostra, dunque, che il sistema sociale non ha alcun “collante” denominato “cultura”, non esiste un unico sistema sociale e lo schema AGIL aveva solo tratteggiato un ipotetico tipo di sistema sociale del tutto specifico e contingente ovvero obsoleto e popperianamente falsificato almeno dall’evoluzione degli scenari del 1989.

Elias non avrebbe potuto tirare una simile bordata a Parsons perché per la sociologia dei processi cultura, civiltà e civilizzazione sono interconnesse, seppure il concetto elisiano di cultura sia molto più fluido, dinamico e complesso

di quello parsonsiano, come testimoniato dall'idea stessa di processo di civilizzazione. Ma Goudsblom (1932-2020) e Luhmann (1927-1998), grosso modo coetanei, non erano Elias (1897-1990) e Parsons (1902-1979), a loro volta più o meno coetanei, anche Goudsblom e Luhmann si erano trovati a dover investire le rispettive eredità.

GOUDSBLOM E LUHMANN

Ero arrivato ad Amsterdam mentre ero dottorando in Sociologia e Politiche Sociali e il mio semestre olandese rientrava appunto nel programma dottorale dell'Università di Bologna. Sin da matricola a Scienze Politiche presso il medesimo ateneo, Luhmann era stato un pilastro di tutti i corsi più importanti: amato, ammirato, aspramente criticato, duramente giudicato sul piano morale, nondimeno ritenuto da tutti i più grandi sociologi bolognesi (Ardigò, Donati e Piazzini) un autore col quale era irrinunciabile il confronto per fare davvero teoria sociologica. Ovviamente avevo anche studiato Elias ma lo conoscevo meno rispetto a Parsons e Luhmann. Questo lo sguardo con cui iniziai ad osservare la vita intellettuale della ASSSR e in particolare dei gruppi di ricerca di Abram De Swaan e Johan Goudsblom (ovviamente qui mi concentro su quello di Goudsblom). Un concetto Luhmanniano che avevo ben presente in teoria era quello delle «differenze che fanno la differenza». Non so quanto Luhmann e Goudsblom si conoscessero e non voglio fare forzature esegetiche o ermeneutiche, ma proprio Goudsblom mi diede l'esempio più pratico del concetto luhmanniano anzidetto: stava progettando un master di storia (e sociologia), in dodici lezioni, dalla comparsa della vita unicellulare sulla terra fino alla Prestroijka. La storia degli eliasiani non è la storia degli storici. Gli eliasiani non si perdono in futili cavilli e insignificanti dettagli. Il "libro sul fuoco" (dalla preistoria alla fine degli anni Ottanta del XX secolo) avrebbe costituito il testo di riferimento di una delle dodici lezioni ognuna di amplissimo respiro come quella sul fuoco. Al contempo però, io avevo in testa che le sociologie che non si perdono in futili cavilli sono le sociologie macro (Sorokin e Luhmann, i due giganti in materia, con anche importanti contributi Durkheimiani). Invece lì mi resi conto che la sociologia dei processi non si perdeva in futili cavilli e insignificanti dettagli, ma non era una sociologia strettamente macro ed essa, piuttosto, vedeva nella sua processualità dipanarsi quattro fasi distinte e interconnesse – A) psicosociale; B) micro; C) meso; D) macro (Elias 1988 – la cui più recente applicazione rivisitata è in De Swaan 2015) – applicate ad uno stesso fenomeno di impatto globale (come diremmo oggi), come il fuoco. Tutto questo senza fronzoli né barocchismi. Il dottorando ventiseienne, che al tempo ero, si chiedeva come filtrare il processo quadrifase eliasiano attraverso il paradigma sistema/ambiente luhmanniano. Col senno di poi, avrei dovuto scrivervi un saggio di epistemologia sociologica che tuttavia non scrissi mai, ma questo tema attraversò in modo sotterraneo molti miei successivi scritti sui quali non mi dilungo. La questione di epistemologia sociologica anzidetta trovò come mia contingente soluzione l'assioma che tutto ciò che fa la differenza raggiunge un impatto macro ma la sua forma operativa potrebbe non essere macro. Propongo un esempio. Un individuo in carne ed ossa di nome Karl R. Popper insegnava epistemologia alla LSE e non disdegnò di fatto mai neppure la teoria sociologica e in questo ambito il suo più importante volume fu *La società aperta e i suoi nemici* (Popper 2002). Sto parlando di Popper e della sua eredità come esempio di processualità eliasiana per cui qui non mi interessa quanto la visione popperiana fosse giusta o sbagliata, di destra o di sinistra, liberale o sociale ecc..., mi interessa piuttosto la sua evoluzione processuale eliasiana. Popper è un individuo col suo contesto psicosociale, fatto anche dei colleghi e studenti a lui più affini, entro un contesto micro la LSE e Londra in cui si colloca a sua volta entro uno scenario meso, il Regno Unito con le sue politiche accademiche che agevolano/ostacolano l'accesso e a visibilità dell'opera popperiana a livello macro che è poi quello in cui una Scuola accademica raggiunge la sua massima potenza di fuoco. I quattro livelli s'interconnettono a volte anche in forma ricorsiva. A un certo punto, nel contesto psicosociale dell'aula popperiana, comparve uno studente ungherese al quale Popper, più o meno consapevolmente ed intenzionalmente, cambierà la vita. Oggi quello studente (circa coetaneo di Goudsblom e Luhmann), ha fondato un impero finanziario considerando le bolle speculative forme di falsificazione popperiana, "crash test" per valutare quanto è davvero sana e forte un'economia nazionale, un'impresa o una borsa, ha fondato un'intera università il cui premio alla carriera a studiosi di fama mondiale vide come primo assegnatario proprio Popper e una rete di fondazioni il cui nome è appunto ispirato al titolo dell'opera sociologica

popperiana. Sto parlando di George Soros, delle sue *Open Society Foundations* e anche del suo libro più recente (Soros 2018 – anche in questo caso che sia amatissimo, ammiratissimo, disprezzatissimo oppure odiatissimo non è rilevante in questa sede). Qui è interessante vedere come dal contesto psicosociale popperiano e del suo libro sulla società aperta si sia arrivati attraverso il micro, il meso e il macro alla formazione di un impero finanziario, di policy sociale, di educational policy di impatto globale. Vicenda analoga accade al magistero di Benjamin Graham (2005 ma l'edizione originale è del 1949), da cui il giovane studente Warren Buffett trasse ispirazione per la strategia che lo portò a creare il fondo Berkshire Hathaway e il suo, oggi enorme, impero. Senza Popper e Graham niente Soros e Buffett, ma senza Soros e Buffett le opere di Popper e Graham sarebbero rimaste probabilmente al più in circoli micro di lettori. Soros e Buffett, ancorché individui in carne ed ossa, hanno generato costruzioni di senso di impatto macro e globale entro dinamiche processuali ma con un *tipping point* in cui tali costruzioni sono divenute sempre più macro e, in un certo senso, hanno acquisito vita autonoma dai loro fondatori con un'importante cesura/opera di selezione e filtraggio sistema/ambiente. In questi esempi pratici s'incontrano per la prima volta e timidamente la sociologia dei processi e la sociologia dei sistemi complessi, emancipatasi dalla vecchia e polverosa sociologia sistemica in stile AGIL.

CIVILIZZAZIONE, GLOBALIZZAZIONE, ILLUMINISMO ED ESPLICITAZIONE

Inizia la sfida di unificare sociologia dei processi e sociologia dei sistemi complessi. Sfida che di certo non si esaurirà in queste pagine ma che è appunto la strategia d'investimento su cui vorrei puntare per la mia piccola fetta di eredità di Goudsblom, ben sapendo di non esserne io l'erede principale (ad esempio cfr <https://aissr.uva.nl/content/news/2020/03/im-joop-goudsblom.html>). Bene, immaginiamo ora di dover progettare oggi un master di storia universale, nel senso di Goudsblom, rammentando il suo decisivo libro sul fuoco.

Quale potrebbe essere la prima lezione?

Propongo: Civilizzazione come Illuminismo Sociologico.

Vediamo perché.

Il fuoco inizialmente non era neppure immaginato dagli uomini preistorici, poi fu intuito e scoperto con un livello di comprensione e controllo minimo e un livello di rischio altissimo, che l'umanità inevitabilmente corse, altrimenti non saremmo neppure qui. Dal motore a vapore alla corrente elettrica, dal petrolio al nucleare, dalle energie più o meno rinnovabili a ciò che oggi è al più intuito ma ancora poco conosciuto e ancor meno controllato, il processo di civilizzazione sul fuoco, come ogni processo di civilizzazione, è un crescente processo di comprensione e controllo, processo tuttavia complesso che richiede rapidi e strategici cambiamenti nel *problem setting* e nel *problem solving*. Un processo, spesso tortuoso e turbolento, di crescente conoscenza, di rischiaramento, di illuminazione (nel senso di Luhmann 1970-1995) e di formalizzazione; le buone maniere servono, ma non sempre bastano. Il pensiero di Peter Sloterdijk, che al tempo non conoscevo, oggi ci fornisce dei tasselli per accoppiare strutturalmente sociologia dei processi e sociologia dei sistemi complessi. «Il vero concetto fondamentale della modernità non è quello di rivoluzione, ma quello di esplicitazione» (Sloterdijk 2015: 78); e che cosa è l'esplicitazione se non un processo di civilizzazione illuminante? Ciò si collega ad un concetto che in Elias e in Goudsblom è ben presente ma, per così dire, in forma occulta: quello di globalizzazione, che invece Sloterdijk esplicita nitidamente: «la globalizzazione è la rapida abrogazione del diritto all'ignoranza» (Sloterdijk 2017: 38). Nella civilizzazione intesa come globalizzazione esplicitante che non lascia tregua ad opinioni non solidamente argomentate e documentate trovano sempre meno posto le percezioni emozionali da circo mediatico e viene ampiamente ridimensionato il delirio di onnipotenza della politica (cfr. Teubner 2012: 54) e dell'opinione pubblica che ha un giudizio estetico/etico/morale/politico su tutto, soprattutto su ciò che ignora. Il giudizio politico è la maschera dietro cui si cela ignoranza, maschera della malafede.

UN PROGETTO IN DODICI LEZIONI IN MEMORIA DI GOUDSBLOM (PARTE 1)

Come anzidetto, la prima lezione sarebbe intitolata «Civilizzazione come Illuminismo Sociologico». Le successive tratterebbero in modo fluido e processuale, epistemologia, teoria, metodologia, tecniche e casi esemplari. La seconda sarebbe intitolata «Per un'epistemologia sociologica sistemico-procedurale», e fornirebbe i concetti che fanno davvero la differenza nell'accoppiamento strutturale tra sociologia dei processi e sociologia dei sistemi complessi tra cui, ad esempio:

1. il rapporto tra processualità e direttrice funzionale sistemica
2. la gestione processuale della complessità
3. il processo come effettiva implementazione del programma sistemico.

Ovviamente, questi sono solo alcuni dei concetti di un'ipotetica lezione numero due.

La terza lezione potrebbe vertere sul *World Order Policy Modeling* (De Nardis 1991) in cinque concetti chiave che potrebbero tracciare una direttrice funzionale e processuale (dal più elementare al più complesso: a) istituzionale; b) intergovernamentale, interstatale o internazionale che dir si voglia; c) federale; d) trans-sovranaazionale; e) costruttivismo neofunzionalista), mostrano come i processi sistemici non siano né forme di spontaneismo vital-energetico, ma neppure pianificazioni a tavolino di oscure e occulte élites, bensì qualcosa d'altro, che è appunto l'oggetto di questa terza lezione e che mostra come la storia sociale dell'umanità dalle caverne ad oggi stia in un libro di 100-150 pagine, per esagerare. Fino ad adesso dunque ho tratteggiato le prime tre lezioni a carattere epistemologico-teoretico comprensive dei rispettivi apparati metodologici:

1. Civilizzazione come Illuminismo Sociologico
2. Per un'epistemologia sociologica sistemico -procedurale
3. World Order Policy Modeling

La quarta lezione, più applicativa, offrirebbe agli studenti un momento di esemplificazione ed esplicitazione pratica attraverso il caso del fuoco. In sostanza, la quarta lezione sarebbe un upgrade del libro di Goudsblom (1996) e «Fuoco e civilizzazione» è un titolo al quale non riesco a trovare un'alternativa migliore.

La quinta lezione, egualmente esemplificativa, e pratica, potrebbe vertere sul cosmopolitismo come esempio di complessificazione del processo di civilizzazione, mostrando gli errori prospettici di tipo, almeno, riduzionista della peggior scienza, della politica e del mondo dato per scontato della vita quotidiana (Berger-Luckmann 1966, Berger 2012). Cultura è termine più rigido e divisivo di civiltà e questo lo è di più quello di civilizzazione, che a sua volta lo è più del concetto di cosmopolitismo già anticipato da Ernst Gombrich: «Signore e signori, il programma che avete in mano è stampato in caratteri alfabetici che derivano dal fenicio, modificati dai greci e dai romani e dagli scribi carolingi in forme che furono riprese nel corso del rinascimento italiano, i numeri ci sono pervenuti dall'antica India per il tramite degli arabi, la carta su cui il programma è stampato è un'invenzione cinese, giunta in Occidente nell'VIII secolo [...] siamo dunque eredi di molte e diverse civiltà» (1985: 15). Tutto è interconnesso e intrecciato con tutto, ogni tentativo di sottrarre e separare è disastroso e conduce a conflitti e guerre tanto dolorosi quanto insensati che di fatto intrecciano e interconnettono tutto ancor di più (Remotti 1996). La sesta e ultima lezione del primo blocco potrebbe vertere su civilizzazione e globalizzazione delle politiche sociosanitarie, per mostrare come cosmopolitismo, globalizzazione e centralizzazione del *policy modeling* siano euristiche viabili per una *knowledge based and science intensive society* la cui priorità strategica è evidente anche in questo scenario pandemico da COVID-19. Questa sesta lezione costituirebbe anche un importante declinazione pratica della terza lezione.

Riepilogando:

- Lezione 1. Civilizzazione come Illuminismo Sociologico
- Lezione 2. Per un'epistemologia sociologica sistemico-procedurale
- Lezione 3. World Order Policy Modeling
- Lezione 4 Fuoco e Civilizzazione
- Lezione 5 Civilizzazione, Cosmopolitismo e Complessità
- Lezione 6 Civilizzazione e globalizzazione delle politiche sociosanitarie.

UN PROGETTO IN DODICI LEZIONI IN MEMORIA DI GOUDSBLOM (PARTE 2)

La settima lezione avrebbe per oggetto il Nichilismo (Goudsblom, 1982) come accelerante della civilizzazione, l'ottava lezione si focalizzerebbe sulla metodologia processuale e sulla complessità sistemica della progettazione organizzativa. Una sfida al mindset di molti policy modellers e policy makers. La nona verterebbe sull'Homo Sapiens. Sapiens come forma evolutiva contingente ossia sulla portata e sull'impatto dei processi sulla nostra specie. Una lezione particolarmente focalizzata sugli sviluppi tecnologici che fanno la differenza. La decima lezione potrebbe essere focalizzata su sistemi complessi, processi e intangibili globali ovvero sulle forme di smaterializzazione compiute dai processi sempre più veloci, globali e potenti (digitalizzazione, finanza, standardizzazione isotropica delle policies, pervasività della scienza nella politica ad esempio nel fondare i diritti umani su conoscenze scientifiche come nel caso dell'eguaglianza e del suo opposto, il razzismo, confutato scientificamente dall'inesistenza delle razze entro la specie umana). L'undicesima lezione sarebbe un classico della Scuola di Amsterdam: lo sport come processo sistemico globale. La dodicesima lezione avrebbe la forma di una tavola rotonda con tutti gli undici relatori delle lezioni precedenti per attualizzare l'opera di Goudsblom in modo accuratissimo lanciando conferenze, pubblicazioni e progetti per dare continuità allo studio sul lavoro di Goudsblom a livello teorico e applicativo entro strategie cosmopolitiche di ibridazione con opere di altri giganti e con le principali sfide del nostro tempo.

UNA CONCLUSIONE, UN INIZIO

Il miglior modo per onorare Goudsblom è che la sua fine terrena sia un inizio kantianamente metafisico. Questo il senso, il significato e il dono dell'opera di Goudsblom verso studenti e studiosi di oggi, domani e del futuro e di questo ancora ipotetico progetto di "J. Goudsblom Graduate Program" in dodici lezioni che qui elenco:

Lezione 1 Civilizzazione come Illuminismo Sociologico

Lezione 2 Per un'epistemologia sociologica sistemico -procedurale

Lezione 3 World Order Policy Modeling

Lezione 4 Fuoco e Civilizzazione

Lezione 5 Civilizzazione, Cosmopolitismo e Complessità

Lezione 6 Civilizzazione e globalizzazione delle politiche socio-sanitarie.

Lezione 7 Nichilismo

Lezione 8 Metodologia processuale e complessità sistemica della progettazione organizzativa.

Lezione 9 L' Homo Sapiens. Sapiens come forma evolutiva contingente

Lezione 10 Sistemi complessi, processi e intangibili globali

Lezione 11 Lo sport come processo sistemico globale

Lezione 12 Tavola Rotonda sull'opera di Goudsblom

Adesso occorre solo individuare i terreni più fertili ove realizzare questo programma auspicabilmente in più e più edizioni.

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Open Essays and Researches

Solidarietà performativa. Critica sociale del capitalismo e nuovi soggetti della partecipazione

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Citation: Bruni L. (2020) *Solidarietà performativa. Critica sociale del capitalismo e nuovi soggetti della partecipazione*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 111-125. doi: 10.13128/cambio-8089

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Abstract. The essay develops some lines of interpretation of qualitative research sources related to social criticism experiences active in the Umbrian territory. The analysis of the sources will be intertwined to the formulation of a hypothesis on the thematic node of subjectivity. This hypothesis will be developed in a twofold direction: in terms of processes of subjectification and redefinition of individual identity within the social relations analyzed; in terms of social identity and collective belonging, going so far as to argue that the critical tension to capitalism carried out by the subjects under consideration can be read primarily as social criticism. The overall intention of this paper is to try to provide some basic references in support of the hypothesis that the critique of capitalism today can be understood also and above all in terms of processes of subjectification attributable to innovative forms of social participation. In other words, the critical aim of the exemplary sociality examined can be declined through a form of criticism that we could define as implicit, relating to a redefinition of the social bond rather than to a militant and generalized political dimension. This is an implicit criticism of capitalism, characterized in purely social terms: it can be read as a creative and practical response to the fragmentation of social solidarity.

Keywords: social pathology, social solidarity, social critique, subjectivity, imaginary.

INTRODUZIONE

Il capitalismo è un fenomeno talmente complesso che cercare di definirlo in maniera univoca risulta un compito particolarmente problematico ed inevitabilmente esposto ad incompletezza e parzialità. Oltre che per la pluralità di sfere della vita umana alle quali è possibile riferirlo – fenomeno economico, culturale, sociale, o la combinazione di tutte o di una parte di tali dimensioni –, la difficoltà di fornirne una definizione astratta e generale dipende dal suo carattere storico, dall'essere cioè esposto al mutamento nel tempo (Marx 2009; Weber 1991; Durkheim 2016; Sombart 1978; Schumpeter 2001; Beaud 2004). Tuttavia, sembra piuttosto convincente stabilire

che una caratteristica necessaria di definizione del capitalismo sia quella per cui i bisogni degli attori che in esso si trovano coinvolti sono inevitabilmente legati, nel senso di legame di dipendenza, alle dinamiche di mercato (Wood 2002). Il capitalismo rappresenta infatti una particolare forma storica che l'economia di mercato ha assunto. Si potrebbe cioè dire, in breve, che l'economia di mercato costituisce il *genus* di cui il capitalismo è specie particolare (Bruni, Zamagni 2004; Zamagni 2005).

In effetti, come ricorda Braudel, se nella storia è esistito un mercato senza capitalismo, non sembra d'altra parte poter esistere un capitalismo senza mercato. Soltanto nel capitalismo, cioè, la dipendenza dalle dinamiche di mercato, la massimizzazione del profitto e la radicale divisione sociale tra conferitori di lavoro e conferitori di capitale (Braudel 1981) divengono elementi di definizione altamente significativi, se non inaggirabili. Per i capitalisti, il mercato ha costituito storicamente il contesto nel quale trova pieno svolgimento la forza generatrice e propulsiva del capitalismo, ovvero la competizione orientata alla massimizzazione dei profitti. Per questa ragione, è stato sostenuto che il capitalismo sia fondamentalmente mosso da particolari imperativi di mercato: sfrenata competitività, massimizzazione dei profitti, accumulazione illimitata di capitale (Wood 2002).

Per quanto la dinamica capitalistica più recente, comunemente definita neo-liberista, sia caratterizzata da una marcata finanziarizzazione, tale processo rafforza la centralità dello scambio mercantile competitivo, trasferendola ad un livello di ulteriore astrazione (Panitch, Gindin 2012; Magatti 2012; Gallino 2011, 2013; Masino, Salento 2013). L'economia capitalistica è stata attraversata – per oltre venti anni, fino alla crisi scoppiata nel 2007 – da una crescita del volume delle transazioni finanziarie, resa possibile dal dilagante fenomeno della deregolamentazione. La finanziarizzazione è stata l'effetto di processi di deregolamentazione volti a riaffermare la libertà del mercato da elementi ad esso estranei e che potessero in qualche modo limitarne l'azione autoreferenziale.

In linea con la definizione minima di capitalismo fornita, il neo-liberismo riafferma con forza l'incrollabile convinzione nell'infalibilità del mercato capitalistico come entità capace di autoregolarsi con razionalità (Peck 2010). Lungi dall'essere ridicibile alla mera autoregolamentazione di mercato, di carattere prettamente tecnico-economico, il concetto di neo-liberismo veicola in maniera potente ed efficace l'idea secondo la quale la sua pervasività non risiede tanto, o soltanto, nell'imposizione di interessi economici e finanziari, ma è fortemente radicata in una sfera di credenze, valori, pratiche e istituzioni. Jemie Peck, nel noto "Construction of Neoliberal Reason" (2010), ha impiegato il concetto di razionalità neoliberale proprio al fine di enfatizzarne questioni connesse al legame sociale e alla dimensione simbolica e istituzionale, anticipando l'impiego che, sulla sua scorta, ne faranno pensatori orientati ad estendere l'analisi del neoliberismo oltre i confini delle dinamiche tecnico-economiche e di quelle relative a ristrette élite politiche e ideologiche (Konings 2018; Brown 2015; Dardot, Laval 2013).

In maniera efficace e suggestiva, Danilo Martuccelli si è concentrato sui tratti fondamentali della pervasività simbolica del capitalismo neo-liberista, parlando dell'economia di mercato come di un *regime di realtà*. O meglio, di una rappresentazione storicamente dominante succeduta a quella garantita prima dalla religione e poi dalla politica (Martuccelli 2013). Secondo Martuccelli, è proprio nel carattere costrittivo del dato economico che si situa il *regime di realtà* del tempo in cui viviamo. In altre parole, l'economia di mercato – in misura rafforzata nella sua attuale configurazione neoliberista – ha mostrato la capacità di imporsi progressivamente come fascinazione naturalizzante e come seduzione definitiva. Il neo-liberismo si è affermato come un orizzonte necessario e privo di alternative possibili, in grado di appropriarsi in maniera strategica di istanze critiche esogene (Boltanski, Chiapello 1999).

La domanda che fa da sfondo generale a questo contributo riecheggia, su piccola scala, il quesito posto da Alain Caillé circa il destino del mondo globale. È possibile – si chiedeva il fondatore del Movimento anti-utilitarista nella Scienza sociale – immaginare e praticare forme altre di socialità che consentano di reincorporare le pratiche economiche stesse nella società (Caillé 2009), in direzione di una risignificazione delle relazioni sociali tra i soggetti, tentando di strapparle al dominio della relazione tra le cose? Se le distorsioni legate al pensiero reificante – a quel pensiero che tende a favorire un agire sociale all'interno del quale gli esseri umani sono visti meramente come *cose*, o come strumenti per favorire il rapporto con le cose – sono imputabili all'allargamento degli ambiti dominati dalla logica dello scambio calcolativo delle merci, riattribuire alle relazioni con beni ed oggetti un significato *altro* può contribuire a riattivare relazioni sociali coinvolte e solidali (Honneth 2007).

Nel primo paragrafo saranno presentati i soggetti sociali presi in considerazione nella ricerca svolta. Successivamente, il riferimento alle fonti impiegate, le quali svolgono un mero ruolo esplorativo rispetto alla formulazione di prime ipotesi interpretative, riguarderà primariamente la *questione della soggettività*. Essa sarà affrontata in una duplice direzione: in termini di processi di soggettivazione e di ridefinizione dell'identità individuale all'interno di relazioni sociali alternative ai processi di reificazione promossi dal neo-liberismo (Honneth 2007, 2010); in termini di identità sociale e appartenenza collettiva, arrivando a sostenere che, riprendendo il concetto di immaginario così come proposto in una recente riattualizzazione (Santambrogio 2013, 2013b, 2015), la tensione critica nei confronti del capitalismo da parte dei soggetti presi in considerazione possa essere letta primariamente come *critica sociale*, o come *critica di immaginario*, e non tanto, o non soltanto, come critica politica o ideologica.

IPOTESI DELLA RICERCA E SOGGETTI DELLA CRITICA

La ricerca si concentra su esperienze e soggetti del territorio umbro che mostrano un significativo approccio critico nei confronti dell'economia capitalista. Il limitato materiale empirico su cui si sviluppano le riflessioni teorico-interpretative qui proposte si inserisce all'interno di un più ampio contesto di ricerca¹. All'interno di questo più esteso orizzonte, i soggetti presi in esame nel presente contributo sono stati selezionati poiché ritenuti rappresentativi di una dimensione innovativa – individuata sulla base della elevata significatività della partecipazione sociale (Pizzorno 1966) promossa, della struttura e della portata critico-normativa – che li distingue rispetto a soggetti associativi di carattere tradizionale (Ascoli, Pavolini 2017).

Tali soggetti – associazioni, gruppi informali e esperienze sociali – sono cinque. Per ciascuno di essi è stata svolta un'intervista in profondità con un testimone privilegiato, per un totale di cinque interviste; in un solo caso, quello relativo al Gruppo di Acquisto Solidale Gas-piterina, si è optato per un surplus di ricerca, mediante il ricorso all'osservazione durante tre riunioni del gruppo stesso. La scelta metodologica di intervistare un membro volontario, a prescindere dalle cariche formali, è giustificata dal fatto che i soggetti e le esperienze studiate esprimono una marcata tendenza alla informalità, non presentando in certi casi, come vedremo, alcuna differenziazione codificata di ruoli. Con il ricorso al materiale raccolto e alle fonti analizzate – evidentemente limitate, per quanto dense e significative – si intende avanzare una prima ipotesi da sottoporre ad ulteriori approfondimenti empirici. In questo senso, l'intento complessivo del presente lavoro è quello di provare a fornire alcuni riferimenti di base in sostegno dell'ipotesi secondo la quale la critica del capitalismo può oggi essere intesa anche e soprattutto in termini di processi di soggettivazione riconducibili a forme innovative di partecipazione sociale. La portata critica della *socialità esemplare* (Ferarra 1999) presa in esame può essere cioè declinata mediante una forma di critica che potremmo definire *implicita*, relativa cioè ad una ridefinizione del legame sociale piuttosto che ad una dimensione politica di carattere rivendicativo e generalizzato. In termini ancora più circoscritti, l'ipotesi è che la critica sociale del capitalismo possa essere riconnessa a un comune e rinnovato desiderio di uscire dal privato, di *essere-con-gli-altri*, di poter dare seguito alle proprie

¹ Il materiale empirico utilizzato per la stesura del presente saggio viene impiegato in maniera esemplare rispetto ad un più ampio orizzonte di ricerca. Le fonti qui citate devono infatti essere collocate all'interno di un ben più ricco materiale di ricerca, che per motivi di spazio non possiamo restituire in maniera esaustiva. In particolare, il materiale empirico di riferimento deve essere contestualizzato all'interno dei dati emersi da una ricerca sull'associazionismo e il volontariato in Umbria (Santambrogio 2014), i quali hanno contribuito poi alla definizione di nuove prospettive di ricerca, attualmente in corso e relative al rapporto tra riconfigurazione del legame sociale nel contesto del neo-liberismo e nuove forme di solidarietà sociale. Queste prospettive di ricerca intendono indagare, attraverso dieci casi di studio concentrati sul territorio umbro, il rapporto tra patologie sociali del neo-liberismo (Honneth 1996, 2010; Jaeggi 2016) e contesti sociali di risolidarizzazione. In particolare, l'ipotesi della ricerca è la seguente: a fronte dei fenomeni di frammentazione e di disgregazione sociale sollecitati dal neo-liberismo, si stanno oggi affermando processi di risolidarizzazione che acquisiscono caratteri innovativi rispetto al passato e di cui sono protagonisti nuovi soggetti collettivi di partecipazione. Sotto-ipotesi della ricerca è che questi nuovi soggetti della solidarietà sono portatori di forme inedite di critica del capitalismo, di cui la ricerca intende indagare in maniera analiticamente dettagliata la natura. Dal punto di vista del materiale empirico, oltre alla raccolta di materiale documentale prodotto dai gruppi studiati, sono state svolte venti interviste in profondità, due per ciascun caso. Per ogni soggetto è stata poi svolta osservazione nel corso delle principali attività svolte.

prospettive di auto-realizzazione (Illouz 2018; Ehrenberg 2010, 2017; Han 2012; Elliot, Lemert 2007; Furedi 2003; Sennett 1999). Si tratta di una critica *implicita* al capitalismo, connotata in termini squisitamente *sociali*: essa può essere cioè letta come risposta creativa e pratica alla frammentazione dei legami sociali, non necessariamente legata a una contrapposizione sistemica declinata in termini di una ben definita progettualità politica.

Il primo gruppo analizzato si chiama “Civiltà Etica” e nasce a Gubbio intorno al Duemila come associazione che gestiva il punto del commercio equo e solidale nella città dei Ceri. Per qualche anno, l’associazione è stata inattiva, per poi essere rifondata nel 2012 mantenendo il nome originario. Civiltà Etica arriva ad occuparsi di economia di condivisione come ambito privilegiato. Come suggerisce Simone Farulla, membro del comitato direttivo:

Il raggio di azione dell’associazione si è andato ampliando nel tempo, investendo una riflessione in chiave critica sulle caratteristiche dell’economia di mercato, cercando di enfatizzare quello che non funzionava (...), cercando anche di trovare una forma di economia alternativa, differente, come può essere quella del baratto (Farulla).

Al momento della sua rifondazione, “Civiltà Etica” nasce su due fronti differenti: «il primo, (...) avanzare un cambiamento radicale di un modo di vedere l’economia, per poi arrivare ad una dimensione pratica che era la fondazione di una cooperativa ...» (Farulla). La cooperativa alla quale fa riferimento Simone è in realtà il progetto portante di Civiltà Etica. L’idea della cooperativa nasce per cercare di realizzare il finanziamento di progetti di lavoro per giovani tramite un *crowdfunding*.

La vicenda della seconda associazione analizzata, denominata “Progetto Paul Beathens”, riguarda l’esplorazione di nuove possibilità di significazione dei luoghi del centro storico di Perugia, sottraendoli a logiche speculative. Le due dimensioni si intrecciano: spesso sono proprio i luoghi e gli spazi *comuni* ad essere reificati, a venire catturati da logiche di speculazione economica. Non a caso, l’associazione nasce – muovendo i primi passi come gruppo informale, all’indomani di una sparatoria tra spacciatori avvenuta in pieno centro storico a Perugia – credendo nell’idea che i luoghi vivano fasi di decadenza a causa del vuoto che li attraversa e che per poter tornare a vivere debbano essere riempiti di nuovi contenuti: riflessioni, significati e momenti aggregativi. La prima iniziativa organizzata è stata “Il mio mitra è un contrabbasso”, manifestazione parallela ad “Umbria Jazz”, che prevedeva l’istallazione di un palco libero in Piazza Grimana, nell’immediata prossimità delle mura etrusche della città, aperto a chiunque fosse “armato” di uno strumento musicale. Come riportato da Lucina Paternesi, membro volontario del gruppo, «da qui nasce l’esperienza di Progetto Paul Beathens: creare una nuova socialità» (Paternesi). Il fiore all’occhiello dell’associazione è stata però la manifestazione “Umbria Grida Terra”. Il mercato coperto di Perugia è da anni pressoché abbandonato ed ospita soltanto pochi operatori commerciali, complice anche la situazione di crisi che ha vissuto il centro storico perugino nei tempi più recenti (Rinaldi 2014). Rimboccandosi le maniche i ragazzi, perché da giovani è in gran parte costituita l’associazione, hanno permesso al mercato coperto di riaprire le porte.

abbiamo organizzato questa tre giorni che tenesse insieme l’aspetto dei prodotti della terra, la musica, la cultura, socialità e riscoperta di un luogo al centro della città. La prima edizione è stata veramente un grande successo (Paternesi).

Infine, il gruppo si mobilita per una protesta contro l’ipotesi di privatizzazione di uno spazio ad uso pubblico, culturale e sociale in piazza IV Novembre, pieno centro storico di Perugia, per destinarlo ad una vetrina del cioccolato dei grandi marchi.

Il terzo gruppo studiato è il “GAS-piterina”, uno dei più numerosi gruppi d’acquisto solidale dell’Umbria. Il gruppo nasce inizialmente in associazione con il “GAS-Tezio”, gruppo d’acquisto di base a Monte Tezio, nel perugino. In maniera non difforme dagli altri soggetti, la vicenda storica del GAS si sovrappone in maniera inscindibile con le motivazioni sostanziali che ne stimolano la nascita, legate anche in questo caso ad un approccio critico nei confronti dell’economia di mercato. Maria Grazia Cupido, membro del GAS, racconta:

come tutti i GAS, nasce dalla necessità e sensibilità di poche persone che sentono il bisogno di avere un rapporto più solidale con il produttore, quindi un rapporto non dettato da una imposizione dei prezzi come avviene nell’economia di mercato, ma un contratto, un accordo (Cupido).

L'esigenza di rendersi autonomi dal "GAS-Tezio" nasce sia per ragioni numerico-organizzative sia per ragioni che investono un momento di riflessione più profonda. Il numero dei membri del "GAS-Tezio" era effettivamente cresciuto di molto e la zona del Tezio non era comodamente raggiungibile. Coloro che hanno dato vita al "GAS-piterina" hanno però anche fortemente creduto che i GAS dovessero mantenere un numero di partecipanti non eccessivo, in modo tale da favorire le relazioni sociali interne, e che dovessero distribuirsi su più zone della città, coltivando anche un rapporto di prossimità con i quartieri: il "GAS-piterina" "fa infatti riferimento al quartiere San Sisto di Perugia" (Cupido).

Le "Riciclamiche" rappresentano il quarto gruppo preso in esame. nascono spinte da una precisa idea: autoprodurre borse riciclabili che sostituiscano le normali buste da spesa e farlo ricavandole da ombrelli vecchi inutilizzati. Nato quasi per gioco, il gruppo ha come interesse centrale quello di promuovere il consumo critico e sensibilizzare le persone a produrre meno rifiuti. Come riportato da Coralla Ongaro, la volontaria intervistata, il nucleo originario delle "Riciclamiche" inizia ad essere ospite di diversi mercatini di Perugia. Con il tempo, l'attività delle "Riciclamiche" si arricchisce e si estende al baratto: «abbiamo iniziato a fare del baratto sempre dentro questi mercatini, in particolare a Ponte San Giovanni, il "Terra Fuori Mercato", che ci ha ospitato sin dall'inizio. Ancora siamo ospiti lì, dal 2011 noi facciamo il baratto regolarmente» (Ongaro). Il gruppo organizza poi laboratori, spesso in collaborazione con altre realtà associative, orientati alle attività di riuso e riciclo. L'attività di baratto si è consolidata al punto che si è reso necessario creare una rete su internet:

forniamo questo servizio e la nostra pagina Facebook è un punto dove la gente può scambiarsi queste cose. Ora è diventato un vero e proprio punto di riferimento (Ongaro).

L'ultimo ambito della ricerca non è dedicato ad un gruppo o ad un'associazione in senso stretto, ma ad un progetto. Il "Progetto Zerowaste" è un progetto sperimentale che nasce dando seguito ad una sollecitazione dell'associazione "Il Samaritano" di Perugia, crescendo poi intorno ad una rete di associazioni e alla Regione Umbria sulla riduzione degli sprechi alimentari. Obiettivo del progetto, come enfatizzato dalla Coordinatrice Alessandra Stocchi, oltre alla sensibilizzazione della cittadinanza è quello di creare un modello per realizzare un sistema-servizio di raccolta e distribuzione delle eccedenze alimentari a favore delle categorie più bisognose. Tale sistema-servizio è stato creato coinvolgendo "Emporio sociale" di Città di Castello, un market sociale e il "Banco alimentare" di Perugia.

PROCESSI DI SOGGETTIVAZIONE E PARTECIPAZIONE SOCIALE

Una soggettività critica. La performatività delle relazioni solidali

Tutti gli intervistati esprimono un alto livello di soddisfazione e realizzazione personale nel partecipare alle attività del gruppo di cui fanno parte. Sarebbe però fuorviante limitarsi a considerare la soddisfazione e la realizzazione come dimensioni meramente soggettive. L'autorealizzazione che la partecipazione alla vita di gruppo sollecita è legata alla totalità delle relazioni che la attraversano: questo significa che al riscontro di una realizzazione personale corrisponde un denso tessuto di legami intersoggettivi. Detto brevemente, il soggetto incontra nel più ampio contesto relazionale concrete possibilità di fioritura della propria identità. Si tratta, in effetti, di una circolarità virtuosa: la relazionalità qualitativamente connotata favorisce la realizzazione soggettiva, la quale, a sua volta, contribuisce ad incrementare la qualità delle relazioni stesse. Axel Honneth ha sostenuto che il rapporto tra socialità e realizzazione individuale è di mutua dipendenza, senza che si possa stabilire una relazione gerarchica tra le due dimensioni: «è vero che gli esseri umani aspirano alla realizzazione di sé, ma è vero anche che in questa forte aspirazione dipendono dalla seconda natura data, ovvero, dalle forme del riconoscimento sociale date» (Honneth 2013, 231). Tale dimensione di appagamento e soddisfazione, declinata qui in termini concettuali con il riferimento alla teoria del riconoscimento di Axel Honneth, è altresì in piena sintonia con caratteristiche contestuali e con una vasta gamma di fenomenologie che emergono dalle più recenti ricerche sul volontariato e l'innovazione sociale in Italia (Ascoli, Pavolini 2017; Guidi, Fonovic 2016).

Il movente partecipativo si situa, *in primis*, nella condivisione di un ambito di pensiero, di interessi e finalità comuni, ma è altrettanto evidente che la relazionalità, l'immediata socialità dello *stare insieme* e la soddisfazione che essa produce nel singolo soggetto, concorrono fortemente a fornire un *surplus* di motivazione alla partecipazione al gruppo. Se all'interno di una particolare comunità la solidarietà è garantita dalla condivisione, o dall'incremento di valori, i quali assicurano la trasmissione di stima sociale tra i membri del gruppo, la discriminante tra una comunità chiusa e una comunità aperta diventa la relazione stessa ai valori: ad essi si aderisce semplicemente o vengono assunti riflessivamente? Se l'adesione ad un valore è mediata dalla riflessione è possibile parlare di comunità aperta e in essa i membri possono riconoscersi tra loro in modo immediato (Honneth 2013). In questi termini, per quanto riguarda i soggetti analizzati, possiamo parlare di comunità aperte, lontane da rischi essenzialistici o immunizzanti (Esposito 2002), nelle quali il riconoscimento non è accordato sulla base di una adesione incondizionata a valori e fini, ma su una loro assunzione riflessiva:

Lo sappiamo come è adesso: è sempre più difficile entrare in socialità con la gente (...) Noi abbiamo una richiesta di socialità, ecco (Cupido).

Come ti dicevo, con il passare del tempo [il rapporto con gli altri membri del gruppo, corsivo mio] si è trasformato in amicizia. L'altro giorno ero all'ospedale proprio ad assistere una delle Riciclamiche ... ci siamo subito attivate tutte ... ci sono associazioni che, per esempio, sentono anche soltanto l'esigenza di cambiare il proprio quartiere, di creare delle amicizie (Ongaro).

Su questa cosa siamo tutti profondamente convinti che l'attuale situazione storica, politica ed economica è frutto di politiche totalmente - adesso non ti voglio fare la ragazzina ingenua che parla in maniera semplicistica di mercificazione - piegate alla logica del mercato e dello scambio economico (Paternesi).

Chi ha aderito a Civiltà Etica ha aderito perché crede in un nuovo modello possibile, non perché adesso ci sia crisi, ma perché si è sempre creduto in un altro modello (...) Ho avuto un ritorno enorme, in termini di amicizia, di solidarietà, di incontri con persone nuove vedendo nuove esperienze (Farulla).

Solo i primi tempi l'approccio con la scomodità della riunione, andare alle dieci al freddo, la sera ... ma mi sono detta: "io potrei andare al GAS del centro, la domenica pomeriggio, faccio la spesa e torno"; ma proprio non è questo il mio modo di concepire un GAS. Incontrarsi è piacevole e questo ti fa dimenticare anche delle scomodità. C'è una bella socialità (Cupido).

Come vediamo in quest'ultimo frammento di intervista, l'elemento relazionale e riconoscitivo prevale su quello funzionale. La *bella socialità* assume un significato ben più forte, ad esempio, dei disagi che la distanza del luogo della riunione del "GAS", o dell'orario a tarda sera in cui si svolge, può provocare.

Il primo di questi livelli è quello ludico: quando stiamo insieme ci divertiamo e stiamo sempre bene. Il secondo è che lanciamo comunque un messaggio: produrre meno, avere un consumo consapevole (...). La terza è che creiamo tanta rete, cioè creiamo associazione e comunicazione e ci si aiuta tra le persone. La gente ha capito che o inizia ad aiutarsi da sola, anche solo curandosi del quartiere ... E poi lo scambio, lo scambio dei saperi, la condivisione (...). E poi ti senti meno solo, al giorno d'oggi si paga tutto, è tutto nel mercato: anche il divertimento ... tutto a pagamento. Questo ti aiuta a riscoprire lo stare insieme, a fare cose che potresti fare a casa da solo insieme. C'è l'aspetto della socialità (Ongaro).

Ai tempi di Piazza Grimana erano dieci giorni di fuoco, dalla mattina alle dieci sotto il sole alla mattina alle cinque ... molto impegnativo, ma una delle esperienze di vita più belle che io possa ricordare: così tanta partecipazione, amicizia, solidarietà (...) Tutto questo, nonostante sei stanca, ti fa andare a letto con il sorriso (Paternesi).

I processi di incremento di beni relazionali (Donati 2011) e di realizzazione soggettiva sembrano altresì legati – stando ad un'ulteriore ipotesi che il materiale di ricerca permette di formulare – ad una tipica struttura informale che i soggetti studiati mostrano e rivendicano. Tutti presentano una marcata informalità, seppure vi siano soggetti sulla carta più strutturati di altri, con una minima forma verticistica – come "Civiltà Etica" e "Progetto Paul Bea-thens" – e soggetti invece totalmente destrutturati, come il "GAS" e le "Riciclamiche".

Le parole di Simone e quelle di Lucina sembrano testimoniare una elevata riflessività: quanto maggiore è il livello di consapevolezza del proprio agire solidale e disinteressato, tanto minore è la necessità di codificarlo. Quan-

to più forte è l'auto-relazione critica, tanto minore è la esigenza di identificarsi in ruoli rigidi e oggettivati. O meglio, da tali identificazioni è possibile riuscire a distanziarsi con maggiore capacità (Crespi 1999).

Il bisogno di strutturarci non lo abbiamo mai avvertito come impellente. La condivisione non è strutturata; il baratto non è strutturato. Forse il baratto lo è, ma la condivisione di certo no. Lo strutturarsi è nato più da una esigenza che ci è richiesta da altri fuori da noi; per ragioni tecniche, non certo per una voglia di struttura (Farulla).

Nasciamo come un gruppo informale, abbiamo sempre rifiutato qualsiasi categorizzazione. Non è comprensibile pensare che i cittadini che si vogliono fare carico dei problemi della propria città si debbano costituire, cioè debbano essere altro che semplici cittadini (Paternesi).

L'informalità non si risolve in un elogio dell'indeterminatezza, ma in una responsabile armonizzazione di capacità e ruoli, anche se il numero non particolarmente ampio degli associati ai gruppi in questione gioca a favore di un simile processo.

No, siamo molto informali, non essendo nemmeno un'associazione riconosciuta, siamo proprio un gruppo libero (...). Però all'interno è normale che si siano stabiliti un po' dei ruoli: c'è a chi piace più stare al mercato e quindi si reca sempre al mercato, c'è chi ha più capacità di relazionarsi e quindi fa gruppo e crea le rete (Ongaro).

Diciamo che ognuno mette a disposizione le proprie potenzialità, a disposizione del gruppo e della città (Paternesi).

Per quanto riguarda il rapporto tra struttura e soggettività, un caso particolarmente interessante è fornito dall'organizzazione sociale del "GAS-piterina". Svolgendo osservazione partecipante nel corso di alcune riunioni del "GAS", è stata notata questa particolare dinamica: all'interno della sala che ospita gli incontri del gruppo ciascuno "offriva" beni alimentari e al tempo stesso li riceveva, in una rete di scambio ricca e complessa che portava tutti i presenti a contatto tra loro, in un evidente fermento interattivo e comunicativo. Questa dinamica di interazione emergerà, e sarà chiarita, in apertura all'intervista con Maria Grazia.

L'organizzazione di GAS-piterina è stata anche sociale: non formare solo un mercato equo e solidale, ma anche un consumatore che sia immerso in un gruppo dove ci sia reciproca assistenza. L'intento è che ognuno di noi si occupa di un ordine, non tutto è a carico di una singola persona, che in questo modo sarebbe troppo esclusivo e impegnativo, ma così ognuno se ne può occupare, basta che si prende in carico un unico servizio. Questo permette la partecipazione di tutti e soprattutto consente di avere un rapporto di vicinanza tra i membri del GAS: un conto è se io devo dare dei soldi così ad un generico referente un conto è che io pago te, te che sei andato ad esempio a prendere le noci, io pago te e questo significa che è te che ringrazio per il tuo compito (...) In questo modo c'è una distribuzione dei compiti e una integrazione: nessuno si potrebbe permettere di fare tutto (Cupido).

La solidarietà che attraversa l'attività del "GAS" è multidimensionale: da parte dei consumatori associati nei confronti del produttore, da parte del produttore nei confronti dei consumatori associati, tra i membri del gruppo di acquisto:

la solidarietà prevede anche che se io sono in disagio, ad esempio il referente dell'ordine dei formaggi è diventato papà, non posso occuparmi dell'ordine, allora si vede chi di noi può occuparsene. Solidarietà tra di noi, che nel gruppo GAS-piterina è molto ricercata. Da un lato crea rete tra di noi, che pur non conoscendoci nel privato, non tutti sanno che stile di vita ho, consente questa solidarietà e divisione dei compiti che è un tratto particolare dal gruppo (Cupido).

Una dinamica di organizzazione sociale che mostra dunque sia un carattere funzionale – di integrazione funzionale à la Durkheim², sulla base cioè della divisione del lavoro –, sia una connotazione più marcatamente etica,

² Come noto, Durkheim distingue due forme di solidarietà, definite meccanica l'una e organica l'altra, le quali caratterizzano due forme del legame sociale: quello tipico delle società premoderne e quello tipico delle società moderne. Secondo Durkheim, ciò che fornisce il collante sociale nelle società premoderne è prevalentemente la condivisione di valori e credenze omogenee. Nelle società moderne, con il progressivo venir meno di valori e credenze condivise, il legame sociale è invece garantito dalla integrazione delle

che trascenda l'ambito privato, o mere considerazioni di carattere personale, e che si connota come umanamente coinvolta, al fine di incrementare la complessiva qualità di vita del "GAS", senza ridursi a mera procedura. Ciascuno si mobilita per la totalità, così come ognuno è il beneficiario dell'attività altrui. Allo stesso modo, per quanto riguarda i processi di democrazia interna, in alcuni dei soggetti studiati sembrerebbe prevalere un'idea di confronto partecipativo e di assunzione di decisioni molto affine all'*intesa comunicativa* di sapore habermasiano (Habermas 1997): ciò che sembra ispirarli è primariamente la fiducia nel fatto che un confronto razionale riflessivamente assunto possa consentire di fare emergere, all'interno di una discussione non attraversata da elementi di distorsione, il punto di vista qualitativamente migliore. Nessuna procedura di decisione a maggioranza, dunque. Troviamo questa idea e questa pratica di confronto democratico sia in "Civiltà Etica" che nel "GAS-piterina":

anche perché poi nel momento in cui c'è una condivisione questa è una condivisione anche di idee: io metto sul tavolino quella che è la mia idea della cosa e ogni idea va rispettata; magari ci si mette di più a prendere una decisione, ma quella decisione non sarà mai a maggioranza, sarà sempre qualcosa che è stato assunto da tutti insieme (Farulla).

Facciamo queste riunioni dove ci mettiamo a circolo e ognuno liberamente affronta ciò che gli sta a cuore. Così si fanno proposte e si parla. Non c'è bisogno di votazioni, non è mai capitato, no (...). Quando non emerge un'intesa, tendiamo a lasciare le cose come sono senza forzature. Certo, magari alcune cose andrebbero un po' smosse (Cupido).

Per quanto riguarda il rapporto tra esperienza soggettiva e qualità delle relazioni si vorrebbe proporre di distinguere tre livelli analitico-interpretativi: *esistenziale-affettivo*, o *riconoscitivo*, legato ad una socialità immediata e ad aspetti anche ludici; *culturale*, legato alla presenza di una visione, un "messaggio da lanciare", una gamma di valori e un modello di pensiero, e allo scambio di saperi; *sociale*, legato alla creazione di una rete più ampia, di relazioni sociali allargate all'interazione comunicativa, dunque non *nei* gruppi, ma *tra* i gruppi, come riconnessione tra esperienze collettive affini, ma eterogenee, *tra* i diversi soggetti.

In qualche modo – nonostante non vi sia nessun richiamo esplicito alla sfera politica – questi tre ambiti, o livelli, sembrano ricomprendere tutti una dimensione ulteriore, *politica*. Politica nel senso di dimensione *normativa*, valutativamente orientata, riflesso non secondario dell'approccio critico che anima i soggetti considerati, e non in quello del riferimento alla sfera politica intesa in senso stretto, alla quale, peraltro, come vedremo meglio nel paragrafo successivo, tutti guardano con una sorta di distacco.

In conclusione, la solidarietà che attraversa i soggetti della ricerca sembra coagularsi in tre forme differenti: solidarietà come *orizzonte*, come *pratica* e come *legame sociale*. La solidarietà è un *orizzonte*, un fine, anche se non ultimo. Una meta, per quanto provvisoria e mai definitiva. La solidarietà si condensa in un pensiero consapevole, viene riflessivamente assunta – come emerge dalle fonti – da coloro che si ripropongono di perseguirla. La solidarietà è una visione che ispira un tentativo di resistenza alla *presentificazione degli orizzonti temporali* (Jedklowksi, Leccardi 2003). La solidarietà è soprattutto una *pratica*, un insieme di comportamenti effettivi. Come abbiamo visto, la solidarietà viene vissuta mediante le molteplici esperienze che abbiamo riportato. La solidarietà riemerge come necessità di tracciare alternative alle patologie sociali (Honneth 1996) innescate dalle forze del mercato. Infine, la solidarietà costituisce un significativo tessuto riconoscitivo, una fonte di *legami* e relazioni riuscite, di coinvolgimento pratico ed affettivo (Honneth 2007), che consente il pieno dispiegamento di qualità e la realizzazione di aspettative di riconoscimento reciproco. Lo stesso Honneth, recuperando in chiave riconoscitiva la categoria di reificazione, ha sostenuto come essa definisca una forma di rapporto strumentale con se stessi, strategicamente costruito e presentato al mondo sociale, intrecciato all'*oblio del riconoscimento* e alla diminuzione di attenzione nei confronti della

diverse funzioni all'interno della divisione sociale del lavoro. Ciò che consente agli uomini di essere legati l'uno all'altro e di partecipare al processo sociale è la differenziazione delle funzioni, ciascuna delle quali si pone in un rapporto necessario alle restanti, all'interno della più ampia attività del condivisione di valori e credenze omogenee. Nelle società moderne, con il progressivo venir meno di valori e credenze condivise, il legame sociale è invece garantito dalla integrazione delle diverse funzioni all'interno della divisione sociale del lavoro. Ciò che consente agli uomini di essere legati l'uno all'altro e di partecipare al processo sociale è la differenziazione delle funzioni, ciascuna delle quali si pone in un rapporto necessario alle restanti, all'interno della più ampia attività del lavoro organizzato (Durkheim 1999).

capacità di articolare i propri bisogni, desideri ed emozioni appropriandosi di essi (Honneth 2007: 74). In questo senso, l'innovazione sociale evidenziata dalle esperienze analizzate è tutta immersa nella capacità di produrre una solidarietà alternativa all'atomizzazione. La disgregazione sociale e la crescente privatizzazione delle esperienze (Elliot, Lemert, 2007) si affermano come esito primo dell'assoggettamento indotto dalla pervasiva promozione neo-liberista della figura dell'*imprenditore di se stesso* (Dardot, Laval 2013) e di contribuire e costruire socialmente una soggettività alternativa a quella legata alla interiorizzazione degli imperativi funzionali della competitività, della efficienza produttiva, della creatività e dell'autorealizzazione "imposte", della "cattura" e della valorizzazione di capacità, qualità, affetti e relazioni (Honneth 2010; Codeluppi 2008; Dardot, Laval 2013).

Le relazioni riconoscitive che ci sono restituite dai contesti sociali presi in considerazione sembrano piuttosto mostrare il loro carattere de-reificante e non distorto o ideologico, per impiegare ancora il lessico honnethiano (Honneth 2010), non in termini essenzialistici, come portatrici a priori di una autenticità ideale alla quale "fare ritorno", ma in quanto performativamente produttrici di una relazione pratica con se stessi soddisfacente e maggiormente «aderente a chi si vuole essere» (Ferrara 1999).

Partecipazione, identità e immaginario

Al fine di cogliere i mutamenti intervenuti all'interno della partecipazione collettiva, Santambrogio ha di recente avanzato una riattualizzazione del noto concetto di immaginario (Castoriadis 1995; Taylor 2005), che sembra particolarmente efficace rispetto alle ipotesi di questo lavoro. In estrema sintesi, il cuore della proposta è quello di sostituire il concetto di ideologia con quello di *immaginario*. L'ideologia è stata, all'interno della vicenda complessiva del pensiero collettivo, una forma relativamente coerente prodotta in prevalenza da intellettuali, uomini politici, ideologi e destinata ad essere "recepita" dagli attori sociali al fine di definire identità e modalità di azione³. L'*immaginario* è invece un prodotto del tutto autonomo della società, trova in essa i propri momenti costitutivi ed è un insieme ricco, e al tempo stesso scarsamente coerente, di valori, idee, aspirazioni (Santambrogio 2013). In questo senso, in estrema sintesi, non è più la sfera politica a dettare i ritmi dell'integrazione sociale, quanto piuttosto l'eterogeneità e l'incoerenza della partecipazione sociale ad eccedere le pretese di riassorbimento in rigide oggettivazioni identitarie politiche (*Ibidem*). Non sono più dottrine, teorie e appartenenze identitarie tradizionali ormai dissolte a garantire l'integrazione sociale, quanto l'effervescenza e l'eterogeneità della vita sociale a conquistarsi spazi di forte autonomia dalla sfera istituzionale e partitico-politica. Un'ampia partecipazione sociale, che sembra registrarsi anche nel nostro Paese, non agisce in vista del soddisfacimento di una domanda mediante le istituzioni, non alimenta l'aspettativa di servizi e beni che giungano dall'alto delle istituzioni pubbliche, ormai tra l'altro del tutto impossibilitate dalla drastica riduzione della spesa pubblica dettata dall'*austerità*.

La questione che si lega alle nuove forme di partecipazione sociale sembra, in effetti, proprio concentrarsi in un avvicendamento tra rivendicazioni e richieste rivolte "verso l'alto", che esigono il soddisfacimento di bisogni esclusivamente da parte delle istituzioni, e la creazione comune di pratiche e di attività, di prassi concrete all'interno delle quali si sperimentano soluzioni creandole, senza aspettarsi o pretendere che qualche soggetto istituzionale o partitico-politico vi provveda in senso stretto. Se l'ambito sociale del lavoro, soprattutto in riferimento ai processi di precarizzazione, ha perso la sua unità e frammentandosi non assolve più al ruolo tradizionale di integrazione sociale mediante l'attribuzione di identità parzialmente stabili e omogenee, è proprio nelle conseguenze della frammenta-

³ Il passaggio dall'ideologia all'immaginario tracciato da Santambrogio può essere collocato all'interno di una più ampia riflessione sulle forme del pensiero collettivo, la quale va ben oltre gli intenti circoscritti del presente saggio. In questo contesto, lo stesso Santambrogio fa ampio riferimento, tra gli altri, al testo classico di Karl Mannheim "Ideologia e utopia" (Mannheim 1999). Come ben noto, in questo libro Mannheim muove la propria riflessione a partire dall'ipotesi relativa al condizionamento sociale del pensiero. Il sociologo arriva così ad affrontare il problema dell'ideologia, definendola come una forma di pensiero condizionato da questioni pratiche e da interessi in conflitto. Il nodo fondamentale della sociologia della conoscenza di Mannheim consiste nell'aver proposto un uso generale della concezione totale dell'ideologia. Tra gli altri nodi concettuali affrontati nel libro, si ricorda il ruolo di sintesi dinamica che Mannheim attribuisce all'intellettuale e la tematizzazione del rapporto tra la stessa dimensione dell'ideologia e l'utopia.

zione e disarticolazione del lavoro che si rintracciano le più interessanti dinamiche di riproduzione sociale (Chicchi, Leonardi, Lucarelli 2016; Giannini 2016). All'interno del *mondo della vita* – costituito da tessuti solidali, realtà associative e del volontariato, bisogni di espressività e di socialità immediata, nuove pratiche di condivisione, legami sociali cooperativi, conflitti per i beni comuni, etc. – si rintracciano originali e innovative esperienze che attraversano il tessuto sociale in una fase di progressiva fuoriuscita dal mero contesto di risposta alla crisi, consolidandosi e stabilizzandosi ben oltre la mera dimensione reattiva. Questo contributo di ricerca, seppur legato ad una dimensione locale e circoscritto a soggetti particolarmente significativi ma quantitativamente non rappresentativi, sembra confermare in buona parte l'ipotesi teorica secondo la quale un'ampia fenomenologia sociale si muove su un terreno di autonomia, orizzontalità ed effettività pratica per cui, come detto, si promuovono, già in seno ad attività e prassi, esiti e risposte a problemi e bisogni.

La partecipazione che emerge dalle fonti di ricerca è una partecipazione sociale, non politica (Santambrogio 2014). O meglio, è *anche* politica *in quanto* sociale, *perché* sociale. La sfera della rappresentanza o della militanza partitica è molto distante, quasi un elemento estraneo, dall'idea di partecipazione alla vita associata che i soggetti studiati pensano e promuovono. La politica è già tutta dentro, è immanente, al sociale. Questo non significa per forza di cose negare fin troppo sbrigativamente, e forse ingenuamente, l'esistenza di una sfera politica intesa come luogo istituzionalizzato della rappresentanza, ma vuol dire che essa è un corollario della sfera sociale, invertendo quello che per lungo tempo è stato il rapporto direzionale tra le due, ovvero *dalla* politica *alla* società.

Emblematica è a tale proposito una frase di Lucina Paternesi, di "Progetto Paul Beathens". L'esperienza politica, seppure in senso lato, è definibile come tale solo riferendosi al presupposto di una partecipazione sociale. Può esserci partecipazione sociale senza partecipazione politica, ma non si può definire una partecipazione come politica se essa non ricomprende la partecipazione sociale: «[L'associazione nasce da, corsivo mio] un gruppo di ragazzi che da sempre si sono impegnati in politica in senso lato, cioè con grande esperienza di partecipazione sociale in città, si mettono insieme per fare una riflessione» (Paternesi). Sempre citando l'intervista di Paternesi, le attività svolte all'interno della propria esperienza biografica vengono definite politiche nella misura in cui vengono riconosciute come tali poiché riconnesse ad una più ampia partecipazione sociale: «ho sempre fatto parte di gruppi sociali: attività di volontariato e attività politiche» (Paternesi). Proprio in questa ottica è possibile problematizzare e inquadrare la diversa modulazione dei rapporti con le istituzioni che i vari soggetti e ambiti di ricerca mostrano. Simone esprime la concezione di democrazia di "Civiltà Etica". Esplicito è il richiamo alla democrazia diretta.

Quello che ci aspettiamo è che siano le singole persone al di là delle istituzioni che possano iniziare a condividere, a mettere in comune, perché poi si parte dal basso (...) ma non dimentichiamoci che la città, lo Stato, è fatto da tanti singoli: io posso dire di essere lo Stato, poiché ne faccio parte. Lo Stato dovrebbe essere una enorme cooperativa in cui in assemblea tutti decidono ciò che lo Stato fa: la democrazia diretta ... è complicato mettere in assemblea cinquantasei milioni di persone, però alla fine è quella l'idea: una cooperativa, operare insieme; condividere: io divido con, opero con (Farulla).

Nel rapporto con le istituzioni è allora quasi spontaneo che "Civiltà Etica" tenda a favorire, come interlocutori privilegiati, i piccoli Comuni del territorio:

il Comune di Gubbio ha aiutato Civiltà Etica per l'organizzazione di eventi, il Comune di Scheggia ha aiutato Civiltà etica per l'organizzazione di manifestazioni (...). Già il piccolo Comune si mette più in ballo, il piccolo Comune è già una comunità che già vive nel piccolo una condivisione (Farulla).

L'agire concreto, la marcata informalità, lo spontaneismo consapevole, la de-codificazione di ruoli – tutti tratti che caratterizzano "Civiltà Etica" – influenzano non solo l'idea di relazione con la sfera politico-istituzionale, ma anche quella con il tessuto associativo regionale. Simone è addirittura riluttante all'impiego di determinazioni definitive:

siamo stati in molte collaborazioni, più che collaborazioni sono sinergie. Nell'ambito neanche dell'associazionismo, perché questa è una parola che vuol dire tanto e niente, ma ci piace pensare che ci siano delle persone che si impegnano per far in modo, nel loro piccolo, di cambiare le cose (Farulla).

Il carattere di *esemplarietà* (Ferrara 1999) si accompagna ad una rivendicazione di autenticità che tradisce però a tratti una sorta di *retorica della differenza*:

che poi ci sentiamo poco parte integrata dell'associazionismo strutturato: sinceramente se fanno, tra virgolette, una convention dell'associazionismo umbro può darsi che nemmeno ci invitano. Ecco, capisci?! (Farulla).

A ribadire l'ipotesi proposta in apertura di questo paragrafo sono le parole di Maria Grazia e di Coralla. Maria Grazia ribadisce l'esistenza di una frattura tra *politica* e *sociale*. Il *sociale*, nella rivendicazione di autonomia, assume un primato – pratico e morale - rispetto alla sfera politica. La politica viene vista come una forma di gestione tecnica dell'esistente, mentre è nell'*effervescenza sociale* che si affrontano a viso aperto le sfide del nostro tempo.

Io non ho mai visto nessun partito impegnarsi fortemente nel sociale; è come se la politica fosse una cosa e il sociale un'altra, o meglio come se la politica fosse una forma associativa a sé. La politica pensa prima all'interesse politico. Io faccio politica già se decido di prendere un frutto bacato invece di buttarlo. La politica sembra presa talmente da aspetti tecnici che molte cose vengono trascurate. Noi siamo auto-organizzati, facciamo non chiediamo (...) le cose le auto-organizziamo e le risolviamo senza fare mai ricorso alle istituzioni (Cupido).

[Le istituzioni, corsivo mio] ci coinvolgono poco. In quel caso ci hanno contattato, ma sono sorti un po' di contrasti. Allora, per stare al mercato del baratto, cioè per stare ad un mercato del baratto bisognava pagare!! Ma come?! Noi facciamo tutto gratis, tutto volontariato, ci facciamo un mazzo così (...). Allora ci hanno detto: "va bene, se ci fate un laboratorio ...". Cioè, io devo farti il laboratorio per poter stare lì con il baratto?! (Ongaro).

Nascono nuove idee su come valorizzare ciò che le persone hanno, anche a livello di relazioni sociali, conoscenze e capacità per costruire nuove progettualità, nuove figure anche, e nuove professionalità e ambiti di sviluppo per creare anche lavoro (Stocchi).

In riferimento al "Progetto Paul Beathens" – per quanto anche questa associazione rivendichi totale autonomia dalla sfera partitica, politica e istituzionale – si apprezza un rapporto collaborativo di maggiore apertura alle istituzioni: «abbiamo sempre cercato di poterci dire liberi. Questo significava essere svincolati da qualsiasi bandiera politica e da qualsiasi legame imprenditoriale» (Paternesi). Il rapporto appare piuttosto armonioso, non viene conflittualmente radicalizzato:

con le istituzioni abbiamo sempre stabilito un ottimo dialogo, per quanto le abbiamo sempre incolpate di essere i primi responsabili della situazione attuale in cui versa la città (Paternesi).

Il "Progetto Paul Beathens" sembra essere molto vicino alle esperienze di *contro-democrazia* di cui parla Rosanvallon: la sfiducia nei confronti della rappresentanza non si risolve in disinteresse o separatezza e isolamento, quanto piuttosto in costanti pratiche attive di controllo e vigilanza critica dell'operato delle istituzioni pubbliche (Rosanvallon 2012). Questo è quanto è accaduto con il Mercato coperto. Dopo il successo della tre giorni di "riapertura" del Mercato, si è optato per un'azione di partecipazione e di monitoraggio del processo decisionale istituzionale.

Abbiamo seguito da vicino come il progetto è stato sviluppato dall'assessore e dall'amministrazione; siamo stati vicino agli operatori economici, nelle loro battaglie, che temevano per il loro futuro; abbiamo un accordo con l'amministrazione per cui nel nuovo progetto di mercato coperto ci sarà spazio anche per esperienze simili (Paternesi).

Se, come sostenuto da Ulrich Beck, l'ambito della *sub-politica*, ovvero di quelle dimensioni squisitamente impolitiche all'interno delle quali prendono oggi forma gran parte dei processi decisionali (scienza, tecnica, apparati amministrativi, etc), ha assunto un ruolo dominante, allora un'effettiva alternativa ad essa non può essere rintracciata nella tradizionale sfera della partecipazione politica o istituzionale (Beck 2000, Privitera 2004), piegata, in qualche modo, alla stessa *sub-politica*. Le esperienze prese in considerazione sembrano così contribuire a fornire un primo sostegno all'idea secondo la quale una reale alternativa alla pervasività della sfera *sub-politica* sia oggi rintrac-

ciabile in soggetti innovativi di partecipazione, il cui potenziale critico non è determinato da definizioni ideologiche in senso stretto, da appartenenze di classe nettamente definite, o da interessi precostituiti, ma da una dimensione aperta e performativa di legami solidali.

CONCLUSIONI

Intento di queste brevi conclusioni è quello di ribadire il nesso, cui si è cercato di dare un primo svolgimento nel presente saggio, tra processi sociali di costruzione della soggettività e dimensione della critica sociale. L'ipotesi interpretativa proposta in riferimento alle fonti analizzate è legata all'idea che, all'interno delle esperienze cui si è fatto riferimento, la critica all'economia di mercato tratteggia una *critica sociale*, dove l'attributo *sociale* può ben essere sostituito dall'espressione *di immaginario*: la *critica sociale* sembra svilupparsi come una *questione di immaginario*.

Gli individui che condividono un *immaginario critico del capitalismo*, anche se di diversa collocazione sociale, sono consapevoli di potersi incontrare negli stessi luoghi, partecipare alla densità di relazioni solidali e condividere le medesime passioni e tensioni critiche nonostante l'eterogeneità dei singoli individui, o degli stessi soggetti sociali che si incontrano e delle azioni che si mettono in pratica. In questo senso, sembra non essere più tanto la sfera politica a dettare i ritmi dell'integrazione sociale, quanto piuttosto è l'eterogeneità, e anche l'incoerenza, della partecipazione sociale ad eccedere le pretese di riassorbimento in rigide oggettivazioni identitarie di carattere marcatamente politico. L'integrazione sociale sembra essere garantita non da dottrine, teorie e appartenenze identitarie ormai dissolte, quanto dall'effervescenza e dall'eterogeneità della riproduzione sociale, la quale si muove in direzione dell'incremento di spazi di autonomia dalla sfera istituzionale e partitico-politica, o quantomeno di un rapporto con essa profondamente riflessivo. La questione centrale che si lega alle nuove forme di partecipazione sociale sembra proprio rapprendersi in un progressivo avvicendamento tra rivendicazioni e richieste rivolte verso l'alto e creazione comune di pratiche e identità. Prassi solidali concrete all'interno delle quali si sperimentano soluzioni creandole (Jaeggi 2012), senza attendere che qualche soggetto istituzionale o partitico-politico vi provveda.

La critica che i protagonisti della ricerca portano avanti non è quindi legata aprioristicamente, o *ex ante*, ad una identità politica rigidamente definita o ad una chiara e netta collocazione oggettiva di classe, ad esempio, ma sembra piuttosto svilupparsi come un processo sociale di aperta e continua costruzione. L'identità, individuale e collettiva, viene pragmaticamente plasmata all'interno di legami sociali solidali, i quali accompagnano un complesso differenziato, ma non totalmente aperto, di valori, istanze, progetti e desideri.⁴ Il *mondo della vita* sembra essere

⁴ Stabilire che le forme di attivismo qui riportate rintraccino nella costruzione sociale della soggettività, mediante legami solidali e riconoscitivi, una sorta di fine in sé, non significa voler aggirare il carattere critico-normativo e conflittuale di cui sono comunque portatrici. Tali esperienze non escludono la dimensione politica, non escludono una dimensione nella quale ad una ulteriore generalizzazione di fini si accompagna una più marcata configurazione di rapporti di forza e di potere, ma stabiliscono come la dimensione sociale non sia necessariamente secondaria ad essa. Le esperienze sociali qui riportate non si risolvono in una mera gestione tecnico-sociale dell'esistente. Non si fanno portatrici inconsapevoli di un ruolo di supplenza di attività tradizionalmente svolte e garantite dalle istituzioni pubbliche e ora fortemente ridimensionate, o del tutto smantellate, a causa dei tagli ai servizi promossi dalle politiche di austerità. Qui la partecipazione mostra un marcato livello di riflessività critica. Ci si fa protagonisti di attività il cui esito ha un riflesso positivo sulla vita collettiva e sulla comunità, oppure svolgo attività di volontariato per le quali un tempo era prevista una retribuzione, ma lo si fa riflessivamente, promuovendo, da un lato, una soggettività critica e, dall'altro, rivendicando spazi di possibile conflitto circa decisioni amministrative e politiche. Se, ad esempio, mi prendo cura attivamente di uno spazio pubblico contribuendo a rivitalizzarlo e ad aumentarne il capitale sociale, vorrei poi contare sulla possibilità di incidere sulla decisione relativa, ad esempio, a quali attività favorire in quello spazio, quanto inclusive esse siano, da quali valori possano essere ispirate, con quali orari svolgerle e via dicendo. Per questa ragione sulle attività qui analizzate sembra fare presa interpretativa la categoria di "welfare del comune" (Marella 2013). La critica e il conflitto si svolgono in una dimensione che è primariamente sociale, ma che conserva *anche* una dimensione normativa ulteriore. Se da un lato il marcato carattere sociale delle esperienze riportate configura il rischio di una sorta di separatezza autoreferenziale di un sistema sociale che non dialoga con gli altri sistemi, dall'altro è ben evidente un potenziale di conflittualità latamente normativa situato in una dimensione che potremmo definire al confine tra *sociale e politico*. In termini più generali, tutte queste considerazioni richiedono una riarticolazione della rappresentanza e del più ampio rapporto tra società e politica in senso stretto, aspetto che qui

il luogo privilegiato della riproduzione sociale: *fare società*, non *fare politica*. O meglio, *fare politica nel fare società*; *fare politica* poiché *si è fatta società*.

I processi di soggettivazione qui analizzati tratteggiano una dinamica sociale aperta, nella quale viene meno qualsivoglia dualismo tra relazioni intersoggettive, da una parte, e autorealizzazione, dall'altra. Agendo, creando socialità e relazioni solidali, i soggetti studiati si costruiscono e si riproducono, senza “fondarsi” su una dimensione ontologica data o garantita dal rigido riferimento ad una identificazione vigente e oggettivata. È come se la soggettività chiamata in causa nelle esperienze riportate si costruisse nella concretezza delle forme di cooperazione sociale e condivisione vissute. In questi termini, la solidarietà, come mostrato, diviene a tutti gli effetti un processo sociale altamente performativo: essa costituisce la fonte prima per la continua e aperta fioritura di appartenenze collettive e prospettive di auto-realizzazione, legami sovraindividuali e “pienezza” esistenziale.

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Citation: Collins R., Pratesi A., Perulli A. (2020) *On politics, emotional cultures and social change in times of crisis: an interview with Randall Collins*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 127-132. doi: 10.13128/cambio-9916

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Points of view

On politics, emotional cultures and social change in times of crisis: an interview with Randall Collins

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Abstract. This interview was conducted between the Spring and the Summer 2020 by means of an interactive email exchange. Our conversation with Randall Collins had been planned a few months before the global pandemic as part of ongoing conversations inspired by the creation of an interdisciplinary study group on emotions at the University of Florence, and was eventually boosted by some of the recent developments in global politics and in the pandemic itself. The starting point, is Collins' original ability to reconcile—through his emotion-based theoretical model (2004)—two significant and allegedly clashing aspects of social life: conflict and solidarity. We then move on to discuss the ways in which current theories of emotions can be reconsidered in light of recent emerging phenomena (such as right-wing populism and nationalism) at an international level. In addition, we introduce the theme of the global health emergency and discuss the role of different emotional cultures in dealing with the pandemic, in Italy and the USA. Finally, we consider whether or not it is possible to talk about *ethics of emotions*, i.e. whether some emotions can be interpreted as 'more ethically relevant' than others within the context of current social and political scenarios.

Keywords: emotions, crisis times, conflict, solidarity, right-wing populism in Italy and the US, emotional cultures, global pandemic, ethics of emotion.

CONFLICT AND SOLIDARITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

AP: I would like to start this conversation with the idea of solidarity, that too often has permeated discourses in the current crisis times. Over time, you developed a conflictual sociology that combines two substantial aspects: an idea of society as a place inevitably characterized by multidimensional stratification and conflicting interests; and a perspective that underlines the relevance of social solidarity for all forms of collective organization. Emotions are the common denominator of social action and

the bridging element between conflict and social cohesion/solidarity. Emotions are constantly at the center of interactions and wider social mechanisms and processes: they are the ingredients of the rituals that structure the situations in which social action takes place; they are the foundation of social solidarity, but also a relevant factor in social stratification; they provide motivation for people's actions and activities; they accompany all forms of individual and collective mobilization; they animate conflicts and characterize violent behavior. How do you think conflict and solidarity/social cohesion relate to each other in present times?...

RC: Conflict and social solidarity are always related; since no conflict is successfully mobilized without solidarity of the group that engages in the struggle. In the classic form of Marx, all significant conflict was between stratified classes; and he famously argued in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* that the better mobilized and more class-conscious group wins. In general, this continues to be true today, adding that Durkheim, Goffman and interaction ritual theory provide a more detailed mechanism for solidarity and therefore mobilization; and that there are many more dimensions besides class that can engage in conflict (gender, ethnicity, religion, life-style, age groups etc.)

RETHINKING THEORIES OF EMOTIONS IN LIGHT OF NEW EMERGING PHENOMENA

AP: Since emotional dynamics are central in the production of society, we cannot understand social dynamics without grasping them. However, rather than merely analyzing current social and political phenomena in light of the theoretical contribution of emotions, it might be more productive rethinking current theories of emotions in light of such emerging phenomena. What are your thoughts on that? How can the study of emotions help us to understand contemporary political dynamics at national and international level?

RC: What has developed in the sociology of emotions are more techniques for studying the emotions people display and a wider range of situations in which we can see these emotions. Emotions can be seen in facial expressions, voices, gestures and body postures. These provide tools for examining empirically how people act with different intensities and kinds of emotions, as seen in photos and videos; many of these are now accessible on-line. Thus, by looking at images of people on the street, we can see how much deference, solidarity, alienation, or self-centeredness there exists. For example, women are seen in public much more frequently than in filmed streets in the 1980s; similarly – although this might seem surprising in view of recent protests – black and white people are seen together in crowds more than previously. (These data are for the USA; comparable data may be available for other countries.)

How can these methods be used to study political dynamics at the macro level? Macro terms like national and international are just a way of conceiving of mass processes by single nouns; they actually consist of large numbers of persons in interaction. In reality, the entire population of a nation never engages in concerted action; most politics consists of social behavior of two kinds: officials who have authority in big organizations such as the state and the military; and people who take part in political movements, such as demonstrations, as well as their more violent counterparts (who are always a smaller yet number). Getting natural, authentic images of high officials is difficult, since they usually put on an artificial front-stage performance for any camera; sometimes we get behind the scenes when their email leaks out. Demos on the other hand are amply depicted on videos; see for instance Anne Nassauer, (2019) *Situational Breakdowns: Understanding Protest Violence*, and Isabel Bramsen on the emotional dynamics of movements in Europe, America, and the Middle East. Extreme violent groups are more secretive; but ethnographic methods yield a portrait of their own emotions and social practices that generate both their own radical group solidarity, and their highly negative emotions about their enemies. See the research of the intrepid Italian sociologist, Alessandro Orsini, (2011) *Anatomy of the Red Brigades*; (2017) *Sacrifice: My Life in a Fascist Militia*.

AP: Several analyses and interpretations of the rise of right-wing populism in Europe and the USA tend to explain these developments by referring to the concept of “emotion” (or affect and/or its cognate terms). In order to describe the general affective tone of a historically situated experience of society, some scholars talk about *affectivité implicative* (Martuccelli, 2016), *affective atmospheres* (Anderson, 2009), *affective resonance* (Mühlhoff 2015, 2019), or identify in a very specific emotion – quite often anger – the hallmark and origin (if not the cause) of many of the political and social phenomena that characterize contemporary societies. Do you think that, from a historical and cultural point of view, the nature of emotion and its role in driving (or preventing) social and political change has reached a new quality in contemporary societies?

RC: As far as I can tell from available evidence, the range of human emotions has not changed very much over time. What has changed most strikingly has been the way emotions are communicated. Until recently emotions were mostly expressed face-to-face; remote communication of emotions was mainly by writing, which could be highly rhetorical but did not affect people viscerally. Now emotions can be communicated in combination of personal image and voice; also with words, although as any actor or speech-maker knows, which words are used is less important than the rhythm that can be built up between speaker and audience. In the last decade of the social media, people have become more self-conscious about what emotions they are trying to express; some of these devices, such as emojis, are rather artificial; but now there is much attention to conveying emotions, and also to critiquing the emotional displays of people we dislike. As sociologists, a next step for us is to attempt a kind of “emotional survey” of how much various kinds of emotions are expressed over the social media. We also need to examine the receiving side – how much do people accept the communicated emotions as authentic or reject them as manipulated? When and how much do communicated emotions mobilize a social movement? Since we know also that social movements can fail (the Arab Spring is just one of many examples), we should study the conditions that make media-enabled movements last longer, or end more quickly.

AP: In your eminent book *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004) you describe a “Goffmanian Revolution” taking place between the 1950s and 1970s—a shift toward greater casualness in interaction (p. 371). The Trump phenomenon as well as other current manifestations of neo-populism, in Italy and elsewhere, can only be explained if we begin to question how such manifestations resonate with the affective sphere of many people. People who seem to have found in the political incorrectness of some political leaders and in their boldness and arrogance not only a legitimate way to oppose politically the traditional elites of power, but above all a way to identify themselves emotionally with what is perceived as a display of “frankness” and “authenticity”, even when blatant forms of racism or gender discrimination emerge. To which extent do you think that the *casualness revolution* you described a few years ago has also influenced the levels of what is tolerated and tolerable in public discourse and politics? In other words, has the casualness revolution lowered the bar of decorum and respectability in political debates and discourses?

Strictly related to these subject matters, what is your diagnosis of the social transformations that have affected the US in the last 30 years? And what does Europe look like from your social observatory?

RC: I will answer these two questions together. It is a very good point, that the casualness revolution has lowered the bar of decorum. In his book, *Informalization*, Cas Wouters documented the change in etiquette books in Europe and America over a century; his conclusion is that informalization is a leveling of class distinctions, previously expressed in proper clothing, discourse, and manners. I agree in part with this analysis. In my own research comparing photos from different dates, we see a continuous effort to hide signs of social class; especially in the high-tech industries since the 1980s, but also for instance viewing persons in the first-class compartments of airplanes. Neckties, dress shirts, suits are discarded in favor of blue jeans and sweat shirts. This change has gone along with changing forms of address; instead of polite salutations in letters and messages, using title and or last name, there has been a shift to almost compulsory addressing everyone by their first name – which was once a sign of intimacy, but now conveys nothing. That does not mean that authority differences disappear; the boss still has the

power to hire and fire, and the fact that everyone dresses alike and speaks casually just makes power more invisible, and the surface more unreliable.

My research comparing photos from the 1920s through the 2000s (Collins, Randall. 2014. "Four Theories of Informalization and How to Test Them." *Human Figurations* :3 No. 2. (online journal) http://quod.lib.umich.edu/h/humfig/11217607.0003.2*?rgn=full+text) confirms Wouters' theory that social class markers have tended to disappear, starting already in the 1930s and accelerating in the 1980s-90s. But other dimensions of status inequality have developed: wearing athletic clothes, which once marked the leisure activities of the upper class, but after 1980 shifted to a claim to superior fitness, and to pseudo-athletic claims by wearing professional team insignia; a sexiness elite (starting in the 1960s) striving at maximal showing off one's body; antinomian elites-- cooler and more rebellious than thou-- from the hippies, to punks, heroin chic, ripped clothes etc. Thus, although Wouters give an optimistic interpretation-- social inequalities disappear or at least become shameful-- I suggest that informalization generates new claims for social ranking. It is an ever-competitive game that some people find offensive and other find enjoyment and status in "blowing their minds" as hippies used to say (Dadists said "*épater le bourgeois*"). The ubiquity of the antinomian style on the media (broadcast and social) is part of today's atmosphere of contention over the once-proper Goffmanian formalities of everyday life.

Does Europe look different than America in these trends? The informalization trend started in the 1920s with youth culture in Germany; the sporty look advanced in France in the late 1940s. The phase of wearing mass-produced athletic clothes and calling everyone by their first name started in the US, but by the 2000s had spread widely in Europe and elsewhere. For recent updates, one should collect photos and observations and report your conclusions.

DIFFERENT EMOTIONAL CULTURES DEALING WITH THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

AP: Let's now talk about the current global emergency. In Italy, the initial reaction of the very first weeks of the current pandemic, especially on an individual level, was perhaps a mix of disbelief, apprehension and impasse. Eventually, collective emotional reactions seem to have prevailed, at least on a symbolic level. Singing or playing out of the balconies or displaying the Italian national flag, allegedly became the emblem of the solidarity that cemented the nation around symbolic gestures—true Durkheimian sacred objects. Several balconies still display the flag or other typical paraphernalia such as hand-painted cloths with the slogan "*Andrà tutto bene*" ("Everything's gonna be all right") written on them. But the other forms of emotional displays have generally lasted only a few weeks. You described a similar pattern of emotional reaction for the shock of 9/11, that provoked an entirely new set of collective responses. And perhaps we might be able to compare the way(s) Americans reacted to 9/11 and the way(s) they are reacting now to the pandemic. However, my question is on a slightly different level: do you think that the different "emotional cultures" characterizing Italy and the USA (so far and so close countries) might have a different impact in terms of *care policy* in the two countries? Said differently—assuming that the pandemic forces us to rethink, for instance, our ideas about people's welfare and well-being—do you think that different emotional cultures and habits will have a role in the rethinking process? Or not necessarily?

RC: Are there distinctive emotional cultures in different countries or regions? This has been a widespread impression given by travellers, since the time of Sir Francis Bacon at least; but since closer observation usually shows that people even within the same region differ in emotional style among themselves, we must beware of impressionistic judgments based mainly on the most striking examples. Modern micro-sociology gives us more detailed evidence (e.g. analysis of voice recordings by Corsaro, in Allen Grimshaw, *Conflict Talk*), supporting generalizations such as Italians are more likely to talk with their hands moving and to carry on multi-sided conversations unlike Anglophone turn-taking rules. Does this matter for cultures of care as translated into public policy? Rather than offering a theory for an area I know little about, I recommend thinking about research method: does the culture of emotional expression and conversational interaction, which can be documented in personal

interactions in Italy, also express a particular kind of attitude about care for other people? And does such an attitude, if it exists, filter through directly into political discourse and political action? Or are there weightier forces at the level of bureaucratic organization? It is a challenging topic for micro/macro research.

THE ETHICS OF EMOTIONS

AP: Emotions are ethically neutral: there are not “bad” or “good” emotions as such, but it all depends on the emotions’ origins and outcomes. For example, in terms of origins, fear can be legitimate or illegitimate, rational or irrational, life-preserving or suicidal. In terms of outcomes, instead, fear can have useful/constructive or detrimental/destructive consequences. It is legitimate, rational and life-preserving when we face a real life-threatening event (the well-known meeting with a grizzly bear on a mountain pathway) and run away; illegitimate, irrational and even suicidal (for the economy) when we deal with the phenomenon of immigration as if was a massive problem rather than a massive opportunity (for cultural diversity and enrichment, economic growth, cosmopolitanism, etc.)

Given these premises, is it possible to talk about *ethics of emotions*? Are there emotions that can be interpreted as “more ethically relevant” than others?

RC: Ethics is itself an emotion. In fact, it is one of the main emotions Durkheim dealt with in his theory of religion (and therefore in wider theory of interaction ritual). Successful rituals create and reinforce moral obligations and beliefs about what is moral; the more successful such rituals, the more intensely moral individuals feel (above all while they are in the midst of other people carrying out the ritual); and -- the dark side of rituals and morality-- the more they feel a righteous duty to attack and punish moral deviance. Let us try to think further into this question. Since there are all kinds of interaction rituals (cheering for your sports team, for example), do they have different emotional and therefore moral qualities? On the whole, the morality of sport rituals is rather tribalistic, self-centered groups destroying their enemies, although sometimes this is overlaid by another ritual of community with the opponent through the ethics of good sports. So yes, some rituals have a more universalistic and less self-centered quality. Religious rituals tend to focus on emotions of awe for the sacred, sometimes on altruistic love. There are political equivalents of both kinds of rituals: demos and speeches that arouse tribalistic anger and fear and righteous punishment; demos and speeches (more rare) that attempt to spread compassion. The history of religious movements has often been in the latter category, but even there, movements generate feelings of membership and hence of boundaries and status differences. It is often an ethical conundrum. The best rituals (to invoke a moral standard) are the ones that include an element of caution: tread carefully.

AP: Thank you very much for your time and contribution, Randall.

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Citation: Bontempi M. (2020) *L'identità degradata. Note sul dispositivo teorico di Stigma*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 133-151. doi: 10.13128/cambio-9816

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

(Re)Reading the Classics

L'identità degradata. Note sul dispositivo teorico di *Stigma*

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Ormai sulla soglia del centenario della sua nascita, l'opera di Erving Goffman continua ad essere uno stimolo e un oggetto di dibattito e di confronto per molti sociologi contemporanei. I concetti elaborati dal sociologo canadese sono entrati diffusamente, sebbene in modi e gradi diversi, nelle pratiche di ricerca e anche nelle analisi teoriche. Resta, invece, per molti aspetti ancora poco esplorata in modo sistematico la dimensione teorica del lavoro di Goffman. Su questo aspetto, ancora in tempi recenti gli viene rimproverata una mancanza di sistematicità che ridurrebbe notevolmente l'impatto dell'effervescente e pressoché continua elaborazione di concetti originali che troviamo nei suoi lavori. Questo limite è stato, ovviamente, anche uno stimolo per alcuni interpreti per tentare letture sistematiche della sua opera o per perimetrare l'insieme dei suoi lavori in una prospettiva teorica generale o anche per sostenere una intrinseca mancanza di sistematicità tra i suoi lavori [Vargas Maseda, 2017; Scheff, 2016; Burns, 1997; Warfield Rawls, 1989: 153].

Inoltre, coloro che hanno lavorato sugli aspetti teorici della produzione goffmaniana hanno spesso rivolto la loro attenzione più ad alcuni testi che ad altri, collocando *Stigma* in una posizione marginale rispetto al contributo che si riteneva potesse dare alla riflessione teoretica di Goffman. Sebbene si tratti del lavoro che, insieme a *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, ha avuto e continua ad avere la più grande diffusione editoriale, con decine di ristampe e molte traduzioni, *Stigma* viene considerato diffusamente un testo minore, sicuramente sorprendente, commovente e spiazzante per la grande quantità di *tranches de vie* e per l'acume della scrittura di Goffman, ma non propriamente un testo di teoria sociologica. Eppure, è Goffman stesso a dare al lettore un indizio del suo intento sistematico, quando scrive, nella prefazione, che cercherà «di separare il materiale sullo stigma dai fatti che gli sono limitrofi, di mostrare come questo materiale possa essere dettagliatamente descritto all'interno di un unico schema concettuale, e di chiarire la relazione che lega lo stigma al tema della devianza» [Goffman 2018: 23].

Alcuni tra gli interpreti hanno sottolineato, come ha fatto Lemert [2010], la coerenza teoretica del libro, soffermandosi però sugli aspetti innovativi di alcuni tra i concetti elaborati in *Stigma*, senza affrontare il lavoro di una ricostruzione ed esplicitazione del dispositivo teorico sottostante al libro. L'intento di questo contributo va, invece, nella direzione di offrire una ricostruzione della struttura e dei problemi teoretici che innervano *Stigma*, mostrandone, almeno nei termini di una segnalazione passibile di successivi sviluppi, gli elementi di contributo ad una teoria generale delle interazioni con stigma. Tra quanti emergeranno nelle pagine seguenti, due mi sembrano meritevoli di essere segnalati fin da ora, perché attraversano il testo nella sua longitudine. Il primo è la tesi che le interazioni con stigma sono specifiche forme interazionali determinate strutturalmente e non forme manchevoli o secondarie di interazione. Il secondo è costituito da una ricca produzione di concetti convergenti in una teoria della distribuzione asimmetrica dell'informazione nell'interazione come condizione di possibilità interazionali. Goffman la sviluppa qui in funzione della trattazione delle possibilità interazionali dello screditabile, ma per la sua generalità ha interessanti possibilità di connessione con altri suoi lavori.

Infine, una notazione di metodo. Come parte di una produzione "giovanile" di Goffman, è piuttosto evidente che *Stigma* stia in una relazione stretta con alcuni testi coevi, cioè *The Presentation of Self*, del 1959 e *Asylums*, del 1961. Ciò è per un verso evidente, e anche noto se si considera come il tema centrale di questi tre lavori sia quello del *self* e della sua presentazione nelle interazioni, sia in senso affermativo nel primo lavoro, che nelle condizioni dell'interazione disancorata nel secondo. Alcuni concetti sviluppati in profondità in questi due libri entrano in *Stigma* con un ruolo importante. *Self*, situazione e definizione della situazione derivano ovviamente dal primo, ma non in modo diretto, poiché *Stigma* studia quelle condizioni interazionali nelle quali la presentazione del *self* fallisce o si teme che possa fallire o comunque si basa su di un genere di attributi categoriali esclusi a priori da *The Presentation of Self*. Un legame con *Asylums* è nel concetto di carriera morale, che però Goffman rielabora ad hoc per lo studio dello stigma, ridefinendone le condizioni. Meno evidente e discusso è il legame con *Distanza dal ruolo*, un saggio che Goffman pubblica nello stesso anno di *Stigma*, in particolare attraverso il concetto di altri del ruolo (*role-others*), che trova in *Stigma* un'elaborazione importante e originale per la comprensione della dinamica della performance dell'identità e del ruolo. Questi legami non delineano delle dipendenze, sono piuttosto fonti di riferimento per il lettore, utili per attingere ad aspetti del concetto che sono tralasciati in *Stigma*, ma che si può, più che ragionevolmente, supporre che fossero implicitamente presenti a Goffman anche mentre li impiegava nella scrittura di *Stigma*. Sebbene le relazioni tra questi concetti restino per lo più implicite, ritengo che siano significative al fine di ricostruire e comprendere il dispositivo teorico che sta al fondo del libro.

ELEMENTI PER UNA TEORIA DELLA PRESENTAZIONE DEL SÉ NELLA SITUAZIONE

L'avvio e lo svolgimento dell'interazione si basano su una struttura cognitivo-organizzativa nella quale svolge un ruolo centrale la produzione e gestione di informazioni da parte dei partecipanti. Prima ancora dell'incontro vero e proprio, le informazioni vengono ricercate in ciò che è percepibile e generate nelle anticipazioni mentali che orientano i partecipanti a reciproche aspettative di comportamento e alla definizione della situazione che gli altri potrebbero presentare. Per formulare queste anticipazioni è necessario disporre già, oppure ricavare sul momento, informazioni sull'altro. Nel primo caso gli altri partecipanti conoscono già l'individuo e nelle anticipazioni mentali utilizzano principalmente le informazioni su di lui che hanno tratto da esperienze precedenti, aspettandosi una continuità dei tratti precedentemente conosciuti. Nel secondo caso, in particolar modo di fronte ad un estraneo, la base primaria da cui ricavare indizi informativi su di lui è costituita da quanto siano percepibili dai sensi della distanza, in quello specifico momento, segnali significativi connessi all'aspetto, al comportamento verbale e fisico, il tono di voce, accenti e modo di parlare, odori, elementi visibili sul o del corpo. Quanto di quell'estraneo viene percepito attraverso i sensi viene assunto dagli osservatori come un insieme di indizi che acquistano una significatività in base a «precedenti esperienze fatte con persone abbastanza simili» [Goffman 1969: 11]. In forza della somiglianza con i tratti sociali di altre persone di cui gli osservatori hanno una passata esperienza, quei tratti dell'estraneo vengono mentalmente considerati come segni di attributi di una categoria sociale di cui quell'estraneo

potrebbe essere un membro. Si tratta dunque di un'attribuzione ipotetica, che si stima solo a grandi linee e come "valida per la maggior parte dei casi", in breve, un'attribuzione *virtuale* [Goffman 2018: 28], perché non ancora confermata da prove, ma utile per anticipare mentalmente un'identità e possibili tipi di comportamenti da parte di quella persona. Quando, invece, per gli osservatori non c'è un'esperienza pregressa che possa mediare i segni ricavati sul momento con un'ipotetica categoria sociale di cui considerare l'estraneo un membro, a quella persona verranno applicati «stereotipi non controllati in precedenza» [Goffman 1969: 11], cioè tratti generici che si ritengono caratterizzare *tutti* i membri di quella categoria, senza distinzioni.

Nella generazione di questo spazio comunicativo comune tra i partecipanti ad un'interazione, due sono i canali semantici lungo i quali ciascun individuo genera un'impressione sugli altri: il primo è dato dalla comunicazione di significati in modo consapevole e volontario; il secondo è invece costituito da aspetti non controllabili del comportamento espressivo. Sarà necessario, quindi, un lavoro di selezione e significazione che gli altri faranno su aspetti non consapevoli del comportamento dell'individuo. Tali elementi possono essere per gli altri una fonte significativa di informazioni su di lui e anche un mezzo per verificare la verità di quanto egli trasmette negli aspetti controllabili. È da sottolineare come le possibilità comunicative emergenti dalla combinazione degli aspetti controllati e non controllabili rendano possibili molti livelli informativi all'interno dell'interazione. Qualunque elemento non consapevole può infatti essere interpretato come sintomo di tratti qualificanti l'individuo che possono convergere o rivelarsi più o meno in contrasto rispetto a come egli presenta se stesso in modo consapevole. Attraverso questi due canali gli altri ricevono una presentazione del sé dell'individuo che può non corrispondere pienamente a quella che l'individuo vuole o intende presentare loro, e viceversa, l'individuo può intenzionalmente comunicare agli altri informazioni fuorvianti, fingendo o mentendo in modi e gradi molto vari sul proprio sé.

L'incontro interazionale si sviluppa, dunque, in uno spazio comunicativo asimmetrico, del quale ciascun partecipante è consapevole, ma solo nelle presentazioni del sé fatte dagli altri, mentre non lo è di quella che egli fa di sé agli altri. È forse il caso di sottolineare che nello svolgimento dell'interazione questa asimmetria non fissa qualcuno su una posizione sovraordinata (percezione dei due canali) e qualche altro su una sotto ordinata (percezione di un solo canale), ma tutti i partecipanti sono simultaneamente sopra e sotto ordinati, a seconda che si riferiscano alle presentazioni che gli altri fanno di sé o alla propria presentazione di sé. Il dinamismo comunicativo e la quantità di informazioni che questo continuo passaggio di posizioni produce sono notevolmente maggiori, in termini di polisemia e anche di opacità, dell'informazione che potrebbe circolare in una ipotetica comunicazione simmetrica e trasparente, e costituiscono la condizione di un continuo lavoro di controllo e *tuning* tra le definizioni della situazione e le presentazioni di sé che i partecipanti proiettano nell'interazione.

La "nuvola comunicativa" che caratterizza l'interazione viene dunque a strutturarsi attraverso due dimensioni, una esterna e l'altra interna all'interazione. La prima ancora l'interazione alla struttura sociale attraverso l'attribuzione dell'interlocutore a categorie sociali, da cui si deducono, virtualmente, possibili aspettative di comportamento. La seconda è data dai reciproci vincoli di fiducia e morali che impegnano i partecipanti all'interazione negli scambi degli atti comunicativi, verbali e no. Entrambe queste dimensioni consentono di organizzare le performance interazionali come processi comunicativi strutturati, ma allo stesso tempo aperti. Goffman sintetizza efficacemente questa combinazione di apertura e strutturazione, osservando che «quando l'individuo si trova alla presenza di altri, la sua attività ha il carattere di una promessa» [ivi: 13]. In che senso la performance interazionale ha i caratteri della promessa? Abbiamo visto che quando un individuo 1 si trova davanti ad un individuo 2 in primo luogo offre una presentazione di sé, anche solo non verbale, e che questa offerta di segni di sé influenza l'individuo 2, suscitandogli un'anticipazione di una possibile identità e comportamento. L'interazione viene avviata se questa offerta dell'individuo 1 viene accolta dall'individuo 2. In questo caso l'attesa si cristallizza e diviene un *credere* di 2 relativo ai tratti segnici offerti da 1. La presentazione del sé comincia così ad acquisire la forma di una reciprocità che si struttura semioticamente come una promessa [Brandt 1992], delineando una coppia di ruoli i cui vincoli reciproci sono tanto più rinforzati quanto più vengono agiti. Infatti, il credere di 2 alla presentazione di 1 vincola quest'ultimo ad un agire di conferma coerente con l'attesa suscitata e rafforza in 2 la sua collocazione nel ruolo di destinatario della promessa offerta nei segni di quel sé. Ora, il vincolo di reciprocità che viene generato dall'accettazione da parte di 2 della presentazione di sé fatta da 1 mostra un'asimmetria tra i ruoli che si caratterizza per uno

squilibrio crescente con il passare del tempo: l'impegno di 1 cresce nel tempo perché richiede una coerenza con i segni offerti all'inizio, che può essere sempre più complessa e impegnativa da mantenere¹. Al contrario, l'investimento di 2 è forte all'inizio, perché inizialmente basato su un atto di fiducia a fronte di pochi elementi segnici, ma decresce con il tempo, per la possibilità di monitorare i canali comunicativi e ricavare eventuali informazioni dissonanti da quelle inizialmente promesse da 1. Questa asimmetria mette in luce la vulnerabilità di ciascun individuo rispetto alla presentazione del sé che un altro individuo fa di fronte a lui; in particolare, la dipendenza in cui si trova 2 per l'investimento fiduciario mostra il carattere precario e rischioso del destinatario della promessa. È la vulnerabilità dei partecipanti soggettivamente esperita a costituire la condizione dei vincoli fiduciari e morali che strutturano dal di dentro l'interazione. Allo stesso tempo, in quanto fenomeno strutturale e non soggettivo, la vulnerabilità è intimamente connessa con l'ampiezza delle possibilità comunicative che consentono agli individui di proiettare anche presentazioni ingannevoli di sé, in parte o nell'insieme². In questo spazio ricco di informazioni, ma anche di incerte possibilità, la fiducia diviene una risorsa importante, capace di strutturare una coppia di ruoli in una reciprocità e di vincolare una presentazione di sé ad una forma di coerenza, fino a prova contraria. Infine, di fronte a una presentazione di sé come promessa, la fiducia risponde anche alla richiesta morale che un individuo fa nei confronti degli altri partecipanti quando proietta una definizione della situazione e mostra determinati elementi segnici attraverso i quali attesta di essere membro di una categoria sociale: Goffman mostra che in questa offerta c'è più di una richiesta unilaterale, c'è un vincolo morale in cui l'individuo 1 pone l'altro nella posizione di sentirsi obbligato «a valutarlo e trattarlo nel modo in cui persone del suo tipo hanno il diritto ad essere trattate», perché, col presentare *quel sé*, tra i suoi possibili, «implicitamente rinuncia al diritto ad essere ciò che non appare» [Goffman 1969: 23], sostiene cioè la coerenza tra ciò che mostra e ciò che è, escludendo di essere considerato come uno che mostra di essere ciò che non è, almeno fino a prova contraria.

In che modo le diverse definizioni della situazione proiettate dai partecipanti assumono il carattere di uno sfondo condiviso? Certamente non come risultato armonico dell'espressione diretta di ciò che ciascuno sente e della reciproca approvazione dei sentimenti espressi dagli altri, è questo solo «un ideale ottimistico non necessario per un buon funzionamento della società» [ivi: 20]. Si tratta piuttosto di un lavoro di «autodisciplina», che ciascun partecipante fa a partire dal doppio movimento di reprimere i propri sentimenti immediati e far riferimento a valori cui si sa che tutti i presenti in quella situazione si sentono obbligati a aderire, almeno in apparenza. Nella comune definizione della situazione non è in gioco alcuna idea di autenticità, ma non per questo si tratta solamente di falsità. In quanto realtà fittizia non è di per sé né vera, né falsa. È frutto di un'attività sociale, portata avanti con una divisione del lavoro su di un materiale già socialmente condiviso. Goffman osserva come questa divisione del lavoro consenta la produzione di un'attività articolata in segmenti individuali di un focus sostenuto in comune: «Ad ogni partecipante è permesso di istruire delle regole, o almeno di tentare di farlo, su argomenti che sono vitali per lui, ma non di immediata importanza per gli altri, e cioè le razionalizzazioni e giustificazioni con le quali risponde della sua passata attività. In cambio di questo privilegio egli tace oppure non s'impegna nei confronti di fatti importanti per gli altri, ma non d'immediato rilievo per quanto lo riguarda: si raggiunge così nell'interazione una specie di *modus vivendi*. Assieme, i partecipanti contribuiscono ad un'unica e generale definizione della situazione che implica *non tanto un vero accordo circa ciò che è, quanto piuttosto un'effettiva intesa circa le pretese e gli argomenti che verranno presi in considerazione in un determinato momento*. Esisterà anche un accordo effettivo sull'opportunità di evitare un conflitto aperto fra definizioni contrastanti della situazione. Indicherò d'ora innanzi questo tipo di accordo con il termine di *consenso operativo*» [ibidem: cors. aggiunto]. La definizione della situazione ha dunque un carattere metacomunicativo che non è rivolto ai contenuti, ma alle possibilità di presentazione e di argomentazione *su* quei contenuti, che sono peculiari e appropriate per quel tipo di situazione. Più che di rappresentazione, allora, possiamo dire che in questa

¹ «Sembra che un individuo sia più libero di scegliere il tipo di trattamento che egli intende chiedere ed offrire agli altri presenti al principio di un incontro, che non di cambiarlo, una volta che l'interazione sia in atto» [Goffman 1969: 21].

² «Molte forme di comportamento mediante le quali possiamo essere trattati offensivamente da una categoria di altri sono intimamente alleate a quelle mediante le quali i membri di un'altra categoria possono appropriatamente mostrare i loro legami con noi. (...) sia opportunità che rischi sono inerenti alla co-presenza fisica» [Goffman 2006: 49].

definizione di *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* Goffman anticipa alcuni degli aspetti centrali del frame che saranno oggetto tre lustri dopo in *Frame Analysis*: l'interazione necessita di una cornice metacomunicativa che viene stabilita cooperativamente dai partecipanti facendo riferimento e "lavorando" idee e norme non generate nella situazione, ma socialmente note ai partecipanti già prima di entrare in interazione.

Così definita, è chiaro che la conservazione della coerenza della comune definizione della situazione sia non solo un aspetto decisivo delle possibilità di sviluppo dell'interazione, ma un'esigenza «fondamentale» [ivi: 291] della struttura degli incontri sociali, «quelle entità della vita sociale che esistono ogni volta che le persone entrano nell'immediata presenza fisica degli altri» [ibidem]. Ma la ricchezza e il dinamismo della "nuvola comunicativa" che avvolge l'interazione in atto comporta un'esposizione continua all'emersione di segni o eventi che, quando non confermano, possono in qualche modo contraddire, screditare o mettere in dubbio la definizione della situazione condivisa fino a quel momento. Quando questo accade, i presupposti condivisi sui quali poggiava la definizione della situazione si incrinano, l'incertezza affiora nell'imbarazzo e nella confusione e tanto più i presupposti diventano insostenibili per l'emergere di prove loro contrarie, quanto più l'interazione tende a perdere l'ancoramento alle strutture fiduciarie e morali interne e perfino, in casi estremi, ai riferimenti alla struttura sociale esterna. In questi frangenti, l'individuo la cui presentazione è stata screditata «può provare vergogna, mentre gli altri presenti magari sono ostili, e tutti i partecipanti finiscono per sentirsi a disagio, perplessi, sconcertati, imbarazzati, sperimentando quella specie di anomia che viene a crearsi quando crolla il minuzioso sistema sociale dell'interazione "faccia a faccia"» [ivi: 23].

Il sé che viene presentato in una situazione interazionale sostenuta da una comune definizione della situazione, non ha, dunque, origine nella persona del soggetto, ma «è piuttosto un effetto drammaturgico che emerge da una scena che viene presentata. Il problema fondamentale, il punto cruciale, è se verrà creduto o meno» [ivi: 289]. Quando il sé non viene creduto si aprono le condizioni dello stigma.

PERFORMANCE DELL'ABBASSAMENTO

Lo stigma sorge quando tra l'identità sociale virtuale e l'identità sociale effettiva di un individuo si apre uno scarto: i suoi attributi effettivi e quelli dei membri della categoria sociale alla quale virtualmente lo si ascriverebbe non corrispondono. Un attributo non previsto, socialmente non desiderabile e screditante, entra nella presentazione del sé in un incontro interazionale ed il suo significato ha per i partecipanti l'effetto di abbassare la loro considerazione di quell'individuo a membro degradato di quella categoria.

L'essere uno stigmatizzato non è una posizione sociale. Il problema dello stigmatizzato è la *riduzione* delle aspettative socialmente attribuite alla categoria sociale cui viene comunque assegnato. L'essere un membro regolare di una categoria sociale è, infatti, solitamente associato ad una disponibilità *tipica* alla stima categoriale, cioè ad aspettative di capacità ed efficacia fondate non sulle qualità personali di quell'individuo, ma sul *fatto* della sua appartenenza a quella categoria sociale. Nel caso dello stigma, questa stima tipica viene compromessa dalla valutazione negativa data all'attributo non previsto.

Proprio perché degradante l'identità, lo stigma è in sostanza un problema di significato, non di attributi. Ciò che è in gioco non è ciò che è, ma le rispettive significazioni sociali agite nelle situazioni interazionali: «ciò che conta davvero è il linguaggio delle relazioni, non quello degli attributi» [Goffman 2018: 29]. Infatti, un attributo che stigmatizzi un tipo di portatore può confermare la regolarità di un altro. Allo stesso modo, l'essere normali non è una condizione sociale permanente, ma «il costrutto immaginario fondamentale in riferimento al quale le persone comuni concepiscono se stesse» [ivi: 33, nota 12] e si definiscono in relazione all'altro. Normale, in *Stigma*, è chi - in una specifica situazione con specifici partecipanti all'interazione - non ha *quell'attributo* che in *quella* definizione della situazione viene considerato stigmatizzante. In altre parole, nella nuvola comunicativa dell'interazione la possibilità di stigmatizzazione è sempre aperta, per chiunque. In senso generale, questa possibilità può cristallizzarsi in relazione ad attributi che sono già socialmente screditanti, ma in contesti circoscritti - gruppi o comunità particolari - il fenomeno della stigmatizzazione può sorgere e attaccarsi anche ad attributi fino a quel momento non ritenuti screditanti. In questo senso, normali e stigmatizzati sono ruoli ed effetti dell'interazione,

non individui. Tuttavia, nelle interazioni alcuni più spesso di altri possono sentirsi collocati nel ruolo di stigmatizzati. Ciò che varia, e può pesare, è la frequenza.

Goffman pensa l'identità in termini di performance: un flusso d'azione che si svolge nella co-presenza fisica, da un lato lungo il binario strutturale dei sistemi situati di attività e delle aspettative connesse ai ruoli agiti [Goffman 2003], dall'altro lungo il binario situazionale dei setting spaziali, delle definizioni della situazione e dei significati del sé. L'identità emerge come un effetto composto, tanto nelle combinazioni di questi aspetti strutturali e situazionali, che nelle libere elaborazioni di significati generate in quello specifico incontro interazionale. In questa prospettiva, la performance dell'abbassamento che caratterizza l'interazione con stigma mette in movimento tanto dimensioni strutturali che soggettive, e Goffman si sofferma nel mostrare come stati soggettivi, come imbarazzo e disagio, possano essere compresi anche come effetti della combinazione strutturale della performance. Così, per lo stigmatizzato, disagio ed imbarazzo sorgono di fronte all'incertezza rispetto a quali attributi gli altri lo identifichino: quelli del ruolo o quelli dello stigma? Ma anche per il normale di fronte ad uno stigmatizzato possono sorgere motivi di tensione e imbarazzo sulla definizione della situazione.

Nei contatti misti, cioè tra stigmatizzati e normali, la distribuzione dell'informazione ha effetti sulla definizione dei ruoli. Quando l'attributo stigmatizzante è noto, perché è visibile o perché, pur non vedendolo, gli altri ne sono a conoscenza, lo stigmatizzato si trova nella condizione di screditato. L'interazione sarà caratterizzata da tensione e imbarazzo, sia da parte dello stigmatizzato, che da parte dei normali. Il primo deve affrontare il discredito che gli viene riservato dai normali insieme ad un processo di disattenzione volontaria che rende incerta e ambigua l'interazione per tutti i partecipanti³ e in particolar modo per lo stigmatizzato⁴. In questo tipo di situazione il problema centrale per i partecipanti è la gestione della tensione e delle possibilità interazionali condizionate da imbarazzo ed incertezza. Quando, invece, l'attributo stigmatizzante non è noto ai partecipanti all'interazione, allora il tipo di situazione è quella di screditabile. Ciò che caratterizza questa situazione è l'asimmetria di informazione tra i normali e lo screditabile. Le possibilità interazionali cambiano rispetto al caso precedente, il problema ora non è più il controllo della tensione, ma diventa il controllo dell'informazione relativa all'attributo stigmatizzante. Al centro ora ci sono le possibilità di occultamento e di rivelazione dello stigma: se dire o non dire, se mentire o no, a chi dire e a chi non dire, quando dire e quando non dire, fino a che punto dire ad una persona e fino a che punto dire ad un'altra. Mentre lo screditato deve affrontare il pregiudizio contro se stesso, lo screditabile si trova nella condizione di dover fronteggiare la possibilità di una reazione condizionata da pregiudizi da parte dei normali qualora venissero a conoscenza del suo attributo stigmatizzante. Da qui l'impegno dello screditabile nell'entrare in interazione confermando con il proprio comportamento l'impressione nei normali, cioè che si trovano in compagnia di una persona che è "davvero" come loro desiderano o immaginano dalla prima impressione. La presentazione del sé che fa lo stigmatizzato screditabile mostra il suo carattere di promessa che chiede, e riceve, un trattamento fondato su false premesse. Con le loro aspettative i normali vincolano lo screditabile ad una coerenza nella gestione della propria immagine di sé e della situazione interazionale, che con il passare del tempo può divenire sempre più onerosa da mantenere e può condizionare fortemente le interazioni⁵.

³ L'imbarazzo dei normali è tra due alternative inconciliabili, particolarmente chiare nei casi di stigmi fisici, ma non esclusive di questi: da un lato *intervenire*, voler dimostrare comprensione verso lo stigma, ma temere che questa comprensione potrebbe essere percepita dallo stigmatizzato come discriminazione; dall'altro lato *non intervenire*, voler mostrare di non farsi condizionare dallo stigma nell'interagire con lo stigmatizzato, mostrando disattenzione, ma temere di spingerlo così ad azioni che potrebbe non riuscire a fare e che questo metterebbe in difficoltà entrambi.

⁴ Nello stigmatizzato s'insinua la sensazione di non sapere cosa gli altri pensino "davvero" di lui: A quale categoria sociale sarà assegnato? Nell'assegnazione prevarrà lo stigma o la categoria? ("è un giovane" / "è un drogato"); Sarà giudicato inadeguato alla categoria a causa dello stigma? ("non può pretendere di dipingere, non ha le mani"); La sua prestazione sarà valutata in base alla condizione di stigmatizzato, esagerandone l'apprezzamento? ("è un monco bravissimo, riesce anche a dipingere con i piedi") oppure potrà essere valutato nella sua prestazione di categoria senza tenere conto delle difficoltà che lo stigma gli procura? ("nella pittura è una schiappa / è un pittore interessante").

⁵ In questo tipo di situazioni, non solo gli occultamenti, ma anche le rivelazioni possono cambiare di significato: ad esempio, nelle fasi iniziali di una relazione di coppia, un individuo può occultare un evento passato screditante al fine di presentare un sé più appropriato

Screditato e screditabile, dunque, non sono solo due condizioni nelle quali può venirsi a trovare lo stigmatizzato, ma due distinte tipologie di situazioni interazionali che definiscono differenti posizioni e possibilità di interazione tanto da parte dello stigmatizzato quanto da parte dei normali. Goffman è molto interessato a mostrare come l'interazione in situazione di stigma apra a specifiche possibilità interazionali che non sarebbero praticabili senza lo stigma. Ad esempio, oltre al poter essere risignificato attraverso usi strumentali per giustificare fallimenti, ottenere vantaggi oppure come occasione di una conoscenza più profonda della vita che renderebbe lo stigmatizzato più consapevole dei normali sui veri valori dell'esistenza, lo stigma può divenire una base per possibilità associative e identitarie tra persone che condividono il medesimo stigma. Può, inoltre, aprire possibilità strutturali connesse all'identità personale, biografiche e di passing, come i cambiamenti di identità, lo sviluppo di forme di doppia vita e così via.

Goffman, insomma, mostra in modo magistrale come lo stigma sia certamente minorazione o degradazione dell'identità, ma anche costruzione di logiche peculiari di gestione dell'identità degradata nelle interazioni, da parte dello stigmatizzato come dei normali. In questa chiave si comprende come le interazioni con stigma non siano una versione manchevole delle interazioni "normali", ma attestino lo sviluppo di logiche interazionali specifiche, nelle quali vengono variamente coinvolti anche i normali.⁶ In queste pratiche interazionali Goffman coglie un orientamento a far sì che «la base comune delle norme [possa] essere rispettata al di là della cerchia di coloro che vi aderiscono pienamente» [ivi: 151], cioè che forme interazionali con stigma convergano sulla conferma delle norme sociali sull'identità in vigore. Si tratta però di una conferma peculiare, in quanto messa in atto non come sforzo volontario, ma in senso strutturale, poiché il semplice desiderio dell'individuo di attenersi alla norma non è sufficiente, dato che nello stigma l'individuo spesso non ha alcun controllo sul suo livello di adesione alla norma. Si tratta, dunque, di «una questione relativa alle condizioni dell'individuo, non alla sua volontà; è una questione di conformità, non di sottomissione» [ivi: 149]. Ciò è attestato dal lavoro cooperativo, per lo più tacito, tra stigmatizzati e normali nelle interazioni faccia a faccia: chi in quel momento devia resta tuttavia legato alla norma per l'impegno dei normali a non sottolineare il suo attributo, ma a tacere o a ignorare prove che lo attesterebbero, oppure mostrare leggerezza a fronte del suo eventuale disvelamento. Lo stigmatizzato, per parte sua, avanzerà eventualmente richieste di accettazione restando ben al di sotto della soglia oltre la quale sa che potrebbe mettere a disagio i normali. Entrambi sentiranno, dunque, il limite della situazione e si impegneranno nel non oltrepassarlo, confermando così le norme vigenti sull'identità.

Questa dinamica strutturale di gestione dello stigma, della quale in chiusura vedremo alcune importanti implicazioni, è «una caratteristica generale della società, un processo che si verifica ovunque ci siano norme di identità» [ivi: 152]. Prova ne è data dall'osservare le medesime caratteristiche sia quando è in gioco una diversità rilevante, stigmatica, che quando è in gioco una diversità di poca importanza, «della quale una persona esposta alla vergogna si vergogna di vergognarsi» [ibidem].

In *Stigma* Goffman studia come questa performance dell'abbassamento della stigmatizzazione si sviluppi articolando la sua ricchezza intorno al nucleo fondamentale dell'identità e generando tre costellazioni interazionali nelle quali lo stigma è elaborato nell'identità in forme specifiche: l'identità sociale, l'identità personale e l'identità dell'ego.

L'IDENTITÀ SOCIALE NELLE INTERAZIONI CON STIGMA

L'identità sociale è ciò che emerge quando si definisce un individuo come membro di una categoria sociale. Nei contatti misti lo stigma agisce principalmente come abbassamento e riduttore della stima categoriale. Tuttavia, Goffman mostra che, date certe condizioni, l'identificazione di un individuo come portatore di uno stigma può

allo sviluppo della relazione; con il passare del tempo, però, proseguire con l'occultamento può divenire un problema per la persistenza della relazione stessa, qualora il partner ne venisse a conoscenza. Così, la rivelazione, anche solo parziale, di uno stigma può essere agita anche come un modo per ridurre gli effetti screditanti dell'attributo, offrendola come un "dono" per attestare un grado elevato di confidenza e intimità.

⁶ In modo non dissimile a come le lingue dei segni impiegate dai non udenti non sono "versioni semplificate" delle lingue verbali, ma vere e proprie lingue; si veda, ad esempio, Russo Cardona e Volterra 2007.

costituire una sorta di collocazione in una categoria sociale ed essere una base per lo sviluppo di specifiche interazioni. In questo caso, l'aver un attributo stigmatizzante colloca l'individuo in qualcosa di simile ad una posizione di ruolo, cioè in una prospettiva nella quale il comportamento e l'identità sono determinati da relazioni di reciprocità con altri individui e dalle loro aspettative rispetto alla sua esecuzione del ruolo di portatore di quello stigma. Nel comportamento di ruolo l'azione è svolta in relazione ad aspettative di altri specifiche per quella posizione e l'individuo è assorbito solo in parte dai vincoli strutturali del ruolo, perché «quello che egli fa in altri momenti o luoghi non interessa direttamente» [Goffman 2003: 102]. A quali condizioni l'essere identificato come stigmatizzato può collocare l'individuo in un sistema di relazioni di reciprocità nelle quali lo stigma è agito come base di aspettative di ruolo nell'interazione? La risposta di Goffman è: quando le caratteristiche dell'attributo stigmatizzante sono assunte come base per la presentazione del proprio sé e per lo sviluppo di relazioni sociali specifiche; questo può avvenire se si danno due condizioni: a) condividere un *medesimo stigma* e dunque far parte con altri di una conoscenza “dal di dentro” di questo; b) condividere un medesimo stato d'animo identitario rispetto allo stigma e in particolare il sentimento che il portatore di quello stigma «è umano e “essenzialmente” normale, nonostante le apparenze e i dubbi che ha su se stesso» [Goffman 2018: 45].

Date queste condizioni, la struttura di aspettative che ne emergerà orienterà il comportamento nella forma di un'esecuzione di un ruolo nella quale lo stigmatizzato cerca di rendere compatibili le impressioni di se stesso che comunica agli altri nella situazione con le sue caratteristiche personali connesse con l'attributo, così da fornire «una base per l'*immagine del sé*, e una base per l'immagine che avranno di lui i suoi altri di ruolo» [Goffman 2003: 103 cors. nel testo]. Goffman chiama *Suoi* (Own) gli *altri di ruolo* dello stigmatizzato, coloro cioè che rientrano in queste due condizioni. I *Suoi* hanno esperienza di cosa vuol dire avere quell'attributo e anche quello stigma, conoscono gli aspetti pratici e quelli di relazione con i normali e tra *Suoi*. Soprattutto, i *Suoi* entrano in interazione con lo stigmatizzato in base ad aspettative differenti da quelle di gran parte dei normali. Le relazioni tra *Suoi* possono essere di tipi diversi: da informali e occasionali fino a dar vita a forme associative vere e proprie finalizzate alla tutela e promozione degli interessi e anche dell'identità della “comunità” dei portatori di quell'attributo stigmatizzante.

In alcuni casi, anche tra stigmatizzato e alcuni normali possono svilupparsi relazioni di reciprocità del tipo degli altri di ruolo dello stigmatizzato: Goffman chiama *Saggi* coloro che pur non avendo quell'attributo stigmatizzante, condividono il punto di vista dello stigmatizzato su se stesso e sui normali⁷. *Suoi* e *Saggi* costituiscono, dunque, un segmento fondamentale della vita sociale dello stigmatizzato, in quanto generano una socialità peculiare col fare dello stigma, delle sue implicazioni e vincoli, una materia assorbita e “lavorata” nelle interazioni in modo specifico.

Nella presentazione del sé in questo tipo di interazioni e, in particolar modo nelle interazioni che si sviluppano nelle associazioni di portatori di un attributo stigmatizzante, un presupposto fondamentale è «la credenza nello stigma come fondamento per un'idea di sé» [Goffman 2018: 53]. L'appartenenza associativa nell'assumere l'attributo e lo stigma come base gli assegna infatti un significato, e un valore, che da un lato sarebbe impossibile senza la costituzione di un'associazione, ma dall'altro lato, fissa questo valore a specifiche condizioni di vita. Così la vita sociale in un'associazione di una categoria di stigmatizzati ruota intorno all'attributo, alle sue possibilità relazionali, alle esigenze di cura e anche di rappresentanza nella vita pubblica. I vincoli associativi possono rendere quella condizione di stigmatizzato una possibile base per sentirsi accolti e non più soli, per avere occasioni di impegno personale e di offrire molte opportunità e servizi a favore dei membri dell'associazione; allo stesso tempo, però, queste stesse possibilità “specializzano” – com'è proprio dei ruoli – le relazioni e la vita quotidiana intorno ad un perno identitario che, osserva Goffman, può essere sentito da alcuni come limitativo delle proprie possibilità e desiderio di vita di relazione, nonostante lo stigma.

⁷ Il termine *Saggi* (Wise) è ripreso da Goffman dall'uso che nella comunità omosessuale USA degli anni '50 indicava la persona eterosessuale che conosce personalmente ed è amico e confidente di omosessuali, come i gestori di locali frequentati da omosessuali. Goffman lo estende ad ogni possibile tipo di situazione con stigma connotata dal criterio di questa conoscenza e condivisione, dal lavoro degli assistenti sociali e altri operatori con i quali gli stigmatizzati possono entrare in contatto, fino alla relazione di parentela o partnership con uno stigmatizzato, date le condizioni sopra indicate.

Questa percezione di un limite è particolarmente marcata nelle fasi iniziali dell'apprendimento di avere uno stigma, come accade quando l'attributo screditante compare nella vita di una persona adulta. In questo tipo di situazioni lo stigmatizzato può provare oscillazione e sentimenti ambivalenti nei confronti di questi nuovi *Suoi*. Per un verso a causa del discredito di cui sono bersaglio, certamente, ma anche perché possono avere altre caratteristiche che egli – in quel momento – rifiuta di accettare come proprie: «ci saranno “cicli di affiliazione” attraverso i quali egli arriva ad accettare le occasioni di partecipazione al gruppo o le rifiuta dopo averle prima accettate. Ci saranno dei corrispondenti tentennamenti riguardo alla natura del proprio gruppo e quella dei normali» [Goffman 2018: 62-63]. Più in generale, in *Stigma*, il tema della definizione della propria identità in relazione al sorgere dello stigma viene affrontato con il concetto di *carriera morale*, che consente di tenere uniti le esperienze di apprendimento relative alla condizione di stigmatizzato con i cambiamenti nella concezione del sé. Goffman segue qui, riformulandola, un'idea sviluppata in *Asylum* in relazione al malato psichiatrico – che «la carriera morale di un individuo di una data categoria sociale implica un susseguirsi standardizzato di mutamenti nel modo di giudicarsi includendo – in maniera significativa- il modo di concepire il proprio sé. Questo processo quasi sotterraneo può essere seguito studiando le sue esperienze morali - cioè i fatti che segnano una svolta nel modo in cui egli considera il mondo» [Goffman 2010: 193].

La carriera morale dello stigmatizzato si sviluppa in relazione all'interdipendenza di due fasi fondamentali della socializzazione: la prima è l'interiorizzazione da parte dello stigmatizzato del punto di vista dei normali e delle credenze sull'identità presenti in quella società sull'aver uno stigma e sulle sue implicazioni in generale; la seconda è l'apprendimento da parte dello stigmatizzato di avere uno stigma e delle conseguenze che comporta nei dettagli. I modelli di carriera morale dello stigmatizzato variano in base ai momenti nel tempo in cui si connettono l'interiorizzazione del punto di vista dei normali sull'identità e l'apprendere di avere uno stigma. Goffman indica quattro combinazioni di queste due dimensioni: a) sono simultanee e il sentimento del sé è elaborato insieme alla conoscenza di cosa comporta l'aver uno stigma; è il caso di una persona che nasce o acquisisce presto l'attributo stigmatizzante e ne viene presto a conoscenza, come un bambino che cresce in un orfanotrofio; b) potrebbero essere simultanee, ma sono regolate in modo da essere disgiunti. E il sentimento di sé deve essere rielaborato di fronte alla scoperta di avere avuto sempre lo stigma, come un bambino i cui genitori tengono all'oscuro del suo attributo stigmatizzante con l'intento di “proteggerlo”, ma poi deve affrontare la cosa quando esce dal mondo domestico; c) avvengono in tempi lontani tra loro e il sentimento di sé viene rielaborato con fatica e disagio, come una persona che acquisisce l'attributo stigmatizzante da adulta; d) avvengono in tempi distinti e in comunità distinte. Può succedere che in questo mutamento il sentimento di sé venga elaborato con minore disagio verso chi lo conosce con lo stigma rispetto a chi lo ha conosciuto senza. Come una persona che cresce in una comunità di un quartiere etnico e poi lo lascia, o emigra dal proprio paese di origine, e si trova a dover «imparare un secondo modo di essere che venga percepito dalle persone del loro ambiente come quello reale e valido» [Goffman 2018: 60].

La fase nella quale la persona apprende di avere lo stigma e le conseguenze che questo comporta è anche il momento in cui l'individuo inizia a sviluppare un rapporto con coloro con il suo stesso attributo. Potrebbero essere contatti solo momentanei, come l'incontro in sala d'attesa dal medico. Potrebbero essere contatti tra pazienti ricoverati in una clinica, in cui chi ha lo stigma da più tempo istruisce il “nuovo arrivato”. Potrebbero avvenire in relazione ad un processo di istituzionalizzazione (carcere, istituzioni di cure per malati cronici, di custodia per minorenni, ecc). Nel guardare al proprio passato lo stigmatizzato può rielaborare retrospettivamente alcune sue esperienze al fine di spiegare i modi di comportarsi e le credenze che ora ha verso i normali e verso quelli come lui. Un evento della sua biografia può svolgere questo doppio ruolo nella carriera morale: essere una base oggettiva del cambiamento nel momento in cui avviene ed essere una risorsa cui richiamarsi quando, in tempi successivi, vuole motivare un atteggiamento del presente. Un'esperienza frequente in questo senso è il momento in cui il nuovo stigmatizzato si rende conto che coloro con il suo attributo sono comuni esseri umani. Questo cambiamento ha effetti anche sul modo di considerare le idee di normalità dei normali che lo hanno conosciuto normale, cioè senza quell'attributo.

L'IDENTITÀ PERSONALE NELLE INTERAZIONI CON STIGMA

L'identità personale è il campo interazionale nel quale vengono elaborate le informazioni su ciò che rende una persona distinguibile dagli altri. Se nell'identità sociale le interazioni sono determinate dall'assunzione esplicita dell'attributo e dello stigma come base - quindi si ha sempre a che fare con la situazione dello screditato - nel campo interazionale dell'identità personale il punto centrale è dato dalle informazioni e dalle possibilità interazionali aperte dalla gestione e interpretazione delle informazioni, sia per i normali che per gli stigmatizzati.

Il lavoro che Goffman fa per strutturare sociologicamente questo campo interazionale è ricchissimo di analisi di casi e di elaborazioni di concetti, anche creati *ad hoc*. Alcuni di questi sono contributi importanti per la teoria sociologica dello stigma e anche dell'identità, ed è su questi che mi concentrerò qui.

Goffman sviluppa la sua analisi lungo tre linee direttrici della condizione di screditabile: l'analisi dei mezzi e delle condizioni della circolazione dell'informazione relativa ad attributi personali nelle interazioni; lo sviluppo di una prospettiva sociologica della biografia e dell'unicità personale; l'articolazione delle strategie di occultamento dello stigma nel *passing* e nel *covering*.

È importante sottolineare che la condizione di screditabile non è continua, ma è determinata dalla situazione. La posizione dello screditabile nell'interazione è caratterizzata dall'impegno nel confermare con il proprio comportamento ai partecipanti all'interazione che sono con una persona che è davvero con quegli attributi che sta presentando a loro e che loro immaginano basandosi sulla prima impressione. Sapendo di costruire una presentazione e un'accettazione di sé basata su false premesse, questo "vantaggio", che egli cerca di acquisire e di mantenere nell'interazione, comporta un impegno costante, sia nel gestire la tensione richiesta dal conservare la coerenza del sé presentato all'inizio, sia nel gestire la tensione che si generasse qualora si trovasse a dover giustificare questo comportamento o decidesse di rivelare il tratto stigmatizzante.

L'informazione è ricavata, nell'interazione, da segni elaborati in modi diversi in rapporto alla loro funzione/capacità informativa. La maggiore "forza" informativa è data da quei segni che sono accoppiati in modo stabile a significati istituzionalizzati e che vengono definiti simboli (es. la fede al dito, simboli religiosi sul corpo, la fascia tricolore del sindaco, eccetera).

Una "forza" informativa minore è quella di segni che non sono stabilmente associati a significati, in relazione ai quali è possibile formulare ipotesi che, però, richiedono altri segni come conferme. Ad esempio, alcune chiazze rosse sugli avambracci e in corrispondenza di segni di punture possono far pensare che quell'individuo abbia fatto ripetutamente iniezioni negli avambracci, da questi segni si può pensare che abbia una malattia che richiede una terapia con frequenti iniezioni, oppure che si tratti di un tossicodipendente. Questi segni, da soli, non consentono di decidere tra una delle due possibilità di individuazione. Sarà dunque necessario impegnarsi nel cercare altri segni, fisici o informazioni, che posso essere impiegati come "prove" della validità o meno dell'ipotesi formulata sulla sua identità. Il lavoro interpretativo è pertanto continuamente caratterizzato da questo movimento di ipotesi e ricerca di prove.

È opportuno sottolineare che l'informazione sullo stigma non è sempre condizionata dalla visibilità. Lo stigma può sorgere all'attenzione e divenire significativo nell'interazione attraverso elementi o percezioni che non hanno a che fare con la visibilità. Questo aspetto merita attenzione perché mostra una questione importante: come la gestione dell'informazione non dipenda soltanto dallo screditabile, ma dalla distribuzione dell'informazione nella situazione. È possibile, ad esempio, che il normale entri in interazione avendo già cognizione dell'attributo che lo screditabile intende occultare, senza che questi non sappia di questa conoscenza: ciò accade quando l'informazione è depositata in archivi e cartelle cui hanno accesso operatori specializzati, come poliziotti, assistenti sociali, medici; oppure l'informazione può essere ricavata dal gossip o dalla memoria di incontri passati⁸.

Lo stigma può avere, poi, maggiore o minore salienza nell'interazione anche per la sua interferenza nell'inte-

⁸ Come quando una persona che fa volontariato in carcere incontra per strada un ex detenuto che ha conosciuto molto tempo prima in carcere; se questi fosse accompagnato da un'altra persona, sconosciuta al volontario, per quest'ultimo sorgerebbe il problema di se, come e quanto fare riferimento al passato, non sapendo cosa e quanto l'altra persona sa del passato dell'ex detenuto.

razione. Ad esempio, la sedia a rotelle può interferire nell'interazione, ma se la persona parla al telefono o in una videochiamata, allora non ha alcuna interferenza nell'interazione. Anche in questo caso le possibilità della gestione delle informazioni da parte dello screditabile e il grado di salienza dello stigma sono determinati dalle condizioni situazionali e non solo dalle intenzioni dello stigmatizzato.

Per il normale la significatività dello stigma varia anche in base alla sua credenza su quanto quell'attributo possa impattare sulla vita di quella persona, riducendogli le possibilità di vita, secondo uno schema del tipo: "se tu hai questo/sei così, allora non potrai fare/essere nemmeno quest'altro". In questo caso, il discredito connesso ad uno stigma non è solo un problema di interazione diretta, ma anche di stima, da parte del normale, del danno e del discredito che lo stigma può produrre.

Infine, anche la visibilità stessa ha determinazioni connesse alle condizioni situazionali. Non tutto, infatti, è visibile a tutti nello stesso modo: la visibilità di segni può dipendere dall'aver o meno, da parte dell'interlocutore, competenze per poter cogliere e interpretare i segni di un attributo stigmatizzante; come nel caso delle competenze mediche necessarie al riconoscimento di sintomi di patologie da segni presenti sul volto, o dell'aspetto, o del comportamento; oppure, come nei casi di comportamenti tipici o strategie di dissimulazione tipiche dei portatori di certi stigmi, che sono riconoscibili da parte dei normali che hanno una qualche pregressa esperienza di questi comportamenti (operatori, parenti di stigmatizzati).

L'informazione relativa allo stigma è dunque condizionata dalle differenti caratteristiche delle situazioni interazionali e ciò ha implicazioni sulle possibilità interazionali dello screditabile e più in generale delle identità performate nell'interazione.

Nel secondo asse teorico Goffman mette a tema l'identità personale a partire dalla questione dell'unicità della persona. Nello sviluppare l'analisi di questa questione, anche al di là della prospettiva dello stigma, offre alcuni dei contributi teorici più originali del libro. Goffman studia l'unicità della persona come attributo del self performato nell'interazione. Non si tratta di un nucleo interiore all'individuo, ma di elementi visibili, percepibili e agiti - parole, corpi e cose - negli scambi interazionali. In questa linea, l'identità personale è osservabile sociologicamente nell'informazione e nei mezzi informativi - materiali e verbali - in relazione ai quali un individuo viene identificato personalmente, e distinto, dagli altri. In particolare, sono proprio gli oggetti impiegati per determinare, mostrare, attestare l'identità personale di un individuo che concorrono, soprattutto nella società moderna, alla strutturazione dell'identità personale come fenomeno interazionale istituzionalmente regolato e orientato a far svolgere all'identità personale nelle interazioni «un ruolo strutturato, abitudinario, standardizzato nell'organizzazione sociale, proprio in forza della sua "unicità"» [Goffman 2018: 81].

La rilevanza dell'individuo nella società moderna, in senso culturale, morale, giuridico, politico, economico, ha conseguenze anche sulla standardizzazione sociale dell'identità personale con lo sviluppo dei registri, archivi e documenti finalizzati alla registrazione, conservazione e standardizzazione dell'identità personale parallelamente allo sviluppo dell'amministrazione dello Stato. Nello stato moderno l'identità personale viene prodotta come una risorsa istituzionalmente gestita in modo standardizzato al fine del controllo degli individui e del territorio.

Elementi informativi come nome e cognome, collocazione nella rete della parentela, descrizione di tratti peculiari, da sempre impiegati come mezzi di identificazione e di distinzione di una persona dalle altre, con l'avvento della modernità divengono materia di lavorazione e standardizzazione dell'identità, attraverso la loro trasformazione in dati anagrafici registrabili in modo permanente e conservati in archivi, certificati, attestazioni, e la loro traduzione tecnologicamente mediata in oggetti informativi, come passaporti digitali, foto personali, impronte digitali, codici fiscali, patenti, numeri di matricola e così via. Sono, questi, mezzi di traduzione di attributi dell'unicità personale in supporti che costituiscono a loro volta l'attributo stesso nella forma della sua validità legale. In una sorta di rovesciamento del primato di validità, il documento che attesta legalmente l'identità personale di un individuo diviene depositario di una forza sociale di attestazione dell'identità che non viene riconosciuta nemmeno alla persona stessa che lo dichiara verbalmente. Così, i documenti che attestano l'identità di un individuo vengono impiegati come "prova" della veridicità dell'identità stessa. I mezzi di identificazione validi nello spazio dello stato nazionale, ad esempio il passaporto o il codice fiscale, mentre attestano, concorrono a costruire l'unicità dell'indivi-

duo, proprio per la loro performabilità in istituzioni differenti (lavoro, istruzione, sanità, polizie, forze dell'ordine, magistratura ecc) e nei loro archivi. In altre parole, al centro non ci sono le qualità intrinseche dell'individuo, ma i mezzi di identificazione personale, che rendono possibile la sua unicità personale per l'istituzione. Così standardizzata, l'identità personale può essere dispersa in forme differenti, ma allo stesso tempo impiegata, in modi coerenti, come risorsa in una grande varietà di situazioni interazionali.

La lavorazione sociale dell'identità personale può, naturalmente, prendere anche la via della manipolazione a scopi di falsificazione. Goffman esamina questo aspetto sottolineando che le forme di contraffazione dell'identità personale delineano un ambito interazionale specifico e molto ricco, che va dalle pratiche di costruzione di identità false per svolgere attività illecite e criminali ai camuffamenti o uso di nomi falsi da parte della coppia clandestina in un albergo, o da parte della persona famosa che non vuole essere riconosciuta, fino alle pratiche di cambiamento del nome per motivi artistici o religiosi.

Nell'identificazione di una persona l'identità personale e l'identità sociale sono spesso embricate l'una sull'altra: ad esempio, identificare una persona come appartenente ad una certa comunità etnica o nazionale perché ha un nome proprio o un cognome di un certo tipo è un uso dell'identità personale per un'identificazione sociale. Viceversa, una persona che mostra il proprio tesserino professionale per dimostrare di essere un medico, nel momento in cui da sé un'identificazione sociale da anche un'identificazione personale, perché la sua qualifica è agganciata ai suoi dati anagrafici. Va sottolineato che il fatto che questi due tipi di identità siano embricati non significa che non costituiscano due paradigmi interazionali differenti. In generale, i segni sul corpo sono sempre veicoli di informazione sociale, non di informazione personale, perché sono elementi informativi impiegati come indizi dell'appartenenza ad una categoria sociale, come segni di un'affinità. Invece, il paradigma dell'identità personale impiega gli elementi informativi come mezzi di distinzione di una persona dalle altre. Mentre nell'identità sociale il criterio organizzativo delle informazioni è quello dell'affinità con altri di uno stesso tipo, nell'identità personale l'informazione si connette e si organizza sempre in ordine al registro della distinzione e tanto più si arricchisce di elementi informativi, quanto più diviene una risorsa per l'identificazione sempre più precisa di quella specifica persona.

Questa interpretazione interazionale dell'unicità viene ripresa da Goffman con la discussione delle implicazioni sociologiche dell'unicità della biografia e della performance della biografia nell'interazione.

Mentre l'idea corrente di biografia si basa su uno sguardo orientato alla ricomposizione del passato di una persona in uno sguardo tendenzialmente unitario, Goffman introduce una prospettiva diversa: «sia che la storia biografica di un individuo venga conservata nelle menti dei suoi intimi o nelle schede del personale di un'organizzazione, sia che la documentazione della propria identità personale sia attestata dal suo comportamento o depositata in un archivio, egli è un'entità su cui è possibile creare una documentazione – una fedina che lui può sporcare. *L'individuo viene così determinato come oggetto di biografia*» [ivi: 86 cors. aggiunto]. Quale che sia la fonte degli attributi informativi, l'individuo è un'entità su cui è possibile creare documentazione, cioè documenti materiali, ma anche immagini nelle menti degli altri, come attestazioni di suoi fatti biografici. Sociologicamente, l'umano è quell'essere sociale su cui è possibile creare una documentazione, esiste in relazione alla possibilità che vi sia qualsiasi tipo di informazione e documentazione su di lui. La biografia è ciò che può essere fatto determinando un individuo come oggetto di biografia. In altre parole, è la composizione di materiali informativi biografici, sia da parte dell'individuo stesso che da parte di chi conosce fatti della sua vita, che fa sì che l'individuo esista biograficamente nelle menti degli altri, per se stesso e nelle sue performance interazionali.

La biografia entra nell'interazione come performance, viene prodotta nella performance interazionale come risorsa per l'identità personale, chiamata in causa per giustificare, attestare, confermare qualcosa di sé che viene affermato nel presente, sia attraverso il riferimento al passato in una logica di continuità, sia attraverso la chiave del "cambiamento" per mostrare la trasformazione rispetto al passato. Ciò vale tanto per il titolare della biografia quanto per gli altri, per le loro immagini mentali e memorie informative sui suoi fatti biografici.

Il concetto che Goffman elabora per poter meglio mettere a fuoco la possibilità che la biografia possa prendere forme diverse nelle menti delle persone, nelle conoscenze degli altri, e anche nella possibilità del soggetto di agire biografie diverse in contesti diversi, è quello di *connettività informativa*. La connettività informativa è determinata dalla probabilità in base alla quale due fatti biografici importanti nella vita di una persona potranno essere messi

in relazione tra loro da altre persone che ne conoscono solo uno o pochi. In altre parole, tra coloro che della vita di Tizio conoscono il fatto biografico X, quante maggiori probabilità ci sono che possano venire a conoscenza anche del fatto biografico Y, tanto maggiore sarà il grado di connettività informativa di quella biografia. Un alto grado di connettività informativa sarà probabile tra i membri di una piccola comunità, dove tutti si conoscono e vivono insieme fin dalla nascita. Ma se uno di loro emigra in una grande città e perde i contatti con la comunità di origine, le biografie mentali che gli altri hanno di lui (come anche gli eventuali documenti di suoi fatti biografici) resteranno limitate al periodo di vita trascorso in quella comunità, mentre lui nella città conoscerà altre persone che non sanno niente del suo passato e che si faranno di lui un'immagine mentale a partire dalle loro interazioni con lui e da cosa e quanto lui vorrà dire del suo passato. In questa logica la connettività informativa delle persone che lo conoscono potrà essere tendenzialmente bassa, se non vorrà "aggiornare" né le persone della sua comunità di origine sul suo presente, né le persone del suo presente sul suo passato. Goffman sottolinea come la bassa connettività informativa può essere una risorsa per lo screditabile, offrendogli la possibilità di massimizzare la diversità tra i self situazionali. Ma i gradi di connettività informativa tra i propri fatti della propria vita nelle menti degli altri non sono necessariamente controllabili dallo screditabile (qualcuno della comunità potrebbe incontrarlo in città o sapere da altri di fatti di lui; qualcuno conosciuto in città potrebbe entrare in contatto con la comunità e connettere suoi fatti biografici diversi), questo rende molto più ampie le possibilità interazionali della sua biografia. Più spesso di quanto non si possa immaginare, infatti, è possibile che sia proprio la persona in questione che cerca di segmentare le diverse performance dei propri self situazionali per accedere alle possibilità che sono offerte dal basso grado di connettività informativa di una biografia. Nello studio dello stigma questo aspetto molto significativo è attestato dal *passing*, come vedremo tra poco. Peraltro, quanto più uno screditabile devia - occultando, mistificando - dal tipo di immagine del self che era solito presentare ad altri e ricevendo la loro accettazione, tanto più, nel momento in cui questa deviazione viene rivelata o scoperta, sarà tenuto a dare informazioni su di sé con un grado di sincerità tanto più costoso per lui quanto maggiore l'ampiezza della sua devianza.

Passando, infine, al piano più prossimo alle dinamiche interazionali, nel quale questi concetti trovano composizione nell'azione: in che modo il livello e il tipo di conoscenza di elementi di identità personale di una persona organizzano e qualificano la conoscenza che gli altri hanno di questa persona e le loro aspettative verso di lei? La risposta di Goffman è che in base alla conoscenza che altri hanno di una persona e alle aspettative di comportamento nei suoi confronti, si definiranno le condizioni interazionali per l'organizzazione di una sorta di articolazione dei ruoli tra l'individuo e le aspettative nei suoi confronti degli altri di ruolo. In analogia a quanto abbiamo visto nell'identità sociale per l'attributo screditante, qui Goffman mostra come la conoscenza di informazioni biografiche su qualcuno possa costituire una base per la definizione di aspettative di comportamento nei confronti di questa persona. Quando la base dell'interazione è la conoscenza personale di un individuo, Goffman chiama *altri biografici* (Biographical Others) gli altri del ruolo dell'individuo titolare della biografia. Nella dinamica di ruolo che si viene a determinare, la conoscenza di fatti biografici su una persona e, soprattutto, il grado di connettività informativa tra questi fatti biografici, delineano una sorta di strutture interazionali specifiche delle interazioni con stigma. In queste strutture, le aspettative di comportamento nei confronti dello screditabile da parte degli altri biografici potranno essere determinate da quanto loro sanno di lui e, se non sanno del suo attributo, dalle possibilità di connettere informazioni su di lui e scoprire la sua dissimulazione. Di queste condizioni dovrà essere il più possibile consapevole lo screditabile, per poter tenere sotto controllo gli effetti della propria performance interazionale. La distribuzione delle informazioni nell'interazione delinea, dunque, peculiari condizionamenti strutturali per lo sviluppo delle interazioni con uno screditabile, proprio perché «il problema che l'individuo ha nel gestire la propria identità sociale e personale varia moltissimo a seconda che quelli in sua presenza sappiano di lui oppure no; e, se sanno di lui, se lui è informato o meno del fatto che loro sanno di lui» [ivi: 91].

Tra quelle prese in esame da Goffman, la forma interazionale più complessa di gestione dell'identità da parte di uno screditabile è il *passing*, cioè il passare per una persona che non ha l'attributo stigmatizzante in questione. Nel *passing* sono contemporaneamente al lavoro i diversi aspetti strutturali dell'identità trattati finora. Col *passing* Goffman studia le caratteristiche strutturali della dissimulazione nell'interazione, cioè le possibilità interazionali determinate dall'asimmetria informativa tra i partecipanti alle interazioni con stigma. Il *passing* non è riducibile

alla semplice volontà dello screditabile di dissimulare, perché è un fenomeno sociale che deve in primo luogo essere compreso a partire dalle condizioni strutturali della formazione di biografia nelle menti degli altri biografici con i quali lo screditabile interagisce. Il rischio fondamentale del passing è che chi lo fa possa essere scoperto da quell'altro biografico che può identificare lo screditabile personalmente, perché è a conoscenza di informazioni personali su di lui.

Le condizioni del passing sono determinate dall'esistenza di un'asimmetria informativa tra screditabile e altri biografici: quando l'informazione è a favore dello screditabile - lui sa dell'attributo, ma gli altri biografici no - si danno le condizioni del passing; quando l'asimmetria è a favore degli altri biografici - loro sanno, ma lui non sa che sanno - allora si verificano le condizioni della scoperta del passing. Invece, in condizioni di simmetria informativa nessun aspetto del passing è possibile. Infatti, non può esserci passing se nessuno sa dell'attributo o anche se tutti sanno. Tuttavia, Goffman sottolinea che l'evidenza dello stigma può non essere sufficiente per impedire il passing: ad esempio, un persona cieca che siede ad un tavolo di un bar indossando occhiali scuri può essere scambiata per una persona con la vista che indossa occhiali da sole, cioè si può trovare nella condizione di fare, anche inconsapevolmente, il passing. In questo caso, gli occhiali scuri non ostacolano il passing perché non rendono evidente l'attributo della cecità. Tuttavia, i medesimi occhiali scuri indossati nel medesimo locale potrebbero acquisire un significato sociale differente se fosse di giorno o di sera, d'inverno o d'estate e più in generale al solo variare dell'intensità della luce. L'evidenza dello stigma varierebbe, dunque, per ragioni del tutto indipendenti dalla volontà dello stigmatizzato e con questa anche le condizioni strutturali della possibilità o meno del passing. Come emerge da questo esempio, le variazioni del setting ambientale possono incidere nella distribuzione delle informazioni. Il passing, infatti è un effetto strutturale che può verificarsi, anche indipendentemente dalla volontà dello screditabile in conseguenza della distribuzione informativa. Questo lo si può vedere bene nelle fasi iniziali del ciclo del passing: in quella sorta di "grado zero" del passing, il passing inconsapevole, quando cioè gli altri di ruolo ignorano l'esistenza dell'attributo, ma lo screditabile non si accorge che lo considerano normale; e anche nella prima fase vera e propria, quella del passing non intenzionale, quando uno o più altri biografici accolgono come normale il self dello screditabile, senza che questi abbia intenzionalmente tentato dissimularlo, ma poi si rende conto del tipo di situazione che si sta verificando. Nelle successive quattro fasi, diviene sempre più chiara e strategicamente orientata l'intenzionalità dello screditabile di approfittare, prima, e creare, poi, delle condizioni interazionali per far accadere il passing. Il passaggio da una fase alla successiva comporta un incremento non solo di volontà, ma anche di competenza nella gestione dell'impressione che intende fare sugli altri e dell'ansia che il rischio di essere scoperto comporta via via che il passing si fa più frequente e più durevole nel tempo. Goffman osserva che lo screditabile deve diventare anche molto più consapevole delle dinamiche interazionali di quanto non lo siano normalmente i partecipanti all'interazione. È necessario che impari a leggere anche i piccoli segni degli altri nell'interazione, che potrebbero attestare il sorgere in loro di qualche dubbio sulla sua effettiva identità, deve cioè monitorare come sta andando la sua performance, non può essere "semplicemente" spontaneo. In breve, è necessario per lo screditabile considerare consapevolmente ciò che nell'interazione è inteso come ovvio, che viene solitamente dato per scontato. Nel fare il passing lo screditabile diventa, così, competente delle dinamiche dell'interazione implicite e per lo più inconsapevoli per gli altri - commenta Goffman «ciò che per loro è lo sfondo, per lui è la figura» [ivi: 112]⁹ -, ma ad un costo elevato in termini di continua incertezza, ansia e rischio di perdere la considerazione sociale da parte degli altri.

⁹ Riferimento implicito, ma puntuale, al saggio di Gregory Bateson, pubblicato nel 1955, *Una teoria del gioco e della fantasia* e in particolare a questo passo: «Figura e sfondo, così come questi termini sono usati dagli psicologi della Gestalt, non sono tra loro in relazione simmetrica come l'insieme e il suo complemento nella teoria degli insiemi: la percezione dello sfondo dev'essere positivamente inibita e la percezione della figura deve essere positivamente esaltata» [Bateson 1976: 229], lo screditabile forza questa inibizione della consapevolezza dello sfondo, rendendolo per sé figura così da esserne il più possibile consapevole. Goffman farà esplicitamente riferimento a questo saggio in *Frame Analysis* con un'affermazione importante: «è proprio nel saggio di Bateson che il termine *frame* è stato proposto quasi nel senso in cui io intendo usarlo» [Goffman 2001: 51].

L'IDENTITÀ DELL'EGO NELLE INTERAZIONI CON STIGMA

Nella loro diversità l'identità sociale l'identità personale sono campi interazionali entrambi determinati dalle aspettative e dalle definizioni che altre persone danno dell'individuo. Ma il sé non viene esaurito da queste forme di strutturazione, dalle quali resta esclusa «la percezione soggettiva della propria condizione, della propria continuità e delle caratteristiche che un individuo arriva ad avere come risultato delle sue diverse esperienze sociali» [Goffman 2018: 129]. Per identificare questa dimensione dell'identità del sé Goffman riprende da Erikson il concetto di identità dell'ego, che definisce una prospettiva nello studio dello stigma dalla quale «esaminare cosa l'individuo può provare riguardo allo stigma e alla sua gestione, e ci porta a prestare particolare attenzione ai consigli che gli vengono dati riguardo a tali problemi» [ivi: 130].

Meritano di essere sottolineate fin da subito alcune mosse teoriche che Goffman compie nell'organizzazione di questo capitolo e che sono rilevanti per inquadrare i presupposti di quanto viene sostenuto nel suo sviluppo. In primo luogo, è da considerare come Goffman per analizzare «cosa l'individuo può provare» non si orienti all'analisi di diari, lettere e tutta quella produzione soggettivamente riflessiva dei soggetti in questione che potrebbe fornire elementi su ciò che lo stigmatizzato sente; fin da subito si focalizza, invece, sui consigli che altri danno allo stigmatizzato riguardo a come sentirsi nell'affrontare lo stigma. Il tema prende dunque la forma dello studio delle condizioni della socializzazione dello stigmatizzato all'elaborazione della propria soggettività riflessiva secondo modelli o orientamenti di autenticità che gli vengono proposti. Quali piste di soggettivazione instradano lo stigmatizzato su come sentire se stesso in relazione al proprio attributo? Goffman compie qui una seconda mossa teorica che potrebbe sorprendere, facendo riferimento alla distinzione mertoniana tra ingroup e outgroup, cioè gruppi di riferimento di cui si fa parte e gruppi di riferimento di cui non si fa parte. In *Teoria e struttura sociale* Merton discute a lungo la teoria dei gruppi di riferimento, che si occupa dei processi mediante i quali gli individui pongono se stessi in relazione con i gruppi e riferiscono il loro comportamento ai valori di questi gruppi, chiedendosi in particolare «in quali condizioni si verifica il caso che l'individuo valuti se stesso e formi i suoi atteggiamenti prendendo come quadro di riferimento il suo gruppo, e viceversa in quali condizioni sono i gruppi di non-appartenenza e gli out-groups a fornire il significativo quadro di riferimento?» [Merton 1970: 464].

Mi pare che sia qui da sottolineare come l'idea di *gruppi di riferimento* applicata al tema della valutazione di se stessi, consenta di mettere in forma in una chiave non normativa l'elaborazione dell'identità. Acutamente Merton sottolinea la necessità di distinguere tra quando il gruppo di riferimento è il gruppo di appartenenza e quando il gruppo di riferimento è un gruppo cui *non* si appartiene. La non-appartenenza viene così concettualizzata come una condizione *presente e interna* alla vita sociale, non come il suo contrario¹⁰. Ciò che è interessante qui per noi è che declinando la non-appartenenza nella teoria dei gruppi di riferimento, Merton la pensa come una dimensione della dinamica sociale dei processi di elaborazione dell'identità, che si manifesta principalmente attraverso i sentimenti di aspirazione, di frustrazione o di esclusione. Tali atteggiamenti identitari sono determinati, in questa prospettiva, dalle differenze strutturali tra posizioni sociali, cioè dal diverso posizionamento degli individui nella struttura sociale degli status.

Goffman scava in profondità in questa idea mertoniana, mostrandone nello stesso tempo i limiti. Infatti, nell'analisi dello stigma, appartenenza e non-appartenenza al gruppo dei normali o degli stigmatizzati non sono status, ma ruoli nell'interazione. L'essere ruoli e non status sposta il *locus* del processo della stigmatizzazione dalla struttura sociale alla struttura interazionale. Nei processi identitari associati allo stigma Goffman individua come la dinamica di appartenenza e non-appartenenza agisca come oscillazione, ambivalenza dell'identità di normale e stigmatizzato nelle interazioni. Merton focalizza l'attenzione sulla rilevanza della non-appartenenza per i sentimenti di aspirazione o esclusione verso gruppi e status di riferimento cui non si appartiene, pensando la collocazione in un gruppo come staticamente ancorata alla struttura sociale. Goffman, invece, mostra che ciò che è strutturante il

¹⁰ Già Simmel aveva mostrato in *Com'è possibile la società?* che per l'individuo «il modo del suo essere-associato è determinato o co-determinato dal modo del suo non-essere-associato» [Simmel 2003: 107], cioè la non-appartenenza non è qui il limite della socialità, ma una condizione di possibilità delle forme stesse della vita sociale.

processo della stigmatizzazione è l'ambivalenza, cioè l'impossibilità di bloccare questa oscillazione tra appartenenza e non-appartenenza. Sentirsi normali o stigmatizzati non è un effetto dello status nell'interazione, ma della performance del ruolo in quel sistema situato di attività. Quando sono in gioco processi di stigmatizzazione, le oscillazioni tra appartenenza e non-appartenenza si combinano in un registro identitario che è specifico dello stigma, nel quale le performance dei ruoli e dell'identità sono associate a sentimenti ambivalenti del proprio sé nello stigmatizzato, oscillanti tra il sentirsi membro e il sentirsi non-membro. Chiunque nell'interazione può sentirsi esposto a questo processo, indipendentemente dallo status, perché è generato dalla definizione della situazione, non dalla struttura sociale.

In questa prospettiva si può allora comprendere più chiaramente l'esigenza teorica di declinare in termini di socializzazione a modelli di riferimento la questione dell'identità soggettivamente sentita dallo stigmatizzato e la natura interazionale dell'ambivalenza di questo sentimento.

Una prima condizione del sentimento di ambivalenza su di sé da parte dello stigmatizzato è nella differenziazione che questi tende a fare dei *Suoi* in livelli differenti a seconda dell'intrusività e dell'evidenza dello stigma. Si apre così la possibilità di sentirsi contemporaneamente simile e diverso dai *Suoi* e assumere, nei confronti di quelli tra loro che dell'attributo hanno forme più intrusive ed evidenti, un atteggiamento di distacco, sentendosi a loro confronto "quasi normale": «così le persone con problemi di udito si considerano tutto fuorché sorde, e quelle che ci vedono male, tutto fuorché cieche» [Goffman 2018: 130]. Ancora, l'oscillazione tra sentirsi membro dei *Suoi* e membro del gruppo dei normali – oscillando, parallelamente, nel sentire la non appartenenza ora al primo ora al secondo gruppo – si ripresenta di fronte a *Suoi* che si comportano in modo patetico o esibizionistico, rendendo evidenti le caratteristiche negative che i normali attribuiscono loro. Il sentimento di sé dello stigmatizzato può così entrare in una sorta di circolo vizioso di appartenenza-non appartenenza da divenire penoso a se stesso, infatti «questo spettacolo potrebbe disgustarlo, poiché, dopo tutto, condivide le norme della società, ma la sua identificazione sociale e psicologica con questi "trasgressori" lo tiene legato a ciò che lo disgusta, trasformando la repulsione in vergogna e quindi il vergognarsi stesso in qualcosa di cui si vergogna. In breve, non può né unirsi al suo gruppo né abbandonarlo» [ivi: 131].

Quando il riferimento al gruppo, interno o esterno, è offerto nella forma di consigli, lo stigmatizzato si trova di fronte a consigli che gli presentano una sorta di modello di soggettivazione. I *Suoi* faranno riferimento all'attributo screditante come base di un "giusto sentimento di sé", sostenendo che è il loro gruppo quello cui appartiene *naturalmente*, mentre sforzarsi di appartenere ad altri gruppi sarà sempre minato da una mancanza. In questa linea, il sé può svilupparsi in modo più strutturato nelle associazioni di stigmatizzati, che chiamano ad una lealtà e offrono possibilità di impegno e perfino di militanza per la causa dei portatori di quello stigma. In questi casi attraverso l'impegno di dedizione ad una causa, il registro retorico si avvicinerà ad una forma politica di identità-come-appartenenza, così l'uscita dal gruppo o anche solo un impegno per una riduzione o cancellazione dello stigma, potrebbero essere visti come una mancanza di lealtà verso il gruppo e la sua identità.

Diversamente, i normali – nelle persone degli specialisti che lo stigmatizzato può incontrare a causa del suo attributo – gli offriranno un modello di sentimento di sé che si fonda sull'idea che lui è un essere umano come gli altri e che non si deve vergognare dell'attributo. L'invito sarà ad assumere il comportamento dei normali come valore di riferimento e dimostrare lealtà a questi valori mettendo in secondo piano i pregiudizi e i comportamenti discriminatori che i normali mostrano nei suoi confronti. Sarà invitato ad essere spontaneo con il proprio stigma, ma anche a far sentire i normali a proprio agio con il suo stigma, evitando di spingersi oltre il limite di un'imitazione goffa dei normali. A queste condizioni potrà sentirsi anche lui normale, se invece reagirà alle discriminazioni, metterà a disagio i normali per il loro comportamento nei suoi confronti, allora più facilmente il suo comportamento sarà considerato da loro patologico, espressione di una condizione lontana dalla normalità clinica.

Entrambi questi modelli mettono in luce forme di soggettivazione condizionate dall'importanza di restare "fedele" al proprio attributo e di evitare il *passing* completo, di non rispondere agli atteggiamenti negativi degli altri verso di lui, di evitare di esporre il proprio stigma nel modo in cui i normali se lo aspettano. Allo stesso modo, viene invitato a non sottoporsi a uno sforzo costante per apparire una persona comune, cioè capace, disciplinata, equilibrata, generosa, nonostante lo stigma. Non riuscire ad aderire a queste richieste e ad assumere questa prospet-

tiva ideologica su di sé «significa essere una persona frustrata e disorientata; riuscirci significa essere vera e degna, due qualità spirituali che si fondono per produrre quella che viene chiamata “autenticità”» [ivi: 134]. Un'autenticità che in entrambi i casi continuerà a sfuggire allo stigmatizzato, che, per di più, sarà indicato dagli altri come il solo responsabile di questo fallimento. Commenta Goffman, con una sottile, ma intensa, *vis polemica* non frequente nei suoi scritti: «La formula generale è chiara. Allo stigmatizzato si chiede di agire come se il suo fardello non fosse pesante, né che il fatto di portarlo lo abbia reso diverso da noi; allo stesso tempo deve mantenersi a una certa distanza da noi, in modo di consentirci di confermare, senza dolore, le nostre convinzioni su di lui. In altri termini, gli si consiglia di ricambiare spontaneamente l'accettazione di se stesso e nostra, un'accettazione di lui che noi per primi non gli abbiamo dato abbastanza. In questo modo, un'accettazione *fantasma* fa da fondamento ad una *normalità fantasma*. Così in profondità lo stigmatizzato deve essere coinvolto in quell'atteggiamento verso il *self* che la nostra società chiama normale, così totalmente deve sentirsi parte di questa definizione da poter interpretare questo *self* di fronte a un pubblico irritabile che distrattamente lo guarda come si aspettasse un altro spettacolo. Può addirittura essere portato ad appoggiare i normali nel sostenere, di fronte a quelli scontenti tra i “suoi”, che i soprusi che avvertono sono puramente immaginari» [ivi: 145].

Si arriva dunque al cuore della tesi di *Stigma*: che normali e stigmatizzati non sono due gruppi di individui concreti, ma «un pervasivo processo sociale a due ruoli in cui ogni individuo partecipa ad entrambi i ruoli, almeno in alcune relazioni e in alcune fasi della vita» [ivi: 158]. Abbiamo visto come questo processo si cristallizzi in strutture interazionali differenti a seconda delle diverse definizioni della situazione. Questa tesi appare controintuitiva perché, nel suo dispositivo di fondo, subordina gli attributi di status alla struttura dell'interazione e alla definizione della situazione. La mancanza di un attributo atteso o la presenza di un attributo inatteso hanno effetti di stigmatizzazione non in forza di questo o quel determinato attributo – se così fosse normali e stigmatizzati sarebbero due gruppi sociali di individui concreti, cioè due status -, ma in relazione alla definizione dei ruoli e delle rispettive aspettative in quella specifica situazione interazionale. In tal modo Goffman fa affiorare ciò che ogni critica dello stigma lascia in ombra: le pratiche di stigmatizzazione sono intrinsecamente connesse con le esigenze cognitivo-organizzative di profilazione dei significati e delle identità che strutturano ogni forma della vita sociale. Lo stigma si rivela come il lato oscuro del normale funzionamento della vita sociale, oscuro perché fonte di esclusione e di sofferenza, ma anche perché nella sua pervasività di cui tutti facciamo esperienza, in entrambi i ruoli, è un processo mai prima portato alla consapevolezza, le cui dinamiche agiscono implicitamente e sono rinvenibili anche nei gruppi più attivamente impegnati nella lotta alle discriminazioni. Così, l'essere stigmatizzato o normale dipende dalla distribuzione dei ruoli che emerge dalla definizione della situazione e dalla parallela individuazione di un gruppo di riferimento rispetto al quale valutare il proprio sé performato in quella situazione. Infatti, non è la struttura sociale che plasma l'interazione, ma gli attributi dello status vengono “assorbiti” dalla struttura interazionale e “lavorati” secondo le sue proprie logiche in connessione con la definizione della situazione. È da questa elaborazione che prende corpo il riferimento di sé ad un gruppo come interno o come esterno.

Nella manciata di pagine che compone l'ultimo capitolo Goffman sviluppa, quasi come un'appendice, un'analisi sistematica delle possibilità di deviazione dalle norme socialmente accettate e della valutazione sociologica di questo tipo di comportamento come deviante o no. L'idea-guida è di considerare devianti soltanto quei tipi di comportamento che scartano volontariamente dalle norme accettate e praticate dalla maggior parte dei membri del gruppo e coloro che li attuano vengono messi ai margini della vita sociale e, in modi e gradi diversi, stigmatizzati, invece, proporre di considerare deviazioni quei comportamenti che pur scartando dalle norme accettate in un gruppo non modificano la posizione di chi li attua nella struttura sociale del gruppo. Ma là di là delle proposte di classificazione, l'intento di Goffman sembra piuttosto interessato alla generazione di classi, cioè a come e dove ritagliare comportamenti e relativi concetti per contribuire ad una teoria generale della deviazione e della devianza. Indipendentemente dai risultati, in verità non proprio soddisfacenti dal punto di vista sistematico, stante anche la brevità di queste pagine, ciò che sembra stare sullo sfondo è un dialogo con la concettualizzazione della devianza elaborata da Merton, in particolare le celebri innovazioni concettuali che Merton propone nello studio delle relazioni tra tipi di comportamento e anomia in alcuni capitoli della seconda parte di *Teoria e struttura sociale*.

In questo contributo ho cercato di mostrare come vi sia in *Stigma* un impianto teorico che consente di considerare il libro un contributo non secondario della produzione goffmaniana alla teoria sociologica. In particolare, gli attributi screditanti e lo stigma, il cui possesso non determina una posizione sociale, hanno molto a che fare con la struttura dell'interazione e, in particolare con la possibilità di assumere una consistenza della dinamica di un ruolo all'interno della performance interazionale. Ciò comporta la generazione di tipi di interazioni peculiari, nella misura in cui entrano nella dinamica interazionale attributi e giudizi che non solo perturbano lo svolgimento dell'azione, ma soprattutto rendono possibili forme interazionali e tipi di situazioni non altrimenti accessibili. Con questo non si intende sostenere che le interazioni con stigma siano radicalmente differenti dalle altre, ciò che emerge dalla ricerca di *Stigma* è che le possibilità interazionali e situazionali con stigma si intrecciano – nella performance concreta dell'interazione – con le forme che non prevedono abbassamento, dilatandole e plasmandone possibilità specifiche. Queste agiscono, a loro volta, sull'elaborazione di tre campi interazionali dell'identità: quella sociale, delle tre la più direttamente connessa con il tema centrale di *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*; quella personale, che trova in *Stigma* il luogo di un'elaborazione originale nelle concettualizzazioni sulla sociologia della biografia e sul *passing*; quella dell'ego che mette a tema l'affermazione dell'identità come sentimento di affinità o differenza con o da altri.

La concettualizzazione dello stigma come dinamica di ruoli nell'interazione, e della distinzione stigmatizzati-normali come «due tagli di stoffa della medesima pezza» [ivi: 152] mentre segna un punto importante nella de-essenzializzazione del concetto, pensa lo stigma come realtà processuale esperita da tutti, ma con frequenze differenti. È in forza di questa mossa teorica che in *Stigma* Goffman può mettere a fuoco nella sua analisi un tema centrale lungo tutto lo sviluppo della sua opera, cioè la distribuzione delle informazioni nell'interazione. Anche rispetto a questo tema le relazioni con i testi coevi sono significative, ma marcano delle specificità. Se, infatti, in *The Presentation of Self* la gestione delle informazioni è funzionale al controllo delle impressioni in una gestione interazionale “di successo” per l'individuo, ed in *Asylums* vengono messe a fuoco le condizioni interazionali della sottrazione, sempre maggiore, di informazioni da parte degli operatori dell'istituzione e dello sviluppo di interazioni disancorate che scardinano le possibilità identitarie dell'individuo; in *Stigma* l'equilibrio interazionale è condizionato dalla distribuzione asimmetrica dell'informazione tra i partecipanti all'interazione: una condizione che non è assimilabile né al primo, né al secondo tipo di situazioni interazionali e che genera forme e dinamiche peculiari della performance del *self*.

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Book Review - Standard



Citation: Pratesi A. (2020) *Caterina Satta, Sveva Magaraggia, Ilenya Camozzi, Sociologia della vita familiare. Soggetti, contesti e nuove prospettive*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 153-156. doi: 10.13128/cambio-9917

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Caterina Satta, Sveva Magaraggia, Ilenya Camozzi
Sociologia della vita familiare. Soggetti, contesti e nuove prospettive
Carocci Editore, Roma 2020, ISBN: 9788843099924.

C'era bisogno di un nuovo testo sociologico sulle famiglie e la vita familiare oggi? A giudicare dall'ultimo lavoro di Satta, Magaraggia e Camozzi, credo proprio di sì. Se è vero che l'interesse per l'istituzione familiare in ambito accademico non si è mai del tutto stemperato, è però altrettanto vero che in Italia la tradizione sociologica dominante ha rischiato di non cogliere in tempo l'opportunità e la necessità di un cambio paradigmatico radicale, di una svolta sia in termini di approccio allo studio delle relazioni familiari che in termini di riconoscimento di una crescente complessità delle geografie e delle dinamiche di tali relazioni. In Italia, infatti, diversamente da ciò che per anni ha caratterizzato soprattutto la letteratura anglosassone, i modelli predominanti di interpretazione della famiglia hanno utilizzato un approccio strutturalista al mutamento sociale, con pochissime eccezioni (Saraceno, Naldini 2013; Saraceno 2017; Zanatta 2008), che comunque sembrano restare legate ad un ambito di analisi molto meno capillare e molto meno esteso, anche in senso internazionale, trans-nazionale e intersezionale, rispetto al lavoro di Satta, Magaraggia e Camozzi appena pubblicato.

Gli interrogativi che il testo affronta sono molti – sul significato dell'essere e soprattutto del “fare” famiglia nelle società contemporanee, sui molteplici nuovi attori sociali coinvolti nella costruzione sociale delle relazioni familiari e sul mutamento dei ruoli dei vecchi attori sociali, sulle pratiche, le culture e i contesti che definiscono una miriade di geografie familiari e relazionali, sull'intersezione di molteplici variabili sociologiche nel definire i vari tipi di contesti familiari, relazionali e di intimità, ecc. – ma il contributo principale risiede soprattutto nell'approccio a tali interrogativi. Si tratta di un approccio relazionale, analitico e critico che guarda agli autori che hanno segnato il passaggio da una visione statica, monolitica e convenzionale di famiglia a una micro-processuale, plurale e innovativa legata alle pratiche quotidiane e alla creazione di nuove forme di relazione e di intimità (Morgan, Duncan, Heaphy, Smart, solo per citarne alcuni) non tralasciando però il tentativo di mostrare i legami meno evidenti tra le dimensioni micro-interazionali e le loro implicazioni macro-strutturali in un'ottica di respiro internazionale.

La prospettiva adottata intreccia soprattutto tre dimensioni principali della differenza: genere, generazioni e culture, e fa proprie le premesse dell'approccio del *doing family*, secondo il quale la famiglia “si fa” costan-

temente attraverso le pratiche quotidiane non soltanto all'interno ma anche all'esterno delle mura domestiche, con lo scopo di sistematizzarne i contenuti a ampliarne gli orizzonti. Il libro si articola in sei capitoli che si sviluppano attorno a sei aree strategiche di analisi e soprattutto forniscono una rassegna alquanto esaustiva di alcune delle teorizzazioni più significative sulla famiglia degli ultimi decenni. Nel primo capitolo, Caterina Satta chiarisce il passaggio dalla visione statica e convenzionale di famiglia a quella processuale e in movimento legata alle pratiche quotidiane del "fare famiglia" e ispirata dall'ormai classico lavoro di Morgan (1996, 2011) e fornisce una serie di mappe di orientamento concettuale che si snodano attorno alle varie dimensioni (spaziali, materiali, corporee e temporali) entro le quali tali pratiche sono agite. La decostruzione della visione fallace di sfere contrapposte e visioni dicotomiche (interno ed esterno, economia e sentimenti, pubblico e privato, ecc.) permette all'autrice di ripercorrere alcuni dei contributi più rilevanti tra quanti analizzano il tema della famiglia al di là dei tradizionali confini spazio-temporali nonché di introdurre il concetto di «genitorialità pubblica» declinato in termini drammaturgico-goffmaniani ma anche in termini performativi con un (purtroppo breve) cenno alla sociologia delle emozioni e al ruolo che esse svolgono nella ridefinizione dello status di genitore nelle società occidentali contemporanee. Nel secondo capitolo, i cui legami col precedente risultano a dire il vero poco chiari, Sveva Magaraggia introduce il tema del genere e ricostruisce le tappe attraverso le quali esso abbia progressivamente influenzato la produzione sociologica in generale e le analisi delle relazioni familiari in particolare. Nel capitolo, inevitabilmente, si fa riferimento al tema della cura e dell'etica della cura e alla questione della violenza domestica. Nel terzo capitolo, sempre a cura di Satta, si analizzano le relazioni tra generazioni in ambito familiare e i processi di costruzione delle differenze generazionali secondo una prospettiva che chiarisce non solo il ruolo di adulti e anziani, ma anche quello dei bambini, che è utile anche a gettar luce sulla costruzione sociale, interazionale e processuale di una nuova cultura della genitorialità.

Il tema delle differenze culturali nelle famiglie viene affrontato da Ilenya Camozzi nel quarto capitolo, che intreccia ai *Family Studies* altre due prospettive disciplinari, i *Migration Studies*, gli *Intercultural Studies*. L'analisi delle molteplici configurazioni familiari in contesti caratterizzati da differenze culturali, oltre ad ampliare l'orizzonte analitico delle famiglie contemporanee, fornisce anche l'occasione per evidenziare i limiti giuridici, politici e sociali della definizione di famiglia e l'invisibilità di tutta una serie di attori sociali molto eterogenei tra loro ma accomunati da una sostanziale mancanza di *entitlement* in termini di diritti e da una posizione di marginalità sociale. La stessa autrice, nel quinto capitolo, analizza i mutamenti delle relazioni familiari e dei modi di far famiglia nell'ambito delle nostre società globali, affrontando appunto i temi della globalizzazione, dell'aumento di mobilità, delle relazioni a distanza, delle famiglie migranti e delle famiglie transnazionali. Infine, nel sesto capitolo, Magaraggia illustra la pluralità delle relazioni di intimità non convenzionali e delle nuove geometrie familiari, evidenziando la carenza di studi empirici su tali temi; una carenza che nel tempo ha contribuito a riprodurre un discorso convenzionale ed eternormativo della sociologia delle relazioni familiari.

La necessaria svolta paradigmatica nello studio delle relazioni e della vita familiare che evidenzia una frattura problematica e ormai anche un po' datata tra la prospettiva dell'individualismo (Giddens 1991) e alcuni dei più recenti sviluppi in questo settore (Duncan, Smith 2002; Duncan, Phillips 2011; Gabb, 2008, 2011; Heaphy, Donovan 1999; Jamieson 2013; Morgan 2011; Roseneil, Budgeon 2004; Smart 2007; Weeks *et al.* 2001, 2004) viene illustrata molto efficacemente in questa raccolta di saggi, così come ne vengono chiarite le premesse teoriche di un approccio allo studio della famiglia come contesto spaziale dinamico e processuale e come pratica conversazionale e interazionale. Lungi dal profetizzare un'ipotetica crisi della famiglia, tali premesse evidenziano i molteplici modi attraverso i quali la centralità della famiglia nelle nostre vite si manifesta e catturano la multidimensionalità delle relazioni intime e familiari all'interno delle quali il sé non si costruisce in maniera autonoma e solipsistica, ma è un sé relazionale che si sviluppa intersoggettivamente attraverso la costante interazione sociale con altri significativi. In tal senso, la presenza di nuovi attori sociali arricchisce (piuttosto che impoverisce) lo scenario e le geografie familiari, sollevando al contempo il bisogno di un adeguamento della letteratura e di un riconoscimento del mutamento sociale non solo in chiave teorica e accademica, ma anche e soprattutto in chiave politica e istituzionale.

Ed è proprio su quest'ultimo punto, forse, si inseriscono alcune delle limitazioni presenti in questo libro, la cui ricchezza ed esaustività in termini di copertura di temi e tradizioni teoriche finiscono col mostrarne anche qualche debo-

lezza. Così, ad esempio, la prospettiva “personal life” di Carol Smart non risulta molto sviluppata rispetto a quella di David Morgan. Tale prospettiva, che rappresenta uno sviluppo della prospettiva concettuale originale del *doing family* di Morgan, è più esaustiva, più ampia e soprattutto meno vincolata dagli approcci convenzionali dal momento che non mantiene il problematico termine “famiglia” al suo interno. Ciò non significa bandire i termini famiglia, vita familiare, relazioni familiari o farli collassare in un unicum indistinto e ideologicamente connotato, ma piuttosto tentarne un ulteriore sviluppo alla luce di importanti cambiamenti sociali e culturali e dei rilevanti sviluppi in campo teorico ben evidenziati nel libro di Satta, Magaraggia, e Camozzi. E ciò non significa neppure dover ricorrere, come sostengono le stesse autrici, «a facili contrapposizioni tra opposti» (p. 198). Tuttavia, un approccio più marcatamente ed esplicitamente critico nei confronti delle teorie dell’individualizzazione (Beck e Beck-Gernsheim, Bauman, Giddens) e soprattutto di ciò che è stata, in prevalenza, la sociologia della famiglia in Italia negli ultimi 30 anni, avrebbe forse potuto illustrare e discutere in maniera più evidente le implicazioni in termini di policy e di polity. Insomma, a volte si ha come l’impressione che il testo si spinga a osare, a scoperciare il vaso di Pandora della sociologia italiana più convenzionale e conservatrice su questi temi, ma che alla fine si potrebbe osare molto di più e soprattutto si potrebbero sviluppare di più alcune aree tematiche chiave, che rimangono invece solo accennate.

Relativamente poco sviluppati risultano ad esempio i temi chiave della cura, delle emozioni, e della cittadinanza, che, per quanto, comprensibilmente, non costituissero il focus centrale del libro, avrebbero però potuto costituire il tessuto connettivo di sfondo in maniera più efficace sia dal punto di vista teorico che da quello delle loro potenziali implicazioni, se fossero stati più robustamente articolati. Il tema della cittadinanza, in particolare, si lega in maniera sempre più evidente al tema della cura, anche nell’ambito delle relazioni familiari (Pratesi 2018a), ma la letteratura sulla cura e sul lavoro di cura (peraltro, a sua volta, scarsamente sviluppata) sembra prevalentemente relegata in ambito domestico e discussa soprattutto in un’ottica di genere, che poco spazio apre alle molteplici implicazioni mostrate da alcuni degli sviluppi più recenti. Negli ultimi anni, teorizzazioni critiche del lavoro di cura, dell’intimità e del tema della cittadinanza sviluppate a partire da prospettive femministe, intersezionali e globali hanno fornito vari spunti teorici ed empirici per colmare le lacune tra le teorie e le pratiche di cura, e connettere i temi della sessualità, dell’intimità, della migrazione e dell’inclusione sociale, fornendo una più ampia, complessa e dinamica comprensione del concetto di cittadinanza (Casas-Cortes 2019; Epstein, Carrillo 2014; Kershaw 2010; Pratesi 2018b; Yuval-Davis 2007).

L’importanza di una prospettiva di “analisi intersezionale” è più volte richiamata, ma nella sostanza, purtroppo, poco sviluppata; e questo, in parte, sembra legarsi ad una costruzione non sempre chiara di un percorso narrativo coerente che leghi i vari capitoli del libro e i loro moltissimi temi. In generale, una maggiore coerenza interna dei singoli capitoli (alcuni capitoli funzionano meglio di altri, in questo senso) e una più marcata coerenza esterna che mostrasse i legami tra i diversi capitoli in maniera più esplicita avrebbero aiutato. Ad esempio, dal primo capitolo, prevalentemente incentrato sul complesso (e forse eccessivamente eterogeneo) percorso analitico che ricostruisce le varie pratiche ed i vari modi attraverso i quali “si fa” famiglia nella quotidianità, si passa al tema del genere del secondo capitolo senza soluzione di continuità e senza spiegazioni evidenti dei legami anche impliciti tra i due contributi. Ma la mancata intersezionalità emerge ancora più fortemente quando si parla di diversità familiari utilizzando categorie di analisi che, al di là degli intenti di analisi critica che nessuno mette in discussione, finiscono però col diventare delle trappole essenzializzanti. Così, ad esempio, si parla di famiglie interetniche e interculturali o di famiglie a distanza (LAT) o transnazionali riferendosi esclusivamente ad esempi di coppie eterosessuali oppure si parla di famiglie omosessuali relegandole in una sezione a parte di un capitolo intitolato “famiglie a geometria variabile”, piuttosto che tentarne una trattazione più trasversale e meno ribadente, suo malgrado, distinzioni e differenze concettuali. Insomma, il rischio di riprodurre anche solo discorsivamente delle differenze, a tratti, permane. Dal momento che esistono già, come rimarcato dalle stesse autrici, vari tentativi “riusciti” di superare l’immaginario ancora fortemente eteronormativo della disciplina (Weeks, Heaphy, Donovan, Fassin, ecc.), perché non approfittarne?

Ciò detto, il libro *Sociologia della vita familiare* di Satta, Magaraggia e Camozzi rimane un riferimento fondamentale per chiunque (studiosi, studenti, ricercatori, policy makers) voglia farsi un’idea esaustiva su alcuni dei cambiamenti sociali e degli sviluppi teorici e metodologici più rilevanti nel campo degli studi sulla famiglia e le relazioni familiari. Ma soprattutto per chiunque sia interessato a studiare le varie forme di vita familiare presenti nelle società contempo-

ranee attraverso le lenti caleidoscopiche di una nuova prospettiva analitica che prende in considerazione, in un'ottica pluralista, la complessità di ciò che si osserva nel mondo quotidiano, al di là di ritardi o lacune teoriche e istituzionali.

Alessandro Pratesi

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Book Review - Standard



Citation: Martone V. (2020) Antonio Pergolizzi, *Dalla parte dei rifiuti. La governance, l'economia, la società, lo storytelling e i trafficanti*, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», Vol. 10, n. 19: 157-160. doi: 10.13128/cambio-9918

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

Antonio Pergolizzi

Dalla parte dei rifiuti. La governance, l'economia, la società, lo storytelling e i trafficanti

Andrea Pacilli Editore, Manfredonia (FG) 2020, ISBN: 9788893760676.

Due anni fa, era l'ottobre 2018, Milano faceva già prove di coprifuoco molto prima dell'emergenza pandemica. Migliaia di tonnellate di rifiuti industriali stoccati in un capannone della Bovisasca erano bruciate per diversi giorni e la popolazione era stata invitata a rimanere in casa e a non consumare verdure e frutta prodotti nell'area. Era solo uno dei 262 roghi di rifiuti registrati in meno di un anno (giugno 2018 - maggio 2019), «praticamente 1 ogni 3 giorni, di cui 165 proprio presso aree di deposito di rifiuti urbani e industriali». Così il Ministro dell'ambiente Sergio Costa in Commissione parlamentare di inchiesta sulle attività illecite connesse al ciclo dei rifiuti, audito il 29 maggio 2019 sulla "emergenza roghi". Significativo che a fine agosto di quello stesso anno, per un altro incendio doloso in un capannone colmo di scarti industriali, era stata invitata a rimanere in casa la popolazione di Codogno, cittadina in provincia di Lodi resa poi nota come sede della prima diagnosi da Covid-19. Il 2020 si è dunque aperto con un quadro ambientale e sanitario assai critico e i roghi di rifiuti sono proseguiti anche durante il *lockdown*, contribuendo all'insalubrità e al degrado dell'area più densamente popolata e industrializzata del Paese. Una lettura prevalente di questi fenomeni tende a suggerirne interpretazioni di tipo criminologico e giuridico-penale: le "ecomafie", termine evocativo che indica l'illegalità nei settori a forte impatto ambientale, sarebbero il perno e il motore dei traffici di rifiuti. Ne conseguono politiche di tipo repressivo: ad esempio, recependo disposizioni comunitarie, il legislatore italiano ha introdotto nel Codice penale un Titolo dedicato ai delitti contro l'ambiente (Legge 68/2015), che estende i comportamenti sanzionabili e commina pene più severe per gli "ecoreati". Lo stesso profilo del Ministro dell'ambiente sopra citato incarna in parte questa logica: un alto ufficiale del Corpo Forestale e poi dell'Arma dei Carabinieri, con lunga esperienza nel contrasto, appunto, alle ecomafie.

Analiticamente, le disfunzioni nel ciclo dei rifiuti sono lette come una *patologia* e spetterebbe alle strutture repressive e alle leggi penali porvi rimedio, allo scopo di reindirizzare i cicli produttivi "devianti" verso la loro *fisiologica* legalità, nel rispetto dei limiti ambientali. Questa lettura, che prevale nel policy making ma che ha una eco diffusa anche in certa let-

teratura storico-sociale, risulta parziale, fuorviante e per certi aspetti assolutoria. Il volume di Antonio Pergolizzi offre un contributo interessante per problematizzare il quadro, inserendo le ripetute “emergenze rifiuti” nella più generale «crisi ambientale [...] che passa sia dai modelli di produzione e consumo che dalla gestione degli scarti prodotti da questi stessi modelli» (p. 12). Quattordici capitoli per 370 pagine divise in due parti: la prima è dedicata, appunto, alla *fisiologia*. La seconda, alla *patologia*. Nella prima risiedono le informazioni, i dati, le categorie e le chiavi interpretative utili per capire la seconda. Il lavoro si ispira al quadro teorico della bioeconomia e della *Ecological economics*, passando in rassegna alcuni dei più noti Autori (tra i quali Karl William Kapp, Nicolas Georgescu-Roegen, Kenneth Boulding, Herman Daly, Joan Martínez Alier, John Dryzek, Barry Commoner e Fred Hirsch) che hanno tentato di riconnettere i processi economici e sociali ai processi ecologici e ai loro limiti naturali. In questo quadro, l’accumulo di «scarti della produzione e i materiali di consumo», tra le principali «cause profonde dell’alterazione degli ecosistemi», è letto come il «dietro le quinte del processo di industrializzazione e di consumo di massa» (pp. 9-11). I sette capitoli che compongono la prima parte (la *fisiologia*) declinano questo impianto teorico lungo diverse angolature, anzitutto inquadrando la materia come questione di policy. Richiamando il Testo Unico Ambientale (Dlgs. 152/2006), Pergolizzi ricorda che i rifiuti sono «qualsiasi sostanza od oggetto di cui il detentore si disfi o abbia l’intenzione o abbia l’obbligo di disfarsi» (p. 31), dunque la loro consistenza non afferisce alle caratteristiche intrinseche o merceologiche della sostanza/oggetto, quanto al corredo di scelte, valutazioni, individuali e/o legislativo/regolamentarie che fanno di questo ambito una questione di policy da situare socialmente e storicamente in base ai modelli di produzione e di consumo, al grado di sensibilità e percezione dei rischi sanitari e ambientali, alle potenzialità e strategie tecnologiche ed economiche. Il Testo Unico appena citato è l’esito di un lento comporsi della legislazione e degli strumenti per la regolazione degli scarti; regolazione che paga il ritardo di mezzo secolo di oblio e di *deregulation* sia “a valle” (riuso, riciclaggio e servizi di raccolta), sia “a monte” (prevenzione e riduzione di materia e di nocività della produzione), perché «il miglior rifiuto è quello non prodotto» (p. 33). L’Unione europea ha giocato un ruolo cruciale e «mai come nel caso dei rifiuti [...] si è caratterizzata sin dall’inizio del suo cammino per un approccio innovativo, trainando con forza i paesi membri con una spinta propulsiva che non appare essersi attenuata» (p. 79). L’ambito sovranazionale entra dunque nella governance multilivello della filiera, di cui Pergolizzi ricostruisce gli schemi di regolazione pubblica e pubblico-privata su scala nazionale e regionale, poi urbana e territoriale, mostrando come le «scelte politiche ed economico-industriali [...], le complesse leggi e i meccanismi normativi e burocratici [...] generano ampi margini di indeterminatezza che possono diventare congeniali alle pratiche illecite» (p. 266). Nei sette capitoli della seconda parte (la *patologia*) vengono dunque ricostruiti i circuiti della criminalità ambientale e della *green corruption*, partendo dalle dimensioni e dalla geografia del fenomeno che, come detto in apertura, connota l’intera penisola con ampie ramificazioni internazionali. Quindi l’evoluzione delle reti di complicità trasversali tra imprenditoria, professioni tecniche e *broker*. Infine, l’evoluzione dell’operatività delle stesse organizzazioni «mafiose» nel mercato della gestione e dello smaltimento.

Dalla parte dei rifiuti è un volume molto denso, che contiene il lavoro ultradecennale svolto dall’Autore anche come curatore – dal 2006 – della redazione annuale del *Rapporto Ecomafia* di Legambiente. In effetti il registro dell’opera spazia da ampi contenuti di tipo tecnico e normativo a passaggi più interpretativi, che rendono lo scritto adatto a operatori e operatrici del settore e a policy maker, ma anche a un uditorio accademico, specie nel campo degli studi sociologici e di sociologia ambientale e territoriale in particolare. L’accumulazione incessante di scarti e la loro (con)gestione, anziché elemento patologico, vanno intese nel quadro delle più ampie forme di regolazione e di funzionamento dell’economia, della politica e del governo dell’ambiente e del territorio (Schnaiberg, Gould 1994). Tra società e rifiuti persiste una frattura, il precipitato più evidente della scissione metabolica (Foster 2002) che trova nell’antagonismo tra città e campagna una sua forma di peculiare spazializzazione: almeno da quando la città borghese e le sue massicce politiche di *désodorisation* degli spazi pubblici e privati (Corbin 1998) hanno istituzionalizzato l’espulsione degli scarti (Sori 2001), l’implementazione di pur efficaci forme di gestione amplifica la separazione – ponendo ad esempio protesi tecnologiche tra l’atto del consumo e lo smaltimento nell’ottica dell’igiene e del decoro urbano – in una persistente razionalità anti-ecologica tanto nei modelli di produzione, quanto in quelli di consumo (Murphy 1997).

Nel solco di queste categorie, e traendo spunto dalle numerose suggestioni contenute nel volume, vorrei porre l'attenzione su tre ultimi aspetti, strettamente interconnessi: il rapporto tra politica e sapere esperto; il governo dei rifiuti industriali; il waste grabbing e le ingiustizie sociali e ambientali. Il governo della filiera dei rifiuti si conferma come un complesso sistema socio-tecnico, cui contribuiscono amministratori pubblici, società partecipate, imprenditori e gestori di impianti, professionisti e tecnici, utenti e operatori di prossimità; poi dati, procedure e schemi di classificazioni, tecnologie di incenerimento e di compostaggio e altri attori "non umani" come i microrganismi che digeriscono la frazione organica facendone compost (nei sistemi aerobici) o energia e biocarburanti (nei sistemi anaerobici). La complessità del sistema, qui solo minimamente accennata, ne fardisce il contenuto di nozioni e argomentazioni tecnico-scientifiche che rendono evidente – qui più che altrove – un consistente processo di *depoliticizzazione*. Non solo ai tecnici e agli esperti che popolano la filiera sono delegati poteri e responsabilità sottratti all'autorità pubblica, ma lo stesso *contenuto* politico di scelte cruciali per la collettività risulta spesso svuotato. In altre parole, viene occultata l'*ecologia politica* del ciclo dei rifiuti, ovvero gli «squilibri di potere che sono alla base dell'acquisizione di risorse e servizi ambientali» (p. 165) e le logiche che ne ispirano il governo e le politiche, la dialettica tra interesse collettivo e criteri di economicità ed efficienza privati, la distribuzione asimmetrica dei costi e dei benefici, le ingiustizie e le conflittualità territoriali che ne derivano. Procedo con un esempio a partire dal cenno fatto poc'anzi sul recupero di materia nella frazione organica dei rifiuti urbani. La scelta tra un sistema aerobico e uno anaerobico segue criteri di giustificazione tecnici le cui conseguenze sono politiche anzitutto con riferimento agli obiettivi – trasversali, globali – di autosufficienza energetica e di contenimento delle emissioni di gas climalteranti: «I processi biologici dedicati al recupero di materia dei rifiuti urbani si caratterizzano ancora oggi prevalentemente per la digestione aerobica, cioè per la produzione di compost, a cui sono destinati nel paese 285 impianti», mentre sono attivi solo «24 impianti di digestione anaerobica» per la produzione biogas/biocarburanti, che accolgono meno del 5% dei circa 6 milioni di tonnellate di organico differenziato dalle utenze domestiche (p. 97). Conseguenze politiche ancor più evidenti riguardano poi la localizzazione di questi impianti, con una grave carenza nelle regioni del Sud, che causa la saturazione del locale ciclo integrato, scoraggia la propensione a differenziare, alimenta «migrazioni forzate dei rifiuti» verso altre regioni del Nord Italia e d'Europa. Non a caso la distribuzione dell'impiantistica da incenerimento (i cosiddetti *termovalorizzatori*) presenta una geografia del tutto analoga: dei 38 impianti di incenerimento attivi, 26 sono nelle regioni settentrionali mentre nel Centro-sud persistono casi di impiantistica totalmente inadeguata, come la Calabria (1 impianto) e la Sicilia (nessun impianto), e altri casi di mancata chiusura del ciclo all'interno del territorio regionale (Campania e Lazio). Anche questa è ecologia politica del ciclo dei rifiuti, che non solo lascia «inalterato lo spettro dell'ennesima emergenza, risolta magari con il fuoco o con l'intervento dell'ecomafia» (p. 98), ma procrastina una perversa forma di "dipendenza" ambientale oltretutto di disparità territoriale.

Disparità che si palesano ancor più attorno alla localizzazione di impianti di smaltimento in discarica dove, «in contrasto con le Direttive Ue e con i principi fondamentali della gerarchia e della salvaguardia delle risorse, numerosi Stati membri, soprattutto quelli di nuovo ingresso, ricorrono ancora prevalentemente alle discariche» (p. 87). Ancora oggi la metà dei rifiuti urbani europei finisce in discarica, con punte sopra l'80% in Croazia, Romania, Cipro e Grecia. In Italia la quota scende a circa un quarto del totale, ma parliamo sempre di circa 6,5 milioni di tonnellate all'anno. E siamo ai soli rifiuti urbani, quelli che colonizzano maggiormente lo *storytelling* dell'immondizia. Eppure, la maggiore produzione di scarti e le disfunzioni e opacità nella loro gestione si registra prevalentemente nei rifiuti industriali (in gergo, *speciali*). Basti pensare che nel 2018 i rifiuti urbani prodotti erano circa 30 milioni di tonnellate, quelli industriali quasi 140 milioni, di cui 12 milioni ancora smaltiti in discarica. Certo, le dimensioni materiali ed economiche dell'economia dei rifiuti – principale comparto dell'economia circolare – sono in Italia ragguardevoli (Bianchi 2018). Come ricorda Pergolizzi, «l'economia dei rifiuti si misura principalmente nella capacità di fornire materie prime rigenerate alla manifattura italiana [...] Il 100% della produzione di alluminio deriva dal riciclo, così come l'85% della siderurgia e dei pannelli in legno, il 56% della produzione di piombo e zinco, il 55% di carta e cartone, il 48% di vetro e via seguitando» (p. 126). Ciononostante, persiste un collo di bottiglia nello sbocco del materiale recuperato dai processi di lavorazione che qui riverbera il deficit impiantistico visto sopra, ancora una volta al Sud, e il conseguente ricorso al mercato illegale, «il modo più conveniente per ridurre l'eccesso di domanda di trattamento per questi scarti e per far sparire le prove di gestioni irregolari» (p. 331). Figu-

re di “nuovi trafficanti” e broker attivi in un mercato privato e para-legale degli scarti industriali colma le falle del ciclo produttivo offrendo servizi di trasporto e stoccaggio, smaltimento ed esportazione, mediante pratiche di falsificazione della documentazione accompagnatoria, tombamenti illegali, “navi a perdere” e concentrazioni di materiali in capannoni dismessi poi dati alle fiamme.

La massiccia delocalizzazione degli scarti industriali – legale o illegale – rileva la dimensione transnazionale dell’ingiustizia ecologica (White 2011), configurando una peculiare forma di specializzazione nelle catene globali del valore. Fenomeni di *waste grabbing* – o di *e-waste grabbing* se riguardanti rifiuti elettronici, come quello richiamato da Pergolizzi nella «terra dei fuochi palestinese» (p. 269) – producono drammatiche concentrazioni spaziali di stoccaggi e discariche abusive per lo smaltimento di rifiuti d’importazione. L’immondizia diviene elemento fondamentale di caratterizzazione ambientale, sociale, insediativa e – non ultimo – olfattiva di vaste porzioni di territorio. A ciò si aggiunga che circa la metà della popolazione del pianeta «non ha accesso ai più elementari servizi di gestione rifiuti» (p. 28) e il più classico *dumping ambientale* trova qui il suo definitivo compimento. L’occultamento rappresenta dunque ancora oggi «il modo migliore per nascondere il problema e confinarlo in una sfera fisica ben circoscritta, che delimita e isola» gli scarti (p. 58), ma la concentrazione spaziale alimenta anche la percezione del rischio sanitario e il continuo emergere di conflittualità e resistenze anche radicali (Palidda 2018), negoziazioni e percorsi di giustizia socio-ambientale, costruzione sociale dei danni e delle vittime. Anche nei processi di vittimizzazione torna centrale il ruolo del sapere esperto per la qualificazione del nesso tra il danno e la morte o la malattia di un territorio e dei suoi abitanti, controversie su dati che conducono spesso a considerare quelli ambientali come reati-senza-vittima. Concludendo lungo questa pista interpretativa, il ricco quadro emerso nel volume e qui solo parzialmente richiamato, si può proficuamente integrare in un’ottica di *green criminology*, adottando un «approccio socio-giuridico critico» (South *et al.* 2018, p. 107) e ponendo attenzione sui processi politici, sociali e argomentativi che presiedono al riconoscimento scientifico e giuridico-giudiziario del profilo “criminale” dei “danni” ambientali, alle relazioni di potere, dominio e resistenza nelle controversie e nelle negoziazioni sulle attività dannose “legali” (*corporate crime*, criminalità dei potenti) e alle implicazioni in termini di ingiustizia sociale e ambientale che ne conseguono (Natali 2019). Così anche ribadendo, come fa Pergolizzi, l’intento di Danilo Dolci: «non c’è vera lotta all’inquinamento e alla distruzione ambientale senza un’analoga lotta all’ingiustizia sociale, alle disuguaglianze e, soprattutto, alla dittatura della crescita economica a ogni costo» (p. 11).

Vittorio Martone

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Book Review - Profiles

I. Bartholini, *The trap of proximity violence. Research and Insights into Male Dominance and Female Resistance*, Cham: Springer, 2020, pp. 122, ISBN 978-3030524500.

This book aims at shifting the emphasis from a general perspective of gender-based violence to the more opaque concept of *proximity violence*. The author explores in details a crucial conceptual triad – proximity violence, vulnerability, resistance-resilience – through five chapters aimed at identifying some mutual interconnections. She underlines as proximity violence provides and includes a fiduciary kind of *proximity*, of *dependent intimacy*, where the trust that the victim places in the other favours the exercise of violence itself, allowing it to take place, thus making it practically imperceptible when not actually normal, in extreme cases.

B. Grüning, A. Santambrogio (eds.), *Karl Mannheim. In difesa della sociologia. Saggi 1926-1936*, Milano: Meltemi, 2020, pp. 408, ISBN 9788855191883.

The book collects six essays written by Karl Mannheim between 1929 and 1936, which are relevant to understand the development of the author's thought, the role of sociology in the period between the two world wars, the cultural and public function of the discipline could have. The issues addressed show how sociological reflection also means reflecting on social transformations which are specific of difficult and hectic times, in the belief that this double reflection can lead to a critical knowledge of the current complex societies.

L. Queirolo Palmas, F. Rahola, *Underground Europe. Lungo le rotte migranti*, Milano: Meltemi, 2020, pp. 482, ISBN 9788855192347.

Through an ethnographic journey among border situations, temporary places and re-appropriated spaces (in Calais, Ventimiglia, Ceuta and Melilla, Athens, Paris, Patras, Pozzallo) the two authors move from station to station of a hypothetical underground railway, the Underground Europe, which represents the only possible escape from the claustrophobic and racialized geography of Europe today. The volume recounts the current migrant routes within, around and against the European borders through the historical lens of the Underground railroad, the essentially black experience of escaping from the chains of slavery and the plantation regime of the southern United States before the civil war.

A. Sayad (a cura di S. Paone, A. Petrillo), *Una Nanterre algerina, terra di bidonville*, 2020, Pisa: Edizioni ETS, pp. 136, ISBN 9788846753243.

This book for the first time proposes in Italian Abdelmalek Sayad's reconstruction of the genesis and development of what was once one of the largest French shanty towns. Starting in the mid-50s, a self-built settlement of Algerian workers has grown up around Nanterre, a satellite city of Paris and a new university site. The shanty town of Nanterre is the result of a long and complex migratory process, as consequence of the colonial policies already explored by Sayad himself together with Pierre Bourdieu in "le Deracinement" (1962). the Algerian Nanterre analysed by Sayad is the mirror of marginal forms of metropolitan living and, more generally, of the precariousness of migrant housing that today re-emerge in the European context.

I. Scotti, *Vento forte. Eolico e professioni della green economy*, Napoli-Salerno: Orthotes Editrice, 2020, pp. 152, ISBN 8893142619.

The ecological transition is a very topical issue and the awareness of the need for a profound change in an ecological sense is promoting green policies and innovative green solutions, in which “expert knowledge” plays an important role. The text tries to investigate the role and function of green professionals in the case of wind energy, focusing on the professional profile of the wind-farm developer. Through the results of an empirical research conducted in the southern Apennines, the author takes into consideration the relational processes through which the “green” professionalism translates the ecological transition at the local level by taking charge of local communities, interests.

Tribunale permanente dei popoli, *Diritti dei popoli e disuguaglianze sociali*, Milano: Altreconomia, 2020, pp. 192, ISBN 9788865163542.

The book collects a series of articles and documents that trace the history and activity of the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal since its establishment more than 40 years ago, strongly supported by Lelio Basso, and of which Franco Ippolito in his Preface reconstructs genesis, nature and legitimacy. The individual chapters, interspersed with documents of great interest, are edited by Simona Fraudatario and Gianni Tognoni, also authors of the short but very current Conclusion on the People of Migrants. Useful the Bibliography that closes the volume.

