

Globalization of domestic politics: between convergence and pluralism: the italian case.

by Simone Tonelli

Introduction

This paper seeks to investigate the latest events of the italian political realm, with an historical perspective, aiming to understand the impact of globalization on the domestic politics. The reason of the analysis stems from the necessity to explain the episodes occurred in Italy during the last five years, given that seems they have provoked uneven understandings of the phenomenon and suggest the emergence of different, and by some points of view dangerous, forthcoming perspective.

Following the insight of Nederveen Pieterse (1995) which suggest that globalization allows the formation of several organizational forms at the same time, I will aim to explain how it is impacting on the italian politics: on the one hand, it seems make the state, by certain point of view, an efficient machine working in a computable manner, constrained by scientific knowledge to give predictable outcomes, which result, by certain perspective, dehumanizing of both, the role of the politicians and of the overall citizenship. On the other I will illustrate how this phenomenon, together with the historical and socio-political circumstances, seems to have been leading to the emergence of a tendency towards the self-management of public affairs, therefore avoiding the traditional mediated democracy. Moreover I will foresee an hybridization of these two tendencies following the Ritzer's insight about the unavoidability of the human advocacy by mcdonalized organizations.

In the first part of this paper I will seek to define theoretical framework within which I intend to fit my analysis. The object of my studying is *politics*, I will define it as a cultural object, and then what I mean with *culture* and *cultural object*, and I will separate its features through the use of the *cultural diamond* (Wendy Griswold 2005). Therefore I will endeavor to conceptualize globalization, cultural globalization and mcdonaldization, through the use of the insights of Ritzer, Robertson, DiMaggio and Powell.

In the second part of the paper I will first define the social context in which my object of study is situated and by which is shaped, retracing a very brief history of the Italian politics from the post-WWII to the 2007's financial crises and its developments, going through it by the lens of the international relationship and its impact on the internal functioning of the political system, with a specific emphasis of its influence on the system of parties.

Following, in the third part of the paper, I will consider, on the one hand, the similarities between McDonaldization tendencies and the technocratic government (developed in Italy during the financial crises) and, on the other, the relationship between cultural globalization and the emergence of a tendency to a direct management of public affairs.

Theoretical perspective

My object of study is politics as a cultural practice, that is an institutionalized symbolic form which serves to manage public affairs. On the side of the society as such it serves as a practical mean to make the state's machine working, on its cultural side is the expression of the people's sovereignty.

When I refer about culture I consider it as a set of tools, settled by norms, values, beliefs and symbolic forms of expressions, that the individuals use in their day-to-day lives as a mean to understand what is happening around them. The relationship between culture and the society stems by the fact that the former suggest the expressive side of the object, intrinsic to it, and the latter its functional side. According with Taylor I define culture as a complex set of practices which include the arts, the knowledge, the right, the costumes, the moral and any other skill and habit acquired as a member of the society. As it aim to be a scientific knowledge, sociology, needs to isolate its object of study and so to endeavor to explain the outcome of its shock with other variables. A cultural object can be either an object as such or not, it can be anything, it just needs to be a *meaning incorporated into a form*, the status of cultural object it's the product of an analytical choice rather than a given of the object as such. The form can be real or conceptual, for instance, the crucifix is an object and indeed is practically a torture machine, but for Catholics it have become the sign of the sacrifice, the passion of Jesus Christ towards humanity. Another example could be the concept of freedom, as a concept it does not exist in the real world, but for some peoples it is a cultural object, for instance, the people of United States, on which it has based its nation.

Specify the cultural object means to isolate some features of a wider culture and make them the object of the analysis. Therefore I need to use an analytic tool, which is, in this case the *cultural diamond* (Wendy Griswold). She argued that a cultural object is a product of human beings (creators) and only after it has reached an audience (recipients) and this audience is an active producer of meaning, and it is roots in a certain contest (social world), than an the *object* becomes a *cultural object*. The Italian political realm will be the context of my analysis (social world), which is also, the nation-state, the traditional boundary in which is traditionally constrained the expression of sovereignty, which expression is the cultural side of politics. But who are the creators and the recipients of the cultural object? And in which way politics can be created and delivered? This is a bit more complex argument. Using an old-fashioned term it can be argued that the cultural conception of politics is set up by the *opinion-leaders* and it is delivered to its *audience*. While I am using this term I don't want to say that all the informations coming from those people are taken as givens by their recipients, which is, among others, the reasons because Katz and Lazarsfeld have been criticized, but rather I suggest that exist persons whose arguments stems from a certain position, which can range from to, be the leader of a movement, be the member of a party or an activist, until to, be the mother or the grandfather of the audience rather than a famous singer or a football player, such that gives them a specific authority regarding certain topics, and thus their interlocutors are influenced by them. But, as I said before, they are not passive recipients, rather they assume their 'filtered' informations and they hybridize them together with their cultural background and their experience of day-to-day life.

There are two 'variables' by which I intend to subject my object of study, both part of the process of globalization: the process of cultural globalization as Ritzer (2003) outlined it, namely that lead to a cultural pluralism; and the process of McDonaldization (Ritzer 1997; 2008) which lead to a cultural convergence, an homogenization of cultures. The latter is, in some parts, incorporated in the former, indeed as we will see, the process of McDonaldization cannot overall avoid the agency of individuals.

First I must define what globalization is. The reductive definition of it is "the shrinking of the world" that is to say the compression of time and space, but as many scholars have highlighted globalization is not a unique process, rather is a complex phenomenon which involve many flows across the world. Flows of capital and people allowed by the increasing interconnectedness and regional cooperation among states around the world

led by the economic capitalism; flows of informations allowed by the exponential growth of informatics infrastructures and the more than ever centrality of the media; flows of negatives externalities such as pollution, nuclear proliferation and terrorism (Ritzer 2010). For our purpose we have to consider globalization as cultural globalization, and according with Roland, Ritzer and Stillman (1993;2003): << in terms of the intellectual and practical terrain on which actors draw their conclusions about globalization, thereby leaving open the possibility of multiple images of globalization. [...] despite the wide variety on globalization it is possible to distill few key proposition concerning the contemporary global culture: (1-A) the world is more pluralistic than the hegemonic world-views of modern social theory had previously allowed[...]; (2-A) individuals have more power to adapt and maneuver within a globalized world than the top-down perspective of modern social theory had previously allowed[...]; (3-A) social processes are rational and contingent. Cultural globalization provokes a variety of reaction [...] that feed back on and transform globalization[...] (4-A) [...]the increasing commodification of social life and increasing velocity and centrality of media.[...] >> (Ritzer and Stillman 2003)

McDonaldization (Ritzer 2010) is a new process rooted in the historical process of rationalization described by Max Weber, and, as well as the latter, it has a profound consequences in the experience of the world of an individual. The concept describe the rationalization of society using the fast-food restaurants as paradigm. In these restaurants the main organizational features are (1-B) the push for a greater *efficiency*, (2-B) *predictability* and (3-B) *calculability*, that is to say that both, employee and customers, follow a script and know very well what the other does expect, and thus they are able to give and receive what they want to, in a certain manner and in a certain time. Thus, is (4-B) the *control* exercised by non-human technology on human labour another feature of this kind of organization. Interesting is the example of the fast-food's french-fry machines: as soon as the machine ring, the fries are ready and the employee must run to pick them up avoiding burns. At the same way works everything else within this organization: meat and bread's cook is controlled by a machine who decide when it's done, thus there's no possibilities for the employees to decide if it has got to be more or less cooked, to them remain the task to assembly it, as well as if they were working in an automobile factory. Moreover another characteristic of this kind of organizational culture is what Ritzer called (5-B) the rationality of irrationality, that is to say the

dehumanization of employee and customers. The first are forced to work following machines orders, as within an assembly line, and the latter have to eat fast and in uncomfortable manners. Despite the tendency to convergence, McDonaldization is subject to the forces of pluralism in at least three senses: the models are exported and subjected to an indigenous adaptation, and they can develop indigenously in a process of emulation that tends towards isomorphism, and for a variety of ends.

Analysis

Since the end of the second world war, until the collapse of the wall of Berlin and the consequently end of the cold war, the Italian politics have been strongly influenced by the international relationship. The world was polarized, and was dominated by two superpowers challenging each other and representing two different ideologies. Each pole task were to attract under its influences as much as geopolitical actors as possible endeavoring to pull them away from the influence of the enemy. This situation used to influence strongly the Italian system of parties of the post-WWII: on the far-left-wing was situated the Italian Communist Party, on the far-right-wing the Italian Social Movement, ideologically fascist. Within the range between these two anti-liberal-system parties there was a wide set of more or less liberal but moderate parties, among which the biggest one was the Christian Democracy. What stemmed by this system was that the smallest moderate parties were forced to unite themselves, independently by the ideology, into the same central coalition, with the aim to challenge the ICP and ISM and avoiding them to pull consensus away from the center and thus overturn the liberal system into another one (mostly to avoid the communist party to overturn it into a soviet society, given that due to the previous fascist experience the ISM did not enjoyed a wide consensus). What does this dynamic, the so-called 'centrifuge system of parties' (Giovanni Sartori 1982), produced? It does produced more than fifty years of *hegemonic Government*, that is a situation in which other parties are legal but to govern is always the same one, preventing the typical recirculation of parties which is characteristic of the healthy democracies.

After the end of the cold war the Christian Democracy started to lose consensus because this dynamics was not anymore necessary and the communism was not anymore a danger. The *coup de grace* to the CD arrived in 1992 by a series of prosecution for bribes to the highest public authorities, the so-called Tangentopoli (Bribesbury) scandal.

This bribes' system was the product of an unofficial monopoly of political power held during the iron curtains' period. Thus in 1993 Italian's people decided through referendum to switch from a proportional voting system to a majority system, endeavoring to produce an higher accountability towards the Government. Moreover through the same referendum the people decided to remove the public funding to the parties. Both of the choices taken in 1993 have been circumvented and already in 1994 the latter has been replaced by 'electoral campaign reimbursement', and in 2005 the voting system has been replaced by one more proportional (defined by its same supervisor as "a crap") against the people's will. Indeed the latter voting system has been declared unconstitutional by the end of 2013.

What concerns us in this brief overview is the unreliability of the Italian political elite which have undermined the legitimacy of the representative democracy. This process of disillusion has been emphasized by the globalization tendencies of the latest years. For instance, the entrance of Italy in the monetary union implied a huge loss of sovereignty and made the Government lose two of the three tools of monetary policy, that represent, at least for a political elite which has never been able to implement structural reforms but rather it has always relied on the *open market operations* (at least hitherto it was possible) for devalue the national currency and make Italian products more competitive abroad, a tough challenge to re-legitimize representative democracy. Indeed, in the middle of the *public debt crises*, when the *yield spread* between German and Italian bonds were over 500, in November 2011 has been nominated Mario Monti as Prime Minister, and he has been charged by the task to form a *technocratic* Government, that is a task force of persons who have never held a political role, have never been elected and their legitimation stems from the high competences acknowledged by the international scientific community (Il Fatto Quotidiano 16/11/2011). Monti, has been nominated by the Head of the state with the aim to implement those structural reforms which the traditional political elite has never been able to do, aiming to reduce the public *deficit* through cuts at the public spending and higher taxes, and thus its ratio with the GDP.

Following the insight of DiMaggio and Powell, it can be argued that, by choosing Mario Monti, the Italian public authority, showed the necessity to transform the country a more competing organizational structure, and demonstrate the unsuitability of previous Governments to do it. DiMaggio and Powell argued that organizations look at each

other in an environment of symbolic uncertainty, and thus did states during the crises. Monti's figure stemmed because of his credentials, which fitted the system developed by the process of professionalization. In this sense it can be argued that Italian politics is in a process of McDonaldization. Italy in several decades had accumulated a huge debt that was fine at least hitherto the GDP was stable, but as soon as its interest rate starts to grow because of the widespread uncertainty among investors, and the production starts a dangerous decrease because the banks were not anymore willing to lend loans, was becoming everyday more true the possibility of an Italian default. If this ever it would happened would have made to start a domino effect all around EU, and thus became necessary to fulfill some condition that, it can be argued, are characteristic of a McDonaldized organization. For example, (1-B) a country which wants to place its bond on the primary market with a successful performance, needs to show the investors its *efficiency* in implement the necessary structural reforms when the surrounding market conditions require it, and therefore the Government must be able to transform it into a reliable investment, otherwise none would not be willing to finance it. This is what happened to Italy: as soon as the possibility that billions of euros could be lost (threatening the greatest attempt of peace and democracy ever putted in place, EU), became necessary to involve a professional, one of those MBA graduates discussed by DiMaggio and Powell (of course, Mario Monti is not an MBA graduate, rather he has been the Rector and he is a Professor of an excellent Italian University, but is the analogy which concern us); (2-B) therefore, the Government of a country which aspire to be competitive must be able to *calculate* how to allocate the resources, and it has to be capable to convince the investors that it is doing it in the best way possible to do it, because *in an environment of symbolic uncertainty* we look for something familiar. And therefore, as a traveler who is distrustful about unknown food looks for a 'Mc sign' while he or she is abroad, so do the investors whom, in an environment of symbolic uncertainty, find reassurance in familiar organizations. Therefore became a necessary task to calculate how much to reduce the public deficit aiming to step back in a reliable condition, and due it was not anymore possible to devalue the currency, the only way remained was to cut the public spending and to rise taxes. Monti's task was to calculate how much, in which services, and for how long doing it, he had to set up an organization capable to fit the investors understanding and to be 'a light in the darkness of uncertainty'. Precisely as happen in a fast-food the emphasis on 'quantity and speed'

causes a loss of quality, so did for the process of policy making: the urgency to arrange the deficit reduction avoided the Parliamentary process, and it has been settled by Government's decree. What emerged practically by this dynamic is that instead to have been taken a thought and discussed decision about in which services to cut and what taxes increase, the public authority gravitated on the ones more subject to the crises, by increasing taxes on house property, on added value, petrol and so on: in other words where were easier to find. (3-B) Therefore this emphasis on the calculations is aimed to make the behaviors of both, employee and customers, more predictable, and so does for the states. But while everyone is capable to understand if he or she likes or not certain sandwiches or certain fries, not everyone is able to understand immediately if a food it's healthy or not and thus if it worth or not. To avoid this drawback, the consumers' choice is led by the advertisements: spreading the 'Mc symbols', media supplies, again, 'a light in the darkness of symbolic uncertainty'. And so, in a similar way, happen for the investments. Indeed to implement this task exist the rating agencies, which apparently hold the authority to syndicate the countries behavior, marking them with a grade. In case a state does not follow the script, the agencies rate it with a low score, leading the investor behavior (4-B) interesting is, in my view, the feature of the control by technology on human labour in mcdonaldized organizations. If we assume the term 'technology' as 'scientific knowledge used in practical ways' (Oxford Dictionary) thus we can consider economics as the scientific knowledge which aim to allocate scanty resources, and, as such, the technology adopt by the technocrats and which has forced them to adopt certain policies rather than others. Economics have been used too often to build rational mathematical models in which to fit irrational actors (human beings). Used in this way it forces the real world to fit within the model rather than the opposite, and literally controls them. It can be argued that an evidence of it is the financial crises as such: the belief that the prices could rise no stop was based on a mathematical model, and it pushed the people to behave in a non-rational way (borrow the money to buy an house even if you can't afford it). At the same way it could be argued that the technology controls the European Central bank: as soon as the 'bell' of the 2% per year inflation 'ring' its technocrats must adopt policies aimed to fit it back within its limit. An evidence of a policy practiced in this way can be found in the 'european style' of quantitative easing adopt by ECB during the financial crises: as soon as they used to issued long-term bonds to inject liquidity, they used to buy short-term ones, in a way to

limit the enlargement of the monetary base (www.ecb.europa.eu). And so did technocrats in Italy, such as in a fast-food when the french-fry machines ring and the employee must run to pick them up, in Italy, as soon as the thermometer of the spread sounds fever then the policy-maker must run to adopt the right policy which aim to lower the fever. (5-B) It can be argued that all this process of policy-making dehumanize both, the politicians, since they don't seem anymore serve to persons, rather they seem more a kind of 'maintenance staff' ready to intervene as soon as the 'automatic machine' of growth is broken, and its citizens, to whom the policies are directed, whom are forced to renounce to basic social services and to pay more taxes making decreasing their live's quality. To support the thesis about the 'Mc-nature' of the policies taken by the EU and the italian Government it can be argued that they were aimed to safe-guard abstracts problems, e.g. spread and inflation, without caring about a very true problems, e.g. unemployment and poverty rate. That's the reason I wrote 'automatic-machine of growth': the policies discussed above serves, in the end, to produced profits, but they cause losses of jobs, and therefore seems like the labour have become unessential.

As a reaction to the decades of unsuitable Governments and the derived technocrats, during the last five years has emerged an important political actor, a movement of citizen, the 5 Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle), leaded by a former comedian, Beppe Grillo, who have been criticizing the political class since he was doing standup shows, making him raise a certain popularity among people, especially young ones (it could be argued that a huge debt it's a burden for the coming generations). Then during the 2011 austerity he starts to criticize also EU, Euro, Germany, parties, technicians, accusing them to be all part of a giant fraud burdening to the italian's expenses. Therefore, after Monti resigned from its role, because of the tensions emerged within the majority that was supporting his Government, the movement's popularity raised through the internet and media events organized by Grillo's blog (such as the V-day) served to him and to its movement as a leverage to get a quarter of the Parliament's seats during the election which came next.

5SM it's a movement which claim to be post-ideological, its leader and its activists don't recognize themselves in none of the traditional political parties, it can be argued that their ideology, I intend ideology as a set of ideas which leads the behavior of a social group, is to quit with the traditional mediated democracy. In this sense it could be

argued that globalization of culture is impacting on the Italian politics. Analyzing the feature highlighted by Robertson (1993) and Ritzer (2003) we can say that (1-A) we live in a time, nowadays, in which identities have become so flexible that are neither given as they were in traditional societies, nor less strict but still fixed as they were in modern societies. Despite this, in post-modern, second-modern or late-modern societies, the identities, even if far more subjected to the individual will than ever, are still social constructions, it is the social context to be changed. Since one person can pretend to be anyone on the internet by creating a fake identity, another one can transform himself or herself identity in the real world radically, physically, even changing sex. According with many scholars the formation of the identity is a product of the interaction with the others: a person considers himself or herself in some way, then he or she compares this individual identification of the self with the one that other people seem to have about him or her, and then their feedback is involved back in the formation of his or her own conception of the self. Therefore, in a liquid society in which a person is able either to talk with persons all around the globe in the time of an instant thanks to the digital formation of social groups through the internet, in which it is possible to have a trip around the world likely within a day, through the powerful means of communication which link the countries and the increasing regional cooperation among them, he or she is thus able to express himself or herself in a way that it's practically impossible not to find a confirmation of own identity in someone else. It makes possible for a person to be born, for instance, in the middle-east as a male, muslim, conservative and to die in London as a socialist, atheist female. (2-A) Thus the individuals feel like they can, and they have to, manage the public affairs on their own. Traditional parties and practices to do it are not fluid as identities are, and thus the people feel like their interests are not anymore represented by the established public authorities. Thanks to the bright possibilities offered by the cyber-space, instead, they feel like they can participate to the processes of problem-definition/problem-solution straightaway, avoiding any mediation of the institutional tools offered by the traditional representative democracy, and they are thus rediscovering the ancient principle of the agora. (3-A) But social processes are rational and contingent and thus the Italian case stems from its political background. For instance, in this country has born a citizen's movements which aim, literally and openly, to destroy the traditional system of parties. As their leader stated once << we'll enter in the Parliament and we'll open it as a tuna can >> (beppegrillo.it). Indeed it aims to

change globalization, taking as a given that regionalization is an aspect of the process of globalization (Best; Christiansen), and the EU is the kind of institution that can be defined as a regional cooperation, the 5SM's leader stated in his final speech on December 31st 2013 "we're going to Europe and we're going to change the Europe". Most of the movement's success can be find in Grillo's steady appeal to the dichotomy people/enemies of the people, a strong charismatic leadership, a direct communicative style, oversimplification of complex issues and a widespread use of mass media for appeal. It could be argued that this feature are typical of populism, indeed in its end-of-the-year speech the leader of the movement stated "we have broken their toy[...]everyone is against us[...]the ECB, Angela Merkel, Germany, the parties, the Judiciary, the journals, televisions[...]We are going to go to Europe, and we'll win[...]we are going to change the Euro[...]we'll make a two-speed-Euro, I don't know if it's possible to do but we'll do something[...]if they [the EU] don't let us doing it we'll exit from the Euro[...]it is possible to do, and it's not a crazy, populist comedian who's praising for violence to say that, it's Paul Krugman!..." (Grillo 2013) while Krugman in his book said exactly the contrary, that is to say that even an eurosceptic, as he is, is now fully convinced that leave the Euro would be a too expensive choice (Krugman 2012). (4-A) The remaining part of its success, instead, stems from the use of the web, the leader and the activists of the movement often appeal to the direct democracy and to an horizontal organization of the public affairs, achievable, in their view, through the use of the internet. The web platforms have been used also to manage primaries election: everyone had the possibility to upload his or her video on Grillo's blog and the members could vote them. The result has been, according with some observer, far away to be more legitimizing than traditional democracy: about 30000 people voted for about 1400 candidates with a *ratio* of 24 vote per deputy (Il Fatto Quotidiano 12/07/2012). The platform is also used to stream online the works within the Parliamentary Commission, a negative power made of control that is possible to exercise also through the review of official documents. Moreover two regional counselor have been expelled by Grillo from the movement because they appeared on mainstream television, against the leader will, and they make *non grate* critiques about the internal democracy of the movement (Il Fatto Quotidiano 12/12/2012). Starting from the fact that the blog, base of the movement, is a private property, and the movement's symbol can be withdrawn as a franchising brand as soon as one of his members violate the leader's rule, it can be

argued that, despite the steady appeal to be an horizontal organization, in fact it is highly vertical.

According with Ritzer (2003) , the power of mcdonaldization to homogenize is limited, that is to say that the reactions to it do create always contingency that force it to adaptation. Following he's argument I foresee a third emerging phenomenon that can be see as an hybridization of the twos: both, left-wing and right-wing, of the major italian parties are apparently breaking with the past, namely the different currents of though within them have broken with the mainstream one. On the right hand, for instance, Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia has broken with the Government's majority and is now at the opposition, following Grillo appeals (Il Fatto Quotidiano 15/11/2013), while the so-called 'new-right' is made up by younger levers. On the left hand, the Democratic Party's congress has just elected its new General Secretary (Il Fatto Quotidiano 09/12/2013), Matteo Renzi, a person who has previously been the President of Tuscany's region and now is the Major of Florence, but who has never covered a role within the Parliament. Angelino Alfano, leader of 'new-right' stated: << The choice we taken it is a choice for the italian future[...]we choose to say no to [Forza Italia because of] too many extremism and extremist[...]” >> (Il Fatto Quotidiano 07/12/2013), or in what Matteo Renzi claims, among others, that is to << [...]don't speak anymore about Berlusconi, let's speak about future[...]not anymore tricks done behind italians' shoulders >> (Il Fatto Quotidiano 27/10/2013), and he has openly challenged Beppe Grillo, because he does not want to << let the 5SM change politics on its own >> (Il Fatto Quotidiano 02/01/2014).

By these statement can be deduced that the party's tendency today is to take the distances by the old-fashioned shady style to manage the public thing together with keeping the distances to Beppe Grillo and his threatening populism. It could be argued that they are therefore aiming to quickly implement those (in)famous structural reforms discussed above (Il Fatto Quotidiano 07/01/2014), to support this thesis is the *Job Act* proposed by Matteo Renzi and inspired to the danish model, to achieve though political channels. Also they are considering the relationship within EU and the obliges it requires. Moreover Renzi claimed for the use of the internet either as a tools to ensure transparency either a tool to reduce inequalities (e.g. the use of database to fight tax evasion).

Conclusions

I have discussed the historical events which led the younger cohorts of the Italian people to dissociate themselves from the traditional 'way of doing' politics, as the Gini Growing Inequalities 2013's report shows these cohorts are the less active in the political participation, it can be argued it is due to the framework of malfeasance which has surrounded the Italian political realm since they have been born. Furthermore I have discussed how such unsuitability of the political elite as politicians has brought to the formation of a non-elected technocratic Government, nominated by the Head of the State, during the debt crises which have followed the financial crises. As a non-political actor such Government did behave in a dehumanizing manner of both, the political role and the role of the citizens, which has led, in turn, to the emergence of a new political actor which openly aims to destroy both, the technocratic tendency and the political actors who allowed its formation.

Is thus emerging a situation which calls for a dangerous perspective: on the one hand is emerging the technocratic tendency to manage public affairs, pushed by the pursuit of international cooperation within regions that leads to the convergence of organizational culture, endeavoring to maximize efficiency, calculability, predictability and control of the states. On the other, led by the cultural flows across the globe, is emerging the tendency to self-manage the public thing through the internet avoiding the traditional mediated democracy. Both of these tendencies are threatening the very concept of democracy, the former, by making unnecessary the process of democratic election, since the interests pursued by a technocratic Government seem addressed to the interest of the capital as such: neither capitalist nor laborers apparently are conceived in its process of policy-making. The latter, in this specific Italian case and due to the existence of a powerful leader, the ownership of the movement, the widespread diffusion of (dis)information through such a powerful mean as the internet, is leading to the growth of a plebiscitarian populism rather than a direct or participatory democracy exercised through the ancient principle of the agora.

But it seems that these two processes are hybridizing each other, and from the political realm is emerging a reaction of the traditional political actors, the parties. On the one hand, they are taking the distance from both, corruption and populism, on the other are aiming to put in place those structural reforms which led the country in the actual

situation through political channels conceiving plural interest, yet endeavoring to maintain the international cooperation within Europe.

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