



# LIFE CHANCES IN A (UN)SUSTAINABLE WORLD

EDITORIAL

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As has already been well established, we are individuals living in increasingly individualized societies. One may depict the contemporary subject as the human type who wants to be free in order to become an individual. At the foundation of our societies lies no more some kind of *Comune*, but the *Individuo* and his freedom to act as a *privato*. There are no more “laws” for action, but “freedom” of action. The subject of history is no longer the “political animal”, but the “homo oeconomicus”. In the global cities (cosmo-poleis) there are no more “citizens” of the city (polis), but rather “consumers” searching for self-improvement and self-realization, often coping with the delusions of authenticity and autonomy.

The paradox is that by seeking more life, we risk losing – and even destroying – it. An argument attested to by the repeated crises (environmental, health, economic, technological, political, cultural, etc.) that follow one another without interruption, and also by the structural inequalities emerging in our societies, as Hans-Peter Müller explains in his contribution.

So much so that the question arises: what else must happen for us to wake up from our “dogmatic sleep”? Our hypothesis (in which many continue to believe) is that “more life chances” could stand on a principle of absolute autonomy. Thus, in an extractive form, it could stand on exploitation of the other and of

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the environment in a technocratic context that is increasingly abstract (i.e. incapable of dealing with concreteness) and imperative, that is capable of imposing its own rules to achieve the expected results. This is the culture of a large part of contemporary élites, as in the case examined by Skylar Houck.

The multiplication of means (through technology) and the privatization of ends (derived from the principle of sovereignty) presuppose that the “more life” of billions of people need consider neither the preconditions (raw materials, energy, but also knowledge, education, etc.) nor the consequences on the world around them. Maybe time has come for going beyond growth, as Dario Pizzul proposes?

The modern idea forgets that “more life chances” for billions of individuals entails an increase in entropy, i.e. the degree of disorder, disorganisation and risk of death of the system. Such an effect occurs on multiple levels, from biology to information. The result is there for all to see: the increase in the possibilities of life that has actually taken place over the last thirty years leaves a legacy of serious entropy problems on the physical side, with the disruption of the entropic balance between planetary society and the ecosystem. On the informational side, the increased freedom and cultural openness goes hand in hand with the growing disorder within the various spheres of personal and collective life. This is the fundamental point of the contribution proposed by Chiara Giaccardi and Mauro Magatti.

Over time, the increase in entropy has reached such a level that it has shaken the structural arrangements outlined since the 1980s. The success of “globalization” has been of such proportions as to upset the entropic balance between organized human life and the natural and social environment. The time we are beginning to live in must come to terms with this legacy. Nevertheless, as sociology teaches, the process of individualization does not entail the end of the social, or the vanishing of relations. Rather, it implies a deep reconfiguration of human relations in every life sphere: from love to family, from work to friendship, the individual is hovering between the longing for personalization and the need of social recognition. A very difficult movement, especially for the Western world, steeped in a



radically individualistic culture. That is precisely why it is always useful to look at reality from different points of view to search for a new “tentative cosmopolitanism”, as done by Sunil D. Santha, Kishori Vijay Mandhare and Dhammadip Gajbhiye in their paper, and also by Erik Bormanis in his.

