OPUS

An Organisation for Promoting Understanding of Society

LISTENING POST

Northern Italy (Milan) at the Dawn of 2019

PART 1: THE SHARING OF PREOCCUPATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

In this part, the Listening Post participants were invited to identify, contribute, and explore their experiences in their various social roles, be they: in work, unemployed or retired; as members of religious, political, neighbourhood, voluntary or leisure organisations; or as members of families and communities. This part was largely concerned with what might be called, 'the stuff of people's everyday lives': the 'socio' or 'external' world of participants.

PART 2: IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES

In Part 2, the aim collectively was to identify the major themes emerging from Part 1.

One of the participants in presenting himself says that he has 2 children and this "breaks the group" between those who have children and those who do not. But we accept the mutual "diversity" with at least apparent tranquility. There was a great need to remain "in order" for the disturbing issues that were being addressed. The almost exaggerated courtesy demonstrated the need to contain aggression and a sense of fear that "something was falling on us".

The civil form of the discussion was a way to understand together how to deal with the "here and now": how to accept diversity and differences within the group without building walls, how to define and identify disorientation, how to control the anxiety and the potential conflicts of one's internal world and the outside world.

It starts with an intervention by the journalist who, having been locked up and not received at the reception desk due to an organizational inconvenience, said she felt rejected and disoriented. He also pointed out how this has aroused in her a strong sense of aggression and unease that she had to manage with a certain immediacy and difficulty. He notes that the more you try to exercise control the less you get and increase insecurities, fears and obsessions.

And remember how even in the political debate the aggressive tones of our interior minister become more and more present as a capricious teenager. The disorientation and fear of citizens actually mark the end of reliance on politics.

And then we continue on the ever-evolving tecno-liquid society, in continuous change of form, in which all live parallel and virtual realities with digitalized identities and dependent on the technological tools used to chirp, text, browse and socialize. Young people no longer define territories and temporal spaces with a shortening of historical memory and distortions of reality, with insecurity and without reference points.

And in the meantime the walls are built and new social conflicts are born, like those born in France of "yellow gilets" and the fear is born, the terror that is breaking something that is unloaded on us irremediably.

The Deputy Director of the Biennale enters this discussion in a soft way and brings us back to the beautiful image of the Biennale that tells us how it has been significantly improved by a new relationship with the territory, developing not only with the activities but also through an architectural change by opening the plan land to free exhibitions and then "breaking down the walls and borders". Open up to young people and schools to get to families! Young people as a starting point for breaking down barriers.

While Trump with the federal crisis is dragging many areas of the public sector - first of all the cultural one - in a negative spiral. the National Gallery in Washington and other prestigious American institutions have been forced to lock their doors to the public.

The university student, however, points out that in reality schools are still bodies still anchored to old paradigms that seem unshakable.

"There is no more desire in teachers". The triumphalism of incompetence and backwardness. The school rejects any form of motivation.

The millennials live a strong dichotomy lost in the network with a feeling of omnipotence and being without limits on one side and then closed in class in a useless universe.

The "non desire" is widespread: in politics and is seen in the photograph appeared on Salvini's social networks with Isoardi (the girlfriend). She cool hustle and he who eats nutella ... with the debasement of the couple and the suppression of the sensual object in favor of appropriation that prevents us from keeping others alive.

And in the world of work: experience is no longer evaluated and there are very strong generational conflicts. The old are marginalized in the impossibility of reinventing themselves. The value of learning and doing no longer exists.

The liquidity of our society produces a loss of the boundary of its role and sense of responsibility. The "Ponte Morandi" symbol of insecurity and the loss of the sacredness of the role.

MAJOR THEMES:

1. FEAR, AGGRESSIVITY, INSECURITY - " LET'S BUILD THE WALLS"

2. DISORIENTATION - " THE WORLD IS FALLING APART"

3. GENERATIONAL TENSIONS - DICOTOMY OF MILLENNIALS, NOSTALGIA OF ADULTS

4. TRIUMPH OF INCOMPETENCE – DISENFRANCHISED AND FRAGILE INSTITUTIONS / ROLES / LEADERSHIP IN THE TECNO-LIQUID WORLD

PART 3: ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION

In Part 3, the participants were working with the information resulting from Parts 1 & 2, with a view to collectively identifying the underlying dynamics both conscious and unconscious that may be predominant at the time; and developing hypotheses as to why they might be occurring at that moment. Here, participants were working more with what might be called their 'psycho' or 'internal' world: their collective ideas and ways of thinking that both determine how they perceive the external realities and shape their actions towards them.

ANALYSIS THEME 1

One of the distinctive features of the era in which we live is the multiplication of opportunities, but also feelings of dissent, loss and insecurity. The condition of perceived instability generates anguish for the future and one of the most serious consequences of this process is the growth of aggression, which degenerates into violence.

All this is fueled by the hope that by erecting boundaries and walls, this feeling will fail, thus strengthening the unstable, erratic and unpredictable existence of those behind it.

HYPOTHESIS 1 – FEAR OF OWN and OTHERS VIOLENCE

The origin of aggression and violence is complex to look for, but in the current social scenario it is possible to say that a determining role is given by the fear of failing, of not being successful, of not being up to it. The openness to the outside, a symbol of freedom and determination, sees today a globalized mass of peoples facing unknown forces. And it is invaded by fear.

The fears of our days, which are expressed in the various individual and collective forms, have their common denominator in the fear of their own violence and that of others, which has its root obscure in the transcendent and impersonal anguish of human aggression. We continue to ask ourselves whether it is possible to distinguish a healthy aggression at the service of life, as opposed to a negative aggressiveness that is opposed.

The most famous wall in history, that of Berlin, stopped dividing the German capital in 1989. It seemed like the dawn of a new, open world, and yet since then the number of barriers built by man to separate itself from other peoples has increased quickly

THEME 2: DISORIENTATION - " THE WORLD IS FALLING APART"

ANALYSIS THEME 2

The end of the ideologies that imprisoned the twentieth century also brought down every structure of thought, every cultural identity, any sense of belonging. It seems that ideas no longer serve politics, resigned to living the present,

without traditions and without projections, as if its world had begun yesterday and should end tomorrow.

The whole world, not just Italy, is today in a situation of great crisis that does not allow us to plan the future in the best way. Disorientation is the primary cause. Men and women have lost every point of reference: being no longer able to grasp the profound meaning of things, they are less aware (than in the past) of what is beautiful and what is ugly, what is good and what is bad, what is sacred and what is profane while for previous generations there were certainties.

We are in a terrible and fearsome transitional period, it takes very little to "get lost", we have the feeling of being overwhelmed.

HYPOTHESIS 2 - THE EXISTENTIAL APOCALYPSE

The postmodern individual seeking greater freedom of action and increasingly ephemeral and fast gratification has progressively lost confidence in his own abilities and trust in society, which is no longer able to protect him and help him adequately as in the past.

In this climate of "individualized" uncertainty, impotence, bankruptcy, victimization and disengagement have taken the upper hand so much that they produce a renunciation in planning for the future in the new generations.

Humankind lives from hand to mouth.; they rarely look to the past, because they fear being overwhelmed by a debilitating 'nostalgia', and if they turn their attention to the future it is only to try to understand how to survive the disastrous events that almost everyone now expects. The ego is reduced to a defensive core against adversity.

THEME 3 - GENERATIONAL TENSIONS - DICOTOMY OF MILLENLIAS, NOSTALGIA OF ADULTS

ANALYSIS THEME 3

The school has become a factory of standardized knowledge where there is neither comparison nor growth.

The crisis of authority and leadership that invests Italian culture and politics heightens the sense of disorientation, of the loss of the fundamental coordinates that regulate the life of citizens.

Rarely in the history of humanity has there been such a sharp split between the generation of fathers and that of the children. The new media offer everyone the possibility of communication and digital communication allows a cognitive simultaneity of experiences. Too many stimuli that we are not able to receive, a cultural relativism brought to excess, no longer a crisis of values, but an absence of them. So how can we expect them to communicate these two generations, the one who believed in something but lost it, the other used to not believing

anything because he was taught that everything is always true and false at the same time?

Can we "old people" expect the post millenials to have valid interlocutors to LP?

HYPOTHESIS 3 – DO WE WAIT FOR XENNIALS?

What the millennials have to face is a complex world, which seems open to every potential, but which requires more and more sacrifices. They should stop looking at their parents' past to try to find new solutions to the challenges that the future puts before them and question the possibility of starting to rethink what they believed to be fixed points, in the face of the risk of really being a lost generation.

Millennials have grown in an optimistic period and have been hit by the recession, while the Post Millennials will have developed a more realistic world view They do not belong to any predefined scheme and should be really special and, perhaps, they would be between generations (before and after the digital age) the only ones who really understood everything.

Our generation still struggles a lot to approach technology and nostalgia for the past, while the Millennials have missed something that probably will never return. That "being in the middle" of the Xennial will be their strong point.

THEME 4: TRIUMPH OF INCOMPETENCE – DELEGITIMIZED AND FRAGILE INSTITUTIONS/ROLES/ LEADERSHIP IN THE TECNO-LIQUID WORLD

ANALYSIS THEME 4

Throughout the West, every new political election brings with it the idea of a "populist turn". The establishment parties lose strength, leaving room for new currents that promise to represent those who have been ignored and those who have been silenced.

The new political forces are all a symptom of a crisis of representative democracy. Old "analog" parties are being replaced with others created for the digital age. The political class that governs the country today is not only one of the most ignorant and incompetent in the history of the Republic, but also of the most deaf to topics such as preparation, foresight, research and scientific mentality. The incompetents have gained further space by exploiting the torment of the generation renewal without restraint.

Meanwhile, social media create simplifications and risk hatred, further polarizing the debate.

HYPOTHESIS 4 – "ONE IS ONE " NARCISISTIC EGUALITARISM"

Not only the distance between experts and laymen grows in public discourse, but the movement of the common citizen's confidence in institutions and politics also increases, under the banner of that spirit of today for which every opinion is equivalent and also to form University or Google legitimates anyone to express

opinions or post conspiracy theories without any foundation. It is the philosophy of "one is one".

There is a need to give a meaning to merit and a profound intellectual honesty and be ready to take responsibility for a role and skills that must be developed, nurtured, challenged. When incompetence becomes the key to reading reality it is the very meaning of our civil life that is less.

It would seem that access to knowledge and freedom offered by the Internet has created an age of incompetence in which a kind of narcissistic and misinformed egalitarianism seems to prevail over traditional consolidated knowledge.

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