

PUBLIC SELECTION BASED ON QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERVIEW FOR THE AWARDING OF NO. 1 EXPERIENCED GRANT LASTING 12 MONTHS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH PURSUANT TO ART. 22 OF LAW NO. 240/2010 AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES, LITERATURES AND CULTURES A.R.F. 11/A3 - CONTEMPORARY HISTORY - A.D. M-STO/04 - CONTEMPORARY HISTORY CUP: F54I19001010001 - TYPE B - ON THE PROJECT PRIN 2017 "ITALY AND THE "SHOCK OF THE GLOBAL" DURING THE SEVENTIES: PERCEPTIONS, INTERPRETATIONS, REACTIONS" - PICA CODE 21AR001

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RESEARCH PROJECT

"Italy and the "Shock of globalization": an analysis on press sources"

Research structure: Department of Foreign languages, literatures and cultures

Duration of the grant: 12 months

Scientific Area: 11 - History, philosophy, pedagogy and psychology

Academic recruitment field: 11/A3 - Contemporary history

Academic discipline: M-STO/04 - Contemporary history

Scientific Director: Prof. Giovanni Angelo SCIROCCO

Objective

This unit will consider the cluster of iconic dates related to the political and ideological sphere. In particular, this unit will focus the impact of events upon the political cultures of the major Italian mass parties (Pci, Psi and Dc) and their collateral organizations. 1) The unit will analyze the perceptions of the novelties which largely determined the rules of globalization. 2) It will verify the following research hypothesis, i.e. that the Italian political sphere, after the "shock" provoked by the 1973 oil crisis and the politics of austerity, was not able to fully appreciate these transformations, being caught up in a self-referential debate dominated by Cold War dynamics, the economic crisis and the explosion of violence in the "Years of Lead". 3) It will evaluate whether the political formula launched in those years ("historic compromise", "third phase", "more advanced equilibrium", "leftwing alternative") were a response to transformations or served above all strategic domestic purposes. 4) This unit will analyze how, at the end of the decade - with the tragic death of Aldo Moro and the end the formula of the "National Solidarity", the election of John Paul II, the PSI's new course under Craxi's leadership, the entry into force of the EMS, the first direct election of the European Parliament and the explosion, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, of the so-called "Second Cold War" - also the Italian political system had to come to terms with the effects of the "shock" of globalization.

Theoretical framework

Recently, historical research is increasing its interest on the systemic crisis of the 1970s as a watershed in periodization. In fact, more and more scholars tend to identify this crisis as a crucial turning point, even more radical and relevant than the iconic 1989 to understand our contemporary world. During this time frame, as a matter of fact, the essential elements of the political-economic model determined by the fundamental postwar fracture collapsed. At the same time, a new world order began to take shape through a multifaceted process, based on the redefinition of North-South relations within and beyond the framework of the Cold War and post-colonial dynamics. This process resulted in a progressive unification of the world and in the transformation of fundamental elements of the previous age with regard to identities, modes of production, labor, personal relationships. Therefore, it is fundamental to underline the structural - and not transitory - character of the crisis of the 1970s in a global perspective (Ferguson et al., ed., 2010; Baldissara, ed., 2001). In particular, it is necessary to consider as point of reference the model of political and economic equilibriums which had consolidated after the crisis of the 1930s and developed during the postwar years. A model which resulted in an extraordinary

age of economic growth and expansion of international capitalism – helped by the novel, grand American “imperial” project and favored, for some aspects, by the aggressive and threatening isolation of the Soviet Bloc during the Cold War. The essential elements of this model can easily be identified: a Fordist production system developed within national contexts; national markets almost entirely integrated into a supranational level, with large exchange of goods and access to low-cost raw materials; the stabilizing role of Keynesian regulation played by the State; the growth of the Welfare State as a complement to the reformist integration of society. This model has been defined in several ways: “capitalism-mass democracy compromise”; “Trente glorieuses” (Fourastié, 1979); “Golden Age” (Hobsbawm, 1994). The crisis of such model unfolded throughout the 1970s and was made more complex by three sets of factors. The first factor was the systemic interrelation of the issues at stake, at least under four regards. 1) Global financial issues: crisis of the dollar and of monetary stability, global inflation. 2) Environmental-energy issues: the oil shock and the first doubts concerning a growth-based system. 3) Socio-economic issues: conflicts over labor income and power relations in the factories. 4) Socio-cultural attitudes and mentalities: the burgeoning of new subjectivities, in the long shadow of the 1968 protest movement; the disruption of traditional gender and family relations; the unprecedented attention for extra European scenarios (including Third World perspectives); the impact of the media system’s technological transformations and the growing criticism against “integrated”, modernized society. Not only was the interplay of these issues particularly complex, but it outlined a reality in which issues were increasingly beyond control at the local and state level. This situation determined an expansion of issues rooted in an ever more global dimension, thus provoking a corresponding political crisis in the governance of the system. The second factor is related with the nature of the ensued crisis: a crisis that developed, in part, not because of the failure of old rules, but more as the result of processes ripened during the thirty years following the Second World War. As these processes intensified, they became more and more fragile and little sustainable, and their own premises were somehow undermined (consider, for example, social citizenship based on labor, which had been the pivot of the Fordist pact and was then perceived as an intolerable, growing increase of the costs of production by entrepreneurs). This connection made it harder controlling and reacting to the crisis itself. Finally, the third factor corresponded with the absence of a definite hegemony capable of governing the crisis (contrary to the situation in 1945, when the American Great Design was at its peak and the Soviet alternative – though unquestionably weaker – was consolidating). On the contrary, in the 1970s the superpowers were dealing with an analogous lack of ability to control both global dynamics and sub-systemic ones in the two camps of the Cold War. Moreover, after the contradictory experience of the “Decade of Development”, the United Nations were struggling to manage the new dynamics of North-South and South-South relations. In this sense, the process of international détente showed conservation aspects precisely because of the agreement between Moscow and Washington to try to stabilize bipolarism. However, détente was unable to completely control the changes in European structures linked precisely to the overcoming of the bipolar clash, as well as the confused and troubled growth of the so-called Third World and the growing new international role of China.

Research project description

The essential theme of this project is precisely the attempt to better focus perceptions and analyses of the crisis in the Italian political context. With regard to the national history, the decade has now obtained a certain historiographical attention, both in the internal dimension (Comitato Italia Settanta, IV voll., 2003; Crainz, 2012) and in the international connections (Gentiloni Silveri, 2009; Bosco, 2009; Cominelli, 2014). The initial assessment of this project is, however, that the state of the studies still allows ample scope for further study, given the progressive availability of new sources. In socio-economic terms, the crisis of the Western system was experienced in Italy in a markedly critical way, demonstrating the limits with which the country had entered the golden age season (high inflation, strong pressure on public budgets, high conflict at work, cultural splits). In political terms, there was initially the setback of the centre-left alliance in the face of the 1968 elections and the acceleration of social change with the student protests. This was followed by the appearance of political violence (strategy of tension, left-wing terrorism), with the prospect of a return to equilibrium in a neo-centrist key. Finally, after the acceleration of the electoral changes of 1975-1976, the Italian transition experienced the experiment of national solidarity, understood as the last and difficult phase of a possible reformist adaptation (even overcoming the systemic split of the Cold War, albeit with many limitations). After 1979, instead, the country experienced a sort of precarious political stabilization similar to that of a “third Italy” linked to the international context, corresponding to the explosion of public debt and at the same time to savings and private consumption. This fibrillation speaks, however, of a system that is struggling to adapt to incipient globalisation. The difficulty of adaptation also had to do with the characteristics of the system’s evolution. In fact, since the crisis of the 1970s the Western

system came out without a Great design comparable to the previous one, without clear hegemonies (the difficulty of the United States was not resolved even with the election of Ronald Reagan as president). Rather, it was the dragging of the choices of the strongest or at least the most central countries that created the new scenario, which in the early 1980s began to be defined with the neologism "globalisation". In fact, the United States and Great Britain embarked on paths connected to the acceptance of the prospect of overcoming the national Fordist model for a recovery based on a marked financialization and tertiarization of their economies, and therefore they were necessarily oriented towards trusting in a new season of interdependence favourable to their own interests. Therefore, between 1979 and 1981, a series of political choices were made: an increase in interest rates (fight against inflation) and liberalisation of the capital movement, which contributed to industrial relocations and loss of momentum in trade union movements. It was evident the favourable interweaving of these choices with a series of technological evolutions (information revolution, communications, production automation processes) and with the development of individualistic/libertarian/subjectivist tendencies in societies, in which the political-ideological tension of the 1970's rapidly deteriorated. The new opening of industrial processes outside the developed world (with the momentum of East Asia and the start of Chinese reforms) was the essential pendant of these transformations at the centre of the system.

Key words: globalization; Seventies; Italian political parties; Newspapers; Cold War

Timing of realization and calendar of activities

The research project foresees, for the research fellow of the Bergamo's local unit, the examination of some newspapers (daily and/or periodicals) to be defined with the other Units belonging to the Prin. Among these newspapers there will certainly be, also for an analysis of the local reality in Bergamo, "L'Eco di Bergamo". The results of this survey will then flow into a database that will be designed for the purpose. It is also planned to write an essay resulting from the research and to participate in the ongoing research seminars and the final international conference.

The project is divided into three phases:

- A) In the first phase, the starting bibliography will be defined and the theoretical/methodological basis for the work will be drawn up, identifying the titles to be examined.
- B) In the second phase, the chosen titles will be examined, and the results entered in the database.
- C) In the third and final phase, the results of the two previous phases will be re-elaborated in order to write an essay analyzing one or more aspects of the project

Expected results

The project aims to examine Italian perceptions of these complex transformations. The hypothesis underlying the research is that Italy was no exception to the acute and widespread awareness of the post-war crisis. The originality of the research, however, lies in the attempt to investigate how this crisis was understood, the reactions and adaptations to it. In particular, it is intended to examine how these global transformations have been interpreted in an ideological-political context, possible responses to the crisis and innovative elements, beyond the traditional models and towards new equilibriums.

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