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From Political Subjectivity to Political Intentionality: The Predominance of Society over the Individual

Christian Giordano

This contribution aims to show that specific societies are often incorrectly regarded as particularly individualistic, and may be held to be characterised by a specific 'political subjectivity', displaying informal coalitions, consisting of informal networks that infiltrate public institutions and undermine the efficiency of the state. For the social sciences, informality has a questionable reputation, because it is at the root of social phenomena such as nepotism, cronyism, patronage, corruption and mafias. Further, the article shows that the State has the monopoly on legality, but lacks legitimacy. This contribution is based on long-term fieldwork in southern and southeast Europe.

Key words: *political subjectivity, informality, social mistrust, personalised networks, legality, legitimacy.*

Straipsnyje siekiama parodyti, kad kai kurios visuomenės dažnai klaidingai laikomos ypač individualizuotomis ir kad joms priskiriamas „politinio subjektyvumo" požymis nurodant neformalias, iš neformalių tinklų susidariusias koalicijas, kurios įsiskverbia į valstybines institucijas ir kenkia valstybės efektyvumui. Būdamas tokių socialinių reiškinių kaip nepotizmas, kronizmas, protegavimas, korupcija ir mafija priežastimi, neformalumas socialinių mokslų srityje turi abejotiną reputaciją. Straipsnyje pabrėžiama, kad nors valstybė turi teisėtumo monopolį, jai trūksta legitimumo. Straipsnis paremtas ilgalaikiu lauko tyrimu, atliktu Pietų ir Pietryčių Europoje.

Raktiniai žodžiai: *politinis subjektyvumas, neformalumas, socialinis nepasitikėjimas, personalizuoti tinklai, teisėtumas, legitimumas.*

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The Concept of Political Subjectivity:
How is it Relevant in Social Anthropology?

Over the last few years, the notion of political subjectivity seems to have become very popular in anthropology, as postmodern theoretical trends found it interesting and suitable, especially because it underscores the supposed importance of individuality in present-day societies from both a negative and a positive point of view. This specific tendency occurs because the term *political subjectivity* stems from the broader concept of subjectivity, a term of actual philosophical origin, thus prevalently abstract. This implies that employing it in a discipline such as anthropology, based on essentially empirical field research, is difficult, if not impossible.

Delving further into the philosophical definition of political subjectivity, we notice a fundamental characteristic. Ultimately, this concept contains the more or less manifest idea that an individual can break free from the constraints imposed by societies, and especially by the various forms of domination inherent in power relations. This approach, therefore, displays a considerable amount of unrealistic voluntarism, especially in terms of the hegemonic trends imposed by society. On this point, we can see the influence of philosophers such as Michel Foucault (Foucault 1982), for example, for whom the idea of political subjectivity forms the basis of a utopian view, in which breaking free from the structures of power historically imposed on individuals is an actual possibility. Political subjectivity represents the premise to achieve emancipation from sub-alterity. After all, this view harks back to the renowned *Prinzip Hoffnung* thematised in a utopian way by the German philosopher Ernst Bloch (Bloch 1985).

Therefore, these are certainly enticing and even ethically legitimate philosophical speculations of a moralising kind, which, however, can hardly be proven through field research. Yet this empirical evidence forms the actual foundation of any sensible theoretical construction of an anthropological nature.

In this case, political subjectivity is a concept of philosophical origin that is too indefinite, and thus difficult to operate with, making it serviceable in purely anthropological research of an empirical nature.

Furthermore, if we examine other specificities of this concept, we will notice that it also has a strong psychological connotation, once again principally centred on the individual who is free to act without social constraints. Drawing on Jacques Lacan, for Glynos and Stavrakis, subjectivity, including a political one, is linked to purely individual fantasy and enjoyment (Glynos, Stavrakis 2008: 256 ff.; Lacan 1994). In this case, too, we can talk about a utopian view that does not attach enough importance to the role of society and its influence on individuals. Once again, it is an approach removed from any empirical evidence of an anthropological nature.

Rather naively and arbitrarily, the psychological concept of political subjectivity overlooks the fundamental role of primary and secondary groups that crucially determine the life of single individuals who ultimately cannot elude the constraints imposed by life in society. In fact, should they contravene social norms, they would have to deal with usually harsh and unpleasant sanctions.

Moreover, the concept of *political subjectivity* with a psychological connotation (Jameson 1981; Rahimi 2015) comprises a bleeding-heart nature, along with an aura of irrationality and idealistic voluntarism rooted in the ideal of free will, and thus in each individual's freedom of choice. Ultimately, it is an abstract concept, steeped in ethics, that fails to take account of the different socio-historical and cultural contexts in which single individuals must interact. This type of psychological approach undeniably tends to omit the concept of society, and thus to underestimate the necessary processes starting in early childhood of socialisation and of learning, also with coercive methods, the *social knowledge* which allows individual members of a group to cooperate, and also to be in conflict without necessarily jeopardising social cohesion.

From the perspective of political anthropology that is not trapped in abstract views of society, the concept of political subjectivity, be it of a philosophical or a psychological nature, would appear to be characterised by *contradictio in adjecto*, since it evokes an individual viewpoint, or perhaps an individualistic one, in contrast with the idea of society, as well as of *polis*, along with its derivatives, such as the idea of politics, which instead presuppose the existence of a group.

Finally, speaking of a collective political subjectivity as proposed by Håvard Haarstad may seem a brilliant theoretical workaround from an anthropological perspective, but it ultimately turns out to be a clever but scarcely realistic logic-bending feat (Haarstad 2007: 57–74). The critical point is the attempt to make subjectivity based on free will compatible with the norms and constraints imposed by the collectivity, which are inescapable if one wants to avoid being severely sanctioned. In the end, it is yet another version, postmodern and politically correct, of the philosophical myth of *free will*. This stance, therefore, is based on the person's possibility to freely and individually choose how to think and act, although each individual lives in a society.

The crucial point is that through the concept of political subjectivity, the individual, not society, i.e. the *polis*, becomes central. This runs counter to the initial project of social anthropology (quite different from the one of cultural anthropology in terms of methodology) and to the related Weberian sociology (*verstehende Soziologie)* reprised by Clifford Geertz in his *interpretive anthropology*.

Consequently, this contribution aims to show that specific societies, often incorrectly regarded as particularly individualistic, and which may be held to be characterised by a specific *political subjectivity*, display informal coalitions

consisting of highly personalised networks that infiltrate formal public structures and undermine the efficiency of the state's institutions. In these societies, members follow a socially defined script governed by rather rigid forms of social control. In fact, in cases of behaviours that deviate from socially defined codes, we can expect specific social sanctions.

For social sciences, informality, along with its specific coalitions, networks and personalised relationships, has a questionable, if not notorious reputation. These features are often regarded as premodern, dysfunctional or indeed anomic, because they foster or are at the root of social phenomena such as favouritism, nepotism, cronyism, patronage, corruption, etc.

Contrary to what social sciences often naively and ethnocentrically uphold, we shall bring to the fore, instead, how in many societies, especially those divided along class and ethnicity lines but considered modern, and thus characterised by formal organisational institutions and based on organic solidarity, these formal institutions are infiltrated or replaced by vast informal networks, which the actors themselves consider meaningful, and thus legitimate, albeit often illegal, and rationally suitable for specific situations.

We shall also highlight what type of historical experiences played a substantial role in the emergence of these societies, which may be defined as public mistrust societies, where the State, echoing Max Weber's words, has the monopoly on legality, but lacks legitimacy in the eyes of its individual citizens (Weber 1956). Clearly, we are not dealing with official history characterised by objective facts and processes (namely, the history of historians), but with a *hostile history* learned, interiorised, handed down and reconfirmed by single individuals through the dialectic between *spaces of experience* and *horizons of expectation* (Koselleck 1979).

Finally, we shall also analyse a number of different types of informal organisations and personalised networks typical of such societies. This comparative analysis of the widespread public mistrust among citizens and the lack of State legitimacy is based on long-term fieldwork in the Mediterranean (southern Italy, Spain) and in southeast Europe (Bulgaria).

Public Mistrust: Informality and Personalised Networks in Mediterranean and Southeast European Societies

Introductory Notes

The following reflections are a theoretical conceptualisation and synthesis of strictly qualitative and long-term empirical research carried out, especially in

Sicily, Spain and Bulgaria, on the difficult relations between citizens and the State (Giordano 2012: 13–31; Giordano 2013: 27–45; Giordano 2015: 175–192; Giordano 2016: 137–159). Through informal methods, i.e. discussions and interviews (not taped, thus solely committed to memory), as well as systematic participant observation during about a dozen month-long stays in Sicily, Spain and Bulgaria, over the course of ten years I was able to examine the extremely complex and thorny relations between citizens and the State (politicians and bureaucrats). These experiences led to the idea of defining these societies as *public mistrust societies* which, as we shall see, display a marked lack of the State's legitimacy, and of its political and bureaucratic institutions, despite their apparent institutional legality. Citizens view the State as something pernicious and unfair, from which one must protect oneself through personalised coalitions of an informal nature. The ultimate goal of these strategies is the neutralisation of the State's action.

In this case, though, I believe that talking about subjectivity would be misleading, because this stance towards the State is based on collective representations shared by all members of the society. These representations can be observed along with individual behaviour, and even individualistic strategies. Yet, these strategies are always collective and never subjective, because they are sanctioned positively or negatively by specific social groups of reference.

Therefore, I willingly forgo presenting ethnographic details, since my interest in this article is exclusively of a theoretical nature; whereas I will illustrate how, contrary to the paradigm of political subjectivity, the subjects do not act subjectively and freely, but rather in accordance with strategies rooted in the collectivity. I am aware that this point of view may be criticised as a form of essentialism.

Constructing Informality: Social Relationships, Coalitions and Personalised Practices

In many societies of the Mediterranean area and southeast Europe, anthropologists must deal with specific notions of *public* and *private* that clash somewhat with ideals and ideologies specific to the Occident. In these societies, which we will call *public mistrust societies*, the relation between public and private is clearly conceived as a binary opposition. In terms of collective representations, in fact, there is an undeniable confrontation between the public and the private spheres. Accordingly, in *public mistrust societies* the clear-cut separation between public and private spheres, and the supremacy of the former over the latter, has never been questioned. The consequent evaluation of these societies' members is categorical: the private sector is regarded as a social space of security, trustworthiness and solidarity, while the public sector is perceived as a dangerous

foreign body. In accordance with this type of social ideology, which is a more or less standard feature of *public mistrust societies*, any endeavour a person undertakes to guarantee, achieve and even maximise the particularistic-like welfare and benefits of his own group is legitimate, given the private sphere's essentially positive features.

In parallel with the positive evaluation of private social spaces, this social ideology is averse to public ones. This is precisely one of the reasons why public institutions rekindle the feeling that their ultimate aim is to rob and harass people. Anyone who thinks that this is an undisputed truth can have only one reaction, namely, to develop action strategies based on the logic that *robbing your robber* is legitimate. Thus, the opposition between private and public turns out to be one of the fundamental collective representations on which corruption practices, political scandals, mafia activities, and mutual assistance between patrons and clients are established. However, this does not imply, and we stress this point, that such behavioural models pertain solely to *public mistrust societies* based on various local versions of the above-mentioned morality.

Despite significant structural differences, almost all experts on informality agree on stressing the *primordial importance* of family and kinship as a *solidarity group*, since according to members of a *public mistrust society* they represent the only types of community that can guarantee *cooperation without a hidden agenda*.

At first sight, therefore, *public mistrust societies* apparently fall into the category which can be labelled as *atomistic society*, whose characteristic is to be solely and without exception an *assemblage of families*. However, a closer look at these societies reveals that their members believe in the need to extend their relationships of solidarity beyond family and kinship ties.

In *public mistrust societies*, when we look beyond family and kinship structures, we ought to consider above all the importance of informal interaction networks, which could be defined as a system of strongly personalised dyadic relationships.

Ritual Kinship, Instrumental Friendship and Acquaintances

Among the several types of personalised relationships used in *public mistrust societies*, one of the most important ones is ritual or symbolic kinship, i.e. godparenthood (It.: *comparaggio*, Sp.: *compadrazgo*, s. Sl.: *kumstvo*), which to this day is still especially widespread in Euro-Mediterranean countries and southeast European Slavic countries (Giordano 2013: 32 seq.).

In Mediterranean and southern Slavic societies, an important strategy to extend protection and solidarity structures is to establish personal dyadic relationships of symbolic kinship with people with a higher status and social prestige and/

or with better political and economic opportunities than one's own. In these cases, the poor, the underling, and the powerless tend to choose their godfathers among rich and powerful people, who can provide the necessary assistance to secure personal interests within the public sphere (Pitt-Rivers 1977: 54).

Within the framework of this analysis, we need to emphasise that ties of symbolic kinship always imply reciprocal rights and duties that guarantee the informal exchange of favours and counter-favours between socially superior and socially inferior actors. To this day, these ritual-like relationships between citizens and politicians are very important, despite the process of secularisation. A baptism ceremony, for example, as I was able to observe in Sicily, is still a good opportunity, beyond its religious significance, and notwithstanding society's process of secularisation, to create or rather strengthen personalised connections that are expected to yield an exchange of favours, and thus mutual advantages. This applies especially to obtaining services from politicians in exchange for votes from family members who can cast a ballot.

The second type of interpersonal relationship comprises ties of friendship. In general, the social institution of friendship is based upon symmetrical extra-kinship and extra-family relationships. Friendship ties usually develop among people belonging to the same class or equivalent/analogous social strata (Mühlmann, Llaryora 1968: 8).

However, the notion of symmetry leads to another feature of friendship relations that is quite prevalent in *public mistrust societies* in the Mediterranean and the southeast European area, namely, the transactional aspect of these dyadic relationships, which, as a rule, involve informal instrumental interactions (Boissevain 1966; 23; Wolf 1966: 10 ff.). In *public mistrust societies*, the instrumental aspect is intrinsic to friendship, and the exchange of material favours is openly performed. These transactions among friends are not stigmatised at all, although the affection aspect is not missing, and coexists smoothly with other types of favours and counter-favours in these societies as well.

In practical terms, we can add that in *public mistrust societies* an individual who needs to speedily solve a problem with the civil law, or wants to obtain a permit, a pension or a license that depends on the decision of a remote and unfamiliar office in the capital, will not apply to the relevant authorities in person, but will mobilise a *close friend*. The latter in turn will get in touch with acquaintances occupying important positions in the magistracy or civil service, who will help deal with the case. These instrumental relationships based on transactionality, and thus on reciprocity, entail equivalent counter-favours: in our case, the mediation of acquaintances with high-ranking people.

The term *friend*, according to the word's instrumental and transactional meaning, and the term *acquaintance* are often nearly synonymous. This was true in

the long period of realised socialism, for example, and can still be found in post-socialist transition societies. Consequently, *acquaintances* imply the existence of a network of dyadic and polyadic social relationships based on transactional reciprocity, which is used to obtain what are regarded as vitally important personal favours at the expense of the common good and public resources (Ledeneva 1998: 37). Being an *economy of favours*, *acquaintances*, especially during the socialist era, was a practically universal system of informal networks that enabled these coalitions of friends and acquaintances (at times just temporary) to appropriate material-like common goods as well as symbolic-like State privileges via highly-personalised channels.

Finally, we should highlight that money plays a secondary role in the three types of relations and coalitions mentioned. Therefore, this phenomenon must be clearly distinguished from corruption.

Patronage Relationships and Corruption

The relationship between patron and client can be defined as an interpersonal and dyadic tie, regulated by rights and duties that are usually informally defined. However, the tie between patron and client gives rise to an asymmetrical type of reciprocal dependence, since the client depends more on the patron than vice versa (Mühlmann, Llaryora 1968: 3). The relationship between patron and client implies a marked social, political and economic inequality between the people involved.

The institution of patronage permeates all organisations and associations linked to wielding and controlling power. Consequently, with its implicit strategy of personalising social relationships, the clientele system becomes the so-to-say backbone of the management of the common good, which is privatised via extensive and multifold vertical links. By now, each *public mistrust society* is embedded in a modern bureaucratic order. Thus, there is a more or less centralised territorial State based on a standardised administration that is (in principle) impartial and hierarchically structured. Transactions between patrons and clients, in the shape of asymmetrical favours and counter-favours, are usually carried out in contexts where the administration of the common good is well known to be crucial. Exemplifying, relationships between representatives of the State's power (politicians and state officials) as well as managers of civil society organisations (directors of NGOs, cooperative associations or trade unions, for example) on the one hand, and common citizens on the other, do not comply with the principles of objectivity of common interest decreed by the abstract models of bureaucratic organisation. These relationships, not personalised in theory, are invariably turned into ties of patronage, which, through the exchange of reciprocal favours, pursue

essentially particularistic interests. Whoever holds a public post of any kind will at length instrumentalise the structures and resources of the legislative, executive and judiciary power solely in favour of specific people connected to his network.

For the actors themselves, the relationships between patron and client represent the most efficient means to make the State's bureaucratic apparatus more transparent and less rigid. Paradoxically, the clientele system turns out to be a bridging mechanism between State and society that helps to make the citizen's relationship with the public administration less troublesome. Consequently, in post-socialist societies in southeast Europe or in the Mediterranean area, one would rather seek the help of a capable patron than apply directly to the appropriate public office that follows the unpredictable and intrinsically sluggish procedure of public service.

The clientele system is often interpreted as a legacy of archaic rural-like societies. Consequently, there is a mistaken assumption that such practices, looked upon as obsolete and socially harmful, will disappear thanks to modernisation and democratisation processes. The far-reaching social changes that have taken place in specific *public mistrust societies* in Europe have certainly transformed their social fabric. Paradoxically, however, they have also triggered the clientele system's adaptation to the new situation. Ironically, we can observe that the classic institution of patronage has updated itself, taking on more complex and certainly less archaic forms of organisation. In the Italian Mezzogiorno, experts have witnessed the rise and development of a party-political clientele system and/or of a mass clientele system (Graziano 1974), which ultimately replaced the old clientele system of the notables. As opposed to the clientele system of the notables, the new forms of patronage are based on obtaining large quantities of votes in exchange for favours through the shrewd control and instrumentalisation of civil society's institutions. The case of Italy, therefore, proves that the institution of patronage is far more flexible and durable than what institutionalist approaches, which settle for formal analysis and disregard actual social practices, still reaffirm (Putnam 1993).

Corruption, like patronage, can be defined as a system of social practices based on reciprocal, voluntary and illegal transactions between two or more individual or collective actors.

Several experts express the opinion that corruption involves only a serious and intentional lack of concern for one's duties as an actor in the public sector. The definition by which corruption is merely *the abuse of public office for private gain* is a simplification, since it restricts evidence of these illicit behaviours to the public dimension, specifically the political and bureaucratic ones. Instead, we cannot deny that corruption practices also emerge in the private sector, for example, within or between companies operating in a market economy.

Corruption is a reciprocal exchange of favours by which two or more persons linked in an informal and temporary net-like coalition obtain illicit benefits at the expense of other individuals, private groups, public collectivities and communities of citizens. In fact, corruption can be defined as such only within a legal system guaranteed by a single State or a transnational community of States that openly declare its illegality. This fact is relevant not only juridically, but also socio-anthropologically.

From these general observations, we can establish the first significant difference between corruption and patron-client relations. In fact, although corruption practices, due to the intrinsic nature of the exchange, are criminally indictable transactions, in most cases the relationship between patron and client implies behaviours that might be morally and politically reproachable, but not downright illicit.

Secondly, corruption practices nearly always involve monetary issues. This monetary aspect, instead, is an exception in clientelist transactions, where the exchange of favours covers a wider and less specific range, and the socio-political aspect of the favours definitely outweighs the economic one.

Thirdly, we ought to stress that in cases of corruption, there is usually a single transaction, which in general is not repeated periodically, as happens instead in clientelist favours.

Mafia Networks: Managing Protection in Public Mistrust Societies

The Mafia has been viewed as a very efficient organisation that can defy the State. The flaw in this view lies in creating a representation of the Mafia in the likeness of bureaucratic institutions, deemed as holders of administrative rationality. Therefore, the Mafia has been cast as a counter-state, as a mirror-like reproduction of the State itself. According to this point of view, the Mafia is a pyramid organisation ruled by strong centralism and a firm hierarchical order. But this representation of the Mafia is based on an ethnocentric assumption, on the belief that an efficient organisation should be based on formal institutions that are identical or at least similar to those of the State.

At present, there is a growing awareness that the Mafia is an amazingly flexible phenomenon. At this point, the correct assumption is that the Mafia is neither a Freemason-like secret society, nor a formal centralised organisation, but rather a complex system of networks consisting essentially of interpersonal relationships (Hess 1988: 119–133). On the other hand, claiming that there are no bureaucratic-like organisational structures within the sphere of the Mafia would be unreasonable nowadays. Yet, conversely, we could claim that they are not as pervasive as was believed in the past, although these structures are present in

the shape of small, formally established nuclei (Paoli 2000). Thus, we can concur with the well-grounded hypothesis that these formally structured Mafia cores (for example, a *famiglia* or *cosca* with well-defined roles, hierarchies, rituals and contract relationships among its members) is integrated into an extensive network of informal and hardly permanent relations with unskilled criminals, with occasional or regular clients, and above all with powerful politicians and distinguished entrepreneurs. In turn, the various nuclei join forces temporarily, forming more or less lasting, yet rarely enduring, alliances. The power of Mafia networks, which by virtue of their inherent flexibility and imperceptibility can easily avoid being snared by the law, lies in the markedly informal aspect of social relationships with the world beyond the nucleus.

In order to explain the persistence and diffusion of the Mafia phenomenon, we need to start from the statement of fact that in a given society there is no reciprocal relationship of trust between the citizen and the State. In this case, obviously, most of the community of citizens would rather join informal and highly personalised protection networks. However, this is also a fertile ground in which Mafia networks flourish. As regards local society, the Mafia above all stands for the *social management of public distrust* through the *industry of private protection* (Gambetta 1993).

This formula indicates that in an environment of widespread distrust in the public sphere, the Mafia can guarantee the proper running of public transactions among groups or single individuals. Consequently, large sections of the economy also have no intention of associating directly with the market, and would rather rely on Mafia control. Finally, we need to stress that the private industry of private protection is not based solely on wholesale violence. Although violence is an essential characteristic of Mafia behaviour, it should actually be regarded as an *ultima ratio*, used only in cases of serious and repeated violation of agreed terms.

The lack or inadequacy of trustworthy State structures within the public sphere in the end drives citizens to turn to informal protection networks (mainly Mafia-like ones), which in turn tend to appropriate the State, or even take its place.

The clientelist, corruptive and Mafia practices within the framework of informality should not be considered exclusive to societies perceived as archaic collectivities, or ones plagued by social, cultural and moral backwardness. This would be yet another ethnocentric theory of the socio-cultural deficit of some societies compared to others, namely Western ones. Societies deemed to be more advanced have cronyism, clientelism, corruption and mafias too, although probably to a lesser extent, or maybe they are just better concealed, because the State is more efficient.

The question of the diffusion and the continuity of informality and its associated social relationships in *public mistrust societies* cannot be adequately dealt with through a culturalist approach, which usually employs an overly static notion of culture. An interpretation based on the pure and simple use of the rational choice paradigm appears to be highly reductive as well.

An historical-anthropological approach, instead, reveals quite clearly that the extent of clientelist, corruptive and Mafia-like phenomena in *public mistrust societies* is strictly correlated to a permanent discord between State and society. In Weberian terms, we could say that there is a split between legality and legitimacy, as shown in the following diagram:

Formal State institutions	Informal relationships and social networks
Legal	*Partially illegal or semi-legal*
Non-legitimate	*Legitimate*

The roots of this discord between State and society reach deep into distant history. But history cannot be reduced to a mechanical or automatic sequence of facts. Instead, it must be understood as an interpreted past activated by the actors themselves in their present to be interpreted (Ricoeur 1985: Vol. 3, 314). Thus, we reach the question of history as a past that is experienced either in a direct or mediated way, and then actualised. This concerns what has been defined as the presence or efficacy of history (Ricoeur 1985: Vol. 3, 495). The historical-anthropological view does not deal as much with the sociologically relevant roots of informality, but rather with the social construction of continuity, by which informal activities in the minds of members of some societies take on and maintain a specific meaning.

According to the historical-anthropological view, this endurance springs from the tight and permanent interaction between the collective spaces of experience, in the sense of interpreted past, and the horizons of expectation to be considered, instead, as imagined future in the present (Koselleck 1979: 349 ff.).

Present informality is strictly linked to the dreadful experiences that members of a given society have continuously had with the State, both in the recent and the distant past. Obviously, these negatives spaces of experience, which have a marked influence on the actors and the formation of their horizons of expectation, do not reproduce themselves automatically by tradition. These spaces of experience must be constantly confirmed in the present. In accordance with the members' perception of these experiences, the corresponding systems of representation and behavioural models will be strengthened, modified or discarded.

As has already been mentioned, the reproduction of negative spaces of experience in *public mistrust societies* goes hand in hand with the constant failure of

the State and of civil society's institutions. Yet, such a public inability to carry out one's duties is not only an objective fact that can be observed from the outside, but, far more important, it is also shared within, and consequently built as such by citizens themselves. Thus, for the actors affected by the permanent disaster of public powers and civil society's institutions, the persistence, resurgence and expansion of informal behavioural models are simply the outcome of a contextual rational choice. In fact, members of *public mistrust societies* in the Mediterranean and southeast European areas resort with good reason to informality, since nobody is foolish to the point of doing things that serve no purpose, or which could be damaging.

In closing this section, I would like to emphasise that the various types of informality analysed above can be interpreted as socially and culturally shared behaviours of political and cultural resistance. Therefore, they are forms of intentional, but not necessarily subjective, resistance, typical of societies with an endemic mistrust of the public sector, epitomised especially by politics and bureaucracy, to which the individual actors grant no legitimacy (Ledeneva 2018).

Conclusions: The Pitfalls of Postmodern Individualism

Through the specific case of personalised relationships typical of *public mistrust societies*, we have shown that these relationships are not subjective but strictly social; therefore, citing Emile Durkheim, they are based on collective representations (Durkheim 1898). For this reason, instead of political subjectivity, I prefer using the term political intentionality, thereby referring directly to Edmund Husserl (Husserl 1952), and indirectly to the concept of *soziales Handeln* (social action) proposed by Max Weber (Weber 1956; Weber 1968). Therefore, we need to draw a distinction between subjectivity and intentionality. Intentionality means voluntariness in acting, which is not synonymous with subjectivity, since voluntariness is linked to, though not determined by, the fact of living in human society.

In fact, the social actors I refer to in my analysis do not act in accordance with the logic of political subjectivity, despite acting intentionally. They do not therefore act as robots, driven by overpowering external forces, such as culture, society, social control, etc. Hence, they act intentionally, in accordance with what may be defined as their *social knowledge* (Schütz 1960; Schütz, Luckmann 1979–1984), or their *social habitus* (Elias 1977; Bourdieu 1980a; Bourdieu 1980b). This is a form of common and shared knowledge. Social knowledge is acquired in their common *Lebenswelt*, and further influenced by their specific *Vorwelt*, i.e. by their socially learned and imagined collective past. This is a specific historical knowledge that the actors learned during their socialisation process, and

was later confirmed by their personal experiences within a specific society. Not based on objective facts, this history is rather an interiorised history, yet at the same time a collective or social one, like the *innere Geschichte* evoked by Edmund Husserl (Husserl 1952). Using the concept of political subjectivity as if it meant that the actors can choose ad libitum, i.e. freely pursuing their purely subjective ideas, ideals and strategies, as if these were not the product of the society they live in, is misleading. A revolutionary, a visionary, an idealist, or simply a person who strives for a better world, may devise or plan a new society, but historical reality shows that this venture is always bound to fail at some point. What remains is a noble but unrealistic pipe dream that may appeal to idealistic and politically correct anthropologists, a category I happily neither belong to, nor wish to belong to.

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Nuo politinio subjektyvumo iki sąmoningumo: visuomenės dominavimas prieš individą

Christian Giordano

Santrauka

Žvelgiant socialinės antropologijos požiūriu, *politinio subjektyvumo* sąvoka galėtų būti apibrėžta per *contradictio in adjecto*, nes ji, kitaip nei visuomenės ar *polis* (miesto-valstybės) idėjos ir iš jų kilę dariniai, tokie kaip bendruomenė, kolektyvinė sąmonė ar kolektyvinė atmintis, kurie numato grupės egzistavimą, suponuoja atskirą ar galbūt individualistinį požiūrį.

Apskritai subjektyvumas yra filosofinė sąvoka, pernelyg neapibrėžta, todėl sunkiai suvaldoma, t. y. jos neįmanoma pritaikyti grynai antropologiniams empirinio pobūdžio tyrimams. Be to, *politinio subjektyvumo* samprata pasižymi stipria psichologine konotacija (plg. su Fredericu Jamesonu) – yra politiškai liberalios prigimties su neracionalaus ir idealizuoto voliuntarizmo aura, įsišaknijusio laisvos valios ideale, taigi kiekvieno asmens pasirinkimo laisvėje. Galų gale tai yra abstrakti etikos sąvoka, kuri neleidžia atsižvelgti į skirtingus socioistorinius bei kultūrinius kontekstus, kuriuose veikia konkretūs asmenys.

Šiuo straipsniu siekiama parodyti, kad kai kurios visuomenės dažnai klaidingai laikomos ypač individualizuotomis ir kad joms priskiriamas tam tikras *political subjectivity*, nurodant į neformalias koalicijas, susidariusias iš ypač individualizuotų tinklų, kurie įsiskverbia į oficialias valstybines struktūras ir kenkia valstybinių institucijų efektyvumui.

Neformalumas su tam tikromis koalicijų, tinklų ir asmeninių ryšių formomis socialiniuose moksluose turi jei ne blogą, tai bent jau abejotiną reputaciją. Šios savybės dažnai laikomos ikimoderniomis, disfunkcinėmis ar net anominėmis, nes jos skatina rastis tokius socialinius reiškinius kaip favoritizmas, nepotizmas, kronizmas, protegavimas, korupcija ir kt. arba būna jų priežastimi.

Priešingai nei aiškina dažnai naivus ir etnocentriškas socialinių mokslų požiūris, šiame straipsnyje išryškinama, kaip daugelyje visuomenių, ypač tų, kurios yra pasidalijusios į klases ir etnines grupes, bet laikomų šiuolaikinėmis, pasižyminčiomis formalia organizacine struktūra, paremta sisteminiu solidarumu, įsiskverbia arba jas pakeičia dideli neformalūs tinklai, kuriuos patys dalyviai laiko svarbiais, todėl legitimiais, nors dažnai neteisėtais, bei tinkamais tam tikrose situacijose. Tokiose visuomenėse, kurias straipsnyje vadinu *viešo nepasitikėjimo visuomenėmis* (angl. *public mistrust societies*), viešojo ir privataus santykis suvokiamas kaip binarinė opozicija. Priešprieša tarp viešosios ir privačios srities yra akivaizdi, kai kalbama apie kolektyvinį atstovavimą.

Viešo nepasitikėjimo visuomenėse aiški skirtis tarp viešosios ir privačios srities ir pastarosios pirmumas niekada nebuvo užginčytas. Tokių grupių narių vertinimas yra kategoriškas: privatus sektorius laikomas socialine saugumo, patikimumo ir solidarumo erdve, o viešasis – pavojingu svetimkūniu. Remiantis tokia socialine ideologija, kuri daugiau ar mažiau yra tipinis *viešojo nepasitikėjimo visuomenėse* požymis, bet kokios pastangos, kurias asmuo deda siekdamas užtikrinti, pasiekti ir net padidinti savo grupės naudą ir pakelti jos gerovę, yra legitimios, turint omeny iš esmės teigiamas savybes, priskiriamas privačiai sferai.

Šalia palankaus požiūrio į privačias socialines erdves ši socialinė ideologija yra priešiška visuomeninėms erdvėms. Tai viena iš priežasčių, kodėl valstybinės institucijos sugrąžina jausmą, kad jų pagrindinis tikslas yra apvaginėti žmones ir kabinėtis prie jų. Visi, kurie mano, kad tai neginčytina tiesa, reaguoja tik vienu būdu – parengia veiksmų strategiją, pagrįstą logika, pagal kurią juos *apvogusio vagies apvogimas* yra legitimus. Taigi opozicija tarp privataus ir viešojo sektorių yra viena pamatinių kolektyvinio atstovavimo formų, kuri leidžia atsirasti ir įteisina korupciją, politinius skandalus, mafijos veiklą ir kitas nelegalias strategijas.

Straipsnyje pabrėžiama *pirmapradė* šeimos ir giminystės kaip *solidarios grupės* svarba, nes, anot viešojo nepasitikėjimo visuomenės narių, jie yra vieninteliai galintys atstovauti tokiems bendruomenės dariniams, kurie gali užtikrinti *bendradarbiavimą be jokių paslėptų kėslų*. Vis dėlto nors straipsnyje ir pabrėžiamas šeimos ir giminystės vaidmuo, čia taip pat nagrinėjama keletas kitų tokioms grupėms būdingų neformalių organizacijų ir individualizuotų tinklų (pagrįstų draugystėmis iš reikalo, simboliniu giminystės ryšiu ir kt.) tipų. Ši tarp piliečių plačiai paplitusi viešo nepasitikėjimo ir valstybės legitimumo stokos lyginamoji analizė

yra paremta ilgalaikiais Viduržemio jūros regiono (Pietų Italijos ir Ispanijos) ir Pietryčių Europos (Bulgarijos) lauko tyrimais.

Galiausiai straipsnyje taip pat išryškinama, kuri istorinės patirties rūšis suvaidino svarbų vaidmenį formuojant tokias visuomenes, kurios gali būti apibrėžiamos kaip viešo nepasitikėjimo visuomenės, kur valstybė, pasirėmus Maxo Weberio žodžiais, savo piliečių akyse turi teisėtumo monopolį, tačiau jai trūksta legitimumo. Akivaizdu, kad čia reikalą turime ne su oficialia istorija ir jos objektyviais faktais ir procesais (tai yra istorikų sukurta istorija), bet su *priešiška istorija*, kurią išmoko pavieniai asmenys, pavertė savo savastimi, perdavė ir dar kartą patvirtino per *patirties erdvių* ir *lūkesčių horizontų* dialektiką.