THE GENERATIVE THEORY OF SOCIAL COHESION AND CIVIC INTEGRATION

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to develop a generative theory of social cohesion and civic integration in order to show the negative or positive impact on the processes of social and civic dissolution (crisis of values, participation and tolerance), that characterize the local realities (communities, neighborhoods,...). In the paper a conceptual clarification of both social cohesion and civic integration is developed away from theoretical, macro and especially a-contextual positions, lacking in a thorough analysis of those generative or degenerative processes triggered by local stakeholders to produce social reality. In line with these critical reflections Lockwood's and Erikson's approaches have been applied as they have been considered the most fruitful for the study at a micro level and for a possible revision based on the application of the category of social generativity and public space.

Keywords: Social cohesion, civic integration, social generativity, public space

Introduction

The crisis of the relationships in the contemporary society transforms the social bond in a scarce resource, problematic and sterile, unable to generate collective solidarity and inclusive community structures. The weakness of the bonds shows a gradual disintegration of the public social spaces that make coexistence difficult, mostly because the meeting places of communication, culture and democratic values are in crisis. The analysis of the fragmentation of the bonds of solidarity and of the crisis of meeting places allows to think about the concept of civic integration and social cohesion seizing an interesting link between them, despite the specific differences.

The aim of this article is to develop a generative theory of social cohesion and civic integration in order to show the negative (social and civic dissolution) or positive impact (values and relational resources) on the processes of social and civic dissolution (crisis of values, participation and tolerance), that characterize the local realities (communities, neighborhoods,...). In the paper a conceptual clarification of both social cohesion and civic integration is developed away from theoretical, macro and especially a-contextual positions, lacking in a thorough analysis of those generative or degenerative processes triggered by local stakeholders to produce social reality. In line with these critical reflections Lockwood's and Erikson's approaches on social cohesion and civic integration have been applied as they have been considered the most fruitful for the study at the micro level and for a possible revision based on the application of the category of social generativity and public space.

Lockwood (1999) analyzes the social cohesion (micro level) and the civic integration (macro level) as two distinct but interdependent levels that constitute the social integration. More specifically, social cohesion refers to the primary social relationships (family, relatives, neighborhood) and secondary (association), while the civic integration refers to the institutional order of a nation. The article proposes a re-reading of both the concept of social cohesion through the use of Erikson's theory of generativity and the concept of civic integration adapted in a micro view, redefined through the sociological literature about public space. In other words we show how the contradictions identified by Lockwood, social

dissolution (social cohesion) and civic corruption (civic integration), are both related to the quality of the generative process and public space as a process of mutual influence that is developed between the two realities.

The social cohesion

The spread of the concept of social cohesion is a response both in terms of interpretation (the development of different theoretical models) and in terms of policies (national and supra-national) to the problems that emerged in the social, cultural and political ambit of global societies.

In particular, the interest in social cohesion is connected to the crisis of the social solidarity and social bonds in general. This is of concern within the contours of a political economic reality, where the old structures of social protection are in crisis or are unable to cope with a complex social framework within which new ethnic and infrageneration conflicts are generated due to migration and global processes. In this context the use of the concept of social cohesion is a response to the consequences of the structural changes produced in terms of keeping social ties of the society.

It is possible to identify two levels of analysis of the concept of social cohesion. The first relates to the study and investigation of macro - structural dimension and considers aspects such as the crisis of the welfare, the increase of inequalities, the transformation of the labor market in ways increasingly precarious as well as the themes of sharing a unique system of rules and values in an intercultural society presided over by the pluralism of values. The second level is meso or micro (the city, the neighborhood, the local community) and mainly reflects the maintenance and regeneration of primary social ties (related to the family, the neighborhood, groups of friends) and secondary (committees, associations, third sector) (Lockwood, 1999).

More specifically, it is interesting to note that in the sociological-academic tradition and in the policy ambit, the concept of social cohesion is considered in macro structural terms. In the rich sociological tradition Durkheim and Parsons have considered social cohesion, and more specifically the issue of the order, within the emergence of a general need for integration and cohesion that modern society produces due to the high process of social division of labor or functional differentiation.

To some extent, this tradition has survived in contemporary sociology, for example through the contribution of Gough and Olofsson (1999) whose analyses are developed mostly at the systemic level with a little attention to the empirical and micro reality. An important exception to this trend is Lokwood's work (1999), who considers social cohesion one of the central aspects of social integration (the other is represented by civic integration).

It is worth noting how the in last two decades interesting contributions have been developed in order to define and operationalize the concept of social cohesion. In these works, as far as the concept of social cohesion is also extended to the micro reality, the theoretical *premium* is still focused on the macro-structural dimension. In the study by Chan et al (2006) social cohesion is defined as an attribute (not a process) of the inner society through its relational dimensions (vertical-horizontal, objective-subjective). In this perspective, the unit of analysis is represented by a nation geographically and politically defined (although you can extend the use of social cohesion to the city, district, neighborhood) (Chan et al. 2006 p. 291), where the State is the institutional level most appropriate in which to observe and study the social cohesion.

The tendency to thematize cohesion in terms macro rather than to redefine it according to the generative processes and products within the different local contexts is also evident in the contribution of Jansens et al. (2006). In this article, social cohesion is considered to be one of the key aspects of the new cosmopolitan public sphere within which operates an active citizenship that transcends national boundaries and especially looks less and less linked to the

role of places and territories in defining its formation (that arises from the interplay between formal and informal formation).

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This trend was also observed in the most recent studies on social cohesion, as it results from the documents of national governments and international organizations. More specifically, the Council of Europe (2005: 23) defines social cohesion "as the ability of a modern society to ensure long-term well-being of all its members, including equitable access to available resources, respect for human dignity with reference to diversity, personal and collective autonomy and responsible participation". By analyzing this definition it is clear that cohesion is framed in a top-down perspective that focuses on the role of the state in creating a socio-political environment in which citizens can express themselves and enjoy the services and a better quality of life. In this context, it is completely neglected the generative processes that the different local realities and the different actors could activate and above all the consequences that this process could result in forming inclusive or exclusive cohesive processes.

The spread of the concept of social cohesion as a guiding concept in national and international policy is highlighted by agencies such as the World Bank. The work by Ritzen and Woolcock (2000) is indicative of a radical change of direction that took place as part of the explanation of the economic development where social, cultural and institutional factors are more and more important. According to their view the economic growth is more favored in those countries where there is greater social cohesion and in which more efficient institutions work. The focus of this approach is the size of the macro-policy based on a socio-institutional perspective where social cohesion is the means by which the economic growth of a state or a nation is realized. In this perspective it is clear that the endogenous dimension is neglected as a factor that could be an impediment or a generative element of the growth of the local community and its cohesion.

The micro dimension of social cohesion

The macro structural dimension of social cohesion seems to disregard the analysis of phenomena related to social disorganization in a community or neighborhood, the crisis of social ties and especially the difficulty of activating generative social and civil processes. The micro view does not exclude that macro, given that between the two dimensions there is a circular process. In the context of this article, however, we believe that the density of primary and secondary social ties, and especially their generating capacity, located in a given area, is one of the central aspects in order to understand the formation and rooting of social cohesion. It should be noted that in the sociological literature there has been a copious stream of studies and research that have been characterized by the attention given to the relationship between the social quality of a neighborhood or community, and the emergence of phenomena like deviance and marginality. In this field, we can certainly count the pioneering studies of the Chicago School of sociology that have thematized the concept of socio-cultural risk for the environment as the seat of the crisis of social ties and processes of spatial identification. More recently, we recall the studies that have addressed the relationship between social cohesion in the community and district with a particular attention to the problems of crime and urban safety.

These studies are important because they focus their analysis on specific aspects of the crisis of social cohesion (the emergence of deviance), neglecting not only a conceptual clarification of the term but especially evading the deepening of the mechanisms that govern the formation of social cohesion within a specific local context.

In line with these critical reflections Lockwood's approach on social cohesion has been taken into account as it has been considered to be fruitful for the study at a micro level and for a possible revision based on the application of the category of the social generativity.

Lockwood (1999) analyzes the social cohesion as one of two distinct levels that constitute the social integration. In this perspective, the social cohesion (versus the social dissolution) is configured as the micro dimension of the social relations and consists of the primary and secondary relationships that insist within a local community. The second level of social integration is the civic integration (civic corruption) and refers to the universality of the rules and rights that empower the procedures and the good practice of the institutional and economic actors who operate at the macro level within a nation. It is important, in our opinion, to note that for Lockwood the social integration (constituted by cohesion and civic integration) is opposed to the systemic one. In his perspective the social cohesion, being the micro aspect of the social integration, does not affect the society as a system but all of those actors who operate within the primary and secondary relations constitutive of the community. Here the theorized concept of social cohesion refers not only to the specific practices of social actors (family, voluntary associations), but especially the fruitful relationship that can be established between primary (family and networks of relatives and friends) and secondary socialization (associations and networks, bonds of trust between them.) This is a reading that focuses on the possibility that kinship, friends and neighbors networks possess to extend "to a more general altruism, that is, trust in and willingness to help" (Lockwood, 1999: 69). The emergent quality of social integration and of its distinct levels allows us not only to identify different processes and actors both in social cohesion and at the level of civic integration (State and market), but also to identify the mutual conditioning that develops between them despite their independent nature. Lockwood (1999: 65) argues that "although social cohesion and civic integration are analytically and empirically distinguishable (as in the case of social versus system integration), it is also the case that civic corruption beyond a certain point will affect social cohesion, just as a widespread social dissolution will threaten civic integration". From our point of view it seems appropriate to emphasize that this theoretical approach refers to at least two ideas central to the development of the overall economy of the paper.

The first idea concerns the fact that only when the two levels of social integration are mutually reinforcing the conditions for the development of a good society are realized. In the opposite case we have the occurrence of pathological asynchronies that affect the process of social integration. More specifically two asynchronic directions are detected: on one hand the social cohesion by building "bonding" social ties determines a self-referential and inclusive process compared to the more general process of civic integration (civil and moral citizenship assembly); on the other part, the emergence of a context in which it is observed, despite the presence of a social cohesion characterized by bonding and bridging ties, a high level of civic corruption.

The second point shows that in order to achieve social integration, the social cohesion has to be synchronic to civic integration, therefore it is essential to identify the generative mechanisms operating not only within the two respective levels but also to understand how the development of a possible connection between the different levels is created.

In Lockwood's theory there is the presence of a generative process function of the society when social cohesion is strengthened and primary and secondary ties are kept and fed, but also when it operates in inter-action with the other form of integration, than that civic. Nevertheless it is clear the absence in the model of Lockwood of an efficient analysis capable to understand the complex dynamics of generativity and its effective role in building social cohesion. Because of this theoretical limit here it is privileged the perspective of the social generativity, necessary to understand the genesis of the formation process of the social cohesion. The focus is centered, in this part of the paper, on the knowledge of the process of building the relational structures and the reciprocity bonds in that they allow us to observe not

so much and not only the quantity of links but above all, their quality and as well as to affirm not only the presence of a link, but to reflect on how the quality of this bond conditions the social cohesion of the community.

The generativity in the social perspective
The term of generativity is part of the articulated and innovative psychosocial or psychological theory developed by Erikson in order to understand the intricate dialectic that is created between the development of the self and the society. Erikson considers generativity as a psychological quality that the adult individual should acquire within an evolutionary path of progressive psychosocial maturation that leads him to take responsibility for the welfare of his children and of the future generations. Despite Erikson starts from a perspective of individual development and identifies generativity as a typical characteristic of the adult, he can definitely be counted among the first who analyzed the social dimension of generativity. Erikson's effort to develop the socio-psychological model of individual development can be seen not only in the theory of the cycles of life but also in the central role it assumes in the understanding and explanation of the functioning of society. In the theory of human development Erikson differentiates the individual's life cycle into eight stages each characterized by a psychosocial polarity central to the growth of the man. Generativity, considered as the psychological center of the seventh stage (generativity versus stagnation), appears as a psychological journey that the person is faced with solving the evolutionary crisis in order to acquire a balanced development of the ego (Erikson, 1950). This is partly true because each stage is the result of a relational process that is established with the external reality interpersonal, and generational. It is interesting to note that the model of the cycle of human development is interwoven with that generational setting up a social theory of change in the society. More specifically, Erikson (1964: 114) argues that "for man's psychosocial survival is safeguarded only by vital virtue which develop in the interplay of successive and overlapping generations, living together in organized settings. Here, living together means more than incidental proximity. It means that the individual's life-stages are <interliving> cogwheeling with the stages of others which move him along as he move them". In this context it is obvious the sociological characterization of generativity as it binds different generations ensuring the exchange and transmission so as to promote the development of the society within a dynamic balance between change and conservation. The social aspect of the life cycle is particularly evident in the seventh stage when the generating capacity is stated on the basis of the passing of an ego-centered dimension and the affirmation of the virtue of care that "is of interest for what is been generated by love, necessity or by accident and that goes beyond adherence to an irrevocable ambivalent obligation" (Erikson, 1968: 72). Generativity so conceived provides itself a balance between the desire for self-fulfillment and a striving for the society, manifested through the care, commitment, action and responsibility towards the other. It is a generative process that involves the activation of two contrasting trends defined by Bakan (1966) agency and communion showing the interdependent linkage between the individual and the context. In this tension to come out of himself it is easy to see that the generativity can move inter-subjective and collective spaces as it involves not only the growth and well-being of their children but the creation of new things, ideas and relationships. The care and responsibility appear as energies that drive the generative action of the individual beyond areas exclusively intersubjective to join social spaces characterized by a tension addressed to here but also projected to the welfare of future generations. The link between individual and collective dimensions of the process of generativity is further developed in the book The Truth of Ghandhi (Erikson, 1969) in which generativity, by promoting the virtue of care leads to a new dimension: social responsibility. In this case generativity expands its scope by passing an expression of care exercised in respect of their children and future generations to understand a perspective that generates the whole human race. It should be

noted that in this work it is not only clarified the deep plot that takes place between the psychological and social quality of generativity but it is also indirectly highlighted the problematic nature of the process of generativity. If in the model of the life cycle the relationship with the social reality is processed both on the generative maturity of the subject and within the bankruptcy forms that invest generativity, in Gandhi's Truth it emerges not so much the profile of the failure of generativity as its ambiguous nature. The contribution offered by both analytical perspectives is very interesting to evaluate how it is not only the action generativity, expressed by the virtue of care towards children and future generations, to allow to penetrate and illuminate the inextricable interplay between action and structure but also in parallel its antinomies: stagnation, self-preoccupation and pseudospecies. The first two are the expressions of the failure of generativity in the evolution of the life cycle and have an impact on the overall well being of the community. More specifically the stagnation expresses the subject's inability to take care of later generations not investing in the transmission of values and resources for the growth of future generations. The self preoccupation expresses a pathological self-centering of the subject, concerned about his own future and not able to invest resources for the future generations. At the social level it is observed a weakening of the process of generativity in the exchange between the generations and the spread of forms of generativity bankruptcy. The last antinomy refers not so much to its bankruptcy forms as to the ambiguous nature of the concept in relation to the social reality. Kai Erikson (2004) argues that the concept of generativity contains a certain degree of ambiguity since it can be referred to his own children, younger members of the community or the species itself. In accordance with this tripartite division very often the generative process is moved from a social perspective and is regulated by a mechanism discriminatory rather than universal. The most of people are generative at least to one level as it does not always happen that those who are concerned with the care of their child or future generation of their community are equally generative in relation to other social groups. It is obvious that generativity, understood as the intergenerational transmission of what is of value, cannot be achieved in all the three levels because often generativity invests mainly in the first two domains by transforming them into familism, nationalism or localism. People move in these defensive circles mainly to protect themselves, their children and their own group for which the process has a double meaning: positive for his own group and negative for those who do not belong to it. In this regard, Erikson (1984: 481-482) speaks of a pseudospeciation governed by the generativity referring to the fact that "mankind, while one species, has divided itself throughout its history into various groupings that permit their members, at decisive times, to consider themselves, more or less consciously or explicitly, the only true human species, and all others as less human". Here it lurks the fundamental problem of tribal identity construction based on a process of identification with specific subgroups rather than the formation of an identity defined by Erikson species-waide based on a universal ethos. It is clear that to get out of a state of ambiguity generativity has to be interpreted as a field of action that expands or reduces, not only because of the psychological quality of the subject but also according to the value structure, to the quality of relationships in the group, to the civic and institutional structure of a community.

The generativity theory of social cohesion
Generativity is an expression not only of intrapsychic dynamics or evolutionary crisis but also of the processes of social nature. Despite the development of the concept of generativity constantly calls the social level it is not possible to say, as de St. Aubin et al. (2004: 267) argue, that "it is not precisely clear how generativity at the individual level relates to generativity at more collective levels … Rather than focus on the individual, we need start looking for generativity in locations not typically investigated by psychologists, such as written laws, the tacit social contract, rituals, cultural customs, institutional mission

statements, and social policy". In this sense we can say that the theory of generativity should be embedding in the social structure to take an interpretative model of the dynamics of societies. More specifically generativity is presented as a disembedding process by providing a psychological view of man's social existence, in fact it captures the social aspects as a projection of the individual dynamics. The theory of social cohesion by Lockwood, on the contrary, emphasizes the importance of relational structures describing them as embedding in structure but neglecting a deepening of the generative mechanisms aimed at the formation of relational aspect as responsible for the quality rather than for the structure of the social cohesion of a community. In this sense we can say that on one hand the generative perspective allows us to analyze social cohesion as a dynamic process (evolutive and involutive, inclusive and exclusive) while on the other the concept of social cohesion allows us to highlight the ability of the generativity to interconnect the individual dimension within the social context and above all to make understandable the generative dynamics of the social structure. It is outlined a generative theory of social cohesion that analyzes the nature sometimes rhetoric and uncritical of social cohesion, often presented as synonymous of good company. This interpretation is proposed by the dominant mainstream in the absence of a thorough knowledge of the processes underlying the social relationships and group dynamics. The conceptualization of the generative process has clearly showed how its character has any impact on the complex and ambiguous nature of social relationships. In detail the generative process shows that it is not enough to be part of a network in order to feel belonging to a cohesive reality as the quality of the networks (bonding or bridging) and the dynamics of a group or community (universal of specieshood or pseudospeciation) are closely related to the quality of the generative process. In this sense it seems limiting to say that social cohesion represents the product of the primary and secondary relations arising from the good practices of the actors if it is not known what kind of generative process they are able to implement and activate. For this reason, it is necessary to trace how the concept of generativity is structured in a social sense, in order to better understanding the nature of social cohesion. In detail social generativity as a process can be distinguished into three mechanisms that occur in unison when the psychological and social conditions are realized and make an action generative. In this perspective it is possible to argue that an action to be generative must be characterized as creative, care/responsibility oriented, able to promote autonomy. In this sense generativity not only creates objects, ideas and relationships but it cares what has been created and do not possess it. If generativity involves the creation of new bonds also determines their care, revitalizing and strengthening them constantly. However in order to be creative, productive and responsible, social generativity must have the ability to develop autonomy in what it has created. More specifically generativity is << to let go of >> what you create (which implies trust in others and freedom), despite the strong tension to care. These three mechanisms can be observed in the different actors and institutions. We can assert that a municipality, a social cooperative or association can develop social relations of generative or degenerative nature. If we consider the foundational social relationship of social cohesion it is evident that it must not only be created, generated, but in order to survive it must be cared. However for this relationship to be generative it must create new relational bridges with new actors and new and different relationships. When the process of generativity is structured with all the three components then it can be considered complete and therefore capable of forming the social reality in inclusive terms. It is obvious that if we apply the construct of social generativity within Lookwood's perspective, we are able to understand not only how to create the bonds but also their quality. Seconded the three aspects of the process of generativity are connected it is possible to understand if it is a social cohesion inclusive, exclusive or subject to dissolution. In general it can reasonably be argued that in the absence of the three mechanisms identified bankruptcy forms of generativity can be observed that assume the character of stagnation or of self preoccupation. These forms lead to a dissolution of social cohesion

resulting in a weakening of social ties due to a retreat from the social field by the different actors that make up a community. This forms the basis of the formation of the phenomenon of privatism and individualism in which it is very difficult to find pro social modes, relational structures based on reciprocity and cohesive communities. By looking at the two distinct levels identified by Lockwood as paramount to the formation of social cohesion we can see as the presence of a weak generative process marked by stagnation or self preocupation develops family ties mostly self-referential and weak, null relational secondary structures or without pro sociality. It should be emphasized, however, that there is not only a problem of weak social ties but also of excessive closure. In the first case, the dissolution could be set in the light of the theory of generative cohesion as the product of the failure of the generative process In the second case the cohesion becomes a problem in itself (Jensen, 1988) since the generative process governed by an introversion pseudospeciation lives within the family or group membership anticipating a tribal social cohesion. This implies that the concept of social cohesion is characterized by a certain degree of ambiguity (social cohesion also has a dark side). Paradoxically, despite the generative process is made of all the three components, if it is not combined with a civic structure made of values, spaces and actors; the implications that it has on social cohesion are in the name of discrimination rather than of universal integration.

Civic integration and public space

The analysis of public space and its crisis represents an important field of investigation and knowledge of the level of civic integration of a community, as well as its democratic seal. The concept of public space has to be considered as a socio-spatial prerequisite from which you can generate the civic integration as it refers to a set of aspects (access, community life, education dimension of civic participation, conflict and negotiation between the diversity) essential for the social integration of a community. It should be noted, however, that the concept of public space draws back to a complex tradition of philosophical studies, political science, sociology and urban planning in which you can identify a general definition of public space (associated with more than one dimension of the public sphere) and another more closely linked not only to the spatial aspects but especially to the most micro of everyday life. In the first theoretical framework we can certainly count the contribution of Habermas (1996) for which the public space refers to an idea of "third space" where you build the premise of the dialogue between pluralities and by means of which the public sphere is formed or, more appropriately, the area of public opinion or the space where public opinions are formed. In particular, "the public sphere is an intermediate structure between the political system, on one hand, the private spheres of the life-world and functionally specialized systems on the other".

On the side of a political philosophy the major contribution is the work of Arendt (1958). For Arendt, the public realm is "the being in common", where a plurality of entities become visible and act confronting, and at the same time, avoiding "to fall on each other". It is a public space that is built on the visibility, the discourse and the action and produces a public (political) sphere with an emphasis on the relationship as a process that combines the difference. Although Arendt gives to the concept of public space a more concrete meaning than that developed by Habermas, the analysis of the spatial dimension, however, remains marginal in relation to the size mainly meso and micro.

In the second perspective, the public space is associated to the territorial dimension from whichl relations, dialogue and participation spring. Sennett, in some respects, is among the leaders that to a greater extent addresses the role of space as a function of sociality. The public space is the place for Sennett's anonymity and impersonality opposed to the intimate reality (1976). The crisis of public space is represented by the fear of impersonality, of the unknown that "promotes fantasy of collective life of a limited nature" in which "the image of the identity of the <we> becomes more and more selective: it only includes neighborhood,

colleagues, family. It becomes difficult to identify with people who do not know". The only reality possible becomes, therefore, that intimate.

Despite Sennett attributes more importance to the physical space as a central element of public space, however, the places of social proximity are neglected. The focus on public space as a place for socializing from which the confidence and security come is due to Jacobs (1961). Following her perspective, the public spaces "are the most important public places of a city and its most vital organs". These are public spaces that when are able to keep the values and the social resources can contribute to the formation of a collective sense and trust. Within this perspective a field of research is the role that the spatial organization plays in generating social capital and civic sense. It is thanked to the work of Jacobs the considerations on the generative role of public space in the virtue of interaction and trust that are developed between people of the same neighborhood and strangers. In line with this approach, we review the concept of macro civic integration by Lockwood adapting it in a micro optical and connecting it to the public space. We propose a distinction between cohesion and public space that does not imply a separation between two incommunicable domains but it especially considers the generative relationship central to the formation of inclusive communities. The starting point is the theoretical assumption of a minimalist conception of cohesion defined on the basis of the relationships, different from the concept of civic integration as expression of civic values. Here the civic integration is the place of tolerance, conceived as embedding in the social structure. It is less tied to Lockwood's model defined on the basis of the institutional integrity of the macro-level social citizenship. It is clear that the adopted concept of integration invokes a spatially specific statement that plays a key role in understanding both the cohesion and civic integration at the micro level. The space and its morphology influences and cooperates in the formation of social ties and civic integration. In this case the public space taking shape of a place of universal access, social heterogeneity and diversity produces the conditions for a learning center located in the regeneration process of civic integration at the local level. It is easy to note, by following Lockwood, that to have social integration, it is necessary that the social cohesion is related, combined, to the civic integration. Undoubtedly, from our point of view, the link between these two dimensions is formed by the process of generativity that regulates the transformation and upgrading of bridging ties rather than just those bonding. More specifically, the social cohesion by finding its place mainly in space more parochial (family, relatives, neighbors) than in the public realm (public space) (Lofland, 1998), in order to to be inclusive must be able to meet the structural condition in which the process of generativity widens and it is transformed from a tribal dimension to another universal. It is clear that social cohesion in the absence of public space becomes an expression of micro-fiefdoms ruled by tribal identity and the pseudospeciation, while the public space, if not supported by the relational dimension, trust and cooperation becomes an empty shell, a space dominated by regulatory procedures and formal rules.

Conclusion

Social cohesion and civic integration are two key parameters useful to understand the crisis of the social dissolution experienced by many local realities. As a consequence it is necessary to abandon an idea of social cohesion as a social <state of affair>, often conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that encompasses different aspects not easily associated in a single definition. The sociological literature often confuses the relational structures with the civic dimension that instead belongs to civic integration. In this case, the process of disintegration of realities must be analyzed from two perspectives: from one hand the relations that constitute the fundamental basis of cohesion and on the other the structure of values which instead is the civic integration. This implies another important step namely the need to consider the two embedding concepts in the reality. This means that the places have a central role in facilitating the processes of cohesion and civic integration. Assuming a close

link between social reality and space it is obvious that cohesion and civic integration are the expression of different spatial areas. We can definitely say that social cohesion has to be considered a concept <spatially specific> for the parochial dimension while civic integration refers to the public realm. The distinction between cohesion and civic integration as two different areas, not only puts greater attention to the consequences that the transformations of the spatial structure produces relatively to the break-up of social and civic competences, but also leads to consider the crisis of local realities as the product of asynchronies that arise between cohesion and civic integration. In this perspective, the social integration of a community depends on both the level of connection that develops between social cohesion and civic integration and the generative processes operating not only within the two respective fields but also how they affect the quality of their connection. The conceptualization of the generative process shows that it is not enough to be inserted into a network in order to feel belonging to a cohesive reality, but even that it is not enough to have a high level of cohesion to define a community civically integrated. This implies the need to analyze the generativity of social cohesion in relation to the values given that cohesion and generativity, in the absence of public spaces, become synonimous of tribal identities.

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