

EDITORIAL

GLOCALISM
info@globusetlocus.org

This issue is intended to have a specific characteristic: to consider the topic of social capital, which has been particularly stimulated in recent times by the problem of migrations, in terms of glocalist logic, when so often it is discussed merely in terms of national or international logic. In fact, the migratory flows we are witnessing – which seem increasingly often to characterise the process of globalisation – put consolidated social equilibria in question, in both the countries of departure and those of arrival, arousing – as is especially evident in Europe in recent months – problems of social justice and public order. And it is clear that, in search of a new global polity or polities, the political order can no longer simply be international, and even less national, but rather must be “glocal”, with the unprecedented and unpredictable characteristics that this will imply.

It may therefore be interesting to observe the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis arrived at by certain research projects, such as the one we are publishing on two case studies in the metropolitan area of Vancouver, and to reflect on the way in which blogs, while being novel spaces of identity creation, nevertheless tend to seek a territorial manifestation of the new identities generated.

In the relationship between global and local, the formation of social capital manifests new possibilities and, obviously, new difficulties. Undoubtedly significant in this regard is the condition of African youth, which seems to be oppressed and hindered in its attempts to truly participate in the process of national and global development by the state’s own legislation. Even though Western youth does not have the same problems, they are perhaps experiencing similar distress, dictated by inadequate policies on the part of national states.

The importance of young people’s social capital is also the subject of reflection of an essay on one particular reality, that of Malaysia, where cultural formation takes place according to

ISSN 2283-7949
GLOCALISM: JOURNAL OF CULTURE, POLITICS AND INNOVATION
2015, 2, DOI: 10.12893/gjcp.2015.2.6
Published online by “Globus et Locus” at www.glocalismjournal.net



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either the English linguistic variant or the Chinese, and to the acceptance of Liberal-Democratic Western or Confucian values: both the mother tongue and the values of reference obviously orientate the creation of the social community to which they belong. Robert D. Putnam's classic dichotomy between "bridging social capital" and "bonding social capital" seems to be superseded by the affirmation of technology as a communication tool facilitating the creation of connections of various types on a global scale. However, difficulties remain for complete global interconnection due to the still living bond with some aspects of linguistic and cultural identification, which seem to make Malaysian youth waver between a tendency towards cosmopolitanism and a resistance associated with their island identity.

It is interesting, furthermore, to reflect on how such difficulties even seem to be aggravated by the fact that, in an increasingly globalised world, the option of political inaction is often preferred in order to maximise the utility of public policies. In effect, the non-coincidence between those who vote and those who suffer the consequences of political decisions prompts the political representatives to avoid discontent and to seek to maximise the utility of public action in foregoing action at national and local level. The causes of this problem lie both in certain effects of globalisation and in the structural bases of utilitarianism as a normative theory. As the study published here demonstrates, cosmopolitan utilitarianism may, in fact, prompt political representatives to indulge in a series of inactions at both global and local level, contradicting the electoral mandate received and generating a dangerous confusion in the production of public policies.

Also in the light of these observations, the clear risk is the possible disintegration of global society into a multitude of closed communities, incapable of fruitful interconnection. Only public policies determined at institutional level or political actions produced by social collaboration can, at least partially, create meaningful links between community and individuals, generating those unprecedented forms of polity of which the globalisation process has such great need.

