

# BEYOND POST-COVID19 WHAT ROOM TO MANOEUVRE FOR SOCIAL RELATIONS?

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*"Who makes these changes?  
I shoot an arrow to the right, it falls to the left.  
I chase a deer and find myself being chased by a pig.  
I go to get what I want and end up in jail.  
I set traps for the others and I fall into them.  
I should be wary of my own desires."*

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*"In my soul, put  
a new image: oh heart, oh eye, oh light!  
Image is you, beyond  
the image is you, with each breath you point to a new one.  
Make sure that for every image  
let the veil of darkness be lifted from your eyes.  
Because I don't have to take the light from you,  
You who are the light of every home and every periphery."*

Rumi Mowlānā

## Foreword

The story of Covid19, which by now keeps us tied to thinking about the future of humanity and which at times, in almost surreal tones, seems to cancel, resize or in any case pause the sphere of the present, shows itself as a structure composed of dichotomies. In front of them, the social sciences are called to intervene in first person and necessarily in a new way.

After the predominance of the medical-clinical thought, in particular virological and epidemiological; after the impotence of the cold and surrendered economic-financial thought which was already accompanied by a deep and perhaps definitive degradation of the post-industrial and productive era - linked to world trade and to the ways of using labour- it is evident that without the contribution of sociological thought we can neither understand nor face the global and collective consequences of the pandemic. The virus



has shown to be an agent with stronger impacts than any social or geopolitical power player. In fact, it has allowed a necessary and productive dialogue between the humanities and the so-called exact sciences, in this case between Sociology and Health Sciences. For this reason, dialogue is fundamental and gives the Social Sciences fundamental vigour and presence, particularly in designing the senses of the new structures of collective relations.

The interpretation of the virus as a pathology that breaks in to damage a normal situation, of health, of the social body must be reviewed. However, that pathology represents the apical point of an unhealthy condition of social life that from our point of view opens at the same time to the possibility of its restructuring.

There is no doubt that the real sick today is not only the population affected or potentially exposed to contagion, but the social body itself, that for a long time it will find itself obliged to rethink the meaning and characteristics of the "social relationship". This makes of that sick person an *in-fermus*, as such weak, defenseless and immobilized at a point of fracture of interaction, understood as an expression endowed with meaning, as well as like predominance of the possibilities of action on mutual social behaviour and attitudes.

The strong divisions that have suddenly revealed themselves and that in the near future will dramatically worsen, are the testimony of an epochal turning point of society and above all of what semantics calls integration between meaning (*Sinn*) and definition (*Bedeutung*), according to the classic definition of Frege<sup>1</sup>. Formulated on the sociological side, this means the necessity of a restructuring of social action as until now has been conceived so far in western culture<sup>2</sup>.

What we have in front of us is a world crossed by dichotomous conditions. That is to say, a set of conflicting and contradictory tensions of the entire social body, which ineluctably push science to question itself not by univocal thematic addresses but by looking for a "space of manoeuvre", within the phenomena that the pandemic has, so to speak, split into difficult to solve binomies, which will last at least until a new content of meaning is born - if it is born.

In this essay we will treat, in a non-hierarchical way, the most relevant conceptual passages of these dichotomies and we will advance the hypothesis of a possible working method for a regeneration of the sense content of social relations.

### **First dichotomy:**

#### ***Generalities - Individuality***

In one of his recent essays, Julio Echeverría says: "*The recognition that this is a phenomenon (the pandemic) that potentially affects everyone, recalls the principle of generality, but at the same time, calls into question the principle of individuality, because it refers [...] to each individual*"<sup>3</sup>. This influence on the dimension of the public and private, the intimate and the collective is one of the dichotomies, which, as Echeverría writes again, "*further nourishes the perception of the lack of control*"<sup>4</sup>.

Since it is in the space of sociality that the spread of the virus takes place, the very structure of the social relationship is put under pressure. This has consequently instability, loss of balance, restriction of public space in favor of the strictly private one, in a word the loss of social meaning.

This pushes, with renewed strength, towards the fundamental challenges of social theory aimed at the complex definition of the meaning of social action. This calls into question the very notion of sociality, from the classical elaborations of Simmel, Durkheim and Weber to the more contemporary elaborations of the Frankfurt School or Luhmanian systemic theory<sup>5</sup>.



The implications of this binomial are many and involve different scientific and research disciplines. One of them, for example, is the one that recalls the anthropological dimension of identity, where is questioned the meaning of otherness, extraneousness and difference as a comparison with identity. Not to mention the theme, so topical today, of surveillance and regulation of external behaviour as well as, in terms of artificial intelligence, the impulses of the mind that calls neuroscience into play. Another possible extension of the dichotomy is the one that has to do with Foucaultian biopolitics or biopower, which leads to important reflections (one of them being the one on what is normal and what is pathological). Not to mention the great, very topical, theme of surveillance<sup>6</sup>.

### **Second dichotomy:** ***Acceleration - Deceleration***

The second dichotomous point is *acceleration - deceleration*. This is a multifaceted point within which other dichotomies lie. For example, those between coincidence and de-coincidence<sup>7</sup> or between *agglomeration - decentralization* or *disaggregation*.

If we examine the first, let's call it "sub-dichotomy" or *coincidence* and *de-coincidence*, the splitting ground is clear because it is the separation between daily ritual activities (family, trust, closeness, etc.). This is the separation between everyday ritual activities (family, trust, closeness, etc.) and the behaviours largely mediated by ICT technologies. This techno-dependence, who takes the form of "*the construction of an artificial reality in which to experience new forms of intimacy and solitude*"<sup>8</sup>, is a sort of domestication. This double process involves media technologies and social actors where, on the one hand, technologies are transformed by adapting to the socio-cultural context in which individuals are immersed; while, on the other hand, family and social cultures and practices are in turn modified in relation to the constraints and new possibilities offered by the new technologies<sup>9</sup>.

In the second case, on the other hand, we are faced with a difficulty which, from the point of view that we have assumed as primary, shows greater difficulties of framing.

The first difficulty is already linguistic. There is, in fact, no contrary for the concept of agglomeration, at least in the sense in which we want to understand it, that is, as a dichotomy between the processes of unification of social individuals and those of use of space, without or with proximity but in any case in a dimension that allows both isolation and socialization. The distinction deserves to be deepened.

To use "diffusion" as a multipolarity of agglomeration would mean referring to a territoriality that diffuses the human presence in space but in a heterodox way, and it is not a coincidence that the diffusionist theories - used in studies on ancient civilizations, on tradition and, in general, in reflections on the processes of propagation of cultures - have now been exhumed in terms of globalization<sup>10</sup>. It is no coincidence that the diffusionist theories - used in studies on ancient civilizations, on tradition and in general in reflections on the processes of propagation of cultures - for example, migratory - have now been exhumed in terms of globalization.

On the other hand, assuming "dispersion" as a contrast to agglomeration, seems to evoke a dynamic of decomposition of the community, which can be found - for example - in the phenomena of migration between countryside and city, phenomena still very strong especially in emerging countries and linked to conurbation, i.e. the escape from the urban environment as a response to the phenomena of socio-spatial segregation or choice for



uncontaminated fresh air, etc.. This has the limit of opening to a confused urban-rural interweaving, without definable form (see note 5).

The choice of the terms decentralization and disaggregation is therefore respectively realistic (let us not forget that during the pandemic one of the most important issues on the agenda was the lack or lack of planning of centre-periphery relations within health policies, to which most of the (*in*)capacity of the socio-sanitary systems to face the problem effectively) and dynamic, because it recalls two-way mobility processes that intensify variably over time on the basis of historical dynamics, even temporary ones, and, at the same time, life choices dictated by social and individual behaviour (withdrawal from active working life, choices due to changes in family behaviour, ephemeral needs linked to social status, reallocation of family groups that cannot afford new investments, etc.).

Apart from these semantic aspects, there is no doubt that the places of evidence of the agglomeration, i.e. the cities, are the space of active, frenetic, mobile life, while the countryside is perceived (perhaps romantically, but not for this reason little felt) as the *topos* of calm, rest, opposition to the frenetic rhythms practiced in advanced societies, and of course the healthy environment. It is no coincidence that the pandemic has mainly broken out in large urban centres and much less so in the countryside. This consideration cannot fail to orient social behaviour in a different way towards new habits, consumption and, of course, styles of relationships. But while it was not easy to reconcile the two dimensions before, today the task is not at all simple, just as the work of urban regeneration and the foundation of a new relationship between the city and its surroundings is complex.

So acceleration and deceleration as temporal but also conceptual rhythms that social relations will have to face and in which they will have to find a content of meaning in many of their aspects: from how we communicate, where we live, where we choose to live, where we want to live, where we want to live, where we want to live.

### **Third dichotomy**

#### ***Globalism - Sovereignty***

The third dichotomy concerns the sphere of social relations in the political-economic sphere. It can be declined with the duality between global instances of government (*globalism*) - reactive instances of preservation of the decision-making capacities of nation states (*sovereignty*)<sup>11</sup>.

Already in the recent past, this theme has become evident. Globalism, in its neoliberal version, especially since the financial crisis of 2008, has reinforced the predominance of trans-national capital - mostly financial - introducing radical impacts in the socio-productive structures. The laws of the market, oriented according to rational economic action (or apparently so), had already long ago annulled the sphere of cooperation, favouring those of competition, in the name of the dogma (for them) indisputable given by the natural laws of the market. From the point of view of social relations, all this has meant a precise vision of what collective utility is. The "speed" practiced in the economic sphere has, that is, conditioned the social structure, which has necessarily had to adapt to its rules<sup>12</sup>.

This adjustment has produced reactions and upheavals for globalism, because, while speed did not diminish, there was a need to put a brake on it because it produced extreme social inequalities. This need manifested itself in different directions, on the one hand, a generalized mobilization of resistance and protest (from Hong Kong to Paris, from Quito to Santiago in Latin America, etc.) and on the other, the re-emergence of nationalism and neopopulism (the latter, commonly called sovereignty).



Today, however, both positions are affected by the pandemic world. If the dynamic saw sovereignty as a reaction to neoliberal globalism until now, today it is the latter that is being put into crisis as it is forced to decrease or slow down its speed. On the other hand, sovereignty, lacking this "against" vision, has shown to rest on clay feet, as it is dependent on the instruments of that liberalist vision (telecommunications, innovations, etc.) that it had fought<sup>13</sup>.

#### **Fourth dichotomy:**

#### ***Political movements - Intentional communities***

A fourth dichotomy concerns participatory social relations. It could be defined in the binomial political movements - intentional communities.

In recent years, the public sphere has seen the emergence of numerous aggregations, some of which were born in virtual form, although they then moved to the institutional sphere (elections, parliamentary representatives, government posts, etc.). The parable of these self-defined "movements" has been more or less similar, at least in Europe. Born as a protest against the mismanagement of an incompetent and self-referential political class, these formations have enjoyed discreet, and sometimes great consensus.

At the height of their rise, however, they have shown limitations in their ability to govern complex processes or, if one means otherwise, inability to enter the self-referential "game" of politics as a profession. Some of these movements have disappeared, most of them have seen the wide consensus conquered (Italy, Spain, but also Austria) and precisely because of the difficulty in changing the rules of the game, as well as for a lack of ideological identity which placed them naively in the middle of the political agony and forced them to avoid the great themes of reform, in favour of the smallest propaganda battles. In the case of Covid19, these new supposed movements showed all the inadequacy to deal with big issues, even where - as in Italy - they had a large direct (sardines) or virtual (M5S) participation.

On the other hand, on the other hand, the so-called *intentional communities*, the intentional communities, which arose mainly in mostly peripheral territories and based on the principle of mobilization on particular social instances and delimited in a thematic or territorial sense, have increased their presence as they were able to combine the digital dimension with the participatory one.

Tools such as *petitions* and *campaigns*, which mainly use unprecedented virtual modes of communication between members, seem not to have experienced crises, as they were in a position to maintain the levels of social relations between the members of the *issue* groups and precisely because they had already marked their mode of action with a "virtuous" distance.

In these two paths of research of the *better world*, social relations play a very important role that will certainly be part in the near future of the way of participating in public affairs and in the interest of groups that bring demands.

#### **Fifth dichotomy**

#### ***Quantitative - Qualitative***

The last dichotomy under examination inevitably leads to the discourse on the method, which has always represented the main vulnus in the accreditation of sociological research in the scientific field, and it presents us with the last of the dichotomies around which our reflection is articulated.



If it is true that the pandemic has highlighted its very strong social implications from the moment it arose, it is equally true that the necessary management immediately afterwards has created an inability to comprehensively read the phenomena and dynamics, entrusted to an epidemiological-quantitative approach that often, in other situations, has shown all its limits<sup>14</sup>.

From this point of view, the choice of the multi-paradigmaticity flaunted by the scientific community appears more and more as an attempt to request legitimation of positions on which nobody wants to discuss in order not to run the risk of losing important scientific spaces and academic power. And while we are discussing the prevalence of those towards whom (or vice versa, it is the same thing), of standard and non-standard, of intrusive and periscopic, of objective and constructive, the garrison of recognized scientific knowledge gradually slips away from the main stage.

The dualism then concerns, in the construction of scenarios that have to cope with catastrophes, the exclusive use of technical data (bio-epidemiological) or the use of courageous approaches that can prove to be very interesting. Provided that we abandon academic dualism.

Yet, for some time now there have been signs of a way out. An overcoming of the useless dualism that has torn the capacity for scientific accreditation, provided that the problems of credibility of sociological methodology are solved first, is possible. Finally, it is a question of using a new paradigm, capable of anticipating "in theory" what will happen - or could have happened and that has happened on time.

In this regard there are important examples, such as the use of large masses of data<sup>15</sup>. We began to talk about this topic at the dawn of the new millennium, when *big data* did not yet exist and when the discussion focused on the concepts of statistical representativeness and its real capacity to respond to sociological representativeness. And as often happens when one finds oneself mired in an apparently unsolvable dualism, very often the way out is elsewhere.

The first ANNs, the artificial neural networks, mathematical models that simulated the behaviour of the sisters ANNs, the natural ones, made of neurons and synapses, have proposed already for almost twenty years a new paradigm of interpretative analysis of the data aimed at a sort of incorporation of the classical approaches, qualitative and quantitative (and also periscopic and intrusive).

The reasoning was simple: should we rely more on the result obtained with a good number of cases (statistically speaking) processed with rigorously quantitative methods and in accordance with the principle of the uniqueness of the scientific method or rather consider the results of a few in-depth qualitative interactions on the basis of a *grounded theory* that overturned the hypothetical-deductive perspective? On the basis of which principle to choose?

A possible suggestion was to rely on the only model that, instead of discussing the method, would reason on the result. The ANNs have been so the foundation to observe exactly what was the trend of a phenomenon on the basis of variables - qualitative or quantitative that were, also considered together overcoming the limit of their operative "contamination" - different: such a model "learns" from the reality data and is therefore able to individuate predictive paths of extreme precision, constituting a keystone, even if only theoretical.

The strictly mathematical approaches to human behaviour are not convincing. Data, despite what one continues to think, does not speak for itself. And the belief that the great capacity for sociological imagination plays a central role in the capacity for analysis and can be usefully employed in the choice of aspects, variables and models of interest. This



is the road that has led to the so-called Multi-agent models, simulative models, and on which today the network has developed allowing great capacity for analysis, also thanks to the help of *mixed-methods*, on equally large quantities of variables/data/information that can be found.

Here then a "neutral" methodological approach - from the point of view of the origin of the data-set and therefore also of the scientific disciplines that can draw information from it - brings back on the same level different scientific approaches, no more hard or soft as a sort of scientific-academic allotment.

In this perspective, sociologists can once again occupy a leading position in the scientific debate, using their ability to read the situation to be analysed in advance (the phase of formulating hypotheses), putting in place an adequate intervention plan (by means of imagination) and being able to count on a more adequate apparatus of investigation techniques.

If you want to understand the state of mind of people who are experiencing a particular situation, you need to work with a standard method (questionnaire and data analysis), through the reconstruction of interviews and/or life stories (to deepen how social reality settles in individual consciences) or use millions of information from different sources (blogs, videos, messages, photos, comments, tweets, etc.) to grasp the substance of things.

It is in this sense that the pandemic can also play a regenerative role on Social Sciences, in particular on methods and consequently on the relationships with other scientific disciplines, just as the virus brings, in its devastating course, occasions of rebirth for societies and their vital organizations. A sort of *stress virus* also for what concerns the implications of the social sciences, therefore, which arrives at a historical moment of evident difficulty of the same in general and Sociology in particular. A crisis that comes from afar, from that scientific drift on which much has been focused, and which has had the opposite effect to the desired one, imploding the capacity for scientific recognition of the natural vocation for knowledge of the mechanisms that regulate social action, rather than enhancing it.

As we have seen, the social nature of the pandemic appears clear: not only - or not so much - because part of the measures to contain it concern the individual and collective social sphere (and therefore significantly affect our own room to manoeuvre within social relations) but above all because the origin itself can only be interpreted by flanking bio-virological studies with those on our collective behaviour and on many of the choices that have characterised our recent development models. Viruses have existed in nature for millions of years, and it is only the behaviour of the most important animal species that makes them pass from one place to another with wrong choices. With outcomes that we have seen can be disastrous.

The social aspects are therefore not simply a possible "cure" but can be analysed *ex ante*, and from this point of view constitute a formidable aspect of "preventive medicine (not in the strictly pharmacological sense of the term)".

### **A working hypothesis**

#### ***The room to manoeuvre***

These, then, appear to be the most pregnant dichotomies within which social science, that is, the science that first has the mission of investigating social relations, will have to move in the near future. Its aim, however, will no longer be to contribute to the construction of a "unilateral" and managerial sense, but rather a multipolar and



participatory one. Multi-directionality that each culture will develop in its own way as a reaction to the social consequences of the pandemic.

The task of understanding how social relations will be reconfigured will not be able to ignore the point of view of the cultures in which the answers will be given. Not only because of the impact on them, but above all because of the way in which they will receive the stimuli that the post-Covid19 is destined to provoke.

From what to start again, how to do it and how to conceive a new social rapprochement, will then depend on a circular, autopoietic analysis, to take up the famous theory of Maturana and Varela, i.e. centred on the observer-subject relationship and, for those who are our interests, in particular in the character of *self-referentiality* of social relations seen as disjointed and at the same time communicating systems<sup>16</sup>.

For this refounding or regenerative task, social science will have to observe the (new) forms and (new) meanings resulting from the social, material or symbolic practices of the social body<sup>17</sup>, in the awareness that the future we have before us - we have seen it - will dichotomically manifest the theme of safeguarding the demands of individual freedom in the face of collective, obligatory or compulsory options.

And that's not all. Given the interconnected world made up of articulated systems of social relations in which we live, which are unlikely to find stability for a long time, social interaction will have to move within a complex of evolutionary balances, therefore always precarious and changeable if not contradictory and schizophrenic.

Understanding which elements can preserve freedom, differently declined by culture, territory, grouping, interest and even generation, will mean for social science to investigate the internal structure of what we have defined as the "*room to manoeuvre*" that society will know, must or simply can conquer<sup>18</sup>. And therefore within the dynamics of possible spaces of freedom.

If before the pandemic it was a matter of "measuring" what extension this instance of movement could have within the contradictions of society, now instead - and at least from this point of view the horizon appears clearer - everything seems to converge towards the awareness that it will be precisely freedom (not only of movement or action) understood as acting without restrictions or constrictions and according to the option of free choice, the field of manoeuvre.

It is not only a question of understanding with what means and instruments we will be able to express freedom and consequently formalize new social, moral, economic laws, etc.. It is about accepting a challenge, which takes place on the ground of a sort of "theory of social freedom", that is, within human existence in the most enveloping sense of the term.

To enter this *room to manoeuvre* means to put one's finger into the ever-open wound of the eternal conflict between obedience and freedom, and to prefigure what can be defined eschatologically as the "*conduct of life*" that leads to salvation, to the way out and - as Nietzsche would say - to the safeguarding of the authentic human through the ability to find margins of free action within the steel cage of obedience.

The questions are many and the perspective, even the scientific one, uncertain. And it is presumable that no answers can be given unless the contradictions of existence are openly examined and necessarily through design action.

The social scientist in this is closer to the artist. Like the latter, he must undertake an exploration, difficult but dense, tortuous but profound, that shows with strong drama the separation, the dichotomy between drives for freedom and rules of social, emotional, economic, religious, technological and political obedience. He must become, to be, an "*intermediary*" between (social) men and the modern divinities who command, supervise, force and oppress him<sup>19</sup>.





"And who is the "intermediary" par excellence if not the prophet? Moreover, the same etymology of the term "prophet" shows this convergent dualism: *προφήτης* (*profétes*) is "he who speaks in place of (God)" but also "he who speaks publicly". Therefore, not only "bearer of salvation" but also "bearer of messages"<sup>20</sup>.

Translated into the social fact, it is this second content that is of revealing importance. The bet of a prophetic research is played out within the great contrasts of the world and for the individuation of the vital spaces in which the still too indistinct and unexpressed identities of human beings will take shape. And to play with the strength of those who know, as in the verses of Hāfez the Persian, that "only by denying the balance can one walk".

Image by: Gerald W. Shonkwiler, *Symbiotic sidesway*

## NOTES

- 1 G. Frege, "The connections of thoughts. Ricerche logiche". in M. Di Francesco (edited by), *Ricerche logiche*, Guerini, Milan, (1988).
- 2 In Max Weber's classic definition, the crisis of social action means that "the basis on which the possibility [of acting socially in a meaningful way] rests" is no longer able to sustain an orientation in conformity, that is "it does not assert (anymore) anything [...] about solidarity among individuals acting". Max Weber, *Community and Society*, Ed. Di Comunità, 1974, p. 23.
- 3 J. Echeverría, "La pandemia come disturbo simbiotico", in *Covid19. Le parole diagonali della sociologia*, Ed. The diagonales, 2020, [www.diagonales.it/catalogue/](http://www.diagonales.it/catalogue/)
- 4 *ivi*
- 5 A useful definition of sociality can be found in the *simmeliano* concept of "form" that is given in urban agglomerations and that configures a diversity of ways of "being together". The presence of viruses and pandemics would seem to result from forms of agglomeration that do not resolve the demand for sociality. In Simmel the urban agglomeration is the result of the encounter between strangers (foreigners one to another), who must necessarily find a way of "being together". This configures a way of being of sociality radically different from that of the community. Sociology makes this problem its "object" of study. The urban agglomeration is very different from the communitarian one, derived instead from extended and fictitious modalities of kinship relationships. It is now well established that pandemics are the product of urban agglomeration (there is also the rural form of agglomeration to which correspond, according to Durkheim, the mechanical modes of socialization, which "lose shape", while the increase in moral density goes ahead precisely because of the growth of communicative exchanges; in the same direction, the Weberian distinction of community and society). The urban form sees itself oversized by the presence of the market, so that outsiders have to relate without taking care of the construction of the social form. At that moment there are the conditions for the pathogenesis of the agglomeration to appear, in other words the propitious ground is created for the emergence of pandemics, i.e. uncontrolled forms of virus diffusion. The market relationship potentially upsets the balance between private and public that is proper to the urban form. Therefore, it is not sociality but rather its lack that is responsible for the overbearing market emergency and consequently the potential of pandemics. It is not then a question of loss of sense of community because this is at the origin of sociality, but of lack or deficit of sociality (perhaps now replaced by digitalization). In this sense, the reference to *communitas* does not make this complex process and risks ending up in the romantic sphere of a fiction that no longer exists.
- 6 On scenarios related to surveillance and its dystopic and science fiction aspects, generated in moments of confusion and anomie, Byung-Chul Han's reflections are interesting in *Psychopolitics. Neoliberalism and the new techniques of power*, Nighttime, 2016.

- 7 V. talks about it. Moretti in the essay entitled #lockdown. Vita quotidiana tra de-coincidenza e digitalizzazione, “Covid19. Le parole diagonali della Sociologia”, cit.
- 8 *ivi*
- 9 A lot has been written about this process of assimilation of ICT in the daily life of domestic units. Among them we point out: R. Silverstone and L. Haddon, "Design and the domestication of information and communication technologies: technical change and everyday life", in R. Mansell, R. Silverstone, *Communication by design*, Oxford University Press, where they draw the "integration career" of the technological artifact in the context of use and P. Airoidi, "Taming the media in everyday life: from consumption to use practices" in Pasquali, F., Scifo, B., Vittadini, N. (ed.), *Crossmedia cultures. Giovani e pratiche di consumo digitali*, Milan, Vita e Pensiero.
- 10 M. Negri, "Il cambiamento dei ruoli sociali e dei fenomeni organizzativi. The concepts of diffusion and profession", in *Sociology. Quarterly Review of Historical and Social Sciences*, n. 3/2014. The term is also used by T. Parsons in reference to the dualism diffusion/specificity.
- 11 Although sovereignty is today a term used in a polemical and demagogic form, that is to say in reference above all to nationalistic or neopopulist drives, it nevertheless shows a history and internal structure in which there is an undeniable accentuation of the tension towards the self-determination of peoples, in opposition to globalism.
- 12 The role of globalization and the rapidity of contemporary life in the spread of the virus has been well exposed by U. Pagano, in his "The Rorschach virus. Illusions and other minimal considerations", inserted in the cited "Covid19. The diagonal words of Sociology". Pagano writes: "The collapse of space, the implosion of distances, the interconnection and rapidity of the phenomena of contemporary society are all elements that have contributed to the almost immediate spread of contagion".
- 13 By saying this we do not want, it is good to specify it, to present a univocal vision of globalism. Its redefinition can in fact be differentiated in the sense that in some areas it will continue with great force in others less so. This brings us back to the classic dichotomy between globalism and localism. If we reflect on the impact in the three sectors Primary, Manufacturing, and Services, the first two will certainly move towards more localist responses, while the last towards globalist solutions. Who realizes this formulation is Richard Baldwin, *La grande convergenza*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2018.
- 14 As David Quammen reminds us in his precious and famous "Spillover. The evolution of pandemics", "...perhaps he should have understood on his own (Ronald Ross, about malaria, ed.) ...that it is a really complex disease, with deep social and economic implications, as well as ecological, and therefore presents problems that a differential equation is sometimes unable to grasp".
- 15 For a deepening of this analysis, see C. Corposanto, *La classificazione in Sociologia. Reti neurali, Discriminant e Cluster Analysis*, Franco Angeli, Mi, 2001.
- 16 H. R. Maturana, F. J. Varela, *Autopoiesis and Cognition*, Marsilio, 1988. The theory of autopoietic systems and their correlation with social systems have long been present in sociological reflection. For example, N. Luhmann, in: *Political Theory of the State of Welfare*, Franco Angeli, ed. it. Milan, 1983.
- 17 *ivi*
- 18 In a time similar in many ways, Max Weber pronounced words that now seem prophetic. "We must not abandon ourselves to the optimistic hope that with the wider development of economic civilization our work will be completed and that, [...] in the free and "peaceful" economic struggle, victory will automatically be given to the highest economic model. Our descendants will remind us of our responsibility not for the form of economic organization that we will bequeath to them, but for the "freedom of movement" (Ellebogenraum) that we will bequeath to them". In "The nation state and German economic policy", better known as "Freiburg Prolusion". Max Weber, *Political Writings*, Giannotta Ed., 1970.
- 19 R. Alberto, M. Fotino, "Art's room for manoeuvre. L'arte tra obbedienza e libertà", in *Giuseppe Barilaro. L'identità delle forme*, Gangemi editore, 2019.
- 20 *ivi*

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## PROMOTERS



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