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Reframing a Damaged Regional Brand on a Global Scale through Cultural and City Diplomacy

the Case of Sicily under a Dynamic Performance Governance Approach

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REFRAMING A DAMAGED REGIONAL BRAND ON A GLOBAL SCALE THROUGH CULTURAL AND CITY DIPLOMACY:

THE CASE OF SICILY UNDER A DYNAMIC PERFORMANCE GOVERNANCE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Among the most significant long-term effects of the so-called globalization, the shift towards a more effective competitiveness of local/regional areas at an international level plays a primary role.

Globalization has been an all-encompassing phenomenon as it pervades both daily life (e.g. through the purchase of goods and services by consumers) and the scenarios of international relations, financial markets, trade, as well as those of human rights, public security, health, etc.

While a national Government is able to formulate adequate measures to adapt / contain globalization processes under the traditional international relations and law tools, on the other hand, a completely different scenario has to be faced when a sub-state level community (e.g., regions, local areas) is called to take on the global competition, due to its unfamiliarity with the traditional system of international state-centric relations.

In addition, as the globalized context - by definition - has no geographical boundaries: a) both risks and opportunities can come from anywhere in the world (inbound); b) strategic opportunities for the development of an area can also be intercepted on a global scale (outgoing). In such a global scenario, reputation is the first and foremost factor by which an area is perceived abroad.

If a neutral reputation enables to immediately implement strategic actions for the development of the area on a global scale, a negative reputation - on the other hand - could decisively hinder the possibility of establishing strategic relationships of any kind.

This leads to a serious risk of marginalization and increasing impoverishment of the local/regional area and its community, as the stakeholders' trust would be lacking (or their audience would be more limited than that the area could looking for).

Purpose: this doctoral thesis is conceived as a learning tool to face the case of Sicily as an example of regional system affected by a serious long-lasting multifactorial negative reputation on a global scale. Based on this, the aim of this research is to define and explore a policy design model supported by a Dynamic Performance Governance perspective focused on international reputation issues of the more-than-a-city and less-than-a-state areas.

Research design: This thesis is structured into four sections and a general conclusion chapter

The first section is addressed to illustrate the reputation background related to the Sicilian context from multiple viewpoints (e.g., political, socio-economic, cultural, and so on) in order to analyse the strengths and weaknesses for which it is required the design of innovative performance governance mechanisms for supporting policy design and implementation.

The second section analyses the models and empirical experiences of city diplomacy and trans-local relationships both in their direct form and in their associative form (translocal networks). This in the light of the overall balance between the various state and non-state actors of the contemporary global scenario.

The third section is dedicated to define strategic learning methods, preliminary to policy design activities. This is done through the analysis of the categories of wicked and super-wicked problems, as well as of the relationships between them and the tools city diplomacy can offer for their effective management, in particular by applying system dynamics and dynamic performance government approaches under the whole-of-government view.

The fourth section is oriented to describe the Dynamic Performance Governance approach as a method which may effectively support policymaking at a regional/local level, thus proving its relevance for the contemporary Sicilian context and its competitiveness at a global scale. It applies the DPG approach to the Sicilian experience by showing an illustrative example of policy design and associated actions aimed to improve its reputation and competitiveness by taking into account the multiple attributes characterizing its social and economic domains (as described in the first two sections). At last, such an illustrative application leads to explore and evaluate the advantages, limitations and practical/behavioral implications emerging from the use of the Dynamic Performance Governance approach in a complex regional system (such as the Sicilian region).

The concluding chapter is also dedicated to the proposal for the creation of a translocal network involving cities with a significant presence of UNESCO immovable heritage of the XVII-XVIII centuries. Such network, supposed to be established in Sicily, provides for Catania, St. Petersburg and Vienna as founding subjects. This working hypotesis is based on data and analysis developed in sections II, III, IV

In particular:

I. *Sicily in the contemporary global perception: place brand, international reputation and misleading narratives.*

The concept of nation brand and its components is recognized, highlighting the differences with nation branding and recognizing that the former must necessarily precede the latter. A mention of public diplomacy, as a fundamental "multiplier" tool for public sector international communication, is also introduced.

Through the analysis of the processes related to stereotype and prejudice, the concept of misleading narrative, intended as a distorted evolution of information emerging from a grain of truth, is created. Four major cases are then exposed and analytically deconstructed as misleading narratives, each of which connected to one or more components of the nation brand hexagon: 1. historical origins of the mafia and its effective relations with Sicily; 2. the "foreign dominations", with particular regard to the case of the Norman era; 3. backwardness and tendency towards the mafia of Sicily and Sicilians in the narration of the press and media; 4. description of the Sicilian Region as a center of inefficiency and drainage of state funds. Finally, a fifth analysis is dedicated to the analysis of the self-perception of the Sicilians, and to the communication that they themselves offer of the Sicilian brand.

II. *Non-State Actors and City Diplomacy: Sub State Rank Local Governments, Multilevel Governance Networks and Global Scenario.*

The focus shifts to the level of translocal relations, to describe how a local area can act in the global scenario. This follows a unitary and coherent conceptual framework about the local government foreign activities, according to the best practices worldwide in use since several decades, also known in Urban Sociology and Urban Studies as "city diplomacy", even if referred to regional/local areas other than the cities.

This will also illustrate how, as local areas are becoming increasingly important in global relations, a situation of profound crisis in the traditional state-centric international system is taking place in parallel.

III. *A Dynamic Performance Governance Approach to Trans Local Cooperation on Super Wicked Problems. Reframing the Local Brand through City Diplomacy*

The question this section proposes to address is whether a robust action of repositioning on the global scenario, through the practices of city diplomacy, can contribute to redefining the essential characteristics of a local area and to give it a new singular perception (and self-perception) not just at the local level but also at the global level. This would require a serious and well-founded set of actions and initiatives to enhance the potentials and peculiarities expressed by the local area and its internal stakeholders, together with the ability and skills necessary to transmit and share those potentials and peculiarities outside the local level—in other words, the ability to leverage one's own cultural, social, and national identity to relate to an indefinite quantity of strategic partners, stakeholders, and complex social and political structures that operate on a global level. The more a local government is able to contribute to the global dialogue on the resolution of global problems (super-wicked problems), the greater the possibility that it can solve its own specific problem (wicked problem). For both objectives, an essential prerequisite is the understanding of the System Dynamics in which both the former and the latter develop and mutually influence each other. This can be considered the phase of strategic learning.

IV. *Enhancing a new Sicily's cultural diplomacy set on a global scale to pursue change in brand value outcomes through Dynamic Performance Governance.*

Reputation and the subsequent nation brand, in addition to being an intangible economic asset, as well as a fundamental right of the Individual (as a right to national identity and to cultural identity), is also a common good. Since the nation brand covers each community component, local area reputation (which is the sum of the nation brand's perception abroad) indiscriminately regards any operator/stakeholder, public or private, which has ties of origin with the local area under observation.

This leads us to assume DPG as a valid method to draft a robust nation brand system, through a multi-tiered level of outcomes which, depending on the specific sector, can be carried out consecutively or simultaneously:

a) a first-level set of intermediate outcomes, namely the Sicily's image restoration (which means, moving from a negative reputation scenario, to turn the nation brand rank from -n to 0): in this case, DPG can contribute to filling the gap between perception/bias and reality.

b) a final outcome, that is the Sicily's reputation improvement and the change in brand value (which means, assuming a neutral reputation scenario as established by the restoration activities, to turn the nation brand rank from 0 to $n \rightarrow +\infty$) through a massive cultural diplomacy action modeled on the basis of a DPG perspective.

Research method

According to a predominantly inductive method, this research is based on the Creswell's five criteria of qualitative analysis. A necessarily multidisciplinary approach has been adopted, as follows:

I. Section I is devoted to detect and define the major damage factors affecting reputation and nation brand (i.e. misleading narratives). Under a DPG perspective, it represents a first wicked questions set to deal with. It frames themes afferent History, Sociology, Social Psychology, Human Rights, a.o. Section I investigates who (rather than "what") Sicily is in the overall perception abroad and why it is perceived in this way.

II. Section II frames the overall contemporary scenario of local government's foreign activities and relations. Under a DPG perspective, it represents the inter-institutional system Sicily, as an holistic whole, is called to act within, as well as to deal with. This section frames issues afferent the sectors of International Relations, Urban Sociology, Urban Studies, International Law. Section II investigates, thus, where and how actions should be undertaken.

Both sections are based on both primary and secondary Literature sources.

III. Section III is devoted to the analysis of policy and social implications (wicked and super-wicked problems) as well as to System Dynamics at domestic, trans-local and international level involving the data shown in I and II section.

IV. Section IV is aimed to define the DPG models of reference, moving from the data arising by both I and II section. Such data (models, elements, components a.o.) are now rebuild and translated in terms of strategic resources and performance drivers, to define some possible solutions and action plans aimed to achieve the desired intermediate and final outcomes.

Implications. The research demonstrates that DPG, associated with city diplomacy and cultural diplomacy models, can enhance the whole nation brand and the reputation of a given sub-state rank system different from the city.

The research also demonstrates that DPG approach can also be successfully applied for strictly qualitative analysis; as well as in relation to trans-local level, so further implementing the inter-institutional view already operating at national level.

This method may support policy-makers, regional public/private actors, and other stakeholders in designing and assessing policies for culture according to a sustainable development perspective spanning the national boundaries.

Originality. This work tends to combine and concurrently apply the city diplomacy models and the nation brand models through the DPG perspective.

Key words: *System Dynamics; Dynamic Performance Governance; Outcome-based Dynamic Performance Management; Multilevel Governance Networks; City Diplomacy; Cultural Diplomacy; Nation Brand; Regional Area Reputation; Image Restoration; Sicilian Region.*

Without passion or prejudice.

SECTION I

SICILY IN THE CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL PERCEPTION

PLACE BRAND, INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION AND MISLEADING NARRATIVES

1. Introduction

Despite its natural and historical vocation as a geo-strategic actor in the Mediterranean basin, contemporary Sicily paradoxically experiences severe marginalisation, which decisively affects its development prospectives

Although extended over an extraordinarily long timeframe, Sicily's condition seems to be due to economic factors rather than to endogenous structural deficiencies regarding its territory or its geographical location.

As proof of this, it is sufficient to consider how the Republic of Malta has, over the last decades, reached exemplary economic growth rates, though it is geographically much more peripheral than Sicily and - unlike the latter – almost entirely devoid of natural resources and raw materials.

One of the most relevant factors one can consider in this regard, among others, lies in Malta's capability in successfully managing its geographical location, making it a primary point of strength in geo-strategic relationships involving the Mediterranean basin.

Assuming the phenomena afflicting Sicily's placement and role at the global level is, for the most part attributable to conjuncture factors also means that such phenomena should be widely reversible in the long term, provided that they are managed adequately in the short-medium term.

On the other hand, one should also consider that the lack of, or the excessive delay in adopting adequate remedial policies within a reasonable time (consequently causing the prolongation *ad infinitum* of the situation to be coped with) is a problem in itself.

This can certainly generate the erroneous belief that the island's disadvantage is due to causes (backwardness, periphery, etc.) of a structural nature, which cannot be resolved.

Among the various causes of the continuation of this gap (although it is particularly difficult to define the correct cause-effect sequence), in our opinion, particular importance is also given to the lack of an effective regional policy aimed at strategic placements of the island towards the international stage.

The strategic value that direct channels of multi-level interaction with worldwide actors and stakeholders entails for the social and economic development of each territorial community is clear.

The strategic role that reputation plays in this context, (which is fundamental in any kind of international relations), is equally well known: with all other conditions being equal, in choosing a partner (be it economic, cultural or otherwise) there will always be a tendency to prefer the most prestigious and, therefore, the one with the best reputation.

Applying this criterion to the so-called globalized world, in which competitiveness plays a pivotal role, it is easy to understand how a better or worse reputation can be decisive.

It is well known that the reputation of Sicily and Sicilians abroad is often the subject of serious istortion, to a large extent originated by a framework of strong biases and stereotypes, and further strengthened (in the negative sense) by the lack of an overall framework of information .

Most of the time, the overall picture is aggravated by the proliferation and subsequent unconscious diffusion of media productions and communication initiatives which have a serious negative effect, through which the harmful stereotype of a Mafia island, backward, resigned to its destiny, etc. continues to perpetuate itself.

In some cases, the identification between Sicily and the Mafia (already a source of unease at a national level) is a deeply rooted false perception in the minds of people abroad.

The investigation into the causes, origins and any hidden purposes of such a long-standing phenomenon is beyond the scope of this study, but some factors that facilitate its perpetuation can be hypothesized, including:

a) insufficient promotion / protection of Sicily's image abroad by the national offices (MFA, etc.), even though they are not technically obliged to adjust their publicity due to the needs of a single component of the national territory, as they are institutionally devoted to the collective and impersonal representation of the entire Italian community;

b) the absence, on the other hand, of proper Sicilian institutional forms of representation (even by the Sicilian Region) decentralized *in locis*, which curates the direct and immediate interests, as well as the image itself, of the Sicilian community, and that above all carries out an effective and widespread action of targeted cultural dissemination, entrusted to adequately trained and specialized personnel.

c) and, last but no means least, as mentioned above, the improper negative contribution both Italian and foreign media often offer abroad, through the distribution of mono thematic TV fiction series and film productions, whose constancy and reiteration over time even raises some legitimate suspicions.

In this section some particularly emblematic case studies will be analytically examined. As a simple introductory example, we can mention two examples of how communication regarding Sicily is managed internationally.

La Piovra, was a fiction produced by Italian state television, RAI, relating to an imaginary story (therefore, devoid of any actual documentary value or truly informative content) totally focused on the concept of the Sicilian mafia: it was developed over ten series, over a period of time that began in the mid-1980s and ended in the early 2000s.

The well-known actor Michele Placido, in an interview with Russia Today in 2013, underlined how, thirty years after the beginning of the "La Piovra", he was still perceived in Russia as Commissioner Cattani (the main character of the series)[1].

The serial, broadcast since the 80s already in the ex U.S.S.R, met with immense media success, as well as all the subsequent series that were regularly aired in modern Russia. Consider that the overall time span covered by the various Piovra series goes, as mentioned, from the 1980s to the first half of the 2000s.

In this specific case, therefore, the imprinting of Sicily generated by an entire and very

1 The document can be consulted here.

important national community remained entrusted to that serial for decades. Moreover, “La Piovra” was also distributed in about 80 countries.

The damage to Sicily’s reputation is almost incalculable[2].

Furthermore, in 2018 the description the Easy Rough Guide gave of Sicily caused a sensation. In particular, it was reported that *"Government statistics indicate that Agrigento is one of the poorest cities in Italy and it is no surprise to learn that Mafia-like attitudes are well established here"*, and still the city *"has a poor sense of identity"*, and again "*No danger for tourists, only a greater tendency among restaurateurs, compared to the rest of Sicily, to perpetrate small scams such as increasing the cover charge or presenting you with dishes that you did not order and then adding them to the bill."*[3]. But this is just one of the many examples that could be quoted, of how foreign tourist guides describe Sicily.

The poor reputation within the international community generates a dangerous credibility gap phenomena affecting not only the entire system- the understanding of Sicily as a whole, but is also detrimental to any individual Sicilian operator (whether public or private) who, when approaching a foreign interlocutor, will often face bias, distrust or mental reservations from his foreign counterpart[4].

To restore a balance of adequate dignity, therefore, the Sicilian operator will often find themselves committed to:

a) addressing and deconstructing the bias;

b) guaranteeing the reliability of their territory and of their origin;

c) guaranteeing their personal reliability.

All this with evident expenditure of time (a fundamental variable in a large number of initiatives, commercial and otherwise), resources, energy and, in any case, persistent uncertainty of the results.

And all, as well, on the assumption that the Sicilian Operator, in addition to offering a service or product of adequate quality, is also equipped with dialectical skills and persuasive

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2 A separate discussion should be made for Puzo’s/Coppola's "Godfather". In a dutifully realistic perspective, it should be borne in mind that not all the phenomena affecting Sicily's reputation can be easily addressed. In the case of the Coppola trilogy, for example, it is necessary to consider that these are unanimously recognized productions of very high artistic value worldwide. Unfortunately, in some cases (not many, in truth), all that remains is to take note of the situation, given that any contrasting actions could easily result in a dangerous image boomerang.

3 The document can be consulted here.

4 This could be considered a sort of negative *halo effect*, that the American Psychologists Association defines in its positive meaning as a rating bias in which a general evaluation (usually positive) of a person, or an evaluation of a person on a specific dimension, influences judgments of that person on other specific dimensions. See APA Dictionary of Psychology, entry *halo effect*.

and negotiating skills that can be used usefully to support any problematic approach with the foreign Interlocutor.

In the absence of these personal qualities (which also presuppose a certain awareness of own territorial identity, a point on which we will focus shortly), the risk of failure of the initiative increases significantly.

Moving from this ungenerous but realistic framework, it is difficult to hypothesize any form of serious and effective international dialogue at any level as long as Sicily is generally perceived as a grotesquely backward and unnaturally dangerous place, and the effective characteristics and potential of which continue to remain ultimately unknown.

A stereotype is a fixed, over-generalized belief about a particular group of people or a co- culture.

The cultural response to the stereotype, therefore, should be of a unitary nature and should consist of an active and univocal proposition of a new way of understanding and perceiving the Sicily-system, its true essence and according to its real components.

The preliminary and necessary step to this, however, is to face the misleading narratives that have given rise to the stereotypes.

After that, the credibility gap should be bridged by reversing the Gresham Law, that is, by introducing and circulating "good money" - information on Sicily that will expel, in a spontaneous and progressive way, the "bad money" of the stereotypes.

2. Nation brand, nation branding and public diplomacy

In dealing with a place's image or reputation issue, both substantive and communicative aspects should be addressed and defined, as well as the interdependent relationship between them: in other words, any communicative problem should be considered as a symptom of an underlying substantive problem not efficiently tackled yet, or not tackled at all.

The risk is therefore twofold:

- on the one hand, an imbalance towards the substantive plan, which can occur when public sector actors, omit to make their positive outcomes known abroad and/or, just outside their territory, even though they have been adopting effective policies and fostering good practices. This lack of communication could undermine any substantial positive effect[5].

- on the other, an imbalance towards the communication plan could be verified when local goods and services are promoted without previously tackling the underlying substantial criticality of the local image. In this sense, for example, a serious inconsistency is detected when Sicily's public offices adopt robust campaigns to promote incoming tourism while most foreign travel guides on Sicily are still warning their readers to be on the lookout for the mafia, etc.

A brief introductory hint on the place's image and/or reputation management issue must focus three key concepts: a) nation brand; b) nation branding; c) public diplomacy.

It is crucial to note how such concepts are mainly referred to the nation state system, since they tend to describe practices and models apparently not suitable to sub-state rank localities (for example, due to the burdens and constraints of foreign policy).

On the other hand, models strictly related to merely regional or local realities seem to be insufficient as such, to draw a full and exhaustive reference framework suitable for any sub-state locality, region, or other non-state area which is characterized by strong historical-cultural conditions as an almost-state. This could be, for instance, the case of several federate states, or of regions endowed with strong autonomous status.

As for the specific case of Sicily (today an autonomous region of the Italian republic), one of its main historical peculiarities, among others, lies in the fact it was for a long time a sovereign state, namely the Kingdom of Sicily, established in 1130 and ceasing to exist in 1816 when it was incorporated into the new Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

However, Sicily suffers from a long-term negative reputation, due to a mixture of diverse factors that will be mentioned below. But this has happened on a global scale. Although it is not a sovereign state, therefore, Sicily's negative reputational element behaves like that of a state: as for the negative factors mainly, in fact, Sicily is internationally perceived, known and called 'Sicily', not generically, "Italy".

It follows that we are dealing with a mixed situation, in which a non-state level territorial reality faces global problems affecting its image and reputation, and this situation should be coped with using the same criteria and models that a state would adopt.

The first and most evident point of difference with respect to what a state would be able

5 We are not referring only to powerful territorial branding strategies, but also to smaller measures that could condition the effects of any communication policy decisively. For example, think of the enormous loss of potential recipients when only the national language is used in institutional communications, regardless of the sector involved.

to do is, as mentioned, the factual and legal capacity to undertake its own independent set of foreign relations.

In the second section of this thesis we will examine how this is actually possible.

On the other hand, in order to implement the image and reputation management model on a global level in relation to a local area, it is necessary to first examine the foundation at national level: how can a nation-state maintain and manage its image and reputation globally?

a) Nation brand

A Nation brand could be defined as both *who* a Nation is (identity) and *what* people abroad think that Nation is (reputation): if a nation brand is robust, balanced and well defined, the content of these two definitions should be the same.

A critical approach is provided by Anholt (2011), who is said to have created the same concept of *Nation brand* in 1996; moving from the initial assumption that the reputations of countries (and, by extension, of cities and regions too) behave rather like the brand images of companies and products, and that they are equally critical to the progress, prosperity, and good management of those places.

Initially, thus, *nation brand* was a general concept: through which, the whole matter of image and reputation of a given place could be treated.

As the same Author (2011) afterwards remarked, a gap between the concept of nation *brand* and that of nation *branding* quickly emerged: by the latter, a vast current of thought began to introduce the idea that branding was a concept which was detached from the essential characteristics of the product object of its action. In other words, the branding activity would end up prevailing over the product. Also by creating features in any way product related out of nothing. This would have happened with regard to the nations and their brands as well[6].

For this reason, in 2010/11 Anholt upgraded his original theory, scaling down the inappropriate level of relevance up to then given to the communicative aspect (namely, the *branding* activity) by several other authors. This branding activity, as the Author specified, was intended as a way of creating a brand from scratch: a single logo, a professional "look

6 It should be noted that, like a negative reputation, an excessively positive reputation can be dangerous, as it generates expectations that have no relation to reality. It should not be forgotten that the disappointment of a rational expectation automatically translates into a negative reputation for its Actor.

and feel" on stationery, business cards, corporate videos, communiqués, press releases, websites, and so forth, undoubtedly reinforces the impression of a well-organised, modern, self-respecting State with effective and efficient structures, processes, and mechanisms.

The aforementioned approach is considered by Anholt as an essentially *passive* operation that cannot win any new customers, change anybody's mind, increase market share, or affect the country's prospects in any significant way.

Of course, in a busy retail environment, there could be cases in which branding and communicative aspects are almost as important as the product itself, because design is one of the few things that distinguishes a product from its competitors: but, as the Author significantly remarks, countries aren't for sale, and aren't easily mistaken one for another[7].

For such reasons, Anholt assumes good products and services produced by a good corporation are the only way to acquire a positive *brand image*, which eventually reflects on the corporation and becomes its principal asset. Similarly, good products, services, culture, tourism, investments, technology, education, businesses, people, policies, initiatives, and events produced by a good country also acquire a positive brand image, which eventually reflects on the country, and perhaps also becomes its principal asset. Thus, if a country is serious about enhancing its international image, it should concentrate on product development and marketing since a consistent, coordinated, and unbroken stream of useful, noticeable, world-class, and above all relevant ideas, products, and policies can, gradually, enhance the reputation of the country that produces them[8].

In accordance with these introductory considerations, Anholt provides for the definition of *nation brand,* that is basically the sum of people's perceptions of a country, a perception which is in turn derived from the cumulative effects of each element of a six layers, or areas, of national competence, according to his model also known as *Nation Brand Hexagon*[9]:

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7 However, there are emblematic cases in which some countries have been forced to adopt national branding strategies to solve serious problems of confusion with other countries. This is the case of Austria, which recently had to adopt a branding campaign to differentiate itself from Australia, namely the "*No kangaroos in Austria*" campaign, which we will mention later. Furthermore, there may be cases in which branding can really make the difference of a country's "product", as in the case where there are territorial assets that are substantially shared or identical to those of other countries. The issue mainly concerns tourism, especially where it refers to environmental characteristics (e.g. the same sea that bathes several countries, both characterized by the same geomorphological characteristics).

8 ANHOLT, S., *"Beyond the Nation Brand: The Role of Image and Identity in International Relations,"* in Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1, Article 1 (2011).

9 ANHOLT S, . "*Nation-brands of the 21st Century",* in Journal of Brand Management, 5(6), 1998, 395-406.

Figure 1: Nation Brand Hexagon
(adapted from Anholt, 2006).

Nation brand, then, is the sum of foreigners' perceptions on:

1. **Governance;** public opinion about government competency and fairness, as well as its perceived commitment to global issues;

2. People; or the population's reputation for competence, openness and friendliness and other qualities such as tolerance;

3. Culture and Heritage; or the global perceptions of each nation's heritage and appreciation for its contemporary culture;

4. Investment and immigration; or the power to attract people to live, work or study in each country and how people perceive a country's quality of life and business environment;

5. Tourism; or the level of interest in visiting a country and the draw of natural and man-made tourist attractions;

6. Exports; or the public's image of products and services from each country.

A noteworthy checklist of the benefits brought by a robust and positive nation brand, on the basis of the most accountable studies in this regard, have been discussed in detail by Mugobo & Ukpere (2011), according to whose findings a robust and positive national brand image increases, among others, currency stability; restores international credibility and investor confidence; reverses international rating downgrades; increases international political influence; leads to export growth of branded products and services; increases inbound tourism and investment; stimulates stronger international partnerships; enhances nation building (confidence, pride, harmony, ambition, national resolve); reverses negative thoughts about environmental and human rights issues; helps diffuse allegations of corruption and cronyism; brings greater access to global markets; leads to an improvement in the ability to win against regional and global business competitors; and the ability of the country to defend its own markets.

From the aforementioned statement, as the Authors argue, nation brand (and, subsequently, nation branding) emerges as a powerful concept that can bring enormous benefits to a country, also considering that the movement of international capital is influenced by perceptions of countries as brands by investors[10].

Anholt (2006) further postulates that a positive brand image can help a country to reverse brain drain. Indeed, one of the consequences of globalisation which is hardest on emerging markets is the haemorrhaging of its best-educated and most talented workers, entrepreneurs and academics to developed nations[11].

Indeed, Anholt (2010) said that the 'logos and slogans' school of thought, deriving from the art of commercial selling, is based on the belief that perceptions of places can be directly influenced by communication: in other words, people can be persuaded through one form of rhetoric or another to alter their opinions about countries, cities or regions.

On the contrary, the Author argues, a mere '*policy-based*' approach (that is a purely communications-based approach implemented by a public actor) is little more than futile propaganda, since countries and cities are profoundly different from products and corporations.

The pivotal point to be noted in Anholt's theory is that the reputations of places can only be meaningfully influenced by addressing their root causes: for this reason, the Author suggests that the images of places are largely a matter of "*reality with delay"*, something rather solidly built over many decades, not something volatile and transient that can be pushed around at will by external agents.

The art of changing people's beliefs, hence, lies in altering the phenomena which give rise to the beliefs. In this way, the 'audience' will own its own belief, and feel — quite

10 MUGOBO, V., - UKPERE, W., *"Is Country branding a panacea or poison?"*, in African Journal of Business Management Vol. 5(20), 2011, pp. 8248-8255

11 ANHOLT, S., "*Why brand? Some practical considerations for nation branding"*. Place Brand., 2(2): 2006, p. 97-107, quoted in Mugobo – Ukpere, op. Cit. These and other fundamental aspects of globalisation will be fully described in Section II.

justifiably — that it has arrived at this realization independently[12].

Therefore, according to Anholt (2010), a robust nation brand management should develop through a process consisting (at least) of three dynamic components, each of which requires action:

component	*contents and actions required*
Strategy	1. knowing *who* a nation is and *where* it stands today (both in reality and according to internal and external perceptions); 2. knowing where it wants to get to; and knowing how it is going to get there. *Difficulties to deal with:* reconciling the needs and desires of a wide range of different national (or internal) actors into a more or less single direction; finding a strategic goal that is both inspiring and feasible, since these two requirements are frequently contradictory
Substance	Effective execution of the ***strategy*** in the form of new economic, legal, political, social, cultural, and educational activity: the real innovations, businesses, legislation, reforms, investments, institutions, and policies which will bring about the desired progress
Symbolic actions	➢ Particular species of ***substance*** that happen to have an intrinsic communicative power. ➢ Symbolic actions are emblematic of the strategy: they are at the same time a component of the national story and the means of telling it. ➢ A single symbolic action will seldom achieve any lasting effect. Multiple actions should emanate from as many different sectors as possible in order to build a rounded and believable image for the place; they must also continue in unbroken succession for many years. ➢ Symbolic actions should never be empty—they must be communicative substance rather than just communication

12 ANHOLT, S., *Places - Identity, Image and Reputation*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010

It is important to dwell on the component of symbolic actions, which are apparently subordinate and secondary if compared to the other two components. In some cases, *symbolic actions* could immediately follow the strategy definition, instead of *substance*: we can consider this hypothesis for scenarios in which the negative reputation is artificially induced by external agents, and not genetically deriving from internal factors, nor is in any way connected to factors that can be managed within the territory involved (e.g. mediatic massive and/or viral discrediting campaigns from abroad, etc).

Figure 2: **Nation Brand – an example of symbolic action.**
Screenshot taken from the official in-flight safety video shown on board Air Malta aircraft. The Knight of Malta shows how to wear protective equipment. Many factors of the Maltese national brand are here perceivable: a Knight (i.e. Malta gets a strong and well defined cultural and historical identity) on board an aeroplane (i.e. Malta conjugates past and present) showing a funny aspect (i.e. Maltese people are nice and positive). It is crucial to stress how, in this case, there is no *nation branding*: neither the name "Malta" nor its most renowned visual brand, the Maltese Cross, ever appear throughout the clip. They are just taken for granted.
Source: © Air Malta Ltd., 2014

In conclusion, we agree with Anholt's perspective, where nation brand can be said to be a quite different concept from nation branding, since it is a multifactorial intangible pre-existing asset, or a *key factor*, definable in terms of what is perceived or known abroad about the area under examination, as well as deriving from several variables which can be adequately defined under the nation brand hexagon; the second, in turn, is the action aimed at efficiently communicating such assets, hence a *key activity*. Pre-existence of a (robust) nation brand is therefore the necessary and preliminary condition to any nation branding operation: this means that no *branding* can be actually achieved when an underlying *brand* is lacking.

b) Nation branding

So while mentioning the concept of nation brand, as defined in its final version by Anholt (2011), some brief hints will now be given with regard to the quite different nation branding concept: this last, even by exclusion, should indicate the complex activities aimed at making the nation brand perceptible abroad.

As Bach (2010) noted, successful brands often occur from where they are least expected: the Author refers to the case of Brazil, as one of the most strongly “new branded” countries in the world. Since it produces almost everything as a leading industrial nation, the Author remarks that Brazil does not want to be only recognisable for samba dancing at carnival times, rainforests, as an exotic country with sex, beaches, sport and adventures, or eventually through negative associations like pollution, overpopulation, poverty and the like[13].

As Cotirlea (2015) stated, on the other hand, there is a lack of consistency in defining what are the constituents of place branding. Following Anholt once more, nation branding could be therefore be defined as the process of designing, planning and communicating the name and identity, in order to manage the reputation[14].

According to Hankinson (2007), place branding enhances the development of a region or a place not only in terms of leisure and tourism, but also in terms of attracting inward investments, enhancing existing culture and heritage, developing facilities for local residents, and welcoming new residents, employees and skilled migrants[15].

As for nation branding, or country branding, and other kinds of "public" branding, the literature is in general vast, also in light of the fact that, bearing Anholt's methodological warnings in mind, despite its devotion to nation *branding,* it continues to deal largely with issues and aspects that, in truth, should refer to the quite different concept of nation *brand*.

The main aspect we believe is fundamental to point out, instead, is the relationship between nation brand and its branding: the latter, as a semantic *Significant*, should always follow the former, the *Signification*, and not vice versa.

A typical point of strength of nation branding, however, is the extreme versatility it

13 BACH, S., “*Nation Branding: Branding Croatia”*, in Diplomatic Academy Proceedings-Papers from the International Conference of the 13th CEI Dubrovnik Diplomatic Forum “Strategic Public Diplomacy”, Zagreb, 2012

14 COTIRLEA, D. A., *“Country Image Vs. Country Brand: differences and similarities”,* in Ecoforum, Volume 4, Special Issue 1, 2015, p. 165 – 171.

15 HANKINSON, G., *The management of destination brands: Five guiding principles based on recent developments in corporate branding theory*, in Journal of Brand Management, 14 (3), 2007, 240-254

offers in managing both the quantity and quality of the image that a country release. So, nation branding could be considered an effective lever, or driver, in correcting perceptive (and therefore reputational) distortions affecting the underlying substantial brand of the country.

c) Public diplomacy

Both significant and signification need to be actively *communicated.*

In other words, the final brand/branding outcome is supposed to be put into a dynamic circuit by which the information is actually transferred from the sender to the recipients.

Imagining the brand as a painting, and its branding as the construction of a frame enhances certain or other brand's nuances, it is then necessary that the framed painting is exhibited in suitable museums, with adequate lighting, etc.. It would make no sense if that painting were exhibited with incorrect illumination, or in galleries which were different to the style and theme of the painting or, worse still, kept in the painter's basement.

In the case of the governmental sector (whether if referred to proper said national level or to sub-state level), *public diplomacy* is one of the most relevant ways by which the brand's/branding's content is actively delivered and "lightened" abroad.

Although part of the second section of this thesis will be devoted to explaining the concept of public diplomacy, it is nevertheless helpful to anticipate here some basic concepts.

In international relations, traditional diplomacy characterizes intergovernmental relationships: it operates, in other words, on a State to State basis.

This traditional diplomacy is an exclusive prerogative of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (which usually act through their decentralized diplomatic missions, in turn bearing the official representation of the State abroad) and, furthermore, it is subject to specific provisions of international law, namely to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (18th April 1961).

On the other hand, public diplomacy is an alternative and entirely informal way by which a government directly interacts with foreign civil communities (or their other non-governmental actors), without any involvement of the related governmental level.

The needs, purposes and interests that public diplomacy could serve are of several kinds: one of these is fostering the public actor's image and reputation towards and among certain foreign people (rather than their governmental bodies), to gain their support and endorsement [16].

First of all, public diplomacy, is a way of presenting the country abroad, its tourism, products, culture, people and government policies, as well as of promoting exports and attracting investment. Public diplomacy can also be considered in itself a valuable *plus* in terms of image: the government authority personally takes the field among foreigners to present itself.

Intergovernmental diplomacy		***Public diplomacy***	
Government A	**Government B** (Community B)	**GovernmentA**	Government B **(Community B)**

Figure 3: Public Diplomacy scheme

In the light of this fundamental aspect, public diplomacy is certainly a somewhat more complex and thorny subject than marketing usually is : in fact, it should be considered that public diplomacy models are widely used also in intergovernmental relations to cope with situations of serious tension.

This, however, does not imply that public diplomacy and marketing are incompatible. On the contrary: the best results are achieved when these two activities are under a common umbrella, and when there is a relationship and coordination between them[17].

Thus, two crucial points marking the difference between nation (or regional, or city, as we will see) branding and other kinds of branding can be defined:

Nation branding is mainly devoted to promoting a territorial image *abroad*: it is irrelevant (if not useless) to hypothesize a branding issue with reference to its own internal territory. In the case of the brand of a sub-state area/government (as in the case we are dealing with here) it is then necessary to carry out *ad-hoc* based evaluations.

What matters is how, even if referred to a sub-state rank territory, branding should always be intended to communicate that territory beyond its national borders (in order to engage the largest possible audience) and, only on a secondary basis as well on the basis of the aforementioned *ad-hoc* analysis, to the rest of the national context it is in[18].

The marketing approach, typical of any kind of branding, should be always

16 For this reason, public diplomacy is strictly related to the *soft power* issues. Also this latter concept will be touched on in the following section II.
17 BACH, S., op. cit., p. 85
18 For this reason, we believe that branding operations characterized by the use of the national language alone are, in themselves, ineffective from the start.

accompanied by the activity proper of the governmental public sector, namely diplomacy and, to be more precise, public diplomacy.

3. Reputational issues, stereotypes and bias

Nation brand, of course, is not a sterile concept. As a result of several factors, indeed, events or situations which affect one or more of its internal components will also unavoidably affect the whole nation brand.

One can identify, in this regard, at least two different situations that could undermine the perception of a place's actual substance, thus leading to an unbalanced or even negative nation brand, and namely:

- a serious imbalance between the various nation brand factors, whereby one is excessively overwhelming the others. In this case, the risk to the place is to be perceived almost exclusively because of that factor, so causing a serious under-evaluation or perceptive distortion for all the others. Within a strongly competitive environment, this could lead stakeholders from abroad to prefer other regions or nations. This means the overwhelmed nation brand components, their potential, and even their presence, will not be perceived at all.

This is a phenomenon relevant for Sicily, the current brand of which (for its "positive" part) is almost completely monopolized by the tourism-component. This is also with reference to the *culture and heritage* component, which (due to a long-lasting cognitive dissonance) is constantly identified as the tourist use of cultural heritage.

- the negative value of one or more factors, the effects of which directly affect the overall perception of the whole area.

In a certain sense, therefore, in defining it in terms of perception, we could also consider nation brand as a fundamentally reputational issue: factors affecting or jeopardizing the nation brand, therefore, give rise to a so-called reputational risk.

This is a crucial point, since in some cases reputational risk could affect the place brand (whether it is a nation or a city brand) in a such a pervasive way so as to make it unperceivable, inexistent or, even worse, a negative brand.

In some cases, where this problem only regards the way in which a nation or place is narrated rather than the reality that place actually embodies, some re-branding activities aimed at restoring the consistency between narrative and reality may be sufficient.

In other words, the place (or nation) branding could be considered as aimed not exclusively at positively promoting the place, but also at the correction of a negative perception affecting it. There is therefore a precise correlation between reputational risk and place branding, so by acting on the latter it should be possible to correct most of the distortionary effects the place's image could suffer from.

In this regard, Anholt (2005) suggests that place branding, and nation branding, are more an attempt to manage the reputational assets of the place than to sell it in the global marketplace[19].

In this sense, after such a brief mention of the dynamic relationship between reputation and nation *branding*, however, it needs to be noted that one more relationship also inevitably arises between reputation and nation *brand,* especially in the case of negative reputation.

Nation branding, combined with public diplomacy, can be an effective option to combat negative reputation. But, if not adequately addressed, can seriously afflict the entire nation brand system in turn, to the point of completely eradicating it.

As Avraham (2009) noted, a country's image (hence, a country's perception or reputation) is affected by many factors, including location, leadership, regime, economic situation, government stability and more and, though the design of an image seems to be highly dynamic, it is actually based on a *stereotype*.

In a neutral scenario, factors causing a negative reputation of a place, a nation, etc. can be of two types:

a) a sudden negative image that is the result of an unexpected crisis, such as murders or natural disasters;

b) a long-lasting negative image brought on by ongoing issues such as economic hardship, high crime rates, continuous war or political instability[20].

Lastly, besides the poor or negative reputation, there is a third scenario to take into account_ the lack of any reputation, which might occur with regard to one of more single components of the *nation brand hexagon*: this happens when no information (whether positive or negative) is circulating about some aspects of a place. It's noteworthy that these

19 ANHOLT, S. *'Editorial: Some important distinctions in place branding'*, Place Branding, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2005, pp. 116–121.

20 AVRAHAM, E, & INSCH, A., "*Managing the reputation of places in crisis",* in Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, 2014, 10,

"lacking" aspects, sometimes, could be revealed as the successful ones in some cases.

Finally, there is a further scenario which does not seem to have been taken into account by the literature on public territorial brands; an *artificial nation brand*, is established whether it is in part or entirely devoid of any "grain of truth". Such (generally negative) artificial nation brand may stratify due to information involuntarily or voluntarily released into circulation both in the national territory and, above all, abroad. This can be due to several reasons: from negative propaganda against a territorial counterpart to geographical competitiveness, from the political competition for the supremacy of power on the international scene[21], to commercial competition for the conquest of new markets abroad, or simple mass media market reasons, etc.

An *artificial nation brand*, therefore, represents in a certain sense the final outcome of an inverted process with respect to the physiological one of the nation brand so far seen: one or more external actors create a *misleading narrative* that, in turn, through real artificial negative branding (namely, *negative stereotypes*), ends up creating an artificial brand, which replaces the original one until it almost completely loses its tracks.

The artificial negative brand, in other words, is nothing more than a stable and immanent sum of negative stereotypes, namely a negative bias the basis of which is no longer the nation brand, but the misleading narrative (which acts like a sort of virus).

Moreover, when spread abroad, a misleading narrative behaves like the conceptual opposite of public diplomacy: while this implies that the country or place successfully promotes itself abroad (an outgoing process, therefore), misleading narrative instead means someone abroad is discrediting the place's reputation in such a way that any image damage spills into the territory (incoming process).

Nation brand → ***nation branding*** → ***public diplomacy***

Bias ← ***vulgate*** ← ***Misleading narrative***

Biases, then, can be defined as a long-term negative image brought on by ongoing

21 As will be discussed in the following section, this aspect represents the "dark side" of public diplomacy, namely the *propaganda*. For example, a State may disseminate misleading information about the government of another State through its agents or related apparently non-governmental structures, in order to provoke blaming by the international Community, as well as stirring up disapproval among its people to cause its "democratic" overthrow.

misleading narratives: so the elimination of the prejudice can only take place by intervening over the misleading narrative, since the negative bias is the symptom and the misleading narrative the cause.

Following Echeverry *et alii* (2017), the entertainment industry and mass media have an important influence on people's perceptions of a country, especially in the case of negative images. There are numerous examples of cases where the image we have of a country is based on stereotypes or associations with a biased reality. The perceptions of a country are also based on stereotypes that different people or groups of people have of a place.

The Authors remark the stereotypes tend to be simplifications of a *"false" reality*[22] that relies on exceptions instead of patterns, or on (subjective) impressions instead of facts: a stereotype associated with a place then influences the assessment made of the same, or, in its absence, on products from that source. Pre-existing stereotypes such as sports teams, political leaders or the behaviour of its citizens, among others, all influence the way others regard a nation[23].

In this regard, Benoit's (1995, ed. 2014) *image restoration* or *image repair* theory can provide for some food for thought to define a reference framework for managing the effects a misleading narrative can cause.

The Author stressed the *persuasion* concept, which is the communication that attempts to change, create, or strengthen attitudes. The latter, in turn, are cognitions or thoughts that are developed through direct experience and communication and influence our behaviour.

Attitudes have two components: *beliefs* ("facts"; descriptions of people, objects, and events) and *values* (favourable or unfavourable evaluations), and this pair belief/value depends on numerous independent variables, changing from subject to subject.

By managing these two leverages, a *persuasive attack* can be led: this is defined by Benoit as an attempt to create (or strengthen) a negative attitude (the pair belief/value) against a target, by describing its behaviour in a way that the audience develops an unfavourable value about that action.

Benoit furthermore notes how some messages simply report what the source believes to be true without any intent to impugn the reputation of the target: the new belief, which

22 We will adopt the different concept of *misleading narrative*, since the idea of a "false reality", in addition to presupposing the identification of the opposite "real reality" (a matter that belongs to other scientific fields), requires complex epistemological investigations that go beyond the purposes of this study. Our aim, in this sense, is just to raise a methodical doubt on reliability and credibility of a given narrative.

23 ECHEVERRI, L., - HORST, E., - MOLINA, G., - MOHAMAD, Z., *"Nation Branding: Unveiling Factors that Affect the Image of Colombia from a Foreign Perspective"*, in Tourism Planning & Development, 2017.

attributes responsibility for an action to the target, coupled with the existing value that action is wrong, encourages the audience to have a negative attitude toward that target. On the other hand, one can rely on an existing belief and try to associate it to a value perceived as negative to the audience.

In conclusion, a persuasive attack does not always need to explicitly address both of these components: discrediting effects can be reached either just to affirm the belief, if this is in itself paired to a value widely perceived as negative (e.g. *"X has stolen a car"*. Stealing is widely and automatically perceived as a negative value); or just to affirm, also indirectly, the negative value of a given fact-belief (e.g. it is well known that the government is about to undertake an ambitious public work. A press article illustrates how public works are a source of corruption and a waste of public money)[24].

Benoit's theory, then, proposes *image repair discourse* as a remedy to the persuasive attack: we do not believe it is possible, in this case, to apply such a remedy exclusively, since it requires that a fact has actually happened, as well that there be a relationship of cause and effect between the action by the allegedly responsible agent and the fact under examination.

In other terms, a *wrongdoing* is assumed.

In our working hypothesis, however, we are going to consider misleading narrative as deriving from third-parties' unproven affirmations, unverified hypotheses, or false claims (and, therefore, not factual).

4. The misleading narratives: methodological notes

The following paragraphs will be dedicated to enlightening and analysing four of the most relevant cases of misleading narratives significantly affecting the image and reputation of Sicily as a whole, at both national and international level.

Although the national environment, to tell the truth, is not considered particularly relevant for the purposes of this analysis, it is interesting to consider how information arising within the domestic framework can easily cross borders and spread abroad.

For "misleading narrative", apart from what was said in the previous paragraph, we intend a self-contradictory, incomplete or not objectively verifiable information (or belief,

24 BENOIT, W., *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies, Second Edition: Image Repair Theory and Research,* State University New York Press, 2014

according to Benoit) connoted by a directly or indirectly negative value.

The analysis' purpose is not to describe *what* the real information should be (which is the task of other research areas: History, Sociology, Economics, etc), but *why* the commonly accepted narrative is unreliable and therefore misleading: this happens either because counteracting versions of the same issue exist, or because the primary information shows significant contradictions, or because unreliability does not affect the information as such, but rather its source.

For this purpose, a third-party and impartial Observer perspective will be adopted: once again, the aim is to examine how reliable given information about Sicily is, not to replace that information with something more palatable.

Topics and narratives we have chosen to deal with are:

1. The origins of the mafia, and its alleged immanence to Sicilian territory and its civil community / people;

2. the so-called "foreign dominations", which have characterized the history of Sicily since its ancestral times;

3. more generally, the media narrative of Sicily (with partial but unavoidable overlap between this point and the one indicated at point 1).

4. the depiction of the Sicilian Region as a source of money wastage, inefficiency, State fund thievery and as a parasite damaging other Regions. It is crucial to note how this last point, even though apparently not affecting Sicily directly, will prove to be relevant to the fact that the Sicilian Region as such is assumed to be the main actor for a series of foreign activities. A strong reputation, hence, is fundamental.

5. Lastly, the average attitude (on the belief criterion, mainly) of Sicilians themselves, or of a large part of them with regard to the aforementioned issues as well to their self-perception as a people. This aspect is crucial since the people's attitude is one of the *nation brand hexagon* components.

The approach here adopted with regard to the reliability of a given information is based on some elementary criteria, some of which are common logic, others borrowed from legal methodology, and namely, among others:

1. The principle of non-contradiction and of the law of excluded middle, and namely if one or more assertions within the same information incompatibly collide, so revealing an intrinsic unreliability;

2. Validity of the information as such, with particular regard to its evidence and its sources;

3. Cross-examination with other information on the same issue, also with regard to their sources, evidence and origins.

4. On a general level, coexistence of more than one version about the same issue, also with regard to the method by which an information is generated.

The point relating to the media narrative on Sicily, although decisive, is nevertheless an exception, since it should be considered more as a driver of misleading information arising in other contexts than a primary cause of the same.

5. Origin of the mafia and the depiction of its link to Sicily and Sicilians

a) overall framework-

The mafia is certainly the topic that, in the collective imagination, creates the most immediate and irresistible link with Sicily, almost as if it were a real marker of the island as well as of its community.

As a kind of "genetic" benchmark, it affects almost all of Anholt's nation brand hexagon six components for Sicily; it is a long-term negative reputational factor; according to Benoit's persuasive attack theory, it is a fact which has, as such, an intrinsic negative value.

The aim of this analysis, therefore, is to analyse the consistency between the vulgates about the mafia's origin and the evidence provided by scientific literature in this regard.

Among many others, we can begin the analysis with the entry "mafia" of the Encyclopædia Britannica:

"[…] *The Mafia arose in Sicily during the late Middle Ages, where it possibly began as a secret organization dedicated to overthrowing the rule of the various foreign conquerors of the island—e.g., Saracens, Normans, and Spaniards. The Mafia owed its origins and drew its members from the many small private armies, or mafie, that were hired by absentee landlords to protect their landed estates from bandits in the lawless conditions that prevailed over much of Sicily through the centuries* [...]"[25].

25 ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA, entry "mafia". Remarkable as in a few words, the renowned E.B. has managed to include two serious misleading narratives: one on the origin of the mafia, and one on "foreign dominations", which will be discussed in the following paragraph. The link was last verified on June 26, 2020.

b) origin of the Mafia vulgate

According to the most recurrent version in this regard, the mafia phenomenon would have been rooted even in the period of the Emirate of Sicily (827-1091), also improperly known as the “Saracen domination".

According to some, the etymological "mafia" would also date to the same period. The first to propose such a solution was Corrado Avolio in 1882, who believed that the term "mafia" derived from the Arab "mahias", with the meaning of "braggart"[26].

A series of race-based theories, which appeared no earlier than the second half of the 19th century post-unitary period, depicted Sicilians as a wild race prone to crime, conspiracy and plots due to the presence of Semitic blood in them (Maggiorani, C.,), or as a morally inferior race due to their Arab-Berber ancestry (Lombroso, C.,), or, again, for the same reason as the arabian-berberian genetic component, a breed tending to ferinity, dishonesty, crime, as well as influenced by the climate and vegetation (Maggiorani, V.), etc.[27]

Gravina Pace (2016) remarked moreover how the penological science of 19th century Positivist school – and the harangues of lawyers engaged in the defence of their clients – even drew highly imaginative genealogies of criminals, fancifully acknowledging the ancient fracture marked by the river Salso between eastern and western Sicily as a boundary between distinct criminal inclinations.

In this way the followers of Lombroso distinguished in the eastern area, which corresponded to the portion of the Island most colonized by the early Greeks, the dominance of the Levantine element. Few blood crimes , a prevalence of less serious offences, which however required intelligence and shrewdness: swindlers, forgers, pickpockets, which were treated lightly and even with respect for their talent in the art of crime.

According to this post-unitary vulgate, as Gravina Pace notes, over the Salso river however the dark drives of the Phoenicians, Saracens and Albanians still operated: so, criminals generated by these lands were perpetrators of violent crimes, crimes which were heinous, vicious, and bloody, denoting the fierceness of races from the desert, whose mentality not even the slow passage of centuries had managed to eradicate[28].

26 AVOLIO, C., *Introduzione allo studio del dialetto siciliano*, Francesco Zammit, Noto 1882, pag. 45.

27 For an accurate historical-sociological reconstruction of these bizarre theories, see LO FARO, F., “*Tra Antropologia e clinica medica – le considerazioni di Carlo e Vincenzo Maggiorani sulla Sicilia*”, in CANONICI, C. & MONSAGRATI, G., (edited by), *Carlo Maggiorani: politica e medicina nel Risorgimento*, Rome, 2004, p. 114.

28 GRAVINA PACE, G., “*Beyond the Lighthouse. Sicily and the ‘Sicilies’: Institutional Readings of a Borderland*”, in MECCARELLI, M., & SOLLA SASTRE, M . J., (edited by), *Spatial and Temporal Dimensions for Legal History*, Max Planck Institute for European Legal History, 2016, pag. 286.

There were no substantial differences, although it was stylistically softened, in the well-known survey conducted by the deputies of the new Kingdom of Italy, L. Franchetti and S. Sonnino (1876) who, in describing the situation already underway in Sicily in the immediately post-unitary period, spoke of generic gangs of criminals, who certainly infested both the urban environment (the research was mostly concentrated over the city of Palermo and its neighbourhoods) and, with greater intensity, the rural areas of the island.

To the question of the "mafia", understood as an associative criminal phenomenon (a term that was already in use at the time they were writing their report), the Authors dedicated some paragraphs also focusing on the diverse meanings attached to the term “mafia”, whether used by Sicilians (who would have attributed to the term the meaning of a way of enforcing their rights) or by non-Sicilians (for whom "mafia" would have had a socio-cultural meaning more similar to the contemporary one, of a violent affirmation of a personal power in private relations).

Even in this case, however, the *topos* of the Arab-Berber ancestry returns to support the affirmation, this time, with regards to Sicilians’ cultural rather than genetic inclination (partially distanced therefore, from the anthropological theories of the early Risorgimento period) for violence and crime.

A decisive contribution to this cultural inclination was given by the feudal-baronial system that, according the two the Authors, characterized the Sicilian social system uninterruptedly from the Middle Ages to the Sicilian Constitution of 1812[29].

c) Vulgate assessment

Some contradictions and limitations intrinsic in these narratives were already clear from the beginning.

In managing an image restoration activity, one must consider the following field of investigation to be analysed.

c.I) originality of the sources-

The claims are based on the impressions and inferences of their authors, and do not indicate any verifiable source or documentation coeval with the facts they mention.

29 FRANCHETTI, L. & SONNINO, S., *La Sicilia nel 1876*, Firenze, Barbèra, 1877. Of course, matter of this analysis are the assumptions arguing on historical origins of the mafia, not the findings the Authors traced by their personal and direct observation over the up to then socio-economic status of Sicily in 1875.

First of all, none of the authors of the post-unitary period ever personally witnessed, before 1860, the facts and historical steps which they claim to reconstruct.

According to the model of the testimony *de relato*, in fact, these analyses were largely based on rumours and narratives reported by either partisan sources (e.g. police reports of government officials of the new unitary Kingdom) or by generic and unreliable sources (e.g. oral narratives collected from unspecified local notables): these elements have no value in describing situations that began centuries earlier.

As for the direct sources preceding the unitary period, the only one that seems to still be represented today by a report by the Prosecutor of the Grand Criminal Court in Trapani, Pietro Calà Ulloa, written in 1838 (hence, under the K. of the Two Sicilies).

He complained of the fact that in some Sicilian provinces there were "*unions or brotherhoods, a sort of sects, which are called parties, without colours or political purpose, without meeting, with no other connection than that of dependence on a leader, who is a landowner here, an archpriest there. A common fund is needed now to get an official released, now to defend him, now to protect a defendant, now to blame an innocent. There are many species of small governments in the government"*[30].

One should already note, at least, two relevant aspects:

- Prosecutor Ulloa seems to describe more a sort of hidden societies of mutual aid than a mafia phenomenon. There is no reference, indeed, to any use of physical violence;

- in 1838 the term "mafia" was still unknown in Sicily.

There are no other verifiable sources for the existence of any mafia in Sicily before 1838.

c.II) cross examination with other 19th century sources

Moreover, the mafia vulgate does not match any confirmation in contemporary third and impartial sources.

We refer, in particular, to the total absence of mentions or even simple suspicions about the existence of a *mafia* phenomenon in Sicily from the historical witness of the foreign observers who actually and constantly had relationships (and, before the incorporation of the Kingdom of Sicily into the new Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1816, properly said

30 CALÀ ULLOA, P., *"Considerazioni sullo stato economico e politico della Sicilia",* Trapani, 1838. Full text available in MAZZENZANA, S., "*Sicilia 1838 – La denuncia del Procuratore Ulloa al Re delle Due Sicilie*", in Rivista di studi e ricerche sulla criminalità organizzata, vol. 3, n. IV, 2017, p. 84

international relations) with both the Sicilian civil community and its government.

Of course, we are not referring to occasional foreign tourists passing through the island on their *Grand Tour*, rather to foreign individuals and companies that had established long-term personal, institutional or commercial relationships with Sicily, often characterized by their permanent residence there.

So, for example, with particular regard to the extensive British presence in/of Sicily between the 18th and the early 19th centuries.

Among others, the following elements are to be remarked:

- during the Napoleonic wars, a British army garrison also enrolling Sicilian volunteers, meantime upgraded as a regiment (namely the *Royal Sicilian Regiment,* including a *Val di Noto Cavalry* unit), which was based in Sicily from 1806 to 1815[31].

- Lord William Bentinck, the most influential British presence in Sicily in 19th century, acted as a plenipotentiary of the British Crown at the court of Palermo. It is common knowledge that he is said to have been one of the main inspirers of the new 1812 liberal Sicilian Constitution along with the Sicilian Constituents. During his stay in Sicily (1811-1814), he directed also a *Journal of Sicily*, and its correspondence with the British government was always constant and intense[32].

- An impressive presence of British entrepreneurs characterized the Island's growing economic and commercial framework in the early 19th century, exponentially increasing the import export between Sicily and London and improving the sulphur industry and market.

- On the other hand, the British were not the only stable foreign observers present in Sicily in the 19th century: if for only a few years, the French *Companie des soufres de Sicile* obtained the exclusive license to exploit the Sicilian sulphur mines from the new Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, in 1838. Due to the heated protests by the British government the license was withdrawn a few years later[33].

None of these sources of third-party direct observation based in Sicily makes the slightest mention of criminal phenomena such as the mafia during almost two centuries.

In conclusion, it seems surprising how, through a cross-examination with *contemporary*

31 CLEMENTS, W.H., *"The defences of Sicily 1806-1815"*, in Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research Vol. 87, No. 351 (Autumn 2009), pp. 256-272. But see also GREGORY, D., *Sicily: The Insecure Base: a History of the British Occupation of Sicily, 1806-1815,* Fairleigh Dickinson Univ Press, 1988.

32 See ROSSELLI, J., *Lord William Bentinck and the British Occupation of Sicily 1811–1814*, Cambridge University Press, 1956.

33 DI RIENZO, E., *Il Regno delle Due Sicilie e le potenze europee 1830-1861*, Laterza, 2012; BARONE, G., *"Yellow war"*, in BARONE, G. (edited by), *Storia mondiale della Sicilia*, Laterza, 2018, pag. 342.

foreign experiences and sources, the bizarre theories about a "medieval" mafia or its "natural" link to Sicily and the Sicilians, whether it is due to "anthropological" or "cultural" reasons, found no matches. This is unless one intends to argue that none of those foreign actors (military personnel, commercial companies, senior foreign government officials, etc.) noticed anything during their stay in Sicily[34].

A final notation should be made, precisely with regard to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, with which we opened this paragraph.

In its eighth edition (1860) E.B. dedicated an in-depth study to 19th century Sicily (using terminology that was not in any way condescending), about both its social conditions and its economy, in the entry *"Sicilies – Kingdom of the Two"*.

It is singular to note how, just as the eighth edition was being published, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was about to cease its existence: therefore, the analysis in question represents the most chronologically advanced contemporary source on the conditions (also) of Sicily before 1860.

No mention of any *mafia*, or other criminal organizations however named, can be found in the large and detailed description in question.

The E.B.'s 1875 edition (the ninth), though, radically and suddenly changes version in an inexplicable way, depicting quite a different *Italian* Sicily, to say the least: under the entry *"Sicily"* it indeed appears, for the first time, the term "mafia" (as well as the term "camorra"), as well as its description as a long-lasting phenomenon.

Textually, "*[...] the lawlessness indicated by the continued existence of the secret society called the Mafia, which, like the Camorra of the Neapolitan provinces of the Mainland, overrides the law in taking vengeance on those who have rendered themselves obnoxious to it, it is a relic of former misrule, and is diminishing under the present Government [...]*"[35].

It is not part of the object of this study to discuss the possible reasons behind this "odd" change of direction, found in some aspects related to the changed geopolitical Mediterranean

34 It should be noted moreover how Lord Bentinck, once he had ceased his duties in Sicily, was despatched to India as a Colonial Governor. There he undertook some severe enforcement actions against the local "mafia" (namely, the *Thugghee*), also passing a series of special legislation to regularise the proceedings of the officers employed to crush the gangs. See GHOSH, S., *The Indian Mafia*, New Delhi, 1991. This is to further confirm how, if any mafia had been detected in Sicily before 1815, some trace of it would have certainly been found in Bentinck's documents, given his particular sensitivity for such phenomena.

35 ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA, *Or Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature*, entry "Sicily", ninth edition, vol. XXII SIB-SZO, Edinburgh, 1881, pag. 31. The document can be consulted on the National Library of Scotland website.

scenario of the second half of the 19th century.

And it is easy to see that these are two totally irreconcilable versions.

c.III) Internal contradictions

The description of the mafia as a product exclusively referable to the Sicilian people, whether due to genetic predisposition, their Semitic/Arab/Berber ancestry, or to a reaction to the so-called foreign conquests, is in itself an unreliable narrative.

On the contrary, it is impossible to explain how similar phenomena have been appearing within social and national contexts which have never had any links with Sicily, and neither with the same peoples who "conquered" Sicily over the centuries.

This with reference, for example, to the Japanese *Yakuza*, or the Chinese *Triads*, or the Irish or the Jewish[36] organized crime associations operating since the late XIX /early XX century in U.S.A., or even the Nigerian *Black Axe*, etc.

d) Positive findings

d.I) The origins

On the other hand, the description of the mafia's origin by both Italian and foreign Historians and Sociologists is quite different to that of the vulgate: hence, as for the origin of the mafia, there is also an impressive scientific production from which a totally different reality unanimously emerges.

First of all, the misleading race-based narrative, as correctly noted, was mostly attributable to the need to create a para-scientific base to support the political actions of the new unitary government: hence, the diffusion of the image of a rough, archaic and wild Sicily because of its Arabic matrix, and therefore to "civilize", was functional to this[37].

On the basis of a wider Literature, recently Acemoglu *et alii* (2017; 2020) noted how consensus today places the mafia's origins in the context of the tumultuous process of the fall

36 The so-called *Jewish Mob,* the original members of which were said to come from Central-Eastern Europe. In this regard, one of its most famous members, the gangster Benny "Bugsy" Siegel*,* is believed to be the actual founder of the casinò business in Las Vegas. See "*The Jewish Gangster Who Founded the Gambling State in Las Vegas*", on *The National Library of Israel* website.

37 Lo Faro, F., *op.cit.*, Roma, 2004, pag. 113. It should also be considered that the first riots against the new Kingdom of Italy occurring in Sicily in the early post-unitary years are well known. It is clear how the proclamation of the genetic inferiority of the Sicilians, as of Arab ethnicity, was also an excellent tool to justify the military repression not only of the alleged criminal phenomena, but also of any other act of insubordination against the new State.

of the Bourbon Kingdom and the following Italian unification. The faraway Italian state was weak and largely incapable of enforcing the law in the aftermath of the unification, and this void was partially filled by the private protection provided by the Mafia.

Moreover, in 1812 feudalism was officially abolished by the new Constitution of the Kingdom of Sicily, and a modern system of property rights was created, accompanied by several ordinary laws aimed to promote the redistribution of lands and to eliminate the remaining feudal institutions.

Again Acemoglu *et alii* (2017; 2020) also note, in this regard, how the early works emphasized the role of the abolition of feudal land relations and identified the origins of the mafia in the rural areas of Sicily, where a new class of landowners, managers and public administrators used criminal methods to grab land that should have been distributed to the peasants and developed coercive labor relations in latifundia specializing in wheat production[38].

As Bandiera noted (2003), moreover, the repeal of feudalism and the establishment of modern property rights resulted in the division of large fiefdoms, which led to a considerable increase in the number of owners (during the reign of the Bourbons they increased from 2000 to 20,000). The large landowners would have then rented their land to "gabelloti" with short-term contracts which, in order to be profitable, forced the latter to exploit the farmers.

The abolition of feudalism, especially in the immediate aftermath of the forced annexation of Sicily to the new Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (by which the Island was downgraded from a sovereign State to an administrative province) had left the peasants without land, impoverishing them even more; spontaneous uprisings broke out in many villages throughout the century.

Many peasants became outlaws, especially in times of high unemployment. The most common crime was cattle theft due to the lack of a constant presence in the fields, especially at night, since both the landowners and the peasants did not live in the countryside, but the former in the big cities and the latter in the villages near the fields where they worked. Furthermore, public security was inefficient as well as insufficient to control the entire island, thus creating more and more mistrust towards the state[39].

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38 ACEMOGLU, D. - DE FEO, G. - DE LUCA, G. "*Weak States: Causes and Consequences of the Sicilian Mafia*", in Review of Economic Studies (2020) 87, 537–581. It seems appropriate to recommend also the accurate bibliography therein indicated.

39 BANDIERA, O.,*"Land Reform, the Market for Protection, and the Origins of the Sicilian Mafia: Theory and Evidence",* in Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Apr., 2003), pp. 218

It should be also noted, in this regard, how the earliest forms of discrimination against the Sicilian people appeared in the same period: Sicilians had often encountered, due to their territorial origin, a strong resistance in gaining access to the most common public services delivered by the new K. of the Two Sicilies, as both public service users and aspiring civil servants[40].

Lack of trust in public services, then, would have encouraged many Sicilians to turn to "private" protection.

With the unification of Italy (1860-1861), this organization spread even more widely and the infiltrations of mafia characters in local administration and even at the level of central power, allowed the organization to take on the characteristics of a sprawling octopus, affecting all of Sicilian life.

Acemoglu *et alii* (2017; 2020) noted how the Piedmontese government, failing to guarantee direct and stable control of the government of the island, began to rely on the rising mafia gangs, which, having knowledge about the local mechanisms, easily took over from the central government. The most typical recruiting environments for protectors were those of vigilantes, ex-soldiers, private policemen, bandits and prisoners.

In Sicily in four years there was an abundance of men in all these categories; for a number of circumstances the offer of protection met the demand giving rise to a real industry (Gambetta, 1992)[41].

Dimico *et alii* (2012) have concluded that despite its rituals[42], the origins of the Mafia

40 BUTTÀ, G. (1875) reports that a specific passport regime for crossing between Sicily (or *Ultra Pharum* dominion) and the continental part of the kingdom (or *Citra Pharum* dominion) was also provided for. *"King Ferdinand II* [of the Two Sicilies] *was advised to never visit that island, to have it as a land of conquest, and to treat the Sicilians as the Lacedaemonians treated the Helots, if not in whole at least in part. The Neapolitans went to Sicily and treated the islanders as a slave people, and most importantly, they despised them. […] Any communication between the Island and Naples was closed, since Sicilians were forbidden to go to the capital of the two reigns, where the Court and the sovereign resided. In order to obtain a passport, the practices and harassment that had to be sustained were so long that they discouraged even the most willing. […] The Sicilians who came to Naples were guarded and harassed by police who never left them alone. In the staff of 1849, it was established that the Sicilian employees in the various administrations of the capital should make up one third: in reality they were just a tenth".* BUTTÀ, G., *Un viaggio da Boccadifalco a Gaeta*, Edizioni Trabant, 2009 (or. 1875), p. 101.

41 GAMBETTA. D., *La mafia siciliana: un'industria della protezione privata,* Einaudi, 1992.

42 From a historical perspective, this is in our opinion the real point: the presence of such initiatory esoteric (rather than merely "archaic") rituals, are completely detached from the peasant reality in which the mafia phenomenon would have originated. The question of the initiatory ritual, common however to the other "mafias" that by a surprising synchronous suddenly appeared in the territories of the former Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, represents a sort of strange missing link in the mafia's sad evolutionary chain. It is noteworthy that, as a matter of fact, the same term "mafia", abandoned by the most recent Literature the uncertain and improbable connection to Arab etymes, is of completely unknown and uncertain origin. The terms most used, at least until 1865, were *sect*, *brotherhood*, etc. See DICKIE, J., *Cosa Nostra: a history of the Sicilian Mafia,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 60.

lie in the more urban, richer and export-oriented areas around the former capital, Palermo, where the vacuum of law enforcement created demand for protection, especially from smallholders specializing in citrus (lemon and orange trees, which require investment several years before the trees bear fruit.

The mafia was also highly visible in areas with sulphur mines, such as Favara and Grotte in the Girgenti province. The earliest trial against the mafia is said to have been held in 1885 in Girgenti, and involved the Favara brotherhood, which mainly consisted of sulphur miners.

In this regard, one of the main hypothesis is that the growth and consolidation of the Sicilian mafia is strongly associated with an exogenous shock in the demand for lemons after 1800, driven by James Lind's discovery on the effective use of citrus fruits in curing scurvy.

Given Sicily's already dominant position in the international market for citrus fruits, neither the Bourbon regime (1816–1860), nor the newly formed government after the Italian unification in 1861 had the strength or the means to effectively enforce private property rights, so lemon producers, therefore, resorted to hiring mafia affiliates for private protection and to act as intermediaries between the retailers and exporters in the harbours[43].

One of the clearest contributions has been given by Dickie (2004), which assumes and widely demonstrates how the mafia's origins are not ancient, since this phenomenon began at roughly the time when the new nation of Italy was born: the Italian government, therefore, played a part in nurturing the association.

d.II) The territorial spread of the Mafia between the 19th and the 20th centuries-

In fact, another important issue to note, indirectly related to the theses set out so far, is the actual territorial extension of the mafia phenomenon in Sicily from the middle 19th century to the middle 20th century,

Figure 4 clearly shows how the mafia, until 1885, was a relatively fragmentary and uneven phenomenon, affecting few and well-defined territories of the Island[44].

There is no correlation, therefore, between the birth of the mafia and the so-called "foreign conquests" that the Sicilian people would have suffered over the centuries, since the

43 DIMICO, A., ISOPI, A., OLSSON, O., "*Origins of the Sicilian Mafia: The Market for Lemons*", in *The Journal of Economic History* 77(04) · January 2012

44 Moreover, it also should be considered how this map, as drafted on the basis of entire municipal territories, is clearly exaggerated. Indeed, it shows some Etna summit territories, which are, in fact totally uninhabited. as affected by "little density of mafia"

latter would still have affected the entire territory of the Island, and certainly not only very limited parts of it.

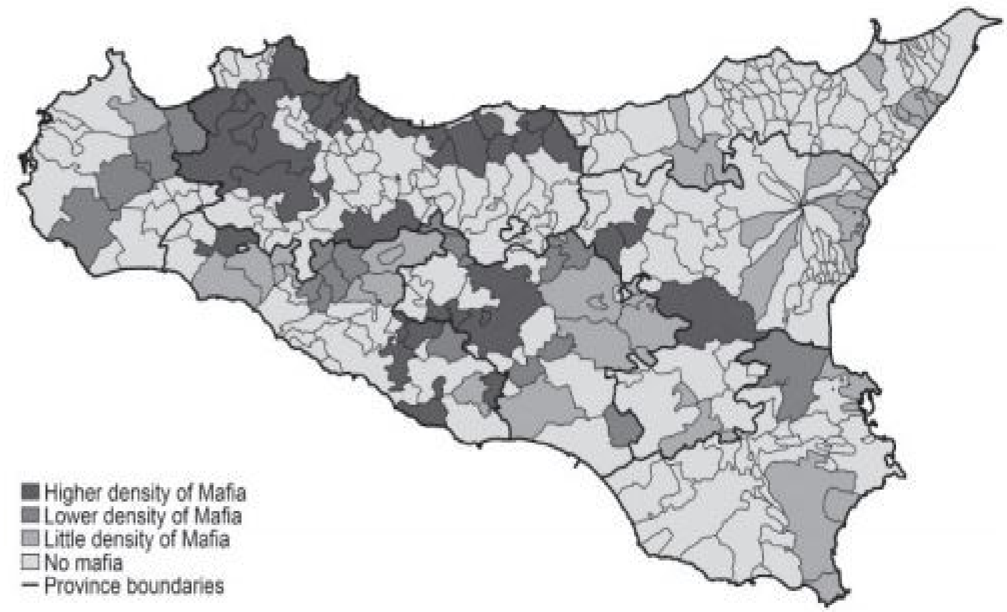

FIGURE 4

Spatial distribution of the Mafia presence according to its intensity as reported in Damiani (1885).

Figure 4: Spatial distribution of the mafia in Sicily in 1885.
Image from Acemoglu, D. - de Feo, G. - De Luca, G. *"Weak States: Causes and Consequences of the Sicilian Mafia"*, in Review of Economic Studies (2020) 87, 549

Moreover, even if this had been true, it is clear that at the end of the nineteenth century little or nothing would have remained in the life of such an imaginative "relic".

In fact, in 1965 the economist P. Sylos Labini was still wondering about the reason why the mafia was present just in western Sicily, and not in its Eastern part[45].

Even the thesis of the mafia's origin as a direct effect of the end of feudalism, following the Sicilian Constitution of 1812 cannot be considered as sufficient in itself to explain the whole mafia phenomenon, since:

1. feudalism was widespread throughout the whole of Europe: as it was in Italy, for instance, in the Kingdom of Piedmont / Sardinia, the feudal system was eliminated only in 1797 (which means just fifteen years before the 1812 Sicilian Constitution), by two edicts of

45 SYLOS LABINI, P., *Le radici della mafia*, in l'Astrolabio, year III, n. 16, 30 September 1965, pp. 30.

King Carlo Emanuele IV[46]. When feudalism disappeared in the various States, either due to traumatic events (1789 French revolution) or due to peaceful change in the economic system, no particular phenomenon of organized crime seems to have arisen (except in Sicily).

2. Since the medieval age the Sicilian territory was mainly articulated over baronial lands (the only ones actually subjected to a feudal regime) and *Civitates Regiae*, or state-owned cities (*Città Demaniali*), subject to the sole authority of the King of Sicily. There were 42 of these cities, totally extraneous to the feudal system and equipped with their own organs of self-government and citizenship representation (in general, a *Mastra Giuratoria* or a *Senatus* therein operated as self-government bodies), in 1812, the year the Constitution entered into force[47].

As Corrao (1998) noted, the long-term centrality of the urban dimension in medieval Sicilian politics and economics highlights the importance of the Sicilian urban system - first of all under the demographic aspect -, with the consequent full inclusion of the intra-city hegemonic forces in the political games of the Kingdom, alongside the Crown and the greater aristocracy. And in fact, through the urban circuits - which acquire, preserve and consolidate over time the role of territorial aggregation centres - much of the social and political conflict concerning the control of the territorial resources, taxation, the achievement of positions of social dominance developed.

The Author stresses how the progressive articulation of government structures on a city basis starting from the early fourteenth century, compared to the prevalence of a model based on vast territorial districts characteristic of previous eras, is the greatest sign of the progressive assumption of the role of protagonists by urban centres between the 14th and the 15th centuries. So, the framework that derives from the intertwining of these considerations is that of two great spheres of power, partially or totally intersected and interacting: one represented by the Court and the central structures of the monarchy, one constituted by the network of urban centres, first of all those belonging to the *Demanio*, and their political

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46 BLACK, C., *Early Modern Italy: A Social History*, Routledge, 2002, pag. 135. Under the House of Savoy, in Piedmont there was a rising feudal nobility with titles (*marchesi, conti, baroni*), involving about 800 families in the early seventeenth century, and 1246 in 1724. A *Camera dei Conti* in Turin recorded and vetted the entitlements as granted by the sovereign, but other cities and areas in Piedmont recognised their own local nobles as a traditional elite.

47 The 42 *Città Regie* or *Demaniali* were Palermo, Messina, Catania, Siracusa, Girgenti (Agrigento), Trapani, Patti, Cefalù, Mazara, Sciacca, Noto, Caltagirone, Troina, Termini (Imerese), Marsala, Lentini, Castrogiovanni (Enna), Naro, Licata, Nicosia, Polizzi, Taormina, Piazza (Armerina), Calascibetta, Randazzo, Mineo, Agira, Vizzini, Monte San Giuliano (Erice), Salemi, Corleone, Mistretta, Augusta, Jaci D'Aquila (Acireale), Santa Lucia, Tortorici, Linguaglossa, Castronovo, Castroreale, Milazzo and Rometta.

structures. Political life takes place in these two areas, and in these two areas the social forces that aspire to a leading role in the kingdom confront each other[48].

From this it follows that any connection between feudalism and the mafia could be useful only to explain the birth of the mafia as an essentially agricultural phenomenon, relegated to a few substantially marginal and semi-deserted areas of Sicily.

This criterion, on the other hand, turns out to be totally unsuitable for providing an explanation on the subsequent evolution of this criminal phenomenon and how it achieved the importance it assumed in the following decades.

e) Conclusion

So that, beyond a bizarre narrative of a “medieval/Arab”[49] mafia, findings seem to show that there are no original, reliable, third party and impartial sources or evidence so far which argues any “mafia” appeared in Sicily before the early/middle 19th century.

Once more, the attribution of the origin of the mafia to feudal issues leaves the doubt whether this phenomenon was equally widespread, and to what extent, substantially unresolved, even in the urban contexts of state-owned cities, where historically most of the Sicilian population resided.

Finally, there is not a shred of evidence that the mafia was a general phenomenon extended to the whole island at least until the second half of the twentieth century.

This latter consideration indirectly leads us to address the misleading narrative according to which the cause of birth and proliferation of the mafia phenomenon was due to a desire, whether conscious or unconscious, of Sicilians and, therefore, to an exclusively Sicilian feature.

Dickie (2004) among others assumes some precise collusive responsibilities by the new Kingdom of Italy, in this regard.

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48 CORRAO, P., *Città ed élites urbane nella Sicilia del Tre-Quattrocento,* in Revista d'historia medieval vol. 9 (1998) p. 171-192. It seems appropriate to point out that we are indirectly touching on another powerful *misleading* narrative, namely that of an archaically feudal and landed Sicily. In truth, especially starting from the mature phase of the end of the thirteenth century, Sicily expressed a strong urban and municipal component. We do not seem to be mistaken in stating that this dimension was even largely prevalent over the feudal one, considering that the majority of the Sicilian resident population was concentrated in the cities. As Corrao himself (1998) effectively notes, *“the image of a Sicily without a politically significant urban life then dominated for a long time a historiography tributary of a superficial as well as rooted homage to the urbanocentric model derived from the crucial importance, in medieval Italian history, of the experience of central-northern municipalities, wrongly identified as the only model of urban life”*.

49 Moreover, not even taking into account the historical episode of the forced expulsion, by Friedrich II of Hohenstaufen, of the last Muslims from Sicily between 1220 and 1246, and their definitive confinement / deportation to the city of Lucera in 1293. However, no "mafia" seems to have ever appeared in that area.

As Armao F. noted (2000), the rooting and expansion of an organized criminal association constitute two alternating phases of the same process to determine which contributes; political conditions and economic variables. Mafias, in fact, are not born casually anywhere. They develop as an autochthonous phenomenon where the State, in its process of formation, out of necessity or for mere convenience, abdicates its function of centralizing power resources, favouring the strategy of co-opting local potentates instead of proceeding on the path of their coercion: to reduce the costs of unification, subcontracts part of its functions to them[50].

This hypothesis would seem to fit to the Sicilian mafia case, to a more appropriate extent than the more widespread theory of *state weakness* in countering these phenomena, also considering the emblematic scenario of southern Italy in the first post-unification decade.

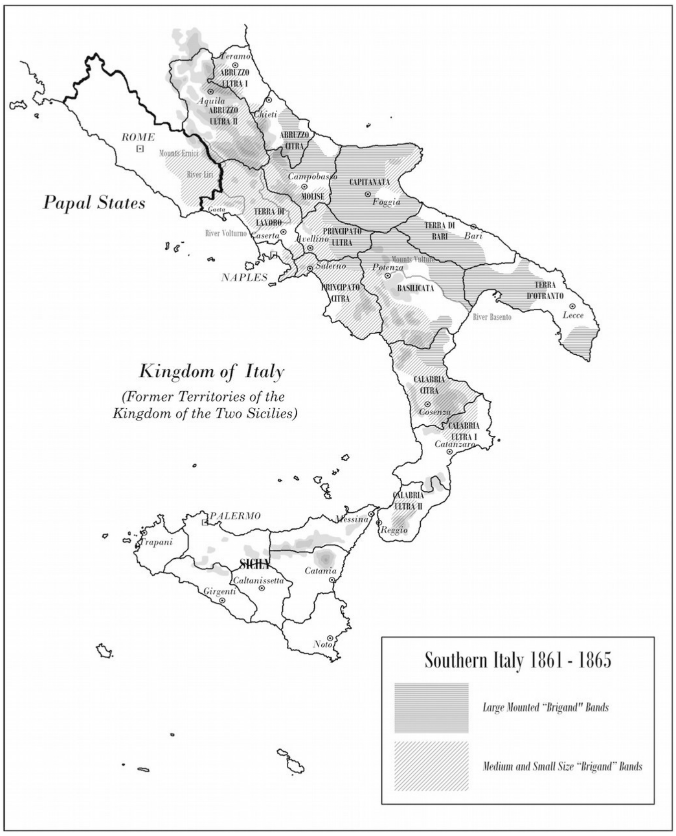

Figure 5: Brigandage in Southern Italy (1861-1865).
Source: Dal Lago, E., *Civil War and Agrarian Unrest- The Confederate South and Southern Italy*. Cambridge University Press, 2018

In fact, it is interesting to note how the new State gave very different responses to phenomena in some ways similar to each other, both considered to be of serious social alarm.

In this regard one could indeed compare the modest territorial spread of the mafia in Sicily up to 1885, as shown above, with the very different territorial extension of the so-called "brigandage" area in Southern Italy, during the years 1861-1865 (the most acute phase of the *guerrilla* or, according to other version, the civil war between the Piedmontese/Italian Army and the "brigands").

"Brigandage" in southern Italy is usually said to have been defeated in

50 ARMAO, Fabio, *"Le mafie (in una prospettiva cosmopolitica)",* in PRIORE, R. - LAVANCO, G. (edited by) *Adolescenti e criminali: minori e organizzazioni mafiose : analisi del fenomeno e ipotesi di intervento,* Franco Angeli , 2007, p. 22.

1870[51].

Comparing the relevant difference, as for the respective territorial extension, between the “brigandage” (Figure 4) and the Sicilian mafia (Figure 4) phenomena, and also in considering that “brigands” were often highly skilled in military arts, as most of them were former officials or troopers of the disbanded bourbon Army (while the Sicilian *mafiosi* were nothing more than armed peasants), it is apparently unexplained how the same Government, endowed with the same law enforcement and military means, defeated a complex and challenging concern as the “brigandage” in relatively so few years and yet, at the same time, was unable to contain or repress the expansion of the early mafia phenomena, connoted by a much more limited territorial extension.

The aforementioned hypothesis of a sort of non-interference (to say the least) behaviour by the State, which had certainly already proven itself not to be weak in the fight against "brigandage", in the growth and spread of the mafia in Sicily therefore seems to be reasonable.

On the other hand, Lodato (2012) noted that it was necessary to wait *“until the end of the seventies* [of the 20th century, N/A] *to see the Italian state, through the exclusive personal and spontaneous initiative of a group of honest Sicilian investigators finally face a phenomenon that dates back at least to the unification of Italy”*[52].

Finally (in the 21st century), as for the historical origins of the mafia, the official version spread in Italy by the Treccani encyclopaedic institute is that of “*complex of small criminal associations (called cosche), secret, of an initiatory nature, [...], which developed in Sicily (western spec) in the sec. 19th, especially after the fall of the Bourbon kingdom*”[53].

As for operative foreign sources, it is noteworthy how even the US Federal Bureau of Investigation recognizes that the mafia appeared in Sicily “*in 1800's*”[54]

51 LECCE, G. - OGLIARI, L. - ORLANDO, T., *Resistance to Institutions and Cultural Distance Brigandage in Post-Unification Italy*, Yale, 2017, pag. 14. the Authors identified three main phases: the early phase of brigandage (1860-1861), characterized by the immediate reaction to Piedmontese occupation; the most intense phase of brigand guerrilla war (1860-1864); the remaining period, between 1865 and 1870.

52 LODATO, S., *Quarant'anni di mafia – storia di una guerra infinita*, Bur-Rizzoli, 2012.

53 Vocabolario della lingua italiana Treccani, edit *Mafia*.

54 Institutional link

6. The "foreign dominations" vulgate – the case of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily

a) overall framework and meaning of the term "dominazioni"

While the binomial "Sicily-mafia", even though widely diffused worldwide, could be considered as being handled with a certain level of caution (since the mafia is nonetheless a phenomenon that arouses social alarm), and is sometimes faced throughout a critical approach even by the masses, the binomial "Sicily-dominations" instead sounds like a *mantra* or a dogma of faith.

"Dominations" (*dominazioni*) is a term commonly used in Italy in any kind of non-scientific source which deals with Sicilian historical issues, for any reason and purpose: from schoolbooks to tourist guides, etc.

According to such vulgate, two main elements have shaped Sicily (and its people) throughout the centuries, namely:

1. Sicily would never have had any own autonomous History, since it was constantly being conquered and, to be precise, "dominated" by foreign peoples: hence, its eventual history would be nothing more than the sum of those "dominations", of *their* culture, and traditions as well as of *their* political institutions;

2. Sicilians would never have had any own autonomous cultural nor national identity as a people, as they have always been nothing more than the result of uninterrupted "ethnic cleansing" enforced by such alleged foreign people.

One of the worldwide most renowned (even though neither the first nor the only) use of the term "*dominazioni*" can be found in *"Il Gattopardo"* by Tomasi di Lampedusa, in the famous dialogue between Don Fabrizio Salina and Chevalley, when the prince says:

> "*Ho detto i Siciliani, avrei dovuto aggiungere la Sicilia, l'ambiente, il clima, il paesaggio. Queste sono le forze che insieme e forse più che le dominazioni estranee e gl'incongrui stupri hanno formato l'animo [...]*"[55].

Although it is uncertain when this long-lasting concept was first used, it is necessary to ascertain both its definition and its subsequent implications if related to an actual perspective.

Domination, of which a unanimously accepted positive definition is still lacking, can be considered as the negation of the self-determination principle.

As Young (2005) noted, for a group to be self-determining means that it controls a

55 Quoted by GRAVINA PACE, G., "*Beyond the Lighthouse. Sicily and the 'Sicilies': Institutional Readings of a Borderland*", in MECCARELLI, M., & SOLLA SASTRE, M . J., (edited by) *Spatial and Temporal Dimensions for Legal History*, Max Planck Institute for European Legal History, 2016, pag. 284.

sphere over which others have no authority: in this regard, the non-interference model makes a strong distinction between inside and outside. The self-determining group dwells inside a single territorial jurisdiction over which self-governing institutions have sole authority. For the group to be self-determining means primarily that outsiders do not interfere with the decisions and actions made by those governing institutions over what goes on inside the jurisdiction[56].

The concept of domination hence necessarily postulates an alien power interfering with the authority of a given territorial group, or overwhelming it in various ways.

It should be firstly noted, therefore, that the term *domination* has a proper sense, which is (of course) negative: it presupposes that certain foreign people are imposing their own power, as well as their culture, traditions, political institutions over certain other people.

In the same way, the related term *conquest* in turn implies a violent and traumatic process through which an alien people impose their power over a target territory as well as over the population therein, against its will. *Conquest* could be therefore defined as the traumatic act by which *domination* begins.

According to the recurrent vulgate, Sicily would have passed uninterruptedly through an unknown number of conquests and dominations (it has been said fifteen or more).

In contrast, the misleading narrative of the mafia, implies an active and dynamic *commitment* by the Sicilians in creating and managing that phenomen, whereas the *domination* misleading narrative tends to depict Sicilians as merely passive recipients.

b) A case study: the "Norman domination"

The analysis of each of the so-called dominations would require an excessively prolonged discussion for the aims of this study. We therefore will focus on an emblematic case, which is also one of the best known: the so-called Norman "domination".

The chosen case, however, does have its own particular relevance also for another reason, since it is precisely under the Norman "domination" that the Kingdom of Sicily, the "great absent" of the mass narrative, was born.

As has already been seen with regard to the mafia narrative phenomenon, there are two different versions of the same issue: a distorted mass vulgate (according to which a Norman

56 YOUNG, I.M, *"Self-determination as non-domination"*, in *Ethnicities*, 5(2), 2005, p.139.

dominazione occurred in Sicily), and a scientific-historical perspective, which almost unanimously propose a Norman kingdom of Sicily, in some cases considered as a Mediterranean "twin brother" of the co-eve Norman kingdom of England[57].

Historians, in other words, remark on the objective existence of a Kingdom of Sicily as such, in its institutional substance: a Kingdom which was founded by a Norman descendant, Roger II, and, in that historical period, was being governed by monarchs of Norman ancestry.

Vulgate, however, splits the historical and institutional unity of the Kingdom of Sicily (1130-1816) into as many fractions as there were governing dynasties, considering the latter as many foreign "dominations": hence, the subsequent foundation of the *Regnum Siciliae* in 1130, since operated by a Norman descendant, later became the *Norman domination*[58].

It is interesting to note how the vulgate sometime tends to identify and merge two substantially different scenarios:

a) the *conquest of Sicily*[59], by Robert Le Guiscard together with his brother Roger d'Hauteville (who were actually Normans knights, coming directly from Normandy), started in 1061 and accomplished in 1073, and

b) the *establishment of the Kingdom of Sicily*, founded by Roger II (respectively, nephew and son of the former) almost 60 years later, in 1130.

For sure, thus, the Norman experience in Sicily started by a *conquest* (although the military campaign was led against the Emirate of Sicily, and not properly against the Sicilians

57 Historical, sociological, as well as juridical and economical Literature about the Norman kingdom of Sicily, is to say the least, vast. For a general overview see, among others, MATTHEW, D., *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, Cambridge University Press, 1992. or NORWICH, J.J.,, *The Kingdom in the Sun, 1130-1194* (1972), Faber & Faber, 2011. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the any bizarre idea of "domination" is excluded, by international Literature, right from the title of any essay on such regard. Moreover, in a comparative view, Norwich's above mentioned book covers the period from 1130 to 1266, when the Kingdom of Sicily passed from the Hohenstaufen dynasty (after Henry VI Hohenstaufen, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, married Constance I, queen regnant of Sicily in 1194and the last descendant of the Altavilla dynasty) to Charles of Anjou, which is roughly as long and as coherent as the Norman monarchy of England between 1066 and 1204. It should be noted again that, at times, historiography itself has used the term *dominations*, as in the case of the Chalandon's *Histoire de la domination Normande en Italie et en Sicile* (1907).

58 Later, the hand-down of the throne of Sicily to the dynasty of Hohenstaufen from Swabia, due to marriage and dynastic rights, would have become the Swabian *domination*, and so on. It should however be kept in mind that the historiographic narrative of the Kingdom of Sicily, in foreign literature, inevitably suffers from some "particularistic" influences depending on the "moral closeness" of the various dynasties that followed one another to the throne of Sicily. It is known, for example, that some foreign Authors tend to describe the period of the Norman dynasty as a golden age (at the end of which the Kingdom of Sicily itself and its institutions would have de facto disappeared), to almost completely ignore the house of Hohenstaufen-Swabia, to paint the house of Aragon-Sicily in quite negative terms, etc.

59 For a detailed analysis of the stages of the Norman conquest of the Emirate of Sicily, see METCALFE, A., "*The Norman Conquest of Muslim Sicily",* in *The Muslims of medieval Italy,* Edinburgh University Press*,* 2009*,* pp.88-111; THEOTOKIS, G., *"The Norman Invasion of Sicily, 1061 — 1072: Numbers and Military Tacticts",* in War in History , November 2010, Vol. 17, No. 4 (November 2010), pp. 381-402.

as such), but this does not necessarily imply that a *domination* ensued.

Historical evidence, indeed, shows that:

a) all Norman ancestral kings of *Regnum Siciliae* were born on Sicilian territory or at least within southern Italy, although always under Norman jurisdiction: from the founder of the Kingdom, Roger II (Mileto, 1095[60]) to William I “the Bad” (Monreale, 1120[61]), to William II “the Good” (Palermo, 1153), to Tancredi (Lecce, which was up to then territory of the Kingdom of Sicily, 1138), to the last queen, Constance I (Palermo, 1154).

It has been noted how, from its foundation, the monarchs of the *Regnum Siciliae* no longer had any significant relationship with Normandy (despite their genealogical ancestry): in contrast to what happened in England, Norman Italy and Sicily, although they continued to attract western Frenchmen and Anglo-Normans, had *“no institutional tie to the duchy of Normandy or its dependencies”*[62].

Moreover, in the medieval age the *jus soli* principle was considered the rule and implied a territorial understanding of citizenship. It recognized the right of each person born within the physical jurisdiction of a given state to acquire full and equal membership of that polity[63].

If applied to the *Regnum Siciliae* as well, as a matter of fact this principle implies that the monarchs were supposed to be, at least in part, *jure soli* native-born Sicilians.

b) The centres of decision-making and political and administrative power of the *Regnum* have always been located in Sicily. Under the house of Altavilla, Palermo had always been the capital of the Kingdom, and an original political and administrative system was created and established there. An autonomous silver coinage also started in 1140[64].

It is widely recognized how some institutes of the Norman public sectors (particularly, in fiscal matters) were adopted within the complex architecture of the Sicilian-Norman kingdom, also even with interesting cases of detachment and exchange of officers and clerks from the English Norman kingdom to the Sicilian Norman one and *vice versa.*

This is, for instance, the case of Master Thomas Brown, a landowner in Winchester who

60 Up to then, *Duchy of Apulia et Calabria*.

61 Up to then, *Grand County of Sicily*

62 ARNALDI, G., *Italy and its invaders*, Harvard University Press, 2005, p. 96.

63 ROSENFELD, M. & SAJÒ, A., *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Constitutional Law,* OUP Oxford, 2012, pag. 1006. The *jus soli* principle is believed to find its historical roots in the feudal system of medieval England (namely, the norman Regnum Angliae), in which ‘allegiance’ and ‘true and faithful obedience’ to the sovereign were owed by a subject from birth.

64 TRAVAINI, L, *La monetazione nell'Italia normanna*, Rome, 1995, pp. 295

makes his appearance in 1137 at the court of Roger of Sicily, where he rises to high position in the Sicily's judicial and fiscal administration, the so-called *Diwan*, and is then recalled by Henry II in the English Exchequer[65].

So that, no external *dominations* or alien *interferences* affected either self-determination nor the unity of the Sicilian kingdom under the Sicilian-Normans monarchs: on the contrary, a huge amount of different *influences* had been shaping a new state in an innovative and original way.

c) no overwhelming colonization ever took place in Sicily by the population or by the nobles of Normandy (who, on the contrary, also because of the immediate proximity, preferred to settle in the Norman kingdom of England. See Arnaldi, 2005). On the contrary, an ambitious immigration campaign for the repopulation of Sicily was promoted, aiming for a peaceful and voluntary establishment of populations from northern Italy and northern Europe over the Sicilian territory.

From these few hints it is already possible to see how the so-called Norman *domination*, rather than a misleading narrative, is a real historical forgery.

Differently from the case of the mafia, however, "dominations" (by using this very term) is surprisingly an (ab)used narrative which is diffused with the utmost levity even by the most representative Sicilian institutional bodies (namely, the Sicilian Region).

In these terms a brochure published on the web by the Regional Ministry for Tourism of the Sicilian Region in 2008, and currently still visible on its institutional website, states:

"The syncretism of Muslim and Christian artistic elements, contribution of the ***Norman domination****, reaches very high stylistic levels in the cathedral of Monreale and in the adjoining cloister, well known for the little columns, covered and inlaid with mosaics and for its precious fountain standing in the middle"*[66].

Moreover, certain perplexities in this regard also arose from the communicative choices adopted in occasion of the renowned exhibition "*Sicily: culture and conquest*", which took place at the British Museum in London, in 2016, nonetheless taking into account that its artistic value (which is not in discussion here) and its communicative outcomes are two

65 HASKINS, C., H., *Norman Institutions*, 1918, p. 111-112

66 SICILIAN REGION, *"Sicily – a journey to the hearth of the Island"*, 2008, pag. 37. It is even worse if we consider how institutional Representatives of the Sicilian regional government currently have used such misleading narrative.

different things.

Despite its remarkable contribution to sweeping *“aside all the tourist clichès of beaches, lemons, the Mafia and Montalbano”* (*The Guardian,* 24th April 2016[67]), the exhibit’s overall basic concept, judging from its title, seems to be rather confusing: Sicily, once again, is depicted as an empty stage on which alien *conquerors*, time after time, have imposed their own cultures and contributions.

Symptomatic echoes of such a concept have been resounding in the British press, as an article published in the renowned London weekly *The Spectator*, emblematically entitled *“The rise and fall of Sicily”*, seems to demonstrate:

“His [of Roger II, N/A] *hybrid Greek-Latin-Islamic state was hugely successful. Islamic bureaucrats kept records in flowing Arabic, the bishops were Italian, French and English, and the Syrian Christian Arabic and Greek-speaking George of Antioch functioned as ammiratus ammiratorum, emir of emirs, or commander-in-chief”*, and “*Norman Sicily”* (never identified in its objective consistence as an identity endowed kingdom, A/N), *“after William II died without an heir in 1189, […] after lasting for a glorious century or so, quickly fragmented”* [68].

Although allegedly referred to the end of the Norman dynasty in Sicily, such a message seems to suggest that Sicily, to the extent that it was personified in its "Norman" *conquerors*, ceased to exist as a subject endowed with its own characteristics, as soon as the Norman dynasty itself ceased to rule the Island (despite the fact that the "Norman" institutions, including Parliament, would continue to exist until 1816).

It is evident, in this case, the confusion that has been made between the *conquest* of Sicily and the *Kingdom* of Sicily.

c) brief hints about the other “dominations”

Of course, from 1130 onwards Sicily actually suffered various alien conquests and, sometimes, also dominations, during which its full self-determination was erased (as in the case of Angevine phase), or reduced to an autonomous status within a foreign State (as in

67 The document can be consulted at the following link.

68 The document can be consulted at the following link. Obviously, no fragmentation ever occurred to the *Regnum Siciliae* after the disappearance of the Altavilla dynasty. It is well known that the crown of the Kingdom, intact in its substance, then passed to the Hohenstaufen dynasty. The hypothesis that "nationalistic" reasons lie at the basis of such a serious historiographical error is not strange.

some phases of the participation in the Spanish Empire).

But these were well defined historical periods, certainly not the uninterrupted sequel of alien powers common parlance usually refers to. In most cases, even the overwhelming "foreign people" were missing: Sicily, or its Kingdom, was simply aggregated or included within foreign empires or states, unless any invasion of its territory occurred.

In other cases, the institute of the so called *personal union of crowns* provided the perfect basis to enhance the misleading vulgate.

According to Roxburg – Oppenheim (2005) a *Personal Union* is in existence when two sovereign States and separate International Persons are linked together through the accidental fact that they have the same individual as monarch. A Personal Union is not, and is in no point treated as though it were, an International Person, and its two sovereign member-States remain separated[69].

According to such particular process, typical of the hereditary monarchies, a single monarch could own two or more "crowns" at the same time. But this was just a "personal" aspect not affecting the objective individuality of each "crown".

This is the case of the so called *"Swabian domination"*, in truth nothing more than the union in the same monarch of the two distinct crowns of the *Regnum Siciliae* and of the Holy Roman Empire (as well as of other crowns), or the same for the so called "*Aragonese domination*"[70], etc.

Moreover, the act of the *conquest*, which constitutes a prerequisite to a *domination,* was also missing: so for example, the crown of Sicily passed by hereditary right from Constance I Altavilla to her son Frederick II (I of Sicily) Hohenstaufen, or was spontaneously offered by the Sicilians themselves to Peter III of Aragon, and so on.

The autonomy of the two crowns also found a visual expression, given the use of different symbols of royal attributions when the same monarch (or dynasty) owned other crowns together with that of Sicily.

This, for instance, as for the Aragona-Sicilia house, is demonstrated by the existence of two different coats of arms, the one of the Kingdom of Sicily (at that time, *Regnum Trinacriae*), quarted in saltire containing the two Hohenstaufen eagles, and the one of the

69 OPPENHEIM, L., - ROXBURGH, R., *International Law: A Treatise*, Volume 1, 2005, p. 154.

70 A more complex analysis could certainly be made for the second phase of the Aragona - Trastàmara lineage, or for the Spanish period (in which the Kingdom of Sicily, although existing up to then, seemed to assume more the characteristics of a federated kingdom to the Empire of Spain). As already observed in our introduction, the purpose of this analysis is not to define historical reality, but to verify the reliability of a negative narrative.

Crown of Aragona, composed by four red "poles" on a gold background, as the Figure 6 shows.

Figure 6: Cathedral of Catania - Constance of Aragona-Sicilia's sarcophagus
Source: magistrimediterranei.com (© Pilar Viladomiu)

For a general and effectively reliable reconstruction of the dynastic lines of succession to the throne of the Kingdom of Sicily, reference can thus far be made to the Lavoisne's detailed genealogical, historical and chronological map (1822)[71], in which historical timeline from 1130 to 1816 is correctly reported in terms of succession of dynasties (namely, *houses* or *families*), and not of inexistent foreign "dominators" (Figure 13).

Lastly, in such terms, among others, the 1860 edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* undoubtedly recognised the existence of a Kingdom of Sicily until 1816, and explained the reasons for its definitive cessation in that year[72]:

"Once firmly re-established on the throne of Naples, Ferdinand [of Bourbon, III of Sicily and IV of Naples, N/A] *began his attack on the liberties of Sicily. Article 104 of the treaty of Vienna recognised him as «king of the* kingdom *of the Two Sicilies." The word kingdom therein introduced, though apparently insignificant, aimed, as it will be seen, at important changes in the government of the country. By a secret article of a treaty signed at Vienna on the 14th of June 1815, Ferdinand bound himself, in resuming the government of his kingdom, «not to admit of any innovation not in accordance either with the ancient monarchical institutions, or with the principles adopted by his imperial and royal majesty in*

71 LAVOISNE, C.V., *"A Complete Genealogical, Historical, Chronological, and Geographical Atlas; Being a General Guide to Ancient and Modern History",* London, 1822, n. 53.

72 It's also noteworthy how the British Parliament, even in 1809, claimed the right for the Crown to appoint the King of Sicily: "[…*] a power has to retort upon its enemy the evils of his own injustice, and that if a third party suffers, he must seek his redress, as against the original aggressor. It would follow from this, that because Bonaparte had placed his brother upon the throne of Spain, we had a right to place any king that we may chose on the throne of Sicily.",* in *The Parliamentary Register: Or an Impartial Report of the Debates that Have Occurred in the Two Houses of Parliament*, Volume 2, Great Britain, Parliament, 1809, pag. 6.

the internal government of his Italian provinces.» In conformity with this engagement, in 1816 he promulgated three royal edicts by which he assumed the new title of Ferdinand I, King of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies; and on the grounds that the privilege enjoyed by the Sicilians were to be combined with unity of the political institutions, which were to form the public law of the kingdom, he united the two kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, took the whole of the government into his hands, and virtually and de facto annulled both the ancient and the new constitution of Sicily. The Sicilians were only granted the privilege, that all offices and employments, civil and ecclesiastical, on the island should be conferred exclusively upon them. From that time the despotic rule of both the continental and the insular divisions of the kingdom dates" (ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA, Or Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature, entry "*Sicilies – Kingdom of the Two*", eighth edition, vol. XX, Edinburgh, 1860, pag. 263)[73].

d) conclusion

Misleading narrative about Sicily's history, according to which the Island as well as its people have been continuously *conquered* and *dominated* by alien powers throughout its historical existence, arises mainly from two factors:

a) the incorrect description of the succession of different *dynasties* or *houses* in the ownership of the same Crown in terms of *conquests* and consequent *dominations* by as many foreign peoples;

b) the almost total obliteration of the unitary and stable institutional subject of the *Kingdom of Sicily* as such, as well as of its powers and institutions (first of all, the Sicilian Parliament).

According to Anholt's Nation Brand Hexagon, such a long-lasting misleading narrative directly affects the *Culture and Heritage* and *People* components, as well as the *Governance* component in part, since many believe that some attributions of the present Sicilian Region, such as that of the honorary name of "parliament" attributed to its legislative assembly, are the result of bizarre "privileges" invented out of thin air.

Moreover, according to Benoit's criteria, this is an aggressive/persuasive narration operating through both the fact (*conquests* and *dominations*, by definition bloody and

73 This is the same text that, in the previous paragraph relating to the narrative on the mafia's origins, we have mentioned to highlight that, until 1860, there were no traces of that phenomenon in foreign sources.

overwhelming, instead of peaceful and consenting *dynastic successions*) and the value attributed to it (passive approach and absence of any active contribution by the Sicilians).

In conclusion, to say a people as constantly "conquered/dominated" by alien powers (as well, as its implication, as ethnically and culturally overwhelmed by alien dominators) is to say that people has neither own history nor own identity.

In turn, if local history and cultural identity are to be first of all considered an intangible asset and a crucial factor for a robust nation brand, beyond any merely "nationalistic" propulsion, their negative alteration is a serious concern to deal with[74].

7. Media and press narrative about Sicily and Sicilians

a) Overall framework

Karlins *et alii* (1969) noted that the stereotyping of places may be seen as the development of images which for the most part are generated from a number of secondary sources. Stereotypes appear to be learned by word of mouth or from books and films. These media create a vast cultural matrix in which images can develop and persist irrespective of the reality they are supposed to represent[75].

Misleading narratives about Sicily and Sicilians have been considerably strengthened by a massive and uninterrupted mono thematic cinematography and TV production by both Italian and foreign origin, mainly from the second half of the 20th century to date.

Specifically, the messages underlying such productions (to a large extent mafia-based) can be traced to four main axioms, or "formats", which, according to the directors' needs, may be combined in various forms:

1. the mafia is a product of the Sicilian community's normal way of life, rather than a

74 The limitation of the present analysis to the Kingdom of Sicily derives exclusively from the choice of this Author, thus leaving further fields of investigation open. Indeed, another in-depth analysis should be made, on the same terms, with respect to the homologous detrimental concept of *colonization*, with reference above all to the so-called Greek period, etc. In that case, the narrative misleading of a massive colonization coming from the Greek poleis or from the Phoenician cities almost completely eradicated the existence of the Sicilian indigenous communities (*Siculi, Sikani, Elimi*) from common perception. Just as it gave rise to the false belief that the Sicilian *poleis* were simple Greek colonies, completely eliminating from the scenario of the common imagination the existence and work of the Sicilian - Greek speaking people, namely the *Sikeliotai* culture. The same can be said for the erroneous identification of the *Sikelia* (namely the *Sikanie* of the XXIV book of the Odyssey) in the more general *Megale Hellas* or *Magna Graecia* of the continental part of southern Italy.

75 KARLINS, M., COFFMAN, T. L., & WALTERS, G. "*On the fading of social stereotypes: Studies in three generations of college students",* in Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 13(1), 1969, 1–16

criminal phenomenon which has taken place (also) in Sicily;

2. the Sicilian community is immanently wild, primitive, backward and sexist (which, in turn, is the main reason why the mafia, as a result of such mindset, should be considered a strictly Sicilian phenomenon).

3. the only salvation for a "deviant" Sicilian (which means the non-primitive, non-backward and, if male, non-sexist Sicilian) can be achieved by emigrating outside Sicily. This topic is particularly frequented in production of both movies (also the so-called TV movies) and TV series;

4. the only salvation to the Sicilian community as a whole can derive mainly from non-Sicilian subjects who, time after time, are police officers, prosecutors, entrepreneurs, etc.

A brief deepening of the main two narrative lines (backward Sicily and mafia Sicily) can be now traced.

b) Sicily as a backward place-

On the thorny issue of the misleading media narrative impact over the overall reputation of Sicily, even if just referred to some '50s and '60s movies, the anthropologist M. Bolognari held a fundamental lecture at the Oxford Literary Festival in 2015[76].

According to his view, cinema brings with it the creation of stereotypes as well as of prejudices, that is to say, representations of conventional and hackneyed ideas which tend to cast the identity of a place as if it were ingrained and immutable.

Through an analysis of some movies drawn from the Italian and German repertoire, the Author argues that certain images of Sicily are historically determined and stem from both political and power interests that are to be found inside and outside of the island.

Before the appearance of the mafia as the "main feature" depicting Sicily in movies and TV productions, however, the Author remarks that Sicily was represented in a different light through the medium of cinema: it was the land of illiterate peasants, landowners heedless of culture, or/and superstitious men jealous of their own black-clothed women. Basically, an archaic and primitive society, bound by its passions and devoid of reason.

According to the Author's thesis, the cinematographic Sicily was nothing but a parody ridiculing a civilization and a culture that had to be eradicated to make way for

76 BOLOGNARI, M., "*Reflected Sicily. Images and Representations through the Cinema of the 1950s and 1960s*", in Humanities - Year IV, Nr. 8, December 2015.

industrialization, emigration to the North of Italy and the rest of Europe, and the modernization of the bourgeoisie of Italy, so that the assimilation of masses of peasants from the South into the working classes of the North could be achieved: in the decades spanning the 50s and 60s, Sicily had to be made to feel ashamed of itself in order to enable it to accept the cultural models imposed from the outside more readily, and cinema contributed effectively realizing this agenda.

Among others, Bolognari quotes the case of the 1962 movie *Divorzio all'italiana* (Divorce Italian style), winner at the Cannes Film Festival.

Although the title refers purportedly to divorce Italian style (on the basis of the actual law up to then in force in Italy, certainly not exclusively in Sicily), the movie was actually set in Sicily, in what the Author assumes to be a deliberate choice to make a grotesque and fictional story more credible with essentially ridiculous and absurd characters, in a far-fetched screenplay of film comedy.

Again, *"The colonial perspective of Sicily is here thrown into relief, not so much on the part of the politically orientated conservatives, but more from the progressive classes who wanted to bring about a fast-paced process of modernization of the South of Italy. All that which was rural had to be overcome, abandoned, put behind and forgotten. The richness of peasant culture was labelled as being antiquated and counter to social emancipation, Western democracy and the emerging and new labour practices. Paradoxically in the decades between the 50s and 60s, it was in fact the contadini themselves and the artisans of the South who, by emigrating to the North, significantly contributed to the industrialization of the so-called golden triangle of Milan, Turin and Genova, and to the enforced modernization of Italy as a whole. The Italian leading classes (the then political establishment), in so doing, had every interest to represent Sicily as an immutable world of a backward and archaic past"* (Bolognari, M., *op. Cit.*).

It's interesting to note how Bolognari's analysis seems to match the actual socio-economic scenario of Sicily in the first decade after its Autonomous Statute entered into force (1946).

Indeed, the late '50s Sicily seemed to be heading towards a relevant economic growth, accompanied by an unprecedented level of industrial development, through a path marked by the following steps, from 1947 to 1953[77]:

77 The following checklist derives from MICCICHÈ, A., "*La Sicilia e gli anni Cinquanta – il decennio dell'Autonomia*", lecture held at the University "*Kore*" of Enna – UKE on 15th may 2020.

1. Creation of the administrative apparatus of the Sicilian Region, and precisely of the multiple branches of administration directly involved in economic reconstruction policies (Agriculture, Finance, Public Works, Local Authorities);
2. Creation of the Sicilian Electricity Authority – ESE (1947)
3. Public works policies with ERP funds (Marshall Plan), state, regional and first funds by the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno*;
4. 1948, a new law allowing newly created companies in Sicily to issue bearer bonds.
5. 1950, Agrarian reform
6. 1950 "Provisions for the development of industries in the region"
7. 1950, "Discipline of research and cultivation of liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons"
8. Law n. 298 of 11 April 1953, on the Regional Institute for Financing to Industries in Sicily - IRFIS, with subsidized credit duties to small and medium-sized enterprises
9. Funding provided by the National Solidarity Fund (art. 38 of the statute): First allocation in 1952, 55 billion of Italian lire.
10. 1953, discovery of oil in Ragusa.

In 1958, this was the situation in Sicily:

- Building the dams of Disueri in Gela, that of Carboj, Trinità, Ancipa, Fanaco; the dam of Pozzillo was in progress;
- The Catania-Syracuse coast road, the Pergusa circuit and the 45 ring roads municipalities, including Agrigento, Catania and Palermo, as well as 1,650 km of new road network were built.
- 356,242 new rooms built for public housing. The most important interventions in popular neighborhoods Noce-Notarbartolo and Villa Tasca in Palermo; in the Nesima and San Berillo district in Catania, in the village Carosello in Messina and in the inhabited caves of Modica and Scicli;
- Tourist accomodation created: from 6,151 places in 1949 to 20,398 in 1957. The regional tourist villages of Erice and Taormina were built, while those of Aspra, Pergusa and Stromboli were under construction;
- Energy production tripled in ten years, from 274 million kWh in 1947 to 963 million KWh; oil production went from 142,925 tons in 1955 to 1.15 million tons in 1957;
- Global spending for private consumption in ten years went from 292 billion lire to 658 billion lire.

It is therefore clear that Sicily, on the eve of the '60s Italian economic "boom", was about to become a potentially strong actor (and competitor) on the national economic stage, in the geographically opposite end to that in which national economic growth was supposed to take place[78].

This could explain, moreover, the reason why such an aggressive misleading narrative was directed almost exclusively towards Sicily, without other southern regions or islands such as Sardinia being targeted by any particular cinematographic emphasis, despite the fact their socio-economic condition did not seem much better than the Sicilian one at the time.

The moustached black-clothed jealous and hot-blooded Sicilian peasant became such a widely abused *meme* since its most famous epigone, the renowned Sardinian actor Tiberio Murgia, consecrated it in *I Soliti Ignoti* (1958), although it was said he had never been in Sicily.

The issue to be faced is not so much the fact that a huge quantity of filmography has been depicting Sicily and the Sicilian community over decades in a ridiculously misleading way, both in Italy and abroad (and this latter factor is what we are definitely most concerned with), but rather the fact that no alternative models have ever been proposed, also on behalf of what the legitimate counterpart of all this, the Sicilian community, would have the right to dispute.

c) Sicily as the *place of the mafia* -

It is a widespread, deep-seated doubt, especially abroad, that each Sicilian, rather than an Italian from any other regional provenance, could potentially be a mafia-man.

In the previous paragraphs, the question of the misleading narrative about the socio-anthropological origin of the mafia-phenomenon in Sicily has been addressed. Now, our analysis will focus on the effects that media narratives about the "Sicilian" mafia is causing to Sicilian reputation at a global level.

In some cases abroad, (many, if the truth be told,) the identification between Sicily and the mafia (a source of unease already at national level) almost increases the dignity of an undisputed fact and of an assumption taken for granted.

78 An unexpected development of the Sicilian industry and economy, however, would have moreover required apposite infrastructure national spending to create adequate routes connecting Sicily to Northern Italy and over.

On this subject, it is sufficient to cite a few relevant cases which have occurred during the last few years, with no need for further details or deeper analyses:

- in 2015, the case of a tour operator from Boston, who prepared tourist packages for Sicily including "*Meeting with a son of one of the former mafia boss*" at a famous hotel in Palermo, caused a scandal[79].
- in September 2017, NRK, the Norwegian state television, published a series of recipes of the Italian tradition on its website, including that of Sicilian *cannoli*, textually calling it "*Mafiakaker*”, the "mafia cake" (later, in the face of some protests, the title was promptly changed to "Sicilianske *cannoli*")[80];
- in October 2017, the French “*Auto Moto Magazine*” published on its Youtube channel the video of a test drive performed near Corleone. The video was entitled, “*An offer you cannot refuse*”. The journalist stops in a small square and begins to describe the passenger compartment of the car. Then he gets out of the car and opens the trunk by a remote control, in which one can see, behind the cameras, a mafia-styled man: the journalist then placidly states that in Sicily, Sicilians are used to doing it this way[81].
- In July 2019, on the official Facebook page of the Ukrainian airline SkyUp Airlines, a message appeared for the promotion of some tourist flights on the Kiev-Catania route, the text of which (in Ukrainian) so said: “*Do not allow the mafia to catch you in Sicily, but rather be caught by the fantastic nature* ". The content is no longer available, as it was removed as a result of the protest intervention with related screenshots that we personally sent to the Embassy of Italy in Kiev on 23rd July 2019.
- As a symptom of a more general trend in foreign tourist guides about Sicily, in the following terms the *CNN Travel* website section dedicated to Sicily: “*The Mafia continues to exercise a baleful influence on Sicily and beyond, from its periodic killings, to the protection money -- pizzo -- many hotels, restaurants and shops are forced to pay, and the corrupt investment climate that helps to keep businesses away and keep Sicily relatively poor among the Italian regions. Tourists will hardly ever be touched directly by mob violence, which tends to go on in the poorer parts of town that are the Mafia's strongholds. But you can help those who have suffered by getting hold of a "pizzo-free" city map of Palermo and eating, shopping and sleeping in*

79 See The Daily Mail, 30th March 2015.
80 See Huffington Post, Italian edition, 4th September 2017.
81 See Corriere.it, 20th October 2017.

establishments that have signed on to an anti-extortion charter. Various Sicilian tour groups offer "Mafia tours" of the island"[82]

- Lastly, as a real plague, there are countless cases of clubs, restaurants and pizzerias abroad that are named or have unequivocal references to the "Sicilian" mafia. For all, it is enough to cite the case of a pizzeria in Gdansk, Poland, named "*Sicilia – la casa della mafia*" (Sicily – the mafia's home), which aroused strong protests[83].

d) Alternative ways to narrate Sicily into history.

Figure 7: Frame from "*1492: Conquest of Paradise*", dir. Ridley Scott (1992). © Gaumont et al.
In the name of the crowns of Aragon-Castilla, a court official aboard the *Santa Maria* is ready to certify the discovery of a "new world" by Christopher Columbus (G. Depardieu), which is about to happen. The coat of arms of the Kingdom of Sicily (see below, Figure 23) is clearly visible on his shoulder, as part of the coat of arms of Ferdinand II of Aragon and I of Sicily (Trastamara house).

82 The document can be consulted at the following link.
83 Among others, the online magazine PalermoReport.it reported in 2013 to have informed the Sicilian regional bodies deputies of the fact to safeguard Sicilian identity. No action seems to have been taken regarding this, since the Pizzeria is still using its original name.

8. The Sicilian Region as the free-rider "*par excellence*" – the cases of the *per capita fiscal balances* and the State fund transfers-

a) Overall framework

Another of the negative issues we choose to deal with does not regard Sicily as a whole or its people (nor, in a certain measure, a direct involvement of any foreign actors), but the overall negative reputation which affects, on a national scale, the highest representative regional authority, that is the Sicilian Region.

Although this topic does not directly pertain to the perception of Sicily abroad, the risk deriving from the circulation of information which can easily cross national borders should nevertheless be considered.

Furthermore, it is also necessary to consider that any national individual, whether Sicilian or not, might in turn become an "ambassador" or a promoter of such information abroad.

The narrative about the Sicilian Region, as well as about its Autonomous Statute usually develops in two main ways, namely:

a) a general framework of prominent negative values depicts the Region as a centre of waste, inefficiency, archaic privileges[84] and corruption: ultimately, a bloated bureaucracy incapable to do anything useful except structurally damaging both national and Sicilian interests.

b) furthermore, the Sicilian Region is also depicted as a serial drainer of State funds, much more than other more 'virtuous' Italian regions.

Of course, no one intends to deny inefficiency and waste are widely present in the Sicilian Region (among others), but the task is in determining the real measure in which such a negative narrative conforms to reality.

In several cases, data underlying the information is delivered in an artfully partial or incomplete version, so as to cause false representation to the recipients.

Although the aims of such a massive negative narrative cannot be analytically explored

84 As already noted, with regard to this issue, disinformation about the Sicilian cultural and historical identity also plays a crucial role. Moreover, no information is usually provided to Sicilians in public schools about origins and characteristics of the Sicilian Region and its Autonomous Statute. The lack of information activity is also accompanied by a hint of narrative misleading on the same origin of Sicilian Autonomy, improved by some national novelists. However, this is a phenomenon that is not yet massively widespread.

here, its effects are relevant, in order to detect another critical point in the purpose of this analysis: the general dissatisfaction of Sicilians towards their representative body, as well a general aversion by the rest of the Italian citizens (who often are led to believe the Sicilian Region is a pickpocket of the taxes they pay to the state).

It is crucial to note how, often, such narrative tends not to affect the Sicilian Region as such but rather its autonomous Statute: the underlying message would tend to affirm that a sort of "regional" golden age will come if Sicily (or, even better, Sicilians) renounce its useless and harmful autonomy.

Differently from other issues previously discussed here, this one still represents more of a risk to avoid regarding ongoing reputation damage on a global scale, since:

1. in the global communication age, misleading information diffused by domestic media on a national scale can easily cross the national borders in any moment and for any purpose, thus aggravating the already seriously undermined informative framework on Sicily on the whole;

2. Each national individual (including Sicilians) might unintentionally become an "ambassador" of misleading information abroad, innocently repeating what he/she has been metabolizing thanks to the domestic mass media.

Of course, our purpose here is not to discuss complex issues of public finance: on the contrary, we will assume we are unqualified observers, who are nevertheless receiving a massive amount of information about the fact that Sicily (as the reference *mantra* tells) *"gets more than it gives"*.

b) The per-capita fiscal balances case

The renowned topic of the *per-capita fiscal balances* (or *residui fiscali*) can be considered as an emblematic case, in this regard.

The *per-capita fiscal balances* can be roughly defined as the difference between total public expenditure in a territory, and the amount of tax revenue generated by taxpayers *residing* in that same territory: a negative value means that territory (in our case, a Region) is gaining in public expenditure more than its residents are paying for taxes.

On the basis of an analysis conducted by the *National Council of Research – CNR* in 2017, during the period 2013-2015 per-capita fiscal balances showed the values reported in Figure 8.

Tab. 1	Media 2013-2015 valori pro-capite (euro)		
	entrate	spese	residuo fiscale
Lombardia	17.610	11.999	5.611
Lazio	16.235	12.563	3.672
Emilia Romagna	15.905	12.612	3.293
Veneto	13.750	11.672	2.078
Piemonte	13.643	12.481	1.162
Toscana	13.358	12.554	805
Provincia autonoma Bolzano	17.909	17.216	693
Marche	11.804	11.909	-105
Liguria	13.777	14.124	-347
Friuli Venezia Giulia	13.676	14.086	-410
Umbria	11.783	12.996	-1.213
Valle d'Aosta	17.330	18.803	-1.472
Campania	8.125	10.211	-2.086
Provincia autonoma Trento	15.259	17.547	-2.287
Abruzzo	10.301	12.664	-2.364
Puglia	8.180	10.681	-2.501
Sicilia	7.681	11.257	-3.576
Basilicata	8.380	12.328	-3.948
Molise	8.900	12.896	-3.996
Sardegna	8.789	13.157	-4.368
Calabria	7.394	12.923	-5.528
Indicatori di variabilità			
Valore medio	12.371	13.175	-804
Coefficiente di variazione	28,9	16,6	360,9
Fonte: elaborazioni Cnr-Issirfa su dati Istat e Cpt			

Figure 8: per capita fiscal balance 2013-2015.
Source: CNR website

Observing the values referred to Sicily, the data might seem to demonstrate how Sicily has always received from the State considerably more than the amount its *resident* taxpayers paid to the State.

On the other hand, since the Regions showing positive values (hence, to be assumed as paying more, or much more taxes and receiving much less services by the State) are usually northern regions, the inference that Sicily *"lives off Northern Italy"* has been fatally crystallized into the common perception.

That said, some objections have been raised to confute such a claim.

According to some, per-capita fiscal balances are nothing but an *estimate*, or *"a concept used in an attempt to identify the optimal territorial distribution of resources obtained through taxation, which is historically recurrently used among public finance scholars"*, we should also consider that "*the possibility of developing conventional criteria is extremely controversial to specify on a territorial basis the quantitative relationship between the tax* *levy and its reuse"* (Constitutional Court, 10th February 2016, n. 69)[85].

As a matter of fact, per-capita fiscal balances are actually based on the taxpayers *residence* criterion, which would not imply in any measure that the so-called *tax base* (namely, the income production to be taxed) is necessarily created in the same place.

In other words, whenever an end consumer in Sicily buys some services/goods by a Supplier whose headquarter is located in X-Region:

a) he generates an income for the Supplier, and

b) he also pays the related Value Added Tax.

In turn, the Supplier from the X-Region pays the State both the direct taxes arising from the income the Sicilian buyer has generated, as well as the VAT (I.V.A., in Italian) the customer paid him.

That said, since the headquarter of the Supplier is located in the X-Region, all those taxes, even though substantially ensured to him by his/her Sicilian buyer, are considered as if they were received by the State from the X-Region taxpayer.

On the contrary, any income generated by the Sicilian buyer, as well as the VAT he/she paid in advance to the Supplier, will not be recognized as coming from Sicily at all, even though it was *generated* in Sicily.

If one pays attention to the massive use in Sicily of extra-regional originated goods, services and activities, from the recurrent daily life needs (large-scale retail trade, electric services, phone providers, etc.) to the more structured realities (oil plants), it is easy to imagine how the scenario depicted through the *per-capita fiscal balances* criterion's application might not actually be reliable[86].

Moreover, besides the refutations of the reliability of this specific criterion, another issue to bear in mind is that the final scenario can radically change according to a different criterion.

This is the case of the rather different *Territorial Public Accounts* system, that is aimed at measuring the consolidated cash flows for all public revenues and expenses, also in regard to regional areas.

By applying such a criterion instead of the *per capita fiscal balances*, Sicily's situation

85 Quoted in ARMAO, G., *Intervento conclusivo di Gaetano Armao, Vicepresidente della Regione alla seduta dell'ARS del 20.II.2019 sul Regionalismo differenziato,* Palermo, 2019, pag. 3.

86 To avoid these deviant effects, art. 37 of the Statute of the Sicilian Region, never applied so far, foresees that the companies acting in Sicily, but which have their registered headquarter outside Sicily, shall (or should) pay their taxes to the Sicilian Region. Enforcement of art. 37 St. could lead to a quite different *per-capita fiscal balance* scenario.

would be rather different, since data shows it receiving much less public monies, and public services, than the "virtuous" regions.

The overall situation should be as shown by the following SVIMEZ estimate[87]:

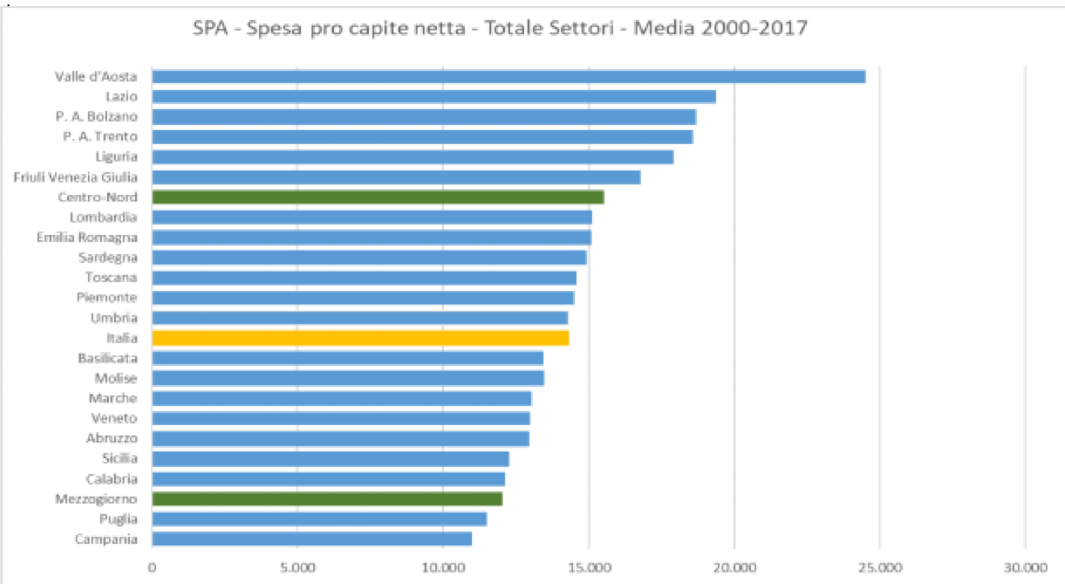

Figure 9: Source: SVIMEZ, 2019

c) The (alleged) massive exploitation of State public funds

Another renowned topic foresees Sicily and the Sicilian Region as massive (sometimes, *the* greatest) beneficiaries not only of *public services*, but of a huge amount of State *public funds* as well. These funds are usually believed to be aimed at addressing the highest regional budgetary shortfalls.

On the one hand, the national press and mass media constantly report data which seem to demonstrate that a large regional deficit is the reason why the Sicilian Region uninterruptedly "pulls in" State funds (to the detriment, therefore, of other "virtuous" regions): the issue is perceived as a national concern so much so that some popular television broadcasts seem by now regularly devoted to dealing with this issue.

On the other hand, however, other data and evidence would seem to show the opposite situation and, namely, that the State retains a relevant part of financial resources originally due to the Sicilian Region, so determining the continuing financial gap of the Region.

87 SVIMEZ, Hearing at the Finance Commission of the Chamber of Deputies,, Rome, 2019.

Also in this case, therefore, we are faced with two irreconcilable versions of the same topic.

In this sense, back in 2016 the weekly magazine *L'Espresso* published an interview with the then Regional Ministry of the Economy (who was appointed at the suggestion of the then national government), whose statement seems to widely counteract the aforementioned vulgate:

"On the fiscal side, Sicily also suffers unsolved problems depressing its revenues and empting the autonomous status of any content. The first one is related to the value added tax - IVA: the Revenue Agency only recognizes to the Region the VAT collected by the companies that have their legal headquarters in Sicily, while companies that, despite selling their products in Sicily, are based on continental Italy and pay their taxes to the state [causing the so-called *per-capita fiscal balance* question above mentioned, N/A]. *Because of this system, the Region loses about 3 out of 5 billion euro. The second problem is related to the substitute tax: the INPS server that processes the payroll of state civil servants and pensioners residing in Sicily has been moved to Latina. A significant share of the personal income tax accrued in Sicily, which should belong by Statute to the Region, is therefore retained by the State. These two statutory violations, i.e. minor collections from VAT and Irpef, «represents for Sicily about 7 billion less taxes ", explains Baccei. This leads to the following visible result: the Island's per-capita tax revenues are in the order of 2 thousand euro, equal to those of an ordinary statute Region, against 4 thousand in Sardinia, 6 thousand in Friuli, 8 thousand in autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano and 9 thousand of the Aosta Valley"*[88]

As a matter of fact, in 2015 the Joint Sections of the Court of Audit already recognised that, during the 2014 financial year, the management structure of the State Revenue Agency (*Agenzia delle Entrate*) retained a significant amount of revenue collected within the Sicilian Region, a total of 585.5 million euros, transferring it directly to the State budget by way of tax provisions and, moreover, in the absence of any formal communication to the Region.

The latter, in this way, has been unable to ascertain the same amount as incoming and consequently outgoing - as a contribution to public finance - given that, in the accounting system of the Region, revenue is ascertained at the time of payment.

The Court, moreover, highlighted how the action of the aforementioned State offices, which have put in place a substantial "cash compensation", has implemented a unilateral and

88 ODDO, G., *"Un bilancio lacrime e sangue"*, L'Espresso, 26 May 2016, pag. 29

not at all transparent procedure, which does not allow correct feedback at the level of the SIOPE database. This behaviour has been furthermore deemed by the Court as poorly reconciled with the principle of *"loyal cooperation"* which must oversee institutional relations between the State and the Region.

In conclusion, *"These Joint Sections underline how, once again, in a moment of financial distress for the accounts of the Sicilian Region, statutory amounts due are not paid by the competent state bodies"* (Court of Audit – Joint Sections for the Sicilian Region, *Summary of the report on the general statement of the Sicilian Region for the financial year 2014*, pag. 19)[89].

d) The "lame" application of the Autonomous Statute of the Sicilian Region.

Costa - Bossone (2019) have recently assumed an even more robust position, at the same time also providing for further data supporting what the Court of Audit had already previously stated.

In the national magazine *Micro Mega*, in analysing the question of the so-called differentiated autonomy, the Authors allege that Sicily is nowadays the region that is paying more than all the country's political unity: except for a quarter of health expenditure and a few crumbs for the Municipalities, Sicily is not receiving any transfer from the State (those that are counted as such are nothing more than the taxes collected in Sicily itself) anymore.

According to the Authors' findings, Sicily (Region, Provinces, Municipalities, almost all public bodies) would literally survive with approximately 2/3 of the IRPEF (the main direct tax over personal income in Italy) as well as by approximately 1/3 of the VAT collected within the regional territory.

As the Authors assume, the Region is expected to do and in turn pay everything exclusively with those resources, and all this at the expense of the Sicilian taxpayers. To this, a contribution to the recovery of the State's public debt must be added: its amount would be four times as much *per capita* in regard to that of the other regions, and the second in absolute value only to the Lombardy. Such a contribution is supposed to be paid also by the former provinces, even though these do not receive any service from the State.

The Authors furthermore remark how this apparent paradox arises from a "lame"

89 The full document is available on the Court of Audit institutional website.

application of the Statute: in theory, Sicily should assume almost all of its expenses and take almost all of its revenues; in practice, this has been implemented only on the expenditure side (with a few residual exceptions, such as schools), while on the revenue side the State "*keeps the purse strings tight*".

So the few taxes collected in Sicily and reversed to the Region are counted as "tax transfers" by the State, and hence the illusion of a region maintained by the national Government[90].

e) Conclusions

A first conclusion can be drawn: the coexistence of more radically opposite and incompatible versions over the same issue denotes how the negative narrative about the whole Sicilian Region is, at least, widely undemonstrated as well as refutable.

But its massive diffusion in an assertive way, as a given data rather than a doubt, with no specification about its uncertainness and conceptual burdens, has been generating a dangerous false representation of Sicily for years, besides creating an inappropriate positive impression of the reputation of other regions.

According to Anholt's criteria, this topic mainly afflicts the *Governance* component, since it paints an overall picture of substantial unaccountability of the highest institutions of Sicilian political and administrative government.

Furthermore, the misleading narrative here under examination also affects the *People* component, both directly (to the extent that Sicilians are perceived as unable to effectively choose their representatives) and indirectly (as it creates mistrust in the latter towards their own most representative Institution) and the *investment and immigration* component (since it creates maximum distrust towards regional bureaucracy).

Under Benoit's criteria, moreover, a persuasive attack affects both the beliefs (Sicilian Region wastes public fund) and the value (also the average and/or necessary expenditures by the Sicilian Region are depicted as a waste of public funds).

Lastly, this represents both instantaneous (since almost each single action by the Sicilian Region is instantly subjected to negative attention) and long-lasting reputational damage.

90 COSTA, M., & BOSSONE, B., *"Autonomia differenziata? "Curnuti e vastuniati" (Perché per la Sicilia è meglio l'indipendenza)"*, MicroMega, 19 August 2019.

It is crucial to note, moreover, how this topic is also relevant under a strictly legal perspective.

In fact, under art. 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights, everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and *to receive* and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.

While the freedom to receive information and ideas relates to the media, so as to enable it to impart such information and ideas to the public, the European Court of Human Rights also reads in this freedom the right of the public to be adequately informed, in particular on matters of public interest, also with regard to the duties of journalists in order to provide *accurate* and *reliable* information in accordance with the ethics of journalism[91].

Furthermore, the concept of responsible journalism is not confined to the contents of information which is collected and/or disseminated by journalistic means. It also embraces, *inter alia*, the lawfulness of journalists' conduct, including their public interaction with the authorities (in our case, the Sicilian Region as such) when exercising journalistic functions[92].

9. Sicilians' in-group identity and self stereotyping

Among the other factors, a community's identity, sense of belonging and memory systems are considered key points for a place's strong image and reputation system[93]. The brand of a given place and its civil community's sense of national and cultural identity, hence, can be said to be tightly linked by a systematic correlation.

We have so far treated some cases of severe alteration of the Sicilian brand, namely how Sicily is perceived outside the region and, in particular, abroad.

Some references to the average Sicilian community's approach to the overall reference framework so far described must be touched on. This is to ascertain if the massive stereotyping on the one hand, and deprivation of reliable information on the origin and the historical-cultural identity of one's own social group on the other, have caused cognitive

91 EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, case *Bladet Tromso and Stensaas v Norway,* 20 May 1999.
92 EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, case *Màndly and other v. Hungary,* 26 May 2020.
93 See BOYER, M. C, *The two orders of cybernetics in urban form and design. Companion to urban design*. Routledge, New York, 2011, pp 89–102.

dissonance among the Sicilians regarding their self-perception.

This is a pivotal point, since it directly regards the nation brand hexagon's *People* component.

in this regard, Social Psychology could aid to properly define the sense of belonging and memory systems (which local identity basically derives from), considering them under the perspective of a *social identity*, whether Sicilians are considered as a national group as such, or a sub-national group within the more general Italian national group, but in any case a *cultural group.*

Henri Tajfel (1978) defined social identity as "*that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a group together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership*".

As the Individual in his relationship to the social is put in the spotlight, social identity can be defined as a concept resulting from a process of identification of an Individual with different groups which means, in the case of national identity, that identification can be seen as a process of depersonalization that emphasizes common ground among members of a nation and bases connections between individuals on their collective identity rather than on interpersonal ties. Thus, in social psychology, the notion of national identity is comprehended through the degree and type of identification of individuals to their national group, and can encompass many variables such as values, habits, linguistic uses, and so on[94].

On the other hand, the contribution of Sociology is particularly noticeable in the theoretical elaboration of the concept of *collective memory*.

As Bouchat – Rimè (2018) remarked, the Individual can remember a past event only by reconstructing it from common notions shared in his mind and in those of members of the society to which he belonged. As such, each individual memory would be therefore be a particular point of view in the collective memory. Moreover, collective memory has a set of emergent properties. Indeed, shared memory at the collective level is more than a mere aggregate of the individual memories of the members of a community. The notion of collective memory is thus familiar to historians, political scientists, and literary scholars, and has come to refer to concepts as different as myth, political tradition, mnemonic traces, socially framed individual memories and collective representations.

From a psychological perspective, then, *collective memory* can be defined as

94 TAJFEL, H., *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, Academic Press, 1978

representations of the past in the minds of members of a community. These representations, then, contribute to the community's sense of identity[95].

This definition attributes a central role to the notion of social identity: indeed, more than a mere set of representations of the past, collective memory has an identity function for the members of a group: it conditions its sense of what it was, what it is, and what it can be. Most national groups thus define their identity around narratives of a “shared experience”.

The Authors again note how this representation of a common past then helps to maintain the continuity of the group despite evolving situations. As such, it is transmitted across generations and to new group members through institutions and cultural products such as commemorations, official narratives, vernaculars, museums, and so on[96].

Collective memory thus seems to play an important role in defining and maintaining the social and, *a fortiori*, national/cultural identity.

On the other hand, Good *et alii* (2007) remarked how social identity alone can determine vulnerability to stereotype threat: a false social identity, then, can be established as a consequence, since the stereotype threat can lead people to alter their sense of self.

For example, research has shown that stereotype-threatened individuals often feel less like valued members of the domain in which they are stereotyped, or avoid the stereotyped domain, or stop caring about achievement in the domain, or distance themselves from the stereotyped group.

Although some of these results may involve short-term effects, others have more long-term consequences and can influence the career opportunities and directions of people’s lives: some studies (widely reported by Good *et alii*, 2007) suggest that stigmatized individuals whose social identity is strongly aligned with the stereotyped group may be most vulnerable, while, on the contrary, a robust national, cultural, or even racial identity is protective and provides benefits for the whole group: when stereotyped individuals make this identity-achievement link, then the stereotype may be disarmed, even though they may find themselves in situations in which the prevailing negative cultural stereotype is alive.

For these reasons, the Authors assume that having a devalued social identity creates vulnerability to the stereotype threat, and perhaps even more so when that component of your social identity is a fundamental part of who you are.

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95 BOUCHAT, P., & RIMÉ, B., *National Identity and Collective Memory – a social psychological perspective*, in INGENHOFF, D., *et alii,* (edited by) *Bridging Disciplinary Perspectives of Country Image Reputation, Brand, and Identity,* Routledge, 2018

96 BOUCHAT, P., & RIMÉ, B., *op. cit.*, 2018

Another consequence deriving from a damaged social identity Good *et alii* (2007) show is the "disengagement", which occurs when, in order to protect themselves, people's self-views become disconnected from how they perform in the domain. Disengagement is related to domain avoidance in that they both involve a distancing of the self from the task in which a threat is felt.

However, domain avoidance is typically more of a long-term reaction to the threatening situation—simply avoiding the domain. Disengagement, on the other hand, is typically a more short-term psychological adjustment to stereotype threat that involves weakening the dependence of one's self-views on one's performance[97].

Frantz Fanon's (1968) early studies on the psychology of racism highlighted that one result of negative stereotyping may be that its victims adopt these attributes and start to believe in their actuality (*facticity*), or at least begin to behave as if these stereotypes represented reality. Elaborating on Karl Marx's term "*Entfremdung*" (alienation), Fanon found that the constant attribution of racist stereotypes leads to a psychological condition where finally the "original" self, which existed before being damaged by stereotyping, is buried, and the stereotype becomes an alienated identity of the individual[98]

Steele *et alii* (2002) remarked that people who expect to be viewed by others from stereotyping perspectives tend to reproduce these stereotypes by unwittingly acting according to the stereotypes. In fact, as the Authors assume, the threat of judgment and treatment that stems from a negative and broadly held group stereotype can become a much more profound threat than the threat stemming from most personal reputations. It can constitute an everlasting predicament of one's life depending on how broadly held the negative viewpoint is.

The imposing analysis of Steele *et alii* (2002), moreover, shows that stereotypes about a person's group, through the threat of judgment, treatment, and stereotype confirmation they pose, can have profound effects on the individual's behaviour, ranging from standardized test performance to golf putting, and, beyond that, to the very nature of his personal and social identity.

Whether or not a person experiences this stereotyped threat in a situation depends on

97 GOOD, C. - DWECK, C. S. - ARONSON, J., *Social Identity, Stereotype Threat, and Self-Theories*, in FULIGNI, J. (edited by), *Contesting Stereotypes and Creating Identities* Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 2007, p. 115-136.

98 FANON, F., *Les damnés de la terre*, 1961, quoted in GOLDSTEIN, B.,*The Political Psychology of Attitudes towards the West* , Routledge, 2018

there being a negative stereotype about their group that applies in the situation. The intensity of the experience then varies with such people and situations, factors such as the strength of the person's desire to belong in the situation and the contextual cues that suggest stereotyping is probable there[99].

This can lead to a vicious circle where the stereotype seems to be empirically affirmed.

Another mechanism is the *Confirmative Bias*, defined by the American Psychological Association as the tendency to look for information that supports, rather than rejects, one's preconceptions, typically by interpreting evidence to confirm existing beliefs while rejecting or ignoring any conflicting data.

Lastly, we will touch briefly on the *Golem effect*, which also likely contributes to this phenomenon. This effect is a form of self-fulfilling prophecy and describes the tendency of subjects to perform less well in any task if an authority, such as a supervisor or an educator, or even the subjects themselves, have low expectations about the individual's capacity to perform the task[100].

The misleading narratives previously described have largely acted on all the social, cultural, historical and identity aspects of the Sicilian community.

They are also characterized by a massive or even global diffusion; they are durable (some of them even exceed a century in duration); and are repeated over time[101].

It can easily be argued that a severe alteration of the cultural identity of the Sicilian people, radically affects the homonymous component of Anholt's hexagon, has occurred: this alteration may cause not only underperformance and demotivation[102] (or disengagement, as we will see) among Sicilians, but also the transmission of the deeply flawed messages by latter to other foreign interlocutors, thus fostering the general prejudice.

As for the latter question, it is evident how recurrent misleading narratives about historical background (with prominent regard to the "foreign dominations") combined with the deeply-rooted belief of the mafia's inherence to Sicilians (due to the misleading narrative

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99 STEELE, C., - SPENCER, S., - ARONSON, J., "*Contending with group image: the psychology of stereotype and social identity threat*", in Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, vol. 34, 2002, pp. 379-440

100GOLDSTEIN, B.,*The Political Psychology of Attitudes towards the West ,* Routledge, 2018

101Think of the fictional TV series on the mafia, divided into "seasons", which are produced repeatedly on an annual basis. The same goes for the huge production of low budget movies that exploit the "Sicily-mafia" topic, particularly "appreciated" by Italian cinema.

102Well known, for example, is the recurring popular belief current among Sicilians, according to which Sicily "could live on tourism", moreover generally understood in the sense of being able to enjoy the natural and historical-archaeological resources present on the Island. In this case the double line of thought is evident: 1. there is no other dimension for Sicily than the tourism; 2. tourism is intended as a simple provision of material goods already present on the Island, without any active contribution by the Sicilians.

about causes and origin of the mafia), have allegedly given rise to a robust deviation in Sicilians' collective self-perception, well summarized in the worst popular motto coined by the Sicilians themselves in own "self-defence", namely that "Sicily is not *just* mafia".

It is in fact clear to everyone that by joining these two misleading narratives (*"Sicily has always been conquered and dominated by alien powers"* and *"mafia is a Sicilian creation"*), in the absence of correct information the obvious logical conclusion can only be that the mafia becomes the only proper Sicilian outcome in the collective imagination of the Sicilians themselves too.

Figure 10: Admirers waiting to greet and receive autographs from the protagonists of the TV series "*Antimafia Squad*" near Catania, 2012. Source: Catania Today.

The constant media hammering of dozens of fictitious movies and TV series located in Sicily, completely extraneous to any critical approach, in addition to fostering the mafia stereotype, seem to have made many Sicilians themselves lose touch with reality.

On the other hand, one cannot fail to notice how, for a long time, a certain part of the Sicilian community itself has significantly contributed in fostering the spread of the mass narrative stereotype, through inappropriate manifestations of both explicit or implicit self-embodiment, also because of the lack of alternative models of reference depicting their own cultural, national or even mere territorial identity.

Therefore, it is necessary to keep in mind the presence of an important induced auto stereotyping factor, which can have a decisive influence over the actions to combat biases.

As for the images compared below (Figure 12, Figure 11), it is noteworthy how the Maltese community, even though the Malta – Hospitaller of St. John Knights were almost all not of maltese ancestry or birth (including the founder of the capital Valletta, Jean De La Vallette), has properly considered their presence in Malta as the crucial point characterizing the Maltese brand, while Sicilians have hardly any confidence with their former *Regnum* and its History.

While the Maltese choose the Knights' experience as their own symbol, several

Sicilians (traders) have opted for "*U mafiusu*", the *mafioso*, absolutely regardless of the devasting value of the message they are communicating.

It is needless to deny that, over time, an endogenous cultural problem of an extremely serious nature has been stratifying

Figure 12: Magnets in a souvenir shop in Sicily. Source: alqamah.it

Figure 11: Magnets in a souvenir shop in Valletta. source: theculturetrip.com

10. Conclusions

Sicily, understood as a holistic system of territory, people, government, culture and identity, suffers from a serious gap in its international reputation.

By applying the criteria described by Anholt for the definition of the nation brand, this damage affects each of the six components of the nation brand hexagon to varying degrees and for different reasons.

The causes are to be found not only in the chronic lack of a foreign relations policy and in the substantial absence of Sicily into the international scenario, except for the poorly managed and overrated tourism dimension.

Sicily is affected by an overall framework of prejudice and stereotypes, stratified at the global and domestic level, that mainly arises (among others) from 4 long-term lasting paths of misleading narratives, and a fifth line reinforcing the first four, namely:

- the secular attribution of the origin of the mafia to ancestral times and to the genetic or cultural characteristics of the Sicilian mentality;

- the absence of a real Sicilian cultural identity, as Sicily would have been subjected uninterruptedly to violent and non-consenting acts of conquest and domination by foreign populations;
- the uninterrupted media and press narration of Sicily as a deeply archaic, grotesque and backward place, as well as tending to the mafia;
- even in current times, Sicily is subject to a fundamentally inefficient and even harmful administrative and political system, embodied by the Sicilian Region and, even more, the Autonomous Statute of the Region.

The constant repetition of these assumptions then led, in all likelihood, to a socio-psychological phenomenon of self-identification of most Sicilians in the same stereotypes and prejudices affecting them, causing disinterest in their own territory as well as disenchantment in their cultural identity, which in fact remains almost unknown or little known to them.

However, in the light of a reliable assessment of the aforementioned narratives, and without any claim to reconstructing the corresponding historical truth, it has been shown that each of them is unproven, unreliable and contradictory.

As these misleading narratives have to varying degrees, as mentioned, been undermining the nation brand Sicily and completely distorting it, the reparation of the brand necessarily presupposes the elimination of the damage caused, namely the misleading narratives.

According to the process described by Anholt for the management of the nation brand, the strategy must first be defined: who is Sicily and where should it act?

In this first section, since we started from a framework of an extremely negative reputation, we tried to give a first hint of the answer to a fundamental question, which should precede the other two: what Sicily is not.

We believe, however, that the next topic should be *how* and *where* Sicily should act.

This obviously does not mean building an artificial identity, modelled on external needs. The fundamental postulate for a healthy nation brand, in fact, as we have seen, relies on the true essence of the subject.

The pivotal point, then, is to focus on the aspects of territorial identity that can best match potential interlocutors. It is therefore better to have a well-defined identity on some crucial points intended for an exchange based on similarity factors, than a strong identity on all points, but so generic that it does not offer any specific interest points for potential interlocutors.

In other words, any cultural and identity elements in which as many strategic interlocutors can easily recognize themselves and find similarities should be valued as strengths.

That said, Sicily's reference point can only be represented by the global scenario, since global competitiveness, as we will see in the next section, also affects local communities and no longer only national ones.

Furthermore, six other reasons motivate the choice of the global scenario as the field of action, namely:

1. the loss of Sicily's reputation , as previously observed , widely crosses national borders: the action aimed at restoring its brand, consequently, must be carried out on an ultra-national scale;

2. the worldwide community offers many more placement scenarios and possibilities to engage with strategic partners than a limited domestic action;

3. the situation of prejudice and stereotype towards Sicily has been deeply rooted in Italy for a long time, while the world stage can offer areas of neutrality (i.e. situations or countries in which Sicily is still unknown, which could prove to be a strategic asset).

4. action on the international scene would be beneficial not only to "territorial" Sicily, but also to the whole Sicilian community throughout the world;

5. Bringing Sicily to international attention, in addition to consolidating the brand, also means making it a common heritage of several communities, each of them with their own cultures and characteristics.

6. finally, relating to the wider international community means exponentially increasing the exchange of cultures, best practices, etc. In other words, it means reframing Sicily as a player in a global environment.

It is now necessary to define how this transition towards the international scenario should take place. We have previously observed that the Sicilian case should be treated in the light of the criteria of the nation brand, given the peculiar characteristics of Sicilian history and territory.

Sicily is not a sovereign state and, strictly speaking, it cannot have international relations in the proper sense.

This apparent contradiction is by no means irresolvable, since for several decades now, local governments of substate rank have implemented their own system of translocal relations worldwide.

The following second section is dedicated to the analysis of these models and tools, also known in international literature as city diplomacy (since cities were the first and greatest realities to implement it).

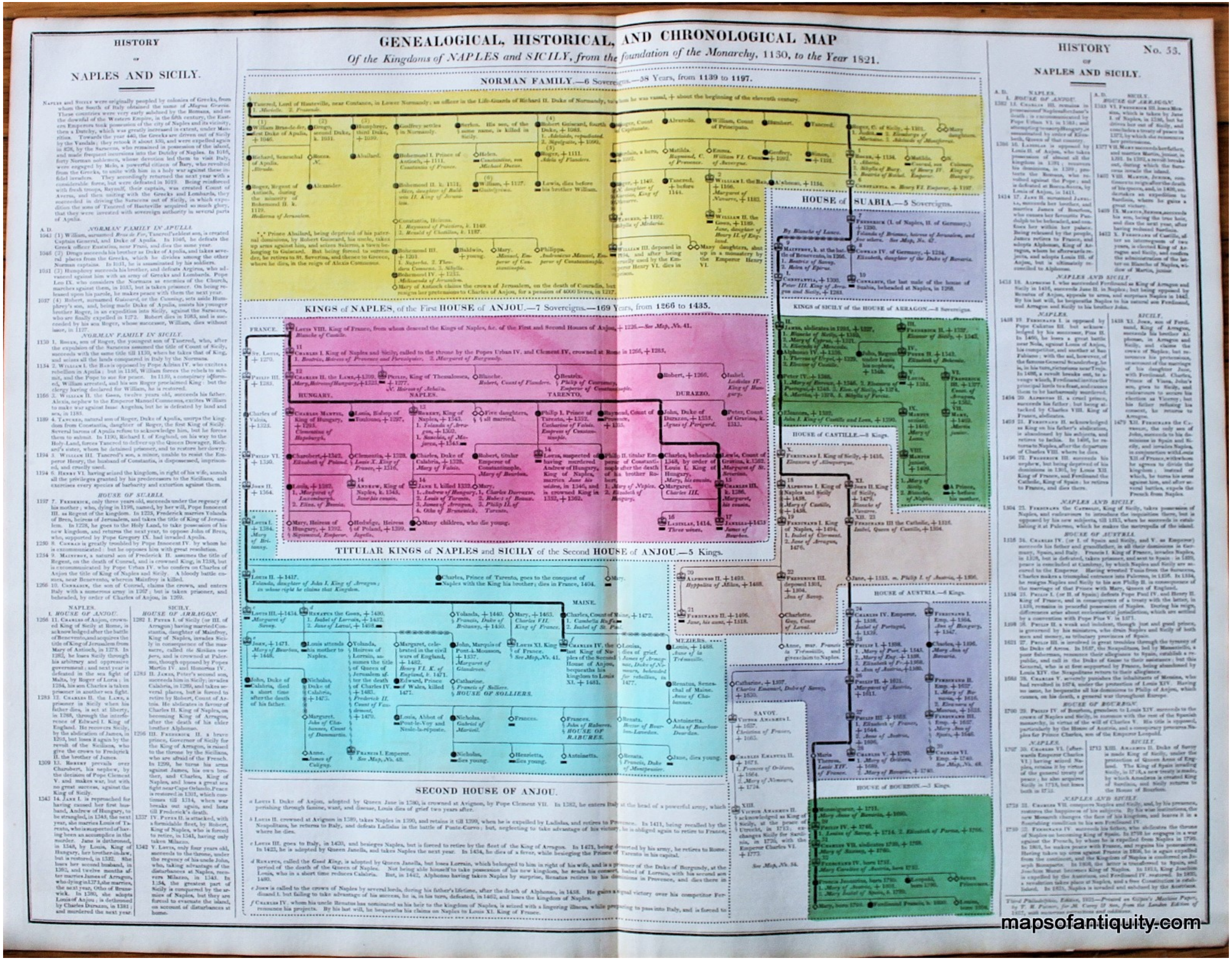

Figure 13: Lavoisne, C. V. - Geneological, Historical, and Chronological Map of the reigning dynasties of the Kingdom of Sicily and of the Kingdom of Naples (1822). Source: mapsofantiquity.com

SECTION II

NON-STATE ACTORS AND CITY DIPLOMACY

SUB-STATE RANK LOCAL GOVERNMENTS,
MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE NETWORKS
AND GLOBAL SCENARIO

11. Introduction

Local governmental bodies as well as territorial public authorities at the sub-state level, as both political-administrative authorities and democratically elected bodies delegated to represent territorial civil communities, implement an autonomous so-called para-diplomatic system of translocal foreign relations. Such a model, also known as city diplomacy, has gradually established itself as a growing alternative to the classic model of intergovernmental international relations.

While the relevance of translocal relations has become increasingly prominent on the global and post-global scene, a parallel loss of effectiveness of the traditional channels of international dialogue, accompanied by a certain disillusionment concerning the effectiveness of international organizations, has led more than one author to argue about international gridlock and the subsequent decline of the Westphalian international law model. However, the apparently insurmountable obstacle, namely the lack of legal subjectivity of international law for local or sub-state authorities, should be taken into account.

This section aims to offer some guidelines in that regard, moving from the observation of translocal and foreign practices enacted by local governments in their network associative forms.

12. From a case to the model: the *America's Pledge* initiative

On 20th January 2017, a few weeks after the Paris Agreement on climate change entered into force following the ratification of 55 states, Donald Trump became the 45th president of the United States of America.

Just five years earlier, the future U.S. President had already declared his belief that *"the concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive"*.[103]

According to such line of thinking, a new *America First Energy Plan* was supposed to embody the new administration energy and environmental policy. Unlike the objectives set by the Obama's administration, the new plan has fixed the national energy reserves exploitation *"to bring jobs and prosperity to millions of Americans"*, as well as the consequent resumption of energy policies based on oil, shale, natural gas as the new pivotal goals to be reached.

The new energy policy was nevertheless supposed to pursue an appreciable balance between environmental protection and economic growth, in order to encourage scientific discovery, innovation and wealth growth.

In addition, development of low-cost domestic extraction of resources within national borders would also have led the domestic job market to increase.

On 1st June 2017, D. Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement, albeit in view of negotiating a new climate agreement on a better basis for U.S. companies, workers and taxpayers, since the Paris Agreement had been deemed to be negative and harmful to American interests. The US would have furthermore stopped any funding to the United Nations' Green Climate Fund.

At the same time, however, an unusual event was occurring between New York, Paris and

103 This was posted by D. Trump on his Twitter official account on 6th November 2012. The *tweet* is still visible.

Washington.

The former mayor of New York City, Michael Bloomberg, and the governor of California, Jerry Brown, had just launched *America's Pledge*, which was a programmatic declaration and a network project aimed to gather US federated states, cities, private companies, and other subnational actors into an ambitious joint plan/commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

All those local governments, non-state actors, private stakeholders a.o. would voluntarily adopt internal practices and rules in compliance with the objectives of that same Paris agreement just refused by the Federal Executive.

The Founders have given the program an emblematic mission, which needs no comment: "*In the wake of the Trump Administration's decision to pull out of the Paris Agreement, an unprecedented number of U.S. cities, states, businesses, and universities have reaffirmed their commitment to helping America reach its Paris climate goals*"[104].

Moreover, M. Bloomberg also declared to the French President and to the mayor of Paris that the Americans would still be committed to fostering the climate targets previously fixed for the United States.

Later, he declared to the Secretary General of the United Nations and to the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) his intention, as the United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change, to involve US subfederal actors in achieving the Paris goals.

We Are Still In[105], the *America's pledge* memorandum of understanding, has been signed by approximately 2,900 leaders, including mayors and county executives of 280 US cities and counties, governors of 10 states, heads of nine Native American tribes, as well as representatives of 346 colleges and universities, 2,147 investors and representatives of enterprises, spiritual leaders of 38 religious groups, 47 cultural institution, and 27 health organizations.

The signatories declare that, in the United States, local, tribal and state governments, together with private stakeholders, should be recognized as the main actors of the significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions in recent years.

Moving from this assumption, the signatories also declare their willingness to further implement the commitment of each involved group, irrespective of any divergent foreign and

104 Declaration can be consulted at link.
105 Available at link.

internal policy the U.S. Federal Government might adopt in this regard.

This is the basis for the following declaration, *"in the absence of leadership from Washington, states, cities, counties, tribes, colleges and universities, health organizations, businesses and investors, which represent a considerable percentage of the US economy, will pursue ambitious climate goals, collaborating to take energetic action and ensure that the United States remains a global leader in reducing emissions"*.

In 2020, the network has gathered nearly 3,900 actors, and represents 158 million people across the 50 states.

Two crucial points should be highlighted in the above mentioned example, namely:

- a relevant group of sub-state rank local governments (as well as private stakeholders, communities, universities, etc.) are gathering to transpose and implement by themselves international obligations, even though they are genetically intended to be addressed to subjects under international law, namely states;
- those local governments are strongly contradicting their own national government in matters directly related to foreign policy issues.

Although deeply emblematic, the *America's pledge* initiative is not exactly new.

Continuing with the example of environmental policy, the door had already been opened more than ten years earlier by the then Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, who, in October 2005, gathered representatives from 18 worldwide mega-cities in the British capital, to develop several trans-local cooperative plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The London meeting was then repeated the following year, this time with the presence and subsequent partnership of the *Climate Clinton Initiative* at the Clinton Foundation, and the participation of 40 cities.

The latter circumstance also provided an inspiration for the name to be given to a translocal network created in the meantime, and within which the multilateral relationship between cities and local governments was fully institutionalized in the form of a stable organization: the *C40 Cities Climate Leadership* (C40 Cities) network.

C40 Cities, which pursues the aim of connecting city practitioners and mayors from all over the world to promote effective collective actions in the field of climate change, currently gathers 96 affiliated cities from around 50 countries, which represent around 25% of global GDP.

Those described above are just some examples of a particular kind of "foreign policy" directly

acted by sub-state local governments and authorities, according to a consolidated model which has been developing throughout the twentieth century.
Whether related to polemical aspects towards the nation-State or not, this model sees local governments, or any territorial local authority of a lower level than the state, facing and overcoming the traditional model of an exclusively state-centred foreign policy.
These Non-State actors tend to create an original and self-managed foreign relations system on their own, in order to build connections abroad with their peers or even, as previously mentioned, with *pleno jure* international law / international relations actors (states, international organizations, etc.).
This set of foreign activities and relations is widely known in urban sociology literature as *city diplomacy*[106], a phenomenon which, in turn, is reshaping the conceptual and operational diplomacy scenario in the light of an innovative multi-level dimension.
According to the definition officially adopted by the Council of Europe, as previously elaborated in one of the first systematic contributions on the subject (Van Der Plujim, 2007), City diplomacy involves the institutions and processes by which cities engage in relations with actors on an international political stage with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one another[107].
On behalf of their local civil communities, these actors can engage in bilateral or multilateral interactions, with the aim of creating benefits either primarily for one of the two parties (the solidarity approach), or for both (the utilitarian approach).
It has been observed that the scope of city diplomacy is not to replace traditional inter-state diplomacy, but rather to use its models and practices to implement, at a "micro" level, economic, political and cultural collaboration between territorial communities both near and far.
It is therefore the *territoriality* in its various economic, political and cultural expressions which, thanks also to the proximity of local governments to their communities, becomes the main or the exclusive beneficiary of this micro-diplomatic environment[108].
Although city diplomacy's historical recipients and key players were once cities, nowadays

106 For a full overview, see ACUTO, M., voice *City Diplomacy* in *The SAGE handbook of diplomacy*, London, 2016, pag. 6.
107 COUNCIL OF EUROPE - Center of Expertise for Local Government Reform, *Toolkit on City-to-City Cooperation*, 2015, pag. 6. For a broader examination of the characteristics and potential of city-diplomacy, see VAN DER PLUJIM, R. - MELISSEN, J. *"City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Politics"*, Amsterdam, 2007, as well the bibliography therein mentioned.
108 LE FEVRE CERVINI, E.M., "*City-diplomacy as a tool for the liberation of cities?*", 2013.

the use of the term "city" does not imply any exclusive reference to the *municipality*: despite its formal denomination, this model can be applied to any kind of local territorial government below state level (from federated states to regions, counties, provinces, etc.), provided that its representatives have been democratically elected by a civil community to implement, protect and represent its own interests[109].

Therefore, as a first key point of the associative / cooperative model carried out by sub-state rank governments, one could consider the heterogeneity of those involved, as well as their capacity to establish stable and equal partnerships abroad, irrespective of their constraints under respective domestic law.

Micro-diplomatic relational models created by sub-state governments have long been known, consolidated and widely debated among scholars of international relations and urban sociology, but nevertheless appear not to have been particularly frequented so far by legal science as an autonomous phenomenon. In this regard, local governments' capability to establish a (very limited) foreign policy has been implicitly framed within international human rights law, followed by transnational law, then global administrative law, etc.

However, two different aspects characterize this phenomenon, namely:

- the relational and sociological aspect, that is, methods and practices through which sub-state governments carry out their own foreign policy: which is what *city diplomacy* is strictly referred to.
- the legal aspect, necessary to hypothesize sub-state territorial actors' subjectivity, essence, capacity, rights and obligations when these actors are facing the world stage: assuming city diplomacy as a driver of trans-local foreign policy, also requires outlining how subjects by their very nature not endowed with a specific legal status under international law can act in foreign relations.

109 The issue is uncontroversial in Urban Sociology Literature (which has mainly dealt with the model we are discussing), in which at most it could be possible to identify and define the differences usually occurring between the practices of cities on the one hand, and those of all the other types of local governments on the other. The general validity of the model is further emphasized by the juridical literature which, in dealing with the matter, has in some cases preferred to adopt the all-inclusive term of *Localities* (Thus for example BLANK, Y., *"The City and the World"*, in Columbia Journal of Transnational Law, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2006, pp. 868 et seq.).

13. Reasons for city diplomacy

It is certainly difficult to identify when and how the first models of foreign relations between local governments historically appeared on the international relations scene.

In this regard, a first conceptual frame of reference could be defined as: dealing with foreign activities of sub-state bodies, whether they be cities, regions, federated states, etc. in any case presupposed which implies that these entities are in some way framed within a state system. Only the latter is recognized as endowed with full sovereignty, thus with the prerogative of *superiorem non recognoscens*.

For this reason, historical experiences as city-states, municipalities of Renaissance northern Italy (*Comuni*), etc. could not be considered in framing the trans-local phenomenon under consideration.

All those subjects, even though chronologically preceding the Westphalian theoretical system of international law, actually embodied all the characteristics of full sovereignty (according to its modern definition) over their territories, irrespective of the fact that they were members of complex *ante litteram* supranational aggregations (confederations, etc.)[110].

In other words, those subjects had been permanently and exclusively exercising typical powers of full sovereignty over their territories, more or less extensively (even if with the peculiarities, deriving from the coexistence of several legal systems, mainly secular and religious in some cases, and historical periods,). Furthermore, they were *original* entities, since they did not derive their powers from any other superordinate authority[111].

The essence of the trans-local relations, on the other hand, lies in its peculiar alterity to the state-centric system of international relations, regardless of the fact that such alterity, as we will see, takes the form of a competitive, a conflictual, or a cooperative model between local

110 An evidence of those particular subjects (which nowadays would be considered as subjects of international law) remains in the so-called small states, or according to other definition, micro-states (e.g., Singapore, Andorra, Monaco, Vatican City, San Marino, etc.), the main characteristic of the which is the tendencial coincidence between the State and the City of which it is composed. V. BLANK, Y., *op. cit.*, pp. 882 et seq.

111 On the characteristics of the sovereign state in the theory of international law, see SAPIENZA, R., *Diritto Internazionale – quattro pezzi facili*, Turin, 2013, p. 7 et seq. (in Italian). On the other hand, the historical example of the cities of the Hanseatic League could be considered more closely reflecting the contemporary translocal scenario. Although formally subjects of the Holy Roman Empire or of other subjects in various capacities superordinate, those cities had been implementing in the Baltic and Northern European area their own commercial foreign policy system in full autonomy. V. NIJMAN, J., "*Renaissance of the City as Global Actor - The role of foreign policy and international law practices in the construction of cities as global actors*", in *The transformation of foreign policy - drawing and managing boundaries from antiquity to the present*, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 215 et seq.

and national government.

Any local government, for the most varied reasons and needs, can draw and implement its own foreign policy lines even if they are different from those the State usually draws and implements in the international relations led by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs[112].

Thus, if it is difficult to identify a historical key time when local governments began to adopt their own foreign policy and the related city diplomacy models, it is, however easier to define when city diplomacy took on a well-defined conceptual dimension, or even the first historical signs of its general theory.

Notwithstanding the fact that at the beginning of the twentieth century some structured forms of city networks had appeared, (and in particular the network the *International Union of Local Authorities* - IULA, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs), the *White House Conference on Citizen Diplomacy* on 11th September 1956 represents a stage that marked the trans-local model's conceptual evolution towards wider scenarios.

On that occasion, President D.D. Eisenhower gave a historic speech to promote and support a renewed organic model of people-to-people "*alternative diplomacy*", which would have seen citizens and their local governments as its key players.

For such reason, he stated that *"if we are going to take advantage of the assumption that all people want peace, then the problem is for people to get together and to leap governments — if necessary to evade governments — to work out not one method but thousands of methods by which people can gradually learn a little bit more of each other"*[113].

The postulate on which Eisenhower's vision was laid was as simple as it was irrefutable: people refuse war, since they aspire to peace[114].

It was therefore necessary to affirm and enhance the role of people from all over the world, as well as of cities, to satisfy a strongly felt and shared need since the early stages of post-second world war: contributing to create stable world peace conditions through constant

112 It has been highlighted how M. Bloomberg himself, in 2015, still stated that cities could not replace the state in finding solutions to social problems such as poverty, security, health or trade, but they should be its partners, according to a collaborative model that sees cities as transformation drivers fully involved in a roadmap for overcoming the institutional stalemate of the state-centric system. See ACUTO, M., & CURTIS, S., "*The Foreign Policy of Cities"*, in RUSI Journal Vol. 163, No. 6, December 2018. *America's Pledge* and the *We Are Still In* statements were therefore still far, even conceptually.

113 EISENHOWER, D.D. "*Remarks at the People-to-People Conference"*, Washington, 1956, available in English on *Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum & Boyhood Home.*

114 Which, moreover, was equivalent to saying that the war was wanted exclusively by national governments, a consideration on which Eisenhower certainly did not avoid dwelling on, on the occasion of his speech. V. Eisenhower, D.D., op. cit.

dialogue from below, so that such a catastrophe could not be repeated in the future[115].

Eisenhower's vision was based on two axioms: on the one hand, local governments would embody the role of *bulwark of freedom,* and on the other, dialogue between peoples and cities would contribute to strengthening world peace[116].

This long idealistic path, moving from a strong affirmation of principle, has been constantly unfolding throughout the twentieth century and progressively growing throughout the most crucial 20th century challenges, from the disappearance of the Eastern bloc of the communist countries and the old balance of power, to contemporary war scenarios (the Balkans, the Middle-East, a.o.), the rise of transnational terrorism, globalization, etc.

This last factor seems to have gained the attention of international literature the most, given that:

a) in the globalized world, states have lost their domestic and international monopoly over social, economic and political duties and responsibilities, because of the rise of several transnational (or, in some cases, supranational) orders: any distinction between the national and international political sphere, hence, gradually decreases;

b) the division of responsibilities between the State and its internal sub-state actors has been reshaped too, since the latter began to grow in the global scenario, in inverse proportion to the above mentioned downsizing of the state's responsibilities and functions[117].

New models and centres of power, not only at the supra-national but also at the sub-national level, began to develop while the loss of power at national / domestic level was progressively growing.

Thus cities started to cross the borders of their national states, as well as overriding their institutions (primarily, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), to become an integral part of the new global scenario[118].

At the same time, non-state territorial actors were not only players, but also receptors of globalization: small, medium and big regions, federated states and cities were seeing their

115 MUELLER, S. L., "*The nexus of US public diplomacy and citizen diplomacy*", in Snow, N. & Nicholas, J., *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, 2020, p. 112.

116 "*Two deeply-held convictions unite us in common purpose. First, is our belief in effective and responsive local government as a principal bulwark of freedom. Second, is our faith in the great promise of people-to-people and sister city affiliations in helping build the solid structure of world peace*.", EISENHOWER, D.D., op. cit.

117 BLANK, Y., *op. cit.*, pp. 878 et seq; VAN DER PLUJIM, R. - MELISSEN, J. *"City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Politics"*, The Hague, 2007, P. 8

118 SASSEN, S.,*"Local actors in global politics"*, in *Current Sociology*, Vol. 52, No. 4, Monograph 2, 2004, p. 649 et seq.

"internationality" increased by growing migratory flows, or new ways of mutual interconnection thanks to technological progress, or because these local actors were being directly or indirectly influenced by monetary and fiscal policies, or by territorial development and planning projects promoted by supranational institutions (under the innovative concept of "sustainable development"), or even because ever increasing quantities of goods from abroad were pouring into their territories, etc.[119]

In urban sociology, in those years, a definition that would be widely successful throughout the 21st century (or even better, a conceptual category that saw the light in the early 90s, on the basis of the experience of New York City, London and Tokyo) was increasingly consolidating: the *Global City* idea.

Global cities have long been considered both a kind of denationalized platform for global capital, and multicultural key-sites intrinsically devoted to welcoming peoples and individuals from all over the world[120]. Actually, the idea of the Global City as a global financial market centre is rooted in even older scenarios.

It has indeed been observed that, following the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and its replacement with a markedly neo-liberal economic system (with a clear reference to the *Washington Consensus* system), cities have become the main strategic sites for the new economic global governance.

The gap opened by the diminished state intervention in the economy, in fact, has been gradually bridged by private companies operating from the central financial districts of cities such as New York or London. These "financial" cities, in turn, were exponentially fostering both their role as transnational poles of economic decision-making and their worldwide

119 BLANK, Y., op. cit., pp. 886 et seq.

120 SASSEN, S. & LIND, RS, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton University Press, 1991 and subsequent editions. Within the limits of a brief mention, it should be also remembered that, between the late 90s and the beginning of the 21st century, the conceptual definition of *Glocalization* was created to describe the *bottom up* processes from local territories towards the changed global context or, more simply, towards its influence over individual territories (according to another economic theory, the origins of the which date back to the early 1980s). Such phenomenon should not be understood as a counterpart or a reaction to globalization processes, but rather as their key to interpretation, or "filter": local cities and territories did not refuse, but reinterpreted "globalized" products and services and adapted them to their own cultural peculiarities and economic needs, by their very nature genetically homogeneous. In its mature version, glocalization abandoned the purely economic dimension to instead invest in any kind of supranational process, or their influence over the localities. In this sense, therefore, cities and local territories became workshops where global problems were tackled, revisited, and even solved. V. BAUMANN, Z., "*On Glocalization: or Globalization for some, Localization for some Others*", on *Thesis Eleven 54*, no. 1, 1998, pp. 37 and seq. This has led the impact of globalization on the local territories also to change the pre-existing hierarchies, placing places such as cities at the center of the analysis, as locations for the production of "*strategic global inputs*".

connections[121].

In other respects, mainly in the United States, the growing interest in attracting new potential residents (mainly middle-class professionals), who were expected to trigger virtuous urban regeneration processes for the city down-towns, was leading the cities' urban fabric towards a radical reshaping, pursuing an *ante litteram* gentrification model.

There is a clear loop: the more attraction for the establishment of economic and financial global companies into the cities, the more immigration of professionals needing high quality houses and services. Moreover, a high income professional class was expected to be willing to invest in the regeneration of pre-existing housing[122].

However more professionals in the economic-financial sectors also meant more than a proportional increase, again, in global connections, towards both other professionals and other companies operating in financial markets. Thanks to this massive and overqualified immigration process, therefore, the city as a whole progressively implemented its worldwide network of interconnections, thus consecrating its global essence.

Notwithstanding, the Global City, here considered under its original meaning of a worldwide financial centre[123], is nothing but one of the potential variations, certainly the most emblematic, in which the change of weight and position of local governments in the world scenario during the 20th century took shape.

Other cities or local governments, or their associations/networks, as we will see further on, developed actions and gained relevance in transnational scenarios for reasons that had nothing in common with the economic-financial dimension. So for example, in 2008 cities and local governments met in The Hague for the first world conference on city diplomacy, focusing on their role in conflict prevention, peace building and post conflict reconstruction.

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121 ACUTO, M., & CURTIS, S., "*The Foreign Policy of Cities*", in RUSI Journal Vol. 163, No. 6, December 2018.

122 In many cities in the United States of America, in the 1980s, a trend called "*the-back-to-the-city movement*" appeared. Among other things, it had also materialized in the adoption of ambitious local economic and cultural incentive policies specifically aimed, as mentioned, at encouraging the immigration of middle-class professionals. The birth of the new peculiar urbanized social category of *young urban professionals* lies in that period, and within the context of that phenomenon. V. BRONNER, S.J., *Grasping Things: Folk Material Culture and Mass Society in Americ*a, University Press of Kentucky, 2014, p. 72.

123 According to the vision of NIJMAN, J. (2016), this is the "*private*" dimension of the Global City, which is opposed to the *"public*" dimension of the city government committed to achieving objectives beyond national borders. See NIJMAN, J., op. cit, p. 226. In the current scenario, the original and limiting vision of the Global City exclusively as a financial center can now be said to have been overcome. Nowadays, the city is defined as global on the basis of multiple factors, characteristics and parameters that disregard the economic-financial aspect (although still present as one of the factors, it is no longer the only key factor), and that extends over sectors ranging from sustainable development to environmental and energy policies (in particular, related to climate change issues), to the protection and safeguarding of human rights, to housing policies, etc.

On that occasion, the joint declaration *"the City Diplomacy Agenda"* was adopted, to recognize as a crucial goal the cooperation between local, national and international levels in the field of peace and security, as well the promotion of human rights in cities as a basis for stability and world peace.

The key point to be intercepted, in all the aforementioned models and phenomena, is that the state-centric world vision has given way to a multicentric or polycentric one, in which new local territorial actors emerge to cooperate (or even compete) with the traditional state actors within a new scenario common to both.

Cities and local governments have progressively acquired qualified experience in the spontaneous creation of their own transnational associative structures (or networks), in setting up their own "global" agenda, in mobilizing any relative resources.

All this indicates a robust accountability of these non-state actors not only to face global challenges, regardless of whether the related international processes are stalled, but also to be able to manage the sudden changes in international relations, managing to effectively adapt to them[124].

Therefore, to the extent that cities and local administrations intend to undertake their own foreign policy to represent their exclusive and peculiar interests, it is also necessary that these new players of the global scenario actually have the skills and tools necessary to achieve this goal.

Local players moving in the global scenario would need diplomatic models designed specifically for cities and local governments, namely a specific non-state diplomacy. According to another view, however, it would be sufficient to reshape traditional intergovernmental diplomacy. It should no longer be understood according to its original monolithic meaning of the exclusive prerogative of the nation-state, but should instead take on the characteristics of a multilevel structure including also what is not a nation-state.

14. First overall framework about city diplomacy: the early six dimensions

Content, the extent and latitudes of local governments foreign policy and, consequently, of its driver (namely, diplomacy) are extremely variable concepts, depending on complex

124 ACUTO, M., voice *City Diplomacy*, in CONSTANTINOU, C.M., *et alii* (edited by), *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy*, SAGE, 2016, p. 519.

multifaceted systems.

As mentioned above, local governments usually show a high level of adaptability and / or receptivity to changes occurring, sometimes abruptly, in the global scenario. Moreover, local governments seem to face those changes more quickly and flexibly than national governments.

In this regard, it could be useful to anticipate two of the fundamental characteristics underpinning the particularity of local governments and their action in both the internal and the supranational level, namely:

3. *proximity and institutional representativeness*, given that the local government is the most representative body operating at the level closest to the local community. Furthermore, the closer the government authority-representative is to its community, the higher (at least theoretically) its political accountability.

   Consequently, provided that the governance expresses an adequate accountability, a local government should be more sensitive to its civil community's requests and needs than the national government.

   Beyond limits and powers outlined by each domestic legal system in relation to its territorial articulations, however named or considered, representation is the first socio-political crucial factor characterizing local governments.

4. *administrative and/or legislative power over people living on its territory*. A local government-public authority can issue imperative acts and measures, the effects of which are automatically transferred into the legal sphere of the recipients regardless of their will. These acts are usually immediately executive as well as endowed with enforceability.

   Thus, local governments are supposed to be endowed with powers allowing them also to guarantee, through their own acts, direct compliance to international obligations within their territories. These characteristics certainly frame local governments as non-state actors of lower rank than the state, but nonetheless of higher rank if compared to other categories of non-state actors (NGOs, multinational companies, etc.) devoid of authoritative powers.

By virtue of the two aforementioned characteristics (i.e. institutional representativeness and ownership of authoritative powers), it is therefore possible to consider local governments as territorial non-state actors at an intermediate level between the key players of the international community on the one hand, and all the other non-state actors on the other.

That said, the aforementioned definition of *city diplomacy* also appears to be more well

founded as a whole on the institutes and processes through which the cities and local governments at sub-state level undertake stable relationships with their peers or with other actors of the international scenario, whether they are state or non-state actors, in order to represent themselves and their own interests.
In other words, such definition (Van Der Plujim, 2007) tends to reframe for local governments traditional intergovernmental diplomacy characteristics rather than depicting a new, different kind of inter-local diplomacy.
The model is therefore the same, but the content presents some inevitable differences.
Intergovernmental diplomacy is aimed at establishing peaceful relations between mutually recognized sovereign states, in view of long-term relationships, while through city diplomacy local governments engage in trans-local activities either to satisfy their local civil community needs or even for idealistic or solidarity reasons towards other local governments.
In turn, by virtue of the proximity-representativeness criterion, any local community is able to become a persuasive force towards its local government to a far greater degree than it could exercise upon the national government[125]. It may therefore be that local diplomacy proves to be more rapid and effective than intergovernmental diplomacy.
However, it is essential to bear in mind that cities' diplomatic activities, in the proper sense, are government based activities: city diplomacy properly defined, therefore, is a phenomenon developing at institutional level. This implies that any related process is expected to be copied by a Government Authority, regardless of the status of the natural person acting by power of attorney (Mayor or Governor, delegated officers, delegated external professionals, etc.).
The main difference between city diplomacy and other alternative diplomacy models (citizen diplomacy, celebrity diplomacy, goodwill ambassadors, etc.[126]) therefore lies in the governmental/institutional level.
In a first attempt at a categorization, six main "dimensions", or areas, in which city diplomacy has been mostly implemented, have been detected in 2007 by Van Der Plujim[127]:

125 VAN DER PLUJIM, R. & MELISSEN, J., *op cit.*, p. 11 and p. 15.
126 For a useful overview of other alternative diplomacy models, see the aforementioned CONSTANTINOU, C.M., *et alii* (edited by), *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy*, SAGE, 2016, and in particular p. 435 et seq.
127 The six dimension will be set out according to the Author's original categorization. The development of the content of each individual topic, however, is ours.

1. Security and Peace building-

This area has seen cities and local governments involved, since the end of the Second World War, playing an active role in the maintenance and consolidation of world peace and in post-war reconstruction, perhaps even more than the states themselves and international organizations.

This is also because war events and war actions generally affect urban sites of the countries in conflict, and only other local governments and cities retain the necessary know-how for an effective restoration to "normality" for a territory damaged by war.

Furthermore, obviously being devoid of any military level, the military option is radically extraneous (as well as precluded) for local governments: their diplomatic support action therefore will tend to strengthen the efforts for a peaceful solution of any disputes.

It should be noted, moreover, that local governments are by definition neutral, as well as tendentially indifferent to those ideological and utilitarian superfetations, typical of the equilibrium between nation-states, which are often the main cause of armed conflicts.

In the second half of the 20^{th} century, peace enforcement actions undertaken by local governments were particularly significant for the post conflict reconstruction scenarios following the Balkan wars, as well as for the conflict prevention / resolution scenario of the Israeli-Palestinian crises.

Furthermore, the post 9/11 world has in turn involved the local level in searching for cooperative responses to global terrorist risks.

2. Support to develop other communities -

This variant intercepts the more properly "social" and solidarity function of city diplomacy: it can materialize in economic aid plans for developing local communities, aimed at the eradication of poverty and social inequality, or to provide technical and operational aid to civil communities affected by disastrous natural events, or even, in socio-cultural actions dedicated to providing active support to under-developed democracies, or democracies in crisis, etc.

3. Development of the local economy-

On the other hand, the most correct utilitarian function of city diplomacy is to attract global capital and large stable investments (establishment of multinational companies or OI offices) or episodic events of worldwide relevance (such as the Olympics, Expo, etc.). For these purposes, cities and local governments also foster robust public diplomacy and city / place branding strategies.

In this regard, a critical aspect of cities' foreign policy practices has emerged over the last few decades: the ever growing competition between Global Cities for high level investments, which, once won, are used esclusively by the city, spending an unimaginable amount of economic resources and ignoring all the other local Autonomies.

This gap between some dozens of worldwide "strong" cities and all the other "weak" local governments has increased in the last decades, putting the latter in serious difficult in attracting international investments crucial for their growth.

4. Culture-

Cultural diplomacy has long been a heritage acquired through ordinary strategies used in transnational dialogue: where a local or national community (regardless of whether the direct agent is the state, or its agencies, or other actors of the public sector, or even private subjects behind patronage of the former) shows, and represents itself and its area by its own national or cultural identity, as well as its contemporary art and culture, before one or more foreign communities.

This is done to positively influence the targeted community's public opinion, creating a positive impression and satisfaction within the community, in order to obtain its support in view of either attracting investments or establishing stable relations at foreign government level, or to strengthen pre-existing relationships.

In other words, while intergovernmental diplomacy relies on the relationship between states, cultural diplomacy is based upon a direct relationship between a state (or other public territorial entities) and a foreign civil community, and focuses on 'winning over' the latter [128].

128 It is therefore a form of public diplomacy, and is certainly the most relevant. The pattern is the same: a territorial public authority engages "persuasive" relations directly towards a foreign civil community, overriding any government level. The main characteristic of cultural diplomacy consists, however, in the fact that such a relationship is originally entitled by a necessarily artistic or cultural content, through which the

The range of reasons underlying cultural diplomacy is very wide: it goes from mere propaganda purposes[129], to the noblest ideals of transnational dialogue between peoples and the cultures of the world[130].

In any case, whatever its fundamental motivation, cultural diplomacy can help communities (even if "represented", in that case, by their government authority[131]) to enhance their prestige, visibility and reputation towards other foreign communities.

Therefore, if considered as a subset of public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy also embodies a *soft power* model, meaning the ability to create consensus through persuasion, and not coercion, in international relations[132].

That said, if referred to cities and local governments, in addition to what has already been said with regard to states and the other national authorities, cultural diplomacy also takes on other aspects, which turn out to be as many added values.

Among these, the *urban forum* model is worth mentioning[133] as an example of an effective way to create ever more extensive and qualified cooperation and exchange networks whereby a city's brand can be conveyed by aiming at the immediate goal of gathering cities and local governments for joint research, development and the sharing of solutions to common needs or problems.

In this sense, the Council of Europe has observed how cultural initiatives have represented the

institutional actor presents itself, its civil society and its territory.

129 For an interesting case about foreign cultural policy (or cultural diplomacy) implemented by the Soviet Union to attract the attention of intellectual professions and progressive bourgeoisie from the western states by giving them a positive image of the USSR lifestyle, image conveyed through a well-branched worldwide network of national cultural associations, see FAYET, J.F., "*Voks - the third dimension of Soviet foreign policy*", in GIENOW-HECHT, J.C.E., & DONFRIED, M., (edited by), *Searching for a Cultural Diplomacy*, Berghahn Books, 2010, p. 33.

130 In this perspective, for example, one can read the appeal for global dialogue between local governments and citizens for the consolidation of world peace, launched by D.D. Eisenhower at the 1956 Washington Conference.

131 For the case in which, however, there is no intervention by public authorities, but diplomatic relations are established exclusively at the base level, which means between territorial communities of one and the other party (e.g. international cultural associations, clubs, etc.), the definition of *citizen diplomacy* is currently adopted. See CONLEY TYLER, M., & BEYENRICH, C., *Citizen Diplomacy*, in CONSTANTINOU, CM, *et alii* (edited by), *op. Cit*., SAGE, 2016, p. 521.

132 Soft power was theorized and developed in the late 1980s - early 1990s by Joseph S. Nye, professor at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, as the ability to achieve results through persuasion and attraction, or through the power of ideas. V. NYE, J., *Soft Power: The Means for Success in World Politics*, ed. PublicAffairs, New York, 2004. Again, says Nye, the soft power of a country is based on its resources of culture, values and policies. A smart power strategy combines hard and soft power resources, conveyed through public diplomacy which, in turn, is an important tool in the arsenal of smart power. It requires, however, adequate understanding of the roles of credibility, self-criticism and civil society. NYE, J., "*Public diplomacy and soft power*" in *The Annals Of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, n. 1, 2008.

133 Not to be confused with the networks of cities and local governments, which will be discussed shortly.

first experiences of international relations between local authorities, leading to the recognition of the role of culture in cities and local government development as the main tool for promoting democracy at international level.
The Council of Europe also confirms that the creation of international networks through cultural initiatives constitutes a development strategy for all those territorial communities that aim to increase their economic strength and to improve their position and reputation worldwide.
Furthermore, the strengthening of exchanges in the cultural sector contributes to creating new jobs, to urban redevelopment and social inclusion, and to sensitizing communities on key issues concerning local resources (both tangible and intangible)[134].
The pervasive nature of culture in everyday life finally implies that the related initiatives are by their nature intended to involve different targeted social groups.

5. Networking-

The last two dimensions indicated by Van Der Plujim, networking and institutional representation, do not represent local government actions on the transnational level, but rather are two different ways that such actions can unfold.
In this regard, networking spreads across the horizontal plane of trans-local relations, while institutional representation develops on the vertical plane of the direct relations between local governments and supranational or international subjects.
Networking consists therefore, in the capacity of local governments acting together to pursue joint objectives through associative groups. Moreover, these inter-institutional groups are usually endowed with their own autonomous governance, bodies, agencies, etc.
These are the so-called trans-local networks, which embody for cities and local governments the same stable and mutual cooperation model that the states usually implement through the international organizations previously mentioned.

134 COUNCIL OF EUROPE - Center of Expertise for Local Government Reform, Toolkit on City-to-City Cooperation, 2015.

6. Institutional representation-

Moreover cities and local governments have also developed their own ability to establish organic relationships with several key players of international relations (that is the *pleno jure* subjects of international law) to represent themselves and their interests before the international community.
Of course, given the cities and local governments ability to respond and adapt to global evolution, as new global challenges arise worlwide, countless new city diplomacy “dimensions” have been emerging over the past decade: environmental policy and global warming, climate change, migratory flows, resilience, sustainable development and public health to mention but a few.

15. Cases of city-to-city relationships and Global Cities’ foreign policy models

The lack of specialized diplomatic structures is the first and most problematic aspect local governments’ institutional and representative architecture suffers from in acting foreign relations.
To date, there are neither international codifications nor regulatory global frameworks for "local” diplomacy, or in any case there are no acts comparable regarding structure and purpose to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961 which represents the diplomatic framework for states.
To the same extent, moreover, local governments usually have few “foreign affairs” offices or bodies, or even professional staff, which could be considered as a local equivalent of the state’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs: lack of professionalism as well as of specialized departments and agencies, as there are no local government Diplomatic Corps, as can be imagined, is a serious shortcoming.
So, how can we talk about city diplomacy notwithstanding the absence of a professional diplomatic apparatus? Beyond any idealistic aspiration, are these local governments and cities actually capable of undertaking and effectively coping with trans-local strategies, activities and relations? Or will those activities represent mere sandboxes devoid of any serious content (all-embracing twinnings, declarations of goodwill etc.)?

On the other hand, there are no univocal criteria useful for defining whether one model is more effective than another, since each of them is affected by the specific and multifaceted needs of each local authority.

Another crucial factor to be considered is the behaviour every national order adopts towards its local governments, as regards their power to exercise their own foreign policy, and to what extent.

Some national orders do not provide for anything in this regard; others endow their local governments with foreign policy powers almost equivalent to the state's; others, such as the Italian one, pervasively regulate the subject[135]; still others, such as in the United States, are instead planning cooperative coordination models between sub-state (in such case, sub-federal) rank governments and national/federal government authorities[136.]

135 Within the limits of a brief mention, it should be noted in this regard that the new article 117, co IX, of the Constitution also imports, recognizes and consolidates in Italy the concept of a "foreign power" of the Regions, already well known and experimented for decades in other national systems (in particular, federal systems). In its partial implementation, Law no. 131 of 2003 (so-called *La Loggia Law*), reaffirms in art. 6 the general power of Regions and autonomous Provinces to enter into agreements with sub-state territorial entities of other countries. According to this provision, Italian domestic regulation recognizes the validity of atypical forms of not-binding agreements (generically called *"intese"*) between non-state territorial actors. The law also regulates the procedure for the formation of binding agreements to be concluded "*in matters of their own legislative powers*" between Regions and other full sovereignty States. According to the aim pursued, this last provision defines three kinds of agreements: executive and application agreements of international treaties that have regularly entered into force; technical-administrative agreements; programmatic agreements aimed at promoting economic, social and cultural development. In this, the Regions are bound to respect the Constitution, the constraints deriving from the EU framework, any international obligations and lines and guidelines of Italian foreign policy as well as, in matters of concurrent legislative powers, to the usual respect "*of the fundamental principles of the laws of the State*". On this point, the Italian Constitutional Court has repeatedly stated that Regions, in the exercise of their recognized power, do not operate as "delegates" of the State, but as autonomous subjects who interact directly with foreign States, although always within the framework of guarantee and coordination disposed by the State (Constitutional Court 238/2004; Constitutional Court 387/2005). While binding agreements with full sovereignty states are in fact on a secondary level (since, in fact, the Region would operate, through its Representative, as a mere plenipotentiary of the State), *"intese"* with other sub-state govenments is that which seems to directly invest city diplomacy (it is reasonable to assume that the Legislator, by using the term *intesa* intended to refer to the memorandum of understanding, commonly used in translocal relations). Finally, the entire sector was revisited with Law 152/2014 (in particular, art. 9), from which further and different problems of connection between regional and state competences arise.

136 This is the case of the bill under consideration in the Congress of the United States of America HR 3571 of June 27, 2019 "City and State diplomacy act", aimed at establishing a subnational Diplomacy Office within the Department of State, whose top figure must be an ambassador. According to the bill (which, unlike the homologous Italian regulatory act, expressly mentions city diplomacy and the major local government networks), the Office should provide assistance and resources of various kinds in support of direct diplomatic activity of Federated States and Cities with not less than 100,000 residents, as well as acting as liaison offices between these subjects and the Department of State. It is true that the bill also provides for the promotion of the alignment of the foreign policy of substate governments with that of the federal government, but no sanction or consequence is attached to it for the former in case of "misalignment". It is therefore reasonable to assume that, in this case, the Office will simply deny its assistance. In other words, there is neither the *de facto* veto power that Italian law has established in favour of the President of the Council of Ministers, nor any obligation to respect the foreign policy of the federal government.

Some food for thought can be had by analysing the contemporary diplomatic texture of the three proto-global cities, from which the essay by S. Sassen and R.S. Lind (1991) sprung, that is New York, Tokyo and London.

As for **New York City**[137], a foreign relations department is primarily entrusted to the *Mayor's office for international affairs*[138.]

This municipal agency has been set up to promote positive relationships as well as to encourage collaboration between the international community and the city’s agencies and bodies. This is primarily by worldwide sharing policies and best practices in use in New York City (outgoing), as well as by receiving and running requests and proposals from foreign governments, the United Nations Organization, and the US Department of State (incoming).

This department also provides advice on diplomatic and consular issues to the other city agencies, as well as to the diplomatic and consular community stationed at NYC as well asfor topics and issues about the city and its civil community.

One of the most relevant peculiarities of the New York City diplomatic model lies in the close link the city government has long since fostered, directly, with the United Nations Organization, whose headquarters is based there.

A specific program, emblematically named "*The New Yorkness of the UN*"[139], is dedicated to intensify the mutual learning between the City and the Organization, as well as to strengthen the socio-cultural integration between the UN multinational staff and the *new yorkers*.

Among the several initiatives the program provides for (including but not limited to studies and reports dedicated to the economic impact that the presence of the UN exercises on the city), the campaign "*We are the City of the United Nations*" stands out[140].

Besides, in 2018 NYC was the first city in the world to submit to the United Nations a so-called *Voluntary Local Review* (VLR), that is an in-depth report on local progress in achieving

137 The territory of New York City incorporates five New York State counties: Manhattan (which would represent the "real" NYC, or the original core of the City), Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn or Kings, Staten Island or Richmond, each of which organized according to the form of local self-government of the Borough and with its own President, whose functions and characteristics are indicated in articles 81 to 86 of chapter IV of the Articles of Association and, as regards the executive aspects, in title 45 of the Regulations of the City of New York. The overall population, in July 2017, was estimated at 8,622,698 residents, according to data collected by the US Census Bureau, and reported on the institutional site of the city. In turn, the City is part and leader of the Metropolitan Statistic Area New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metro Area, whose overall population was estimated at 20,320,876 residents in 2017.

138 Institutional website of the Office.

139 Institutional website.

140 But the effects in terms of prestige and international reputation for the city and for its brand in general should be also considered.

its sustainable development goals. In occasion of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019, the city government also launched the *Voluntary Local Review Statement,* an initiative open to cities, local governments and regional governments around the world, in which the signatories formally commit to reporting to the UN on their local progress for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals.

A non-profit organization is also operating, the *New York City Global Partners, Inc.*, established in 1962 by the Mayor's office for international affairs to connect NYC with other main cities in the world, with a particular focus on commercial relationships: one could say that while the Mayor's office deals with international relations in the proper sense (including, in fact, relations with the United Nations and other state-level actors), the latter mainly manages external and foreign relations with sub-state rank actors, both city-to-city and other non-state actors[141].

In addition to the *ad hoc* activities, the Mayor's office currently manages several fixed programs, including:

- Connecting local to global (CL2G): Through CL2G, the Office shares the solutions adopted in NYC to deal with local problems with the international community, as a starting point for reflection and contribution to the international commitment to tackle global issues, from climate change to disabilities, from immigration to food security.

- Global Vision / urban action: dedicated to pursuing sustainable development goals, in constant cooperation with other New York City agencies, diplomatic missions, the United Nations, and several cities around the world, as well as with academic institutions, civil societies, and other stakeholders interested in sustainable development.

- Global Partners Junior is a program that connects almost 1,000 young people in New York, aged between 9 and 13 years, with 2,000 peers from over 30 foreign cities, through an online platform, in order to promote research among students and brainstorming of solutions to bring about lasting changes in their communities and to perceive themselves as global citizens generating local impact.

The Office also manages the annual publication of "*Global NYC*", a detailed report on the New York City's international activities and general city diplomacy issues.

Tokyo has a highly complex administrative structure, largely due to the city's peculiar history

141 ACUTO, M., *City Diplomacy* in op. cit., London, 2016, p. 515.

and the related urban development[142]. Even the definition of the internal division of powers and functions is quite difficult, with particular regard to the assignment of competences on public services between the several public actors operating within the articulated metropolitan framework[143].

That said, pursuing the ambitious goal of making Tokyo "*the best city in the world*", in 2014 the Governor's Office of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government released "*The long-term vision for Tokyo*", an impressive report in which city diplomacy was assumed as the founding and priority value to many sectors of the metropolis' social and economic life[144].

This was followed by the new 2020 action plan "*New Tokyo - New Tomorrow*"[145], in which a "*new*" Tokyo is imagined as the sum of three different overlapping cities: *Tokyo safe*, focused on urban security (in particular, on disaster risk prevention issues); *Tokyo different*, culturally transnational and cosmopolitan; *Tokyo smart*, devoted to sustainable development and economic growth (also in competition with other megacities).

The Japanese capital is traditionally assumed to be at the forefront of the city diplomatic relations, which the Metropolitan International Affairs Office uses to carry out numerous cooperation plans with other cities of the world, also on the basis of another specific plan adopted in December 2014, the *Tokyo's Basic Strategy for City Diplomacy*[146].

However, essential and strategic relevance is also given to the research & development sector, as well as to other training activities related to the Tokyo's city diplomacy.

In this regard, a *Tokyo Human Resource Fund for City Diplomacy* was established by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government in 2015, to develop human resources expected to play a key

142 Among the major world capitals, at the same time appreciated as Global Cities, the ultra-metropolitan area of Tokyo-Yokohama, or Greater Tokyo Area, has an estimated population of 38,050,000 residents in 2018, equal to about 30% of the entire population of Japan (About 126 million). Within the Greater Tokyo Area, Tokyo, contrary to what might be imagined, is not even a "city" in the traditional sense. As a result of various reforms of the Japanese system of local authorities (Law No. 67 of April 17, 1947, also known in Western Doctrine as Local Autonomy Act), the pre-existing City of Tokyo (corresponding to the area now called the "special districts") has undergone considerable territorial and administrative changes, among which the merger with the homonymous Prefecture and the consequent extinction of the Municipal Authority must be mentioned. First, and, subsequently, the incorporation of two other large macro-districts to the original core of the Special Districts (the area of Tama, with related cities and villages, and the island district, which also includes administrations distant several thousand kilometres from the Japanese coast). The latter territorial variation, with the conurbation of the three territorial macro-actors, has therefore led to today's definitive structure of the metropolitan area of its own or, according to the Japanese system, of the Metropolis-Prefecture of Tokyo (not to be confused, as said, with the Greater Tokyo Area, of which it constitutes one of the 4 prefectures),

143 A detailed description of the complex administrative system just mentioned here is available on the institutional website of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

144 Available in English at link.

145 Available in English at link (simplified version).

146 Available in English at link.

role in the trans-local mutual exchanges and cooperation activities.
This fund mainly consists of grants and scholarships programs for doctoral and master's degree students at the Tokyo Metropolitan University. Benefits are provided for students coming from both Asian countries and cities twinned with Tokyo, whose studies are to define innovative solutions for the Tokyo residents' quality of life improvement. Furthermore, the Fund also promotes and supports research on the use of city diplomacy as a tool for the worldwide advancement of cities and local governments.
On the other hand, Japanese local governments are also members of the *Council of Local Authorities for International Relations* (CLAIR), a state agency that supports the internationalization of Japanese local governments through a specific training program for clerk staffs; interpersonal exchanges within the framework of dedicated projects and other initiatives; support to multiculturalism and related advice services for local governments.
It is interesting to note how this kind of training is considered a priority by the Japanese government: the CLAIR staff, in fact, is mainly composed of both employees posted by Japanese local governments and foreign coordinators. Most of the Japanese administrative staff, after having served one year at the CLAIR in Tokyo, are required to serve abroad for two more years.
Tokyo is also the lead city of the *Asian Network of Major Cities* (ANMC21).

London[147] demonstrates one of the most advanced city diplomacy strategy and action models: the public-private partnership model specifically adopted for the city's foreign relations deserves an in-depth analysis.
The foreign relations area, entrusted to the Mayor, was largely outsourced in 2011 to the non-profit public-private partnership company *London & Partners*, funded by the *Mayor of London Office* itself, by European and national funds, as well as by other private stakeholders (Barclay's and others), and through private initiatives.
The mission of the Company is "*to support the Mayor's priorities by promoting London internationally as the best city in the world in which to invest, work, study and visit*", or, in

147 London is administered by a political-administrative managing authority, the Greater London Authority, established with the homonymous Act of 1999 (later amended several times over the years), which is divided into a Mayor of London and a London Assembly of 25 members, both elected in compliance with the allocations, or quotas, provided for by art. 2 of the Greater London Authority Act of 1999. The functions and powers of the Authority and of the two bodies of which it is composed, described in detail in the large section of the second part of the GLA Act (general functions and procedures), are summarized in art. 30 of the Act, which states the Authority has the general power to do "anything" deemed useful to favour the purpose of promoting economic development and the creation of wealth and social development.

other words, to influence people to choose London to develop their initiatives and activities. This on the basis of several detailed multi-year action plans, each articulated with a *business plan* and a *general strategy plan*.

In the last strategy plan, relating to the period 2018-2021, a great deal of emphasis is given to the prospects for the international role of the city after Brexit, as well as to the strategies that London should adopt to counter any potential negative spill-over effects damaging the city's economy, also in terms of reputation damage[148].

Among the countermeasures to be undertaken in this regard, two main directions have been considered as crucial, namely:

- *balance of location*, aiming to influence the balance of location between London and other cities in the EU as businesses take decisions based upon the likely outcomes of Brexit negotiations;
- *jobs and talent retaining,* to address employers' key requirement to retain and continue to attract the best talent to London.

The foreign policy model proposed by L&P is partly derived from a more general "*good growth*" model, defined by the Mayor of London as the balance between two opposing factors: on the one hand, international audiences are hugely valuable to London, creating economic growth and therefore opportunities for Londoners; on the other, too many visitors can impact Londoners in less positive ways, creating congestion and acting as barriers to opportunities or everyday enjoyment.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned factors, good growth should successfully be fostered:

- where London has capacity
- in sectors where London wants to remain globally competitive, creating quality jobs of the future
- in ways that support London's cultural diversity.

Good growth can be achieved by implementing the following key activities:

Keeping international businesses in London, to make sure that jobs and growth stay there.

Growing businesses in the sectors which will create good jobs for the future. For individuals these are jobs with good conditions, fair pay and equal opportunities for promotion. For society, this could be roles to drive innovation and tackle some of London's bigger

148 London & Partners' Strategy 2018-2021, p. 11.

challenges, for example in health and environment.

Making tourism work for Londoners: attracting tourists who will spend money on a wide range of cultural institutions and experiences so that Londoners can benefit from them too, and encouraging tourists to come at the times and to the places where they don't cause congestion.

Attracting international students who support London's universities by paying fees and who can go on to work in London's businesses.

Attracting international investors to invest in regeneration and affordable housing projects which are priorities for the Mayor[149].

Finally, city branding on the one hand, and increase in the overall international reputation index on the other, are further considered crucial success factors.

So far, we have dwelt on three examples of proto-global cities, even though these cannot be considered as absolute archetypes or unique reference models.

It is clearly impossible to account for the dozens, or perhaps hundreds, of foreign policy / city diplomacy models nowadays adopted worldwide.

The current scenario sees several global cities as world leaders on the basis of liveability and *smart dimension* benchmarks and indexes, such as Vienna[150] (which, among other things has, in common with New York City, a close link with the International Organizations based in the city, including the UN), or new global cities quickly emerging from unexpected places, settling after a few years in the top ten of many indexes, such as Moscow, that has created interurban dialogue (the *Moscow Urban Forum* stands out on an annual basis[151]), scientific research and hi-tech its own particular strong points also in terms of city diplomacy, or St.

149 The recipe for London's foreign policy action, however, should be coordinated with the so-called *Seven key points* defined by the Mayor's Economic Development Strategy: 1. the advanced urban services sector, which is helping London to work more efficiently as a city; 2. the cultural and creative industries, which contribute to the quality of life and wellbeing of Londoners and give the city a global stage; 3. the financial and business services sector, which helps to underpin the workings of London's economy as well as the national and global economy; 4. the life sciences sector, which is helping to address the major healthcare challenges facing society; 5. the low carbon and environmental goods and services sector, which is supporting the transition to a low carbon economy; 6. the tech and digital sector, which is helping to drive innovation across the economy and provide platforms to entirely new industries, business models and services; 7. the tourism sector, which gives London an international profile, attracting people from across the world, and showcases London as a diverse and open city.

150 According to the Global Liveability Index 2019 of the *Intelligence Unit* of *The Economist*.

151 Institutional website. Note the active participation and involvement of both International Organizations and Agencies, as well as representatives of local governments from countries with which there are serious problems in the international relations of the Russian Federation. The translocal link, therefore, also contributes in this case to reopening in a new form channels of dialogue from the "bottom" in scenarios characterized by particular international tensions.

Petersburg, which is considered one of the most active cities as for foreign relations and twinning with other cities and local governments worldwide. Furthermore, the unstoppable rise of Chinese or African Megacities is further framing new challenges as well as cooperation opportunities, just as the less mentioned but equally relevant rise of Brazilian and Canadian cities.

16. Characteristics, elements and operational models of local government networks

a) Modalities of constitution-

Procedures and models by which sub-state rank governments' networks are usually set up can be traced back to three main types:

1. *spontaneous or conventional establishment*, where the associative phenomenon just arises through the local governments' free determination, with no involvement of the states, their agencies, or supranational / international bodies;

2. *derivative establishment,* if the network is created by a *pleno jure* subject of international law (be it a state, a group of states, or other international organization), which is directly or indirectly superordinate to the individual local governments supposed to become members of the network: this is the case, for example, of the *European Group of Territorial Cooperation*, a network established by the Regulation (EC) n. 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the European Council of 5 July 2006[152];

3. *mixed establishment*, when the network is set up by decision of a group of local governments (type 1), though under impulse, patronage, recommendation or other forms of *soft law* run by *pleno jure* actors of international law: this is the case, for example, of the *Covenant of Mayors*, informally promoted by the European Commission in 2008[153].

Our analysis will focus now on the *type 1* category.

152 Only networks with their own level, even minimal, of autonomous policy making capacity will be considered here. Consequently, further hypotheses of networks organically framed within other subjects and, in general, with merely consultative functions (e.g. European Committee of the Regions, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities at the Council of Europe), are not included in this essay.

153 There are also hypotheses of networks established, in various forms, by totally private initiatives. For example, in the case of *100 Resilient Cities*, promoted by the Rockefeller Foundation. Since 2019, *100 Resilient Cities* has joined the new *Global Resilient Cities Network* (GRCN). See also KLIJN, E. H. (2008). *Governance and governance networks in Europe*. Public Management Review, 10(4), 505-525; KLIJN, E.H., - KOPPENJAN, J.F.M. (2000). *Public management and policy networks*. Public Management: an International Journal of Research and Theory, 2(2), 135-158.

Judging by their organizational set-up, as well as from their aims and mission, it is evident how type 1 - networks largely tend to exercise forms of effective atypical *policy making* at a global and, sometimes, international level.
This is in a primary and original way: in other words, the local governments associated in these networks want to assume a key player role in directly or indirectly producing the global *"rules of the game"* at each level.
Up to now, the general balance between nation-states and trans-local networks seems to be characterized overall by an appreciable climate of reciprocal trust, neutrality and extraneousness tendency to avoid conflict situations.
It should be considered however, that, on the other hand, several type 1 – networks arise and impose themselves on the global scenario, more often than not, as an alternative or a response to the inaction or insufficient action by the states (whether individually considered or coordinated in international organizations) in sectors perceived by the civil community as being particularly sensitive or critical.
A grey area scenario, so to speak would be a problem or concern at a global level experienced by several civil communities; the respective nation-states (or their international organizations) do not adopt satisfactory policies, or do not adopt any measure in this regard at all; as a consequence, the closest governments to those civil communities (i.e, the local governments) cross national borders to directly act and to join together in seeking shared sustainable solutions.
As we saw in the introductory example, and as will be seen more extensively further on, sometimes such networks convey serious dissent against the national governments' foreign policy; other times, trans-local networks even tend to remedy damages the states' foreign policy has caused to the international community as such, as well as to individual local communities.

b) Objects, purposes and fields-

The extent, purpose and nature of a sub-state local government's foreign action, especially when they act as associates in networks, can therefore be articulated according to infinite forms and as many fractals, making general theorizing as very difficult.
On the basis of purposes and missions, two broad categories of networks can be identified

according to what the praxis has shown so far:

1. *Universal objective networks*.

These networks are characterized by “open” aims and objectives, and are used to deal with all issues that may concern local government. As they are highly dynamic structures, these networks are usually very efficient in quickly adapting to changes occurring in the international scene.

Furthermore, given the universality of their field of action, they generally provide for an internal articulation into departments, committees and commissions focused on specific fields of action, and/or specific regions of the world. This is the case of the *United Cities and Local Governments* – UCLG, which will be analysed below.

2. *Thematic networks.*

By definition, these networks are exclusively dedicated to specific topics, thus ensuring specialization in the reference sector they are involved in, as in the case of the *C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group,* the most influential network devoted to promote and develop actions to hinder climate change as well as to promote “green” sustainable development.

c) Subjective membership

1. Universal membership-

As previously stated, the capability of each type of *locality* (Blank, 2006) and of other non-state actors in the trans-local scenario represents the "corner stone" of the direct bilateral relationship model (so-called city-to-city).

Such heterogeneity also characterizes the associative model, since networks can accommodate in their subjective composition each type of sub-state government, regardless of whether or not it is a city, as well as other non government subjects (universities, independent agencies, etc.) and even private stakeholders.

Thus, for example, the network *100 Resilient Cities* (today *Global Resilient Cities Network* - GRCN) also provides for membership to bodies and governments other than cities, such as the Metropolitan Region of Santiago de Chile.

And this also happens in the network which, due to its size and areas of expertise, to date appears to be the reference model, namely the above mentioned *United Cities and Local Government* (UCLG).

UCLG, in fact, allows the participation of local governments, regional governments, their internal associations to the country of origin, their international associations, and a vast audience of collective and individual subjects different from local and regional governments, but interfaced with them for various reasons: from NGOs to universities, to individual researchers or even to some state agencies (but not to states as such).

2. Subject-based networks.

Several networks only allow cities to join: *Eurocities*, for example, provides a full or associated membership to cities only (depending, respectively, on whether or not they are located within member countries of the EU or EEA), while local authorities can aspire to becoming associated partners, with the right to participate in specific forums and working groups.

d) Governance structure

The structure of networks' internal governance is another criterion of differentiation: in fact, some networks are structured just at one level (one-tier networks), providing for a secretariat that guides the entire organization; networks operating at two levels, through two-tiered subnetworks of which one operates worldwide and the other operates at the macro-regional level; or even multi-level network[154].

17. Historical evolution of translocal networks: from the *Union internationale des villes et pouvoirs locaux* to the *Sister Cities International*-

Historical evolution is a crucial point to better define and understand the complex phenomenon of the trans-local relationships in their associational form.

In this regard, the analysis should take into account the relevant experience of the *Union internationale des villes et pouvoirs locaux* (or, in English, the *International Union of Local Authorities* - IULA), which was founded in 1913 on the occasion of the International Exposition of Gent, in order to promote local democratic self-government in the world.

The main task of IULA, in particular, was to create and support a single network of local governments and their national associations, to facilitate the exchange of experiences and

154 ACUTO, M. & RAYNER, S."*City network: breaking gridlocks or forging (new) lock-ins?*", In International Affairs, 92 (5), 2016, p. 1160.

information among its members as well as to develop innovative capacity building programs both for local governments and for their associations.

Its mission, in particular, was based on four strategic objectives aimed to give support to democratically elected local governments.

According to these key points, IULA's purposes were:

1. to develop and maintain a strong democratic political organization, managed according to high professional standards;

2. to play the role of advocate and world voice of democratically elected local governments;

3. to create a permanent centre of scientific research as well as of dissemination of key information of local governments' activities;

4. to implement learning, exchange and capability building programs.

For the first time in the history of trans-local relationships, then, thanks to the foundation of the IULA the idea of structuring translocal relationships into stable and equal networks appeared. The concept that these "new" networks were characterized by their own autonomous subjectivity, as well as being endowed with their own autonomous and specific governance other than that of individual member states, was introduced as well.

At the same time, the traditional model of occasional bi or multilateral *twinnings* no longer represented the only way to connect two or more cities in the world.

The IULA remained in operation until 2004, until its incorporation into the new *United Cities and Local Governments* network[155].

More one milestone ought to be mentioned.

Following the White House Conference on Citizen Diplomacy on 11th September 1956, on the basis of Eisenhower's statements, two networks sprung up in the United States: the *People to People International*[156], dedicated to citizen diplomacy, and *Sister Cities International*, focused on city diplomacy.

Sister Cities International (SCI) is formally a non-profit association under U.S. law, aimed at developing relations not only between local governments, but - through them - between people from all over the world. This is to promote peace, mutual understanding and democratic values.

If compared to the IULA model, the peculiarity of the SCI model lies in fostering the *personal*

155 In-depth summary sheets on the institutional structure, fields of action and territorial branching of the IULA are still available on the website of the Massachussets Institute of Tecnhologies and on the City Mayors Foundation one.

156 Based in Kansas City, and still in activity.

component, namely the *citizens*, even if through programs and activities mainly addressing their local governments: the latter are therefore expected to join one another not only in view of satisfying their "institutional" needs, but to promote cooperation between their respective citizens as well.

To this purpose, SCI applies a double operational track: a general multilateral network on the one hand, and a specific program aimed at promoting bilateral twinning between U.S. cities and cities from other foreign countries on the other.

Within the SCI institutional and programming framework, then, every U.S. city is given the possibility of creating a relationship with a foreign sister city: SCI, in this specific role, acts as a hotspot.

A rather evident peculiarity should be remarked upon: SCI was created mainly to promote an "outgoing" form of city diplomacy, on behalf of the U.S. sub-federal governments towards foreign local governments.

In this sense, several purposes emerging from its internal regulation demonstrate a close link to national needs and issues.

More specifically, SCI is devoted: a) to encouraging foreign citizens to learn about the traditions, the history, the lifestyle and ideals of the United States of America through shared relationships and programs; b) to helping American citizens, conversely, to do the same towards foreign counterparts, learning about customs, cultures and traditions through exchanges of people, information and activities in all aspects of contemporary life (see art. I, par. 3, SCI Reg.).

Affiliation policies are also clear in this regard: every *sister city's* relationship must consist of agreements of understanding undertaken between a city mayor, or a superior local government authority, from the United States of America, and one or more equal foreign counterpart.

It follows that, strictly speaking, within the SCI framework city relationships are established provided that at least one U.S. local government authority is part of them.

A remarkable mitigation to the aforementioned *national* factor is echoed by the valuable declaration of intent about the suggested policy in the event that, at the level of the respective national governments (and, therefore, in the context of international relations in the strict sense), reasons of political dissent or crisis scenarios would emerge, such as to cause a serious risk of interruption or suspension of the sister relationship.

In this case, the criterion is to give priority to the mission of promoting peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation, and therefore to maintain active relations between the twin cities, especially when political issues threaten to interrupt the positive and constructive relationships that have been in the meantime established [157].

The SCI model points of strength, therefore, can be defined as follows:

1. the theoretical model of a structured organization for support and management of the local governments' foreign relations has further developed. Moreover, the *twinning* traditional model has been recovered, revisited and reframed according to the innovative model of an "open" and multilateral network, acting through effective sister city relationships as well;

2. Even in case of an international crisis involving the respective national governments, any trans-local relationship undertaken within the SCI framework will be kept open and active, since, as already noted, global dialogue is considered a crucial factor for the maintenance of world peace: local governments, as far as possible, are therefore called in the first instance to foster their relations regardless of what the national governments do.

Furthermore, the SCI experience (which was originally born as a carrier and promoter of inter-city twinnings) shows how, progressively, even the most "traditionalist" networks have moved away from the perspective of a merely idealistic cooperation between cities, to embrace a more broad and outcome-based concept of city diplomacy[158].

18. The pivotal model of the *World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments*

Among the countless experiences of local governments' transnational networks from the mid-twentieth century onwards, the *World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments - UCLG* network seems to embody the most complete and mature model in this regard.

UCLG is a type 1 – network, exclusively founded by local governments and aimed at general purposes. Its broad subjective basis includes urban and rural communities, small, medium and large cities, metropolises, regions and any other public entity of sub-state rank. Memberships for non territorial public and private actors are provided as well.

Created in Paris, by the *Constituent General Assembly Act* of 5 May 2004[159], from the merger

157 SCI "*Policy Relating to the Suspension or Cancellation of Sister City Relationships Due to Political Disputes*", 2012.

158 ACUTO, M., & CURTIS, S., *op. cit.*, 2018.

of two previous networks: the International Union of Local Authorities – IULA, and the World Federation of United Towns and Cities (UTO, founded in 1957),

the UCGL's general aim is to create a new unified world organization of local governments, aimed towards developing trans-local relations and to strengthen, in general, the role and relevance of local governments in the world, inheriting and fostering the policies hitherto pursued by the two networks from which it originated[160].

The UCLG constitution directly makes reference to the art. 21, co. III, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10th December 1948, according to which the will of the people is the basis of the authority of any government[161].

Among other key points, the Organisation bases its reason for existing on the considerations:

- that the world is being reshaped by changing economic, technological, demographic, environmental and social forces;
- that the traditional role of the State is profoundly affected by the above trends and that States cannot centrally manage and control the complex integrated cities and towns of today and tomorrow;
- that population growth and the continuing process of urbanisation makes the task of local governments, both rural and urban, more complex but all the more essential;
- that in this changing world, the essential value of democracy, grounding government's legitimacy in the people, remains stronger than ever;
- that local government is one of the main foundations of any democratic society, being the level of government closest to the people;

This last concept, though indirectly, is then further developed and strengthened throughout the constitution's preamble, whereby local democracy, as the government level closest to the "people", is widely assumed to be the primary foundation of any democratic society.

For this reason, in pursuing its mission, objectives and tasks, and in dealing with issues of membership and other decisions under its constitution, UCLG shall act in accordance with, and be guided by, the principles of international law and relevant decisions of the United Nations on recognition of states and other related matters (art. 5, UCLG constitution).

159 Subsequently amended by an act of the Extraordinary General Assembly which met in Chicago on April 26, 2010, and by an act adopted by the General Assembly on October 3, 2013, following the session held in Rabat.

160 In particular, the articles of association of the UCLG, among other sources, refer to and expressly refer to the 1957 UTO charter, the 1985 IULA worldwide declaration of Local Self-Government (ratified by the UTO in 1994), and the final declaration of the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities, adopted in Istanbul in 1996.

161 The Constitution of the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments can be consulted here.

The general aims of UCLG are explained by the articles 2-4 Const., which differentiate and describe, its mission and objectives on the one hand, and tasks which the Organization aims to develop in order to fully accomplish the first two on the other.
The ambitious mission, as described by art. 2 Const., is to make the Organization the united voice and world advocate of democratic local self-government, promoting its values, objectives and interests, through cooperation between local governments, and within the wider international community.
In order to accomplish this mission, 11 primary objectives have been defined by art. 3 Const., namely:

- to promote strong and effective democratic local self-government throughout the world;
- to promote unity and cooperation amongst members;
- to ensure the effective political representation of local government to the international community, in particular the United Nations and its agencies;
- to be the worldwide source of key information and intelligence regarding local government;
- to be the worldwide source of learning, exchange and capacity-building, supporting the establishment and strengthening of free and autonomous local governments and their national associations;
- to promote economic, social, cultural, vocational and environmental development and service to the population based on the principles of good governance, sustainability and social inclusion;
- to promote race and gender equality, and to combat all forms of discrimination that are illegal with regard to international law, and/or illegitimate in relation to the values and policies of the organisation;
- to be a strong democratic organisation, reflecting the diversity of the local spheres of governance in its composition and functioning;
- to promote decentralised cooperation and international cooperation between local governments and their associations;
- to promote twinning and partnerships as a means for mutual learning and friendship between peoples;
- to develop policies, programmes and initiatives within the framework of the World

Organisation's mission, values and objectives, by seeking appropriate means to implement them, within the internal rules of the organisation.

In turn, the tasks UCLG aims to effectively achieve are also detailed in depth, though the related list is not to be considered exhaustive.

Among the diverse tasks the Organization is expected to implement, art. 4 Const. primarily identifies:

- Engaging actively in lobbying and advocacy work to promote the role and status of local government in the international arena and to influence international policy making;
- Developing and promoting policies and positions on issues of key interest and importance to local government before the international community;
- Collaborating actively with the United Nations and its agencies, and other relevant international organisations;
- Developing initiatives and action programmes based on the principles of local self-government and international cooperation, particularly through decentralised cooperation/development projects between local governments and associations of local governments, seeking funding and the creation of financial tools to support these projects;
- Building an international platform of exchanges and partnerships, in order to strengthen the capacities of local governments and their associations;
- Supporting a strong network of local government members and developing services and global products to meet their needs and demands;
- Becoming a major world source of information on local self-government, local authorities, international solidarity and the exchange of know-how;
- Disseminating information amongst its members, through publications, seminars and new information technologies, on the situation and the evolution of local government all over the world;
- Organising congresses, other events and activities, and increasing the number of members, in order to reinforce the World Organisation's political influence and its financial autonomy.

As for UCLG subjective basis, the following are considered as eligible members of the Organization:

1. *local governments*, i.e. individual cities and local governments, as well as national associations of local government (art. 7);
2. *regional sections of the World Organisation*, that, previously recognised in accordance with the provisions of the constitution, are members as of right (art. 8);
3. *international local government organisations* which represent specific categories of local governments, and/or whose purposes relate to specific sectors or themes (art. 9);
4. *associate members*, that is organizations which, though not themselves local government organizations, are strongly concerned with or involved in local government matters (art. 10);
5. *honorary members*, that is individuals or institutions who have rendered distinguished service to the association or to the cause of democratic local government (art. 11).

A limited membership in quality of associate member is also provided for individual ministries or state agencies, while states as such seem not to be entitled to join the Organization.

The UCLG is a highly decentralized multi-tiered network, articulated over several levels: a central general network, seven regional sub-networks (or sections), a metropolitan section and a section for regional governments. Each of these levels defines its own policies in relation to the specific or geographical area assigned, besides fostering the general policies and activities as defined by the World Organization governance, as well as playing a political, programmatic and administrative role in the UCLG whole of government.

19. The risks of institutional overlapping and of economic power based directorate.

On the one hand, both the multi-subjective basis and the universal objectives of the UCLG represent the widest range of action a trans-local network could reach.

On the other, this indirectly brings to light an unintended side effect, which could undermine the networking model itself: the overlapping of competences among networks, which could generate a certain confusion as well as, occasionally involving the networks themselves in undesirable competitiveness to hoard new "associates".

There dos not seem to be a similar phenomenon as regards international organizations: on the contrary, the lack of procedures and authorities for official recognition and/or validation of the trans-local networks under international law, unlike what happens for international

organizations, contributes in creating a serious hyperproliferation of these networks, with particular regard to the monothematic networks.
The functionability of the overall trans-local networking system, therefore, is essentially entrusted to the accountability of the various organizations that, to varying degrees and in ways specifically suited for each, interface and coordinate with each other in view of joint initiatives and actions.
In several cases, a second level super-network (that is, a network of networks) turned out to be an efficient solution to tackle the overlap and hyperproliferation problems: more networks operating in the same field come together to take a single action.
This is the example of the *Global Covenant of Majors for Climate and Energy*, defined as an agreement between networks[162] (or rather, as mentioned, a second level super-network) specifically dedicated to foster policies to counteract climate change[163].
It was created in 2016, from a merger of the *Covenant of Mayors*, promoted by the European Commission in 2008, and of the *Compact of Mayors*, created in 2014 by a joint initiative of both the then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and Michael Bloomberg in his capacity as UN Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change.
The Global Compact general action develops over three main lines:
- Innovate4Cities, with a focus on technological priorities and collaboration with governments, universities, businesses and other partners;
- Data4Cities, a program dedicated to big and small data management and processing, which is then made available to the cities through specific and detailed annual reports;
- Invest4Cities, which aims to improve and accelerate the access of cities and local governments to national and international financial investments, for the realization of fundamental projects in compliance with the mission of the GC.
Some considerations can be drawn directly from this first example.
Seriousness, substantiation, importance, and even the historical significance of the trans-local

162 Definition by HERRSCHELL, T. - NEWMAN, P., *Cities as International Actors: Urban and Regional Governance Beyond the Nation State*, London, 2017, p. 122.
163 The Global Covenant of Mayors (now *Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy*) defines itself as “the largest global alliance for the city's climate leadership, built on the commitment of over 9,000 cities and local governments. These cities come from 6 continents and 132 countries. In total, they represent over 800 million people ", and so explains its mission: "By 2030, the cities of the Global Covenant and local governments could collectively reduce 1.3 billion tons of CO2 emissions per year. As if they took 276 million cars off the streets. […] Cities and partners of the Global Covenant of Mayors for climate and energy share a long-term vision of supporting voluntary action to combat climate change. Together, we are working for a resilient, low-emission company. "

associative phenomenon as a whole are not in discussion.

It is precisely for this reason that any critical point as well as any weaknesses should be highlighted as a risk that could threaten, in the long term, both stability and further evolution of the model[164].

Robust fragmentation, lack of coordination, and consequent overlapping between networks are the most evident problems to be tackled.

In the case of climate change, one of the most relevant fields of the trans-local cooperation, we have seen how actively committed specific monothematic networks as well as offices, groups or specific commissions of global or general networks are, as are second level super-networks.

Each of these subjects is seeking for solutions: each of them will produce a certain number of reports, action plans, and other documents largely based on management and elaboration of big and small data; these reports, in turn, will lead the network to undertake several "internal" actions (that is, actions mainly addressed to the network's associates or members) which, in turn, shall be implemented by any member.

One should consider, in this regard, the role and position of a small local government which intends to actively engage in joint trans-local activities, but which is, at the same time, rigidly forced by its internal system to rigorous budget constraints and limits to public spending.

Participation in the network's activities, as well as the financial commitment for membership fees (necessary, since the networks are usually self-funded), could mean excessive or unexpected expenses (stable relocation of delegated officials, missions abroad, etc) to a local authority.

It follows that a government without solid funding, even if deeply motivated to make its own contribution and to assume any commitments deriving from its participation in the trans-local challenges, will either find itself having to completely give up, or it will have to make a rigorous selection of which networks to participate in.

The lack of certain and predetermined criteria and/or of agreed opinion by the international community could then lead the local government, to run the risk of making choices not suited to its needs, unless it relies on a specialist consultant.

164 For an extensive and in-depth critical analysis of the issue, which also highlights the risk that translocal networks, as organizations tend to be rigidly structured, especially if one-tiered, and may block or hinder the innovative "push" of individual cities o local governments (which, as noted above, express innumerable alternative models of structures and modes of action in their peculiarities), see ACUTO, M. & RAYNER, S. *"City network: Breaking Gridlocks or Forging (New) Lock-ins?"*, In International Affairs, 92 (5), 2016, pp. 1147-1166.

Furthermore, even if it adheres to one of the available networks successfully, a local authority could subsequently fall into a state of inactivity due to the extreme difficulty of coping with the various branching commitments deriving from the connection between the chosen network with the other networks, from the second level supernetwork, etc.

Although many organizations foresee subsidy or financing forms for less economically advantaged realities, in the ordinary functioning of the system is evident the risk that a sort of directorate could rise from the Cities with greater economic power.

Diplomatic influence of the "Big" cities (which, very often, are also the co-founders as well as the promoters of a wide majority of networks), in other words, could affect the network's life in a more profound way than the vast audience of the smaller participants could do.

This is also because the latter are not yet assisted by effective compensation mechanisms to safeguard the substantial equality for all the network's members.

In other respects, the high level of informality that usually characterizes the networks, guarantees wide flexibility, effectiveness and speed of action on the one hand, which are almost completely unknown to traditional international organizations, on the other hand could lead to further new causes of fragmentation as well as uncertainty about rules, procedures, and, sometimes, of the same institutional nature of the network[165].

This *directorate* threat, then, can be further aggravated as for the general equilibrium outside the network's life: stronger or wealthier cities have more opportunities to directly relate with other cities and local governments of the world than the weaker ones.

Nowadays it is more usual to talk about *Superstar Cities* than about *Global Cities*: in other words, the focus has shifted from the financial weight that a City gains in the global arena ("weight" which is however a benchmark linked to external factors to the City as such, first of all the trend of the financial markets) to a kind of specific *gravity* of the City as a whole. This substance could be defined as a sort of *geist* immanent in some cities rather than in others.

Such bigger cities, in turn, often see their weight increased by a more or less extensive *metropolitan statistic area* surrounding them, however named according to the various local and domestic regulations.

The supremacy, or directorate, of a few strong cities could lead the whole system towards a serious imbalance, like a sort of urban version of the saying *"the winner takes it all"*. The most sought after cities will be able to offer more opportunities, in turn attracting more talent

165 s. again ACUTO, M. & RAYNER, S., op. cit., 2016

and generating an even greater charm in a snowball effect, thus condemning the weaker local governments towards a downward trajectory[166].

In this scenario, all other local governments *other-than-superstar-cities* seem to have been relegated to a secondary level and / or marginality limbo: non-superstar cities actually begin, in practice and in literature, to be defined as *secondary cities* or *intermediate cities*, although there are no certain or objective benchmarks, nor any agreed definition in this regard available to justify such categorization.

It has been argued, with good reason, that this polarization is leading to a *"GAFA"* phenomenon[167]translated into urban areas, quite similar to what happens for an oligopoly in the business world: in this case, a (very) small number of companies that dominates the market is not beneficial for consumers, since they are forced to opt for good services almost exclusively following the oligopoly's offer rather than the market.

In the same way, a narrow number of cities, which offer more opportunities, are attracting more and more people to be converted into "citizens"/residents: these, in turn, will further improve the city's rank and its brand, so attracting more people, and so on[168].

This is, however, a situation connoted by a high risk of unsustainable development.

A problem of internal social cohesion within the Superstars - Global Cities, which we could define as a cognitive dissonance (or, in some cases, a *misleading narrative*), namely the fact that a superstar or global city is usually perceived as *entirely* superstar or global.

The common beliefs imagine, among others, "London" or "New York City" in their global dimension, often overlooking that such *globality* just regards some parts of them. Thanks to movies or to other popular media, people from abroad usually tend to identify NYC with Manhattan, or London with its *"City"*.

Also thanks to a strong city brand, hence, it is quite common how a part of the city (generally, the most competitive) is usually identified with the entire city itself.

But it is in fact very difficult to imagine the low - income families from Queens or the Bronx exploiting the same "global" opportunities as professionals operating in Manhattan, as it is unlikely to argue that the citizens from London's peripheral boroughs actually participate in the cosmopolitan dimension of the *City*.

Therefore, a robust paradox occurs.

166 FLORIDA, R., *The Rise of the Creative Class - Revisited: Revised and Expanded*, Hachette UK, 2014.
167 As known, this is an acronym defining the 4 Big Four of the tech sector: Google-Amazon-Facebook-Apple.
168 DEL OLMO, C., *The New Urban Crisis: Beyond the Superstar City*, in Green European Journal, 10 October 2018, available at this link.

On the one hand, several cities are considered *global, mega, alpha, superstar* etc. by virtue of phenomena which actually develop in a few specific places out of their whole area; furthermore, the overall critical mass of the residents, including those from the surrounding metropolitan area, further foster the relevance of the city, including its "globality", irrespective of whether they are actually involved in the city's global dimension or not.

On the other hand, several other cities with the same or similar global dimension, but with fewer residents than the former, are "intermediate" or "secondary cities".

Being "global" or not (sometimes by self-proclamation) leads to relevant differences between the cities: there are specific international rating systems and agencies (upon which, in many cases, the awarding of the qualification of global city depends)[169], forums, networks, and countless other initiatives exclusively dedicated to the cities bearing the term "global".

The risk, therefore, is that an unnatural and unjustified position of supremacy, based on the brand only and without any objective and shared classification criteria, could be radicated for just some a few major players, to the detriment of all the other non-state local actors.

20. Foreign action of local governments and their networks: operational experiences

In the previous paragraphs we have illustrated and analyzed some of the models of structures and systems local government authorities and their networks have adopted to effectively create and manage trans-local or trans-national relations.

Now we will examine two quite different experiences implemented by local governments, their agencies or their networks. These experiences are relevant since they are related to

169 For an example among the hundreds of rating agencies, one considered among the most accredited is AT Kearney, which publishes the detailed report *Global Cities Index* every year. It does not seem superfluous to specify that for years there has also been a sort of singular "trade war" (since the economic-financial sector is the one most frequently affected) among the major megacities, due to the affirmation of the greatest degree of influence worldwide. For the interesting historical "clash" between London and New York City, for example, see FLORIDA, R., "*Sorry, London: New York Is the World's Most Economically Powerful City*", in *Citylab, 3 March 2015.* The same from London, given that, in the 2018-2021 strategic plan, London & Partners identified, among the critical factors, that of" rapidly growing competition from other cities in emerging markets and established centres, with more resources to invest in promoting their cities to attract investments and visitors. ". And again, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, in the presentation of the "New Tokyo - New Tomorrow" plan, made no secret of imagining a smart Tokyo that can face "the challenges facing the megalopolis and continue growing to emerge victorious in the international competition among cities" . Outside of private initiatives, in the context of the United Nations Habitat III agenda and the related UN-Habitat Agency, the City Prosperity Initiative is based, however, on 6 indicators, or dimensions, of the general level of well-being and prosperity of 400 cities worldwide. See, on this regard, the city prosperity index

sectors that a wide social perception usually considers to be an exclusive prerogative of international relations proper and, therefore, limited to the competence of states and international organizations: public security cooperation and humanitarian interventions in armed conflict scenarios.

A) Urban security: the case of the New York Police Department

Acuto (2014) highlighted how the cities (and, we add, local governments in general) increasingly claim greater areas of competence and action in the public security field, an area traditionally considered (erroneously, argues the Author) to be an exclusive prerogative of the state central apparatus[170].

There is no doubt that public security is traditionally considered to be one of the state sovereignty strongholds, within which there is, therefore no room for local governments and / or their law enforcement agencies.

Furthermore, the security sector and law enforcement agencies organization varies significantly from state to state, over a range that develops between two extremes which are clearly at different ends of the spectrum.

On the one hand, some regulations provide for an entirely centralized law enforcement system. Detached sections from a single state police, directly subject to the central administration in charge, operate within the cities or the local areas.

Thus in France, for example, where the Paris urban security is entrusted to the *Police nationale* under the French Ministry of the Interior, albeit through the special peripheral office of the *Préfecture de police de Paris*; or in the Russian Federation where, following the 2011 reform[171], the centralized federal police dependent on the Ministry of the Interior, articulated on several specialized non-territorial sections, also manage urban security.

In the middle of the range, several national systems, such as that in Italy, provide for one or more distinct and autonomous local police forces, (different also in their functions and competences) from the state's, even if they are complementary to it.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, other public security models are almost completely devoid of any centralized state police force: this is the case in the United Kingdom (where

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170 ACUTO, M., "*How Can 'City Diplomacy' Influence Security?*", In International relations and security network, Zurich, 2014, p. 2 and following

171 Federal Law 7 February 2011, n. 3-FZ.

about 44 police forces operate between England and Wales, one in Scotland and one in Northern Ireland), as well as the USA, where dozens of metropolitan police departments, sheriff's offices, county police forces, etc. up to the highest level of the State Police of the individual federated States coexist.

On the other hand, these systems do not provide for single and centralized federal police force jointly dependent on one of the Federal Government Departments[172].

As for the US experience, the New York City administration created a rather peculiar organization of its urban security sector: the New York Police Department - NYPD is committed to management and contrast of terrorist risk from abroad in a wider scenario of real transnational cooperation.

NYC is supposed to be a sensitive target for at least two different risk factors, namely the potential attacks against the City as such, as well as the potential attacks towards the headquarters of the international actors and organizations located there, including the same UNO.

The New York City government started an ambitious path to strengthen its urban security skills in the aftermath of the attack on the Twin Towers: a dedicated specific intelligence unit was established at the NYPD, and some officers were detached to Israel to attend counter-terrorism training courses[173].

The counter-terrorism section of the New York Police Department (NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau) today has a complex structure articulated in seven sections: the critical response command, a highly specialized operating unit, devoted to intervention in case of attack or emergency; the counterterrorism division, in turn further articulated in seven subsections with duties ranging from harbour security to the proactive protection of infrastructures from the risk of terrorist attack, internal training, the training for citizenship, the counteraction of chemical and bacteriological weapon attack; the Joint terrorist task force, a multi-force unit the FBI cooperates with; the domain awareness system, established in collaboration with Microsoft and dedicated to data control and processing from CCTV, data bases, etc.; the lower Manhattan security initiative, which is focused on the south Canal Street area; the terrorism threat analysis group, for strategic analyses and intelligence activities and the World Trade

172 Of course, it is not important to detect, for the purposes of this study, the few which are actually federal, but sectorial and highly specialized police forces, such as the Federal Protective Service, or the border control service. We do not even considered the famous Federal Bureau of Investigation, given its peculiar nature of intelligence structure and the general non-assimilability to a "common" police.

173 Acuto, M., ibidem

Center command, which is focused on controlling that specific area[174].

Furthermore, according to quite a unique police cooperation scheme (which seems to be, at the same time, both trans-local and trans-national), from 2003 onwards the NYPD also implements its own International Liaison Program: metropolitan police liaison officers are permanently posted on missions for intelligence duties at the police offices of 14 other cities[175] both within the United States and abroad, as well as at the General Secretariat of the International Criminal Police Organization - Interpol, and at the European Police Office - Europol[176].

Already in itself, the "foreign" dimension of the activities of what might appear to be an ordinary metropolitan police department on the one hand, and the consequent accreditation of NYPD officials at the state police authorities and headquarters in other states, or even at local ministries of interiors (Qatar, Santo Domingo) on the other, have their own undoubted relevance.

But we wish to focus on the direct cooperation with OIPC-Interpol. This cooperation model usually takes the form of informal memoranda of understanding, and is moreover acted by another "local" law enforcement agency as well: in 2004, the Metropolitan Police Service of London[177] was the first metropolitan police in Europe to connect to I-24/7, the global high-security police communications service that allows access to the Interpol's database (and, therefore, the Interpol’s vital ganglia).

It is known that, pursuant to art. 4 of the Interpol Statute, the participation of police authorities in the Organization presupposes and requires a specific delegation act by the related Member State, and the request for membership can only be made by the competent Government Authority.

The subsequent art. 41 of the Interpol Statute indeed provides for possible forms of cooperation with international governmental and non-governmental organizations, and in some cases recognizes consultative attributions to the latter as well as to national governmental and non-governmental organizations.

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174 Data taken from the institutional website of the *New York Police Department*.

175 To be understood in the sense of mere territorial location, regardless of whether it is a local police office (few, actually: Madrid, Abu Dhabi, Toronto, Montreal) or offices of the state police or government intelligence agencies.

176 See again the site NYPD

177 London has two of its own police forces: the Metropolitan Police Service for the Greater London Area (popularly identified with the famous headquarters of Scotland Yard), and the City of London Police, for the City of London area. One of the overseas detachments of the NYPD's International Liaison Program is located right at the London Met.

Furthermore, Interpol praxis also recognizes further types of agreements between the Organization and other categories of national public actors (universities, research centres, etc.) or private actors of international relevance. These agreements, or memoranda of understanding, are generally aimed at scientific cooperation projects or specialist training purposes or, in a broader sense, not involving the Organization's essential functions or its strictly operational aspects.

Nevertheless, the participation of the NYPD intelligence officers, as well as those of the London MET, is allowed, accepted, and even solicited in Interpol's operational scheme, by the Organization itself, whose Secretary General, in 2014, further renewed its invitation to the NYPD to strengthen its cooperation with the Organization[178].

B) Peace building: the case of the Israeli-Palestinian scenario-

The cases so far explored or touched on, regard local governments activating their own foreign policy agenda, though this can be partially or entirely detached from their national governments' foreign policy.

Moreover, several cases in which networks (generally regional ones) take on a compensatory or even reactive role to their national governments and their internal and foreign policies are widely spread throughout the trans-local overall scenario.

The aforementioned *America's pledge* network is inspired by the last model, regardless of the fact that its competence is limited to the territory of the United States of America. Hence, AP action seems to be apparently devoid of any relevance beyond the US national borders.

But on the contrary, this apparently limited "territoriality" does not hinder the actual organization's transnational nature, as it is expressly appointed to implement by itself (namely, through the cities, federated states, and all other members coordinated action) duties and responsibilities deriving from and destined for the international community.

In other words, a transnational purpose or objective can also de-territorialize the network, irrespective of the fact that the network acts within a single state: its mere geographical location / limitation, hence, represents an irrelevant and secondary aspect[179].

178 INTERPOL website - "*INTERPOL Secretary General discusses terrorism issues with NYPD Commissioner", 22 November 2014 (URL verified on 24.04.2020).*

179 On the declaredly polemical position of America's Pledge, it is sufficient to report some steps of the introduction to the report: "*The America's Pledge report is the first communication to the international community specifically addressing the scope and scale of non-federal climate action in the United States following the Trump administration's decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. It captures and*

There is, in this regard, one more point to take into consideration: among the several groups within the network (ranging from local government bodies to universities, NGOs, commercial companies, tribes of the natives, etc.), the urban and territorial group gathers cities[180] and federated state governments which, in turn, are already actively playing a role in the trans-local and trans-national scenario to tackle climate change.

However, this is not an isolated case or an exception.

Even if solely through substantial actions and without any explicitly critical position or formal declaration, opposition between local governments, or their networks, and individual foreign national governments, or even their own national government could also occur.

These oppositions can take various forms: from formalized and clearly expressed contrast, as seen in the case of the *"We are still in"* declaration, to the more general criticism of the traditional international state-centric system[181], to the more discreet form of resilience or solidarity actions towards civil communities damaged by actions (usually, by war acts) carried out by states or other state actors.

One of the most pivotal examples can be drawn from the inter-citizen and trans-local relations specifically focused on conflict prevention, peace building and post conflict reconstruction activities, as better defined in The Hague by the First World Conference on City Diplomacy in 2008.

On that occasion, it was suggested that local governments could aid areas affected by conflict by fostering three main objectives: lobbying, planning and implementation of dialogue.

These objectives, in turn, can be articulated into two main lines:

global action, aimed at coordinating and raising awareness towards other actors of the international community (lobbying for the respect of human rights, for the promotion of peace agreements, for the active involvement of other local governments, etc.);

local action, specifically responsible for interventions on the community affected by the conflict (partnerships with local governments of the areas in conflict, reconstruction plans,

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quantifies the outpouring of public support for the agreement since the withdrawal announcement, finding that cities, states and businesses representing more than half the US economy and population have declared their support for the Paris Agreement, including more than 2,700 signatories to the " We Are Still In "declaration ".

180 Among which there are Global Cities such as New York City, Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago, etc. See Declaration *"We are still in"*, Signatories list, Cities entry.

181 In this sense, we can refer to the aforementioned Preamble of the UCLG constitution, in the part in which (to say the least) the capacity of the States to face the new challenges of the changed world scenario is questioned openly.

sending of its officials for administrative support, etc.)[182].

Local governments and their networks, in such cases, directly and operationally intervene on the ground (not simply through financial grants) to help other local governments or civil communities to rebuild what one or more states have destroyed.

Although inspired by noble solidarity principles, it should be noted how this approach necessarily presupposes an implicit will from the head of the acting local government to dissociate itself from the position of the states causing that conflict as well as its related damage.

A consideration that, in our opinion, is not trivial, to the extent that the scenario could see acting local governments which, in turn, are part of the same political-administrative structure of one of the belligerent Parties. In other words, a scenario could play out where a local government from state A is supporting a civil community / local government from state B, as states A and B are at war, or a serious diplomatic crisis between them is ongoing.

In this sense, the case of the *Municipal Alliance for Peace in the Middle East - MAP*, a network between Israeli and Palestinian municipalities founded in November 2005 (based on long and troubled local negotiations) to promote intra and inter-social cohesion, is deeply emblematic.

This initiative was promoted by the *Association of Palestinian Local Authorities* (APLA) together with the *Union of Local Authorities of Israel* (ULAI), and the support of the UCLG, as well the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), the European Network of Local Authorities for Peace in the Middle East (ELPME), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Cities of Hamar, Rome, Barcelona, Cologne, and the UNDP's Program of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP / PAPP, which also held the network's secretariat).

In 2007, two projects were launched by the MAP in the environmental field involving 11 municipalities (four from Palestine, four from Israeli, three from Netherlands), and three other projects relating to the management of water infrastructures, urban parks, and wastewater treatment, were undertaken between late 2007 and early 2008.

But the cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian local authorities has also been implemented on the initiative of several individual municipalities, outside of structured networks.

182 See SIZOO, A. - MUSCH, A., *City diplomacy - the role of local governments in conflict prevention, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction,* The Hague, 2008, p. 7 and ss ..

Among the most important examples, the 2009 urban rehabilitation project of the city of Gaza's Al-Nasser district, carried out by the governments of Tel-Aviv, Gaza, Barcelona, and by the Comunidad Catalana, with the external support of APLA, should be mentioned.
This project was to foster and rehabilitate urban and environmental conditions of the District and, consequently, the residents' quality of life, assuming that a better urban environment would help to defuse or prevent potential outbreaks of urban violence.
This was achieved mainly through the implementation of essential public services as well as the creation of common public spaces intended for social interaction and cohesion (services aimed at citizenship), and by providing professional training for technicians and public officials from Gaza, through exchange programs with the Municipality of Barcelona (indirect citizenship services).
Ambitious infrastructure planning, which represented one of the most valuable aspects of the project, provided for the development of a new drinking water distribution network; the construction of new waste black and white water treatment system; public lighting and road pavement renovation; the planting of new trees; the construction of a new telephone network (entrusted to a Palestinian company); the construction of two squares, based on a technical project set up by the City of Gaza, comprising spaces for children to play, new urban furnishings and regeneration of the existing greenery[183].

21. Vertical projection of traditional domestic actors or birth of new international actors?

Defining the socio-legal dimension of these few examples of practices (which represent a first set of empirical data from which to make the analysis move), as well as of the local governments acting at a global level, and their subsequent duties, rights, opportunities and obligations (indeed many, as will see) in this regard, should be intended as a crucial point.
To date, the matter of the local governments' trans-national action and relations seems to have been entrusted only to the albeit monumental work of international relations and urban sociology scholars. On the contrary, juridical overviews are not significantly present.

183 Municipalidad de Barcelona, *"Urban Rehabilitation of the Al-Nasser District Gaza City, Occupied Palestinian Territories"*, in UCLG Position Paper on Aid Effectiveness and Local Government, Barcelona, 2009, p. 63.

The first and most obvious question to be resolved is whether, at present, there are legal sources of positive law, in the light of which one could systematically analyse subjectivity the action of local governments acting on a trans-local or even trans-national level.

Two fundamental factors should be taken into account:

1. local governments and authorities, strictly speaking, have neither juridical subjectivity nor the ability to act under international law: as they are considered internal or domestic partitions within a sovereign state, they lack the quality of *superiorem non recognoscentes*.

Nonetheless, these subjects are often taken into consideration (again, in various capacities) by several sources of international law, albeit in a rather limited way and, in general, in their quality as third-party beneficiaries of binding agreements concluded between other international legal actors.

This is the case of the Madrid European Framework Convention on the cross-border cooperation of local communities and authorities of 21st May 1980, by which the signatories undertake to facilitate and promote cross-border cooperation between the local authorities depending on their jurisdiction, and local authorities or territorial authorities depending on the other states' jurisdiction.

As is evident, acts such as the Madrid Convention always refer to the states as signatories and recipients as for the related rights and obligations.

On the other hand, the situation is diametrically different in terms of informal or *soft law* sources, as we will shortly discuss.

Furthermore, local governments and authorities, if considered in their capacity as a part of the state's internal law system, in turn do have their own law systems; they develop and exercise authoritative powers, over a clearly defined territory and towards the community inhabiting those territories; again, they are endowed with regulatory or, in some cases, legislative power as well.

Beyond their domestic role, we have mentioned above two structural characteristics that make local governments quite unique in the complex and multifaceted panorama of the actors operating at the global level. Local governments are supposed to be both expression and embodiment of the principles of *democracy*, since their representatives are freely elected by the community, and of *representativeness*, since their purpose is to take care, directly and without intermediation, of any specific interests of the territorial community that elected them. In addition, the local one is considered the government level closer to the local communities.

All these characteristics, whether they are relevant for the global level (as for democracy, representativeness, closeness to communities) or for the domestic level (as for the ownership of authoritative powers, of their own legal system, etc.), do allow to draft a first framework of local governments' legal capacity and to act within the global scenario.

It should be considered, for instance, that being a local government authority on the basis of a reference domestic law is necessary but is not a sufficient precondition to be eligible as a member in several trans-local networks: only freely and legitimately elected local governments can join as members, while participation of local government whose representatives took office following appointments, co-optation, etc. are precluded.

This aspect, which is a pivotal point of strength for the trans-local system, seems to counterbalance one of the most relevant criticisms of the international state-centric system, namely the democratic and representativeness deficit.

In the case of local governments and cities, it is easy to imagine how the political-administrative proximity binding the local authority administrators to the respective territorial communities is, in itself, an adequate reason for guaranteeing that the requests and interests of those communities are effectively and adequately represented throughout the trans-local relationships.

All the more so in networks, where "local" interests cease to be local, and to merge, like many bricks, into joint and coordinated actions on the global scenario.

Furthermore, as local administrators come from the area they are responsible for representing and managing, they also have, in theory, a deeper knowledge of the needs and problems that specific area has.

Thanks to this contribution of varied personal backgrounds, moreover, trans-local networks (which are the sum of administrators' personal experience) have long since taken on an increasingly growing role and importance within traditional international relations. In fact, the advisory contribution of trans-local networks represents a relevant added value for every action that international organizations are carrying out for the benefit of local areas.

This leads to the effect that, on the one hand, these networks are implementing their own peculiar role within international organizations and, on the other, they are contributing to repairing long-standing and / or emerging gaps and dysfunctions by the overall international law system.

22. Institutional paralysis of interstate and intergovernmental cooperation-

Some juridical-philosophical theories assume that general international law should not be even considered a legal system in the proper sense, and this is mainly because the lack of a substantial coercive system on the one hand, as well as of a sanctioning apparatus on the other. As no authoritative nature can be found in international law, one could conclude, it cannot be considered a structured legal system.

At the most it would be an "elegant" concealment of the balance of political and economic power behind it. One or more dominant - hegemonic states, behind the formal dress of the international law, would exercise a *de facto* power on weaker or less organized states, or even on a considerable part of the international community[184].

The actual lack of an authoritative structuring of the international law system, which guarantees the effectiveness of the international rules through a single superordinate authority, would thus leave room to one or more isomorphic "sovereigns" (i.e. the hegemonic states) who, at international level, is taking the place of what, for the national systems, would be the state.

The idea of the *de facto* "international sovereign" has been traditionally embodied by the so called *Great powers*: a historically changing group of hegemonic states which, through a delicate system of mutual checks and balances, has given rise to a tendentially balanced international system (the so called *balance of power*).

The balance of powers' center of gravity constantly moves between the two opposites of the utilitarian exploitation of the international law on the one hand, and of the repudiation - refusal of it and its legitimacy on the other[185].

Hegemonic states who adopt exploitative behaviour are usually reluctant to sign multilateral international treaties (which, by their very nature, would presuppose an appreciable level of formal equality between all the contracting parties) not embodying their specific national interests; on the contrary, these states are used to promote and join a relevant amount of bilateral agreements.

This is because bilateral agreements, in fact, allow the hegemonic State not only to manage the negotiation phase as the "strong" part (while in multilateral treaties, more often than not, this phase is entrusted to international organizations which are officially neutral third parties),

184 On these juridical-philosophical theories, see SCOTTO, G., *"Diritto Internazionale per filosofi"*, 2013

185 KRISCH, N., "*International Law in Times of Hegemony: Unequal Power and the Shaping of the International Legal Order"*, in The European Journal of International Law (2005) Vol. 16 no.3, p. 369.

but also to modulate and exercise, time after time, adequate levels of influence and predominance over the usually weaker counterpart in the subsequent executive phases as well as in the management of exceptional events[186].

This can also be applied to refusal, even if vital interests for Humanity as a whole are at stake. So for instance, the refusal to ratify the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court by both the United States of America and the Russian Federation (which, therefore, are not considered "parties"), though they formally signed it, and China's total estrangement, having never even signed it, are definitely emblematic in this sense.

It may seem surprising that the citizens from three out of five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council could remain immune from international criminal jurisdiction. This is unless, voluntarily and without any specific obligation in this sense, one of those states decides to accept the Court’s jurisdiction with regard to specific criminal cases involving its citizens (see art.12, par. 3, ICC Statute), or unless international crimes were committed by those citizens on the territory of a state party[187].

Other influential key actors of the international community have not signed the Rome Statute yet, such as Israel, Turkey, India, Saudi Arabia, and even some member states of the European Union: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.

It is, therefore, an overall framework which is no better from the point of view of the system of international organizations.

IOs seem to be enveloped into a growing institutional stalemate (or gridlock, according to

186 KRISCH, N., *op. cit.*, which refers the example to the United States of America.

187 In this regard, it is worth mentioning the serious crisis underway between the US federal government and the International Criminal Court. On November 20, 2017, the Prosecutor of the Court, Fatou Bensouda, asked the Preliminary Chamber for authorization pursuant to art. 15 St. ICC to undertake an investigation into possible war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Afghanistan since May 1, 2003. The investigation would also concern US personnel. The request was rejected by the Court Judges in April 2019, with a decision that was subsequently appealed by the Prosecutor. The position of the US government, immediately clear and firm in contesting the Prosecutor's initiative, considered outrageous, can be summarized in the statements that the Secretary of State, M. Pompeo, issued in October 2019,U.S. State Department press release October 9, 2019). In the present case, the countermeasure was then effectively adopted against the Prosecutor Bensouda, in the form of revocation of his entry visa in the US territory. On March 5, 2020, the Appellate Chamber of the International Criminal Court upheld the appeal and ruled unanimously to authorize the Prosecutor to launch an investigation into alleged crimes under the jurisdiction of the Court, in relation to the situation in Afghanistan reported in the request for authorization to proceed. The considerations regarding the US Secretary of State, who did not hesitate to define the decision of the ICC Appeal Chamber in terms of "breathtaking action by an unaccountable political institution, masquerading as a legal body", were very harsh; to reiterate that "The United States is not a party to the ICC, and we will take all necessary measures to protect our citizens from this renegade, so-called court "; to declare that "This is yet another reminder of what happens when multilateral bodies lack oversight and responsible leadership, and become instead a vehicle for political vendettas". (U.S. State Department press release of March 5, 2020).

Hale *et alii*, 2013[188]), as the result of a progressive gap between the need to detect global solutions to global issues on the one hand, and the International Organizations' effectiveness at satisfying these needs on the other.

In this regard, Hale *et alii* (2013), who do not fail to point out the empirical observation of a serious depletion in the overall normative production of international agreements between 1990 and 2010[189] noticed that since the post second world-war period the intergovernmental cooperative model has proved to be a winning one, registering successes above all in terms of stability of peace and economic growth.

The growth of international cooperation, however, had the effect of creating a strong institutional interdependence at the same time, which has turned into a sort of problem to be tackled in turn.

In other words, the Author assumes that the greater this mutual institutional interdependence becomes, the greater the need for new and effective international institutions to cope with it.

In turn, as international institutions' grow in number, effectiveness, and "pervasiveness", institutional interdependence also grows, thus triggering a vicious circle that will lead to a stalemate.

International cooperation, therefore, from 1946 up to now would have traced a sort of A-shaped curve, thus becoming asymptotic (i.e. gridlock). This is due to at least four concomitant factors:

- the new structured multipolar world, which has succeeded a system designed and modelled on the old tripartition Western countries - Socialist bloc - Third World States;
- cases of institutional inertia, among which the Authors include the same United Nations Security Council;
- the growing complexity of traditional problems, as well as the emergence of new critical scenarios (ITC), or of new global threats (environment and climate change, transnational terrorism, etc.);
- the atomistic fragmentation of traditional institutions as well as of their activities[190].

A singular convergence seems to be arising between the two above illustrated theories (i.e. the

188 HALE, T .; HELD, D .; YOUNG, K., *Gridlock: Why Global Cooperation is Failing When We Need It Most*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2013.

189 In the period 1990-2000, 406 new multilateral treaties and 12,566 bilateral treaties were registered, while in the following decade there were "only" 262 multilateral and 9,484 bilateral treaties.

190 HALE, T .; HELD, D .; YOUNG, K., op. cit., 2013, p. 278, tab. 5.1

ineffectiveness of the international law system and institutional gridlock of the international system), since these, although from different perspectives, take into consideration the same scenario and seem to reach the same conclusion:

- on the one hand, in fact, the hegemonic states' strategy, based on the binomial exploitation-repudiation of the international law, tends to foster the depletion of the cogency (even if formal) of international law, in favour of more manageable forms of *soft law* or, informal international law [191];
- on the other hand, the stalemate-gridlock of international organizations (which, as one can easily guess, is the effect of a new balance of power) would seem to leave ample room for action to the new "social" forces.

These, both from above (supranational private stakeholders like financial actors, multinationals, etc.) and from below (local governments and their networks) state-level, are leading actions and initiatives aimed at gaining their own formal recognition as international actors, as well as making themselves a valid alternative to traditional international actors.

23. The rise of the Non State Actors and the Transnational Law in the new global and post-globalized scenario-

As the nation-states' role has diminished following the former balance of power's collapse, the Non State Actors (NSA) have increasingly been assuming a greater role and weight becoming active players, if not of international law, certainly of the new globalized world. They now directly act beyond any national border representing their collective interests, providing advisory functions in the state-actors' negotiations for new binding agreements, producing a huge number of *soft law* acts (memoranda of understanding, recommendations, action plans, etc.).

Hale *et alii* (2013) noted in this regard how the rise of the NSAs could cause potential

191 Again KRISCH, N., op. cit., p. 390 et seq. The author concludes his acute and in-depth analysis by setting out a truly disturbing scenario, in which the ultimate goal of hegemonic states lies in the imposition of their national legislation over the other partners (who are destined to become subordinates) of the international community, through a complex path of replacement of their decision-making power and its own legislation (understood in the broadest sense of policy making) to international law. The assumption of a *de facto* power of leadership of the international community by one or more hegemonic states, without any mediation by third and impartial international bodies, is by no means a peregrine hypothesis: among the most recent cases, one could think of the controversial "coalition of willing" by US traction, engaged in the Iraqi war scenario, HALE, T .; HELD, D .; YOUNG, K., op. cit., p. 281.

problems of fragmentation and institutional overlapping, but at the same time it could also expand political debate and decision making platforms at every level[192].

In several cases, the NSAs are formally recognized and embodied within the International Organizations' or Agencies institutional set-up, generally for both consultative and active cooperation duties.

This is the case of UNESCO that, pursuing art. XI, par. 4 of the Convention of London of 16th November 1945, has been fostering advisory and cooperation activities with non-governmental organizations dealing with issues within its competence for a long time.

These NSA are usually associated to UNESCO to collaborate on specific objectives, and their representatives are entitled to participate in the consultative committees established by the Organization's General Conference[193].

Although NSAs cannot yet be considered as full subjects of international law, it is likewise true that several symptomatic elements of an embryonic opening are by now appearing.

So for example in the Commission for International Law's acts.

In particular, with reference to the *general principles of law* as a source of international law (according to the provisions of art.38 St. of the International Court of Justice), the importance of the role of NSAs has been recognized to some extent, at least in the areas of international law which directly or indirectly affect them[194].

These openings, for the most part, are currently sectoral or thematic, and take on particular importance for international criminal law. This is with marked regard to the so-called *Violent non State Actors* for transnational crime (terrorists, drug traffickers, human traffickers, pirates, etc.), as well as under investment international law provisions with reference to financial actors[195].

192 HALE, T .; HELD, D .; YOUNG, K., op. cit., p. 298. Moreover, it seems reasonable to support the attitude of the networks of cities and local governments to be able to fill that institutional gap, thanks to their ability to operate through highly complex "hybrid" (public-private) governance agreements and according to innovative cooperation methods between cities and local governments as substate actors, see ACUTO, M. & RAYNER, S. "*City network: breaking gridlocks or forging (new) lock-ins?*", In International Affairs, 92 (5), 2016

193 There are currently 390 the NGOs that enjoy partnerships with UNESCO, and 33 foundations and other assimilated subjects. For other cases and examples, cf. SUZUKI, E, "*Non State actors in International Law in policy perspective*", in NOORTMAN, M., REINISCH, A., RYNGAERT C., *Non State actors in international law,* Oxford-Portland, 2015, p. 37 and following

194 VASQUEZ-BERMUDEZ, M., "*General Principles of Law*", in Report of the International Law Commission - 69th session (2017) Attachment n. A / 72/10, p. 228, par. 12.

195 The new world scenario, in the new balances born over the last two decades of the twentieth century, cannot fail to consider large Companies as Non State Actors: worldwide institutional investors, multinational private companies which have such huge resources that they could influence the economic, fiscal and monetary policies of individual states or even of whole groups of states.

The prevalent strategic role of NSAs within the processes of evolution and production of positive international law is mainly linked to their propulsive function (i.e. where they do have any impulse and initiative power), as well as to their participatory/advisory functions for binding agreements[196].

But one cannot disagree with those who argue that this is a legally relevant phenomenon, but quite removed from the full consecration of the NSA among the international community's "legislators". These last, directly or through mediation of third and independent international organizations, still remain the key-actors within a purely state-centric decision-making model (D'Aspremont, 2010).

The NSAs, in substance, could at most aspire to playing the role of influential pressure groups or lobbies: but any final decision, any exercise of the volitional act that creates (or recognizes) the international law rule, will remain precluded to them.

At most, they could be considered as subjects of *Transnational law,* according to the conceptual category defined by Jessup (1956) who, moving from a decisive criticism to the same definition of "international" law, assumed the existence of a super-legal system which also incorporates, but goes further than what is commonly called *international law*.

In other words, this super-system of regulations would affect and regulate any action and event developing beyond the domestic level, for any reason and regardless of the nature of the actors involved: this system is articulated on three pillars, namely public international law, private international law, and all the *"other rules"* [197].

196 In addition to the aforementioned UNESCO case (of course, only one of many), see, for a historical perspective, D'ASPREMONT, J., "*International Law-making by Non-State actors: changing the model or putting the phenomenon into perspective?* ", in NOORTMAN M., RYNGAERT C., *Non-State Actor Dynamics in International Law: From Law-Takers to Law-Makers, London, 2010, p. 175.*

197 JESSUP, PH., *Transnational Law*, Yale, 1956. Borrowing an example from this theory, reported by the same Author, one could imagine the case of a purely private agreement between non-State actors, for example a commercial agreement between multinationals. It is clearly irrelevant in terms of public international law (unless fundamental rights of the individual come into play, but this is another hypothesis). *Quid iuris*, then, what if a State, a *pleno jure* subject of international law, also joins this agreement? The Author believes that in this case there would be a transnational law case. Another hypothesis to consider could be that of an association governed by private law, whose members are exclusively or predominantly States. It is, for example, the case of the *Open Government Partnership*, which is formally an unincorporated association under US private law. The legal nature, or legal status, of the OGP is defined both by art. 2 of the Bylaws of its management body, the Open Government Partnership Secretariat (latest version, 17 January 2019), which defines the OGP as *"an unincorporated association that is a voluntary, multistakeholder international initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance "*; the same from art. VI., Pt. a., of the Articles of Governance 17 June 2019, according to which *"OGP operates as an independent public charity as defined under US law and the regulations of the US Internal Revenue Service. On April 1, 2018, OGP began operating as a not-for-profit organization in the District of Columbia. OGP's formal legal name is the Open Government Partnership Secretariat. The OGP Secretariat Board of Directors provides fiduciary and legal oversight over the SU and the IRM* ".

In fact, the evolution of transnational law theory in the decades following its formulation seems to actually confirm the accuracy of Jessup's original intuition, leading the Literature[198] to the further step of a systematic distinction between a *transnational legal ordering*[199], and the various individual *transnational legal orders* on which the former is supposed to be articulated[200].

The first definition regards the overall phenomenon of general regulatory production in particular areas of transnational relevance (which could also be defined as the *actual* general transnational legal order), while the second refers to complex mandatory and positive rules granting the effectiveness and compliance of the transnational legal ordering within every national/domestic jurisdiction, through structures endowed with authoritative powers at national or sub-national level[201].

Given the question in these terms, therefore, it is clear that cities, local governments and their representative networks should be considered NSAs as well, whenever they put in place international or translocal activities, or activities intended to produce lasting effects beyond their national borders.

This is also with reference to the aforementioned impulse, consultative and participatory roles, typical of the NSA, in the creation of international law rules, since such roles usually represent one of the most relevant characteristics of the local government networks.

In this sense, from numerous examples, it is worth mentioning the United Nations Program for Human Settlements, better known as UN Habitat[202], which gets the participatory scheme

198 See for all, SHAFFER, G., COYE, C., "*From International Law to Jessup's Transnational Law, From Transnational Law to Transnational Legal Orders*", in University of California, Irvine School of Law & Legal Studies Research Paper Series, No. 2017-02.

199 SHAFFER, G., *Transnational Legal Ordering and State Change*, Cambridge, 2013, cited in Shaffer, G., Coye, C., op. cit.

200 HALLIDAY, TC, SHAFFER G., *Transnational Legal Orders*, Cambridge, 2015, cited in Shaffer, G., Coye, C., op. cit.

201 As for the transnational legal orders, the authors report the examples of the TRIPS agreements on intellectual property of 1995, with regard to some aspects related to the protection of minority rights (with reference to the Mayan ethnic groups in Belize and Ainu in Japan), Shaffer, G., Coye , C., op. cit.

202 This is a UN agency structured according to the traditional three-tier scheme: General Assembly (composed of 193 UN member states, and successor to the previous Governing Council, correct resolution of the General Assembly NU A / RES / 73/239) , Executive Council (composed of representatives of 36 UN member states elected by the General Assembly), and Permanent Representatives Committee. The role of local governments and their networks, among other sources, is foreseen and regulated by the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly UN Habitat HSP / HA.1 / HLS.2 of 31 May 2019 and, in particular, by art. 67 ("local authorities"), in memory of which "duly accredited representatives of local authorities, invited by the executive director and in agreement with their respective governments, where requested, or in national representation or international associations or organizations recognized by the United Nations, may participate as observers in public meetings and in the deliberations of the United Nations Assembly for the habitat and its inter-sessional bodies ", and art. 69 ("non governmental organizations"), according to which "Non-governmental organizations with consultative status towards the Economic and Social Council can

extended to the NSAs already seen in UNESCO.

In particular, the United Nations Local Authorities Advisory Committee (UNACLA) at UN-Habitat should be mentioned, an advisory body established by the UN Resolution 17/18 of the Habitat Governing Council, with the aim, among others, of "*strengthening the dialogue of the UN System with local authorities from all over the world involved in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda*"[203].

Moreover, democratic representativeness, as well as the ownership of authoritative powers (or even legislative power) over the communities within their territorial jurisdiction, place the local governments in an intermediate position, so to speak, between the traditionally understood NSAs and the traditional actors of the international law.

One could imagine the case of a local government legitimately endowed, on the basis of domestic law and internal constitutional order, with exclusive legislative power on certain matters: this legislative power could be carried out directly the local government's order to would immediately conform to international obligations, even if the state is late or refuses to fulfil those obligations.

Strictly speaking, this outcome would be achievable by resorting to the so-called substantial transposition: the competent local political body (regional parliament, county council, city council etc.) issues its own regulatory act, the content of which, however, coincides, in all respects, with that of international agreement.

Under international law, such a phenomenon should remain irrelevant: but would it still be correct to speak of, in that case, a purely internal (or "domestic") event to a national system?

The same could happen if a city, acting by a voluntary fulfilment of a joint multilateral agreement with other foreign cities, requires the companies allocated onto its territory to adopt all the necessary measures to keep CO2 emissions within the same limits of the Paris Agreement.

Would this be still considered as an act of mere domestic law?

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designate authorized representatives to participate as observers in the public meetings of the UN Habitat Assembly and its bodies intersessional. A non-governmental organization attending an Assembly meeting may, at the invitation of the President and with the approval of the Assembly, make oral statements on issues that fall within its scope. " In this case, therefore, the rule requires that the NGO (in our case, the network of local governments) be previously accredited by ECOSOC. One should also mention the residual provision pursuant to art. 68, according to which duly accredited representatives of other partners of the Habitat Agenda can sit as observers in the public sessions of the UN-Habitat Assembly and its inter-sessional bodies. At the invitation of the official who chairs the body concerned and with the approval of that body, these observers may make oral statements on matters in which they have special competence.

203 To date, UNACLA is co-managed by UN Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments (which has the right to appoint 10 of the 20 members that make up the Committee).

SECTION III

A DYNAMIC PERFORMANCE GOVERNANCE APPROACH TO TRANS-LOCAL COOPERATION ON SUPER-WICKED PROBLEMS

REFRAMING THE LOCAL BRAND TROUGH CITY DIPLOMACY

24. Introduction

The reputation gap afflicting local areas and the relationship models established between local governments on a global scale may seem, at first glance, to be two unrelated topics or even two dimensions so different that they seem irreconcilable. The former constitutes a problem in itself, while the latter aims to provide solutions to problems. However, there are some basic characteristics that these two fields of study have in common: both represent dynamics of social systems, both involve local civil communities, and finally, both presuppose and/or require joint actions between several actors.

The question this section proposes to address, therefore, is whether a robust action of repositioning on the global scenario, through the practices of city diplomacy, can contribute to redefining the essential characteristics of a local area and to give it a new singular perception (and self-perception) not just at the local level but also at the global level. This would require a serious and well-founded set of actions and initiatives to enhance the potentials and peculiarities expressed by the local area and its internal stakeholders, together with the ability and skills necessary to transmit and share those potentials and peculiarities outside the local level—in other words, the ability to leverage one's own cultural, social, and national identity to relate to an indefinite quantity of strategic partners, stakeholders, and complex social and political structures that operate on a global level.

The challenge can be summarized as follows: the more a local government is able to contribute to the global dialogue on the resolution of global problems (super-wicked problems), the greater the possibility that it can solve its own specific problem (wicked problem). For both objectives, an essential prerequisite is the understanding of the social dynamics in which both the former and the latter develop and mutually influence each other. This phase of strategic learning will be followed by the policy design proposition phase.

25. Facing social complexity and diversity: wicked problems and situational types

Identifying effective solutions to a structured problem presupposes the ability to define both the conceptual category of the problem itself and that of the scenario it develops within.

Rittel (1967) introduced the term "wicked problem" to define that class of social system problems which are ill-formulated, where the information is confusing, where there are many clients and decision makers with conflicting values, and where the ramifications in the whole system are thoroughly confusing.[204]

Later, Rittel and Webber (1973) remarked that, unlike problems in the natural sciences, which are definable and separable and may have solutions that are findable, "wicked" planning and policy problems are ill defined. They rely upon elusive political judgment for resolution.

The concept of *resolution* itself, however, has a proper and well-defined meaning, since social problems are never solved (in other words, they have no definitive *solutions*). At best, they can only be *re*-solved, over and over again.

Wicked problems include nearly all public policy issues, whether the question concerns the location of a freeway, the adjustment of a tax rate, the modification of school curricula, or the confrontation of crime[205]. Consistent with McConnell (2016), Rittel and Webber (1973) specified that some policy problems were not amenable to being put into clearly defined

204 As reported in West Churchman, C., "*Free for All",* in Management Science, 1967, 14(4):B-141-B-146.

205 Rittel, H.W.J - Webber, M. M., *"Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning",* in Policy Sciences 4 (1973), 155-169. The Authors stress the difference between "wicked" problems and "tame" problems, as solving an equation; or the task of an organic chemist in analyzing the structure of some unknown compound; or that of the chess player attempting to accomplish checkmate in five moves. For each of these problems, the mission is clear. It is clear, in turn, whether or not the problems have been solved.

boxes labelled ‘problem,’ ‘desired outcome,’ ‘optimal solution,’ and so on. Taking care not to attribute a meaning of ethical deplorability, the coined term ‘wicked problems’ (as opposed to those which are ‘tame’) embraces at least ten characteristics:

1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem, i.e., no definitive understanding of the problem and the solution based on all relevant evidence and questioning.

2. There is no stopping rule, i.e., there is no end point where the solution is found and the problem comes to an end (as in a chess game).

3. Solutions to wicked problems are ‘good or bad’ rather than ‘true or false,’ i.e., there are different value judgments and no party has the power to determine correctness.

4. There is no immediate and ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem, i.e., the full consequences of an attempt at a solution cannot be known.

5. Every potential solution is a ‘one-shot’ operation, i.e., it leaves traces which cannot be undone.

6. Wicked problems do not have innumerable or exhaustive potential solutions, i.e., there are no criteria allowing us to prove that no more solutions are possible.

7. Every wicked problem is essentially unique, i.e., there are no classes of problems without variation in distinguishing properties.

8. Every wicked problem is a symptom of another problem, i.e., there is no definitive level at which a problem is settled.

9. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways, i.e., through rich modes of reasoning as compared to those in scientific discourse. This means that every associated phenomenon can have multiple explanations

10. The planner has no right to be wrong, i.e., policy planners can be held to account and blamed for the consequences of their reasoning[206].

Bianchi (2016) argued that such problems cannot be clustered within single organizational boundaries because they possess dynamic and complex characteristics involving multilevel, multi-actor, and multi-sectoral challenges. Problems such as unemployment, poverty, crime, homelessness, and low social cohesion primarily affect quality of life in society. Lack of aptitude by stakeholders to deal with these problems often undermines the performance of single organizations in a local area, which further reduces quality of life.

206 MC CONNELL, A., “*Reappraising Wicked Problems: Wicked Policy vs. Simple Politics*”, Paper Presented at Political Studies Association (PSA) 66th Annual International Conference 21-23 March 2016, Brighton.

For such reasons, the author recognizes the role of public agencies in leading multi-actor collaborations aimed at building consensus among local area stakeholders on policies that may generate sustainable public value as a prerequisite to tackle ‘wicked’ social problems. This is mainly related to urban contexts where inner-city areas may show serious decay, implying escalating social fragmentation and marginalization, lack of infrastructure and public services, declining job opportunities, increasing crime rates and an eroding feeling of safety, declining attractiveness of the area, rising unemployment rates, and further social problems.[207]

On the other hand, Head and Alford (2008) proposed that the key features or parameters of ‘wickedness’ emerging from the literature can be distilled and grouped into two key dimensions: *complexity* and *diversity*. *Complexity* refers to the difficulties in acquiring knowledge about the wicked problem and related potential solutions. These difficulties arise from a patchy knowledge base, complex inter-dependencies of processes and structures, uncertainties arising from the contingent and dynamic nature of social issues and processes, and the incommensurability of many of the risks and potential trade-offs. This is consistent with Heifetz (1994), who proposed three different classifications of problem situations confronting managers:

Situational Types

Situation	***Problem Definition***	***Solution***	***Locus of Responsibility***	***Kind of Work***
Type 1	Clear	Clear	Manager/expert	Technical
Type 2	Clear	Requires learning	Manager/expert and stakeholders	Technical and Adaptive
Type 3	Requires learning	Requires learning	Stakeholders > experts	Adaptive

(adapted from Head - Alford, 2008 - Heifetz, 1994: 76)

207 BIANCHI C., *Dynamic Performance Management*, Springer, 2016, p. 61. See also, among the others, BIANCHI, C., - BERECIARTUA, P. - VIGNIERI, V. - COHEN, A., *“Enhancing Urban Brownfield Regeneration to Pursue Sustainable Community Outcomes through Dynamic Performance Governance”*, International Journal of Public Administration, 2019; ALFORD, J. (2009). *Engaging Public Sector Clients: From Service-Delivery to Co-Production*. Palgrave McMillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK; OSBORNE, S.P. - RADNOR, Z., & STROKOSCH, K. (2016). *Co-Production and the Co-Creation of Value in Public Services: A suitable case for treatment?.* Public Management Review, 18(5), 639-653; ALFORD, J., AND YATES, S. (2014). *Mapping public value processes*. International Journal of Public Sector Management, 27(4), 334–352.

- Type 1 situations are those where both the definition of the problem and the likely solution are clear to the decision maker (e.g., the manager or policy expert). These situations require technical work on the part of decision makers and those subject to their decisions.
- Type 2 situations are those where the definition of the problem is clear but the solution is not—typically because the relevant cause-and-effect relationships are hard to discern—and therefore learning is required by both the public sector managers and the stakeholders they lead.
- In Type 3 situations, both the problem definition and the solution are unclear, and more extensive learning is required by all concerned.

Type 1 situations constitute 'tame' problems, whereas Type 3 situations and many Type 2 situations, according to Heifetz, should be considered as 'wicked' problems.[208]

Diversity refers to the number and variety of actors involved. Head and Alford (2008) explain how, from the point of view of the decision maker, the diversity of either actors or institutional locations poses broadly similar kinds of difficulties. Both entail diverse sets of knowledge relevant to the issues which need to be shared in order to identify/define problems and consider appropriate responses to them. Similarly, they may have divergent interests or values which prompt them to be in conflict about the nature of the problem and how to deal with it. They all have expectations of the manager/decision maker, and they all constitute or mobilise potential sources of information, permission, or resources.

Unlike 'tame' problems, which have low levels of complexity and diversity, the more complex and diverse the situation, the more wicked is the problem. That said, tame and wicked problems are the extremes of a range which, according to the time-by-time situational type and taking into account the inferences of complexity and diversity, is affected by factors such as:

- Scientific uncertainty: fragmentation and gaps in reliable knowledge about problems.
- Institutional complexity: governance fragmentation and interconnectedness.
- Social pluralism: diverging interests and values of stakeholders.[209]

208 HEIFETZ, R.A. *Leadership without Easy Answers*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University, Cambridge, 1994

209 HEAD, B. & ALFORD, J., "*Wicked Problems: The Implications for Public Management",* Panel on Public Management in Practice International Research Society for Public Management 12th Annual Conference 26-28 March, 2008, Brisbane. HEAD, B. & ALFORD, J., (2015), *Wicked Problems Implications for Public Policy and Management,* Administration & Society, 47(6), 711-739.

In this regard, according to Bianchi's outlook (2016), through the governance of policy networks, a public-sector institution may involve other community stakeholders in carrying out a strategic learning process aimed at framing public value, its drivers, and the strategic resources needed to affect community outcomes. This learning process supports the design of "robust" policies underlying an outcome-based view and may entail a co-design, co-production, and co-assessment of policies by different stakeholders with the goal of pursuing community resilience.

It should actually be noted that the cooperative governance model goes beyond a mere aggregation of companies or other single both public and private actors located in the area. Therefore, collaborative governance is a mode of "governance" where both public and private stakeholders structure rules and processes which support them in accomplishing a task that is diffcult or impossible to achieve without collaborating. According to Cepiku (2016) The emerging setting configures a "hybrid model" where a collective decision making aims to address problems which cannot be solved by a single organization[210]

26. Negative reputation affecting the place or nation brand as a wicked problem

According to such perspective, the reputation gap of a local or regional area, which leads to marginalization of that area from an international viewpoint, can be considered a wicked problem. Actually, Brønn and Buhmann (2018), though writing from a corporate perspective, widely recognized the complexity of reputation, defining it as a judgment held by a diversity of stakeholders, all of whom have diverse and often conflicting views and priorities, as well as something that in the long run will never be perfect, and it can be influenced positively or negatively at any time by both internal and external actors. Hence, according to the authors, the notion of reputation and reputation management "*bears many of the characteristics of the class of problems called wicked problems*."[211]

It could actually be said that reputation is supposed to be a wicked question, since Brønn and Buhmann's research has uncovered anywhere from 16 to 50 different definitions of

210 CEPIKU, D., *Collaborative governance*, in T. R. Klassen, D. Cepiku, & T. J. Lah (Eds.), The Routledge handbook of global public policy and administration. London, UK: Routledge

211 BRØNN P. S.; BUHMANN, A. *Building and Managing Reputation: Current Debates and Future Directions*. In SASSON, A. (edited by): *Research-Based Answers to Contemporary Uncertainties of Management*, Oslo, 2018, pp. 59–72.

the term “reputation,” besides the fact that the various academic disciplines differ in their views of what reputation is (for economists, reputation is the sum of those characteristics or signals that describe a firm’s possible behaviours in special situations, while accounting sees reputation as one of several types of intangible asset that are difficult to measure but that create long-term value).[212] Furthermore, when it refers to the nation or place brand, the reputation defect is in itself destined to operate within an indefinite horizon in space.

As shown in Section I, Sicily’s reputation gap, although afflicting only one well-defined local/regional area and a specific community, develops globally: sometimes, it has no effective link with the Sicilian reality, but it is an autonomous creation of external actors, as in the reported cases of media narratives about Sicily as a backward and a high-crime place.

In other words, some stereotypes have increasingly become so strong and deeply rooted over the decades, they have assumed a sort of life of their own, completely detached from any connection with reality—a sort of *avatar* with global spread. To define this *avatar*, Schneider and Schneider (2005) coined the periphrasis “*Myth of Sicily*”, and to many people, both insiders and outsiders, this myth is a sufficient explanation of the origin of the mafia and its persistence, which emerged full-force in the wake of Italian Unification in 1860, as the fledgling nation-state prepared to confront banditry and disorder in its newly acquired southern and island provinces.

According to the myth, which likens Sicilian peasants to the “savages” of North America who were incapable of civilization unless guided by outsiders, this sinister image parallels commonplace descriptions of Sicily as a paradise inhabited by “devils” where neither customs nor laws can be civil.

Furthermore, a complementary stereotype, the authors noted, depicts Sicilians as unable to solve problems—including organized crime—through collective social action, as they supposedly lack civil consensus, public faith, and a “spirit of association” and are prey to inept and arbitrary justice, factionalism, and corruption.[213]

This *avatar*, then, has been exponentially propagated through both word of mouth abroad and various improper embodiments more or less consciously adopted by the Sicilians themselves.[214]

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212 BRØNN P. S.; BUHMANN, A. , *op. cit.*, 2018.

213 SCHNEIDER, J. - SCHNEIDER, P., *Mafia, Antimafia, and the Plural Cultures of Sicily,* in Current Anthropology, Vol. 46, No. 4 (August/October 2005), pp. 501-520.

214 Again, Schneider & Schneider (2005) widely report how, in the 1880s and ’90s, Europe’s first “scientific” criminologists, led by Cesare Lombroso (see below, section I), applied social Darwinist theory to Italy and its regions, which, they lamented, compared unfavorably to Britain, lacking capitalist industries and colonies.

That said, Castelli *et alii* (2001) noted that research on the social function of stereotypes recognizes that even a disapproved source may exert, under certain circumstances, an influence on target attitudes. In fact, a source that makes use of stereotypes in communication creates a sense of shared norms and knowledge. Once stereotypes become the common frame of reference for the two subjects of a persuasive communication, the influence of the source will continue as long as he or she does not violate stereotype expectancies. Such effects take place on an implicit level, while at the same time judgments of the source continue to be negative or disapproving on an explicit level.[215]

For this reason, Scaffidi Abbate *et alii* (2004) pointed out how the interest in persuasive methods and the possibility of adopting large-scale influential techniques have always gone hand in hand with two main aims: the commercial aim of increasing sales and the political aim of creating consensus. As the main purpose of advertising is to put forth powerfully persuasive messages, the reliance on stereotypes is likely to be a concrete and successful advertising strategy.[216]

The stereotype representation, therefore, also achieves an economic interest, especially for the media and information industry. In this sense, therefore, the field of action is not entirely neutral, and a potential clash of opposing interests should be taken into account.

Attributing the gap to a compromised biology, they described southern Italians and Sicilians as carrying inferior Mediterranean-type genes, a threat to the progressive northern Italians' Alpine, Aryan, or Celtic endowment. Most perniciously, the new criminologists sought to prove that Calabrian and Sicilian men were predisposed to crime, using the variable "*congenital Latin decadence*" to account for the southern crime rate. Meanwhile, Sicilian intellectuals transformed these negative images into positive attributes without overturning their premise. For example, the turn-of-the-century physician and ethnologist Giuseppe Pitre´ represented the mafia to northern Italians as an "*honored society." The word "mafia," he said, referred to "beauty, grace, perfection, and excellence of its kind . . . the idea of . . . superiority and skill"*. The mafioso, Pitre´ added, "*is simply a courageous and skillful man who does not bear a fly on his nose . . . [who] wants to be respected. . . . If he is offended, he does not rely on the Law . . . for to obtain one's rights in this way is considered shameful.*" The Authors conclude that for Pitre´ no less than Lombroso the mafia was an enduring manifestation of a Sicilian "*way of being.*" . See SCHNEIDER, J. - SCHNEIDER, P., op. cit., 2005.

215 CASTELLI, L., VANZETTO, K., SHERMAN, S. J., & ARCURI, L. "*The explicit and implicit perception of in-group members who use stereotypes: Blatant rejection but subtle conformity",* Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 37,4 19-426 (quoted in SCAFFIDI ABBATE, C. - BOCA, S. - BOCCHIARO, P., "*Stereotypes in Persuasive Communication: Influence Exerted by a Disapproved Source",* in Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 2004, 34, 6, pp. 1191 -1207).

216 SCAFFIDI ABBATE, C. - BOCA, S. - BOCCHIARO, P., "*Stereotypes in Persuasive Communication: Influence Exerted by a Disapproved Source",* in Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 2004, 34, 6, pp. 1191 -1207.

27. The post-globalized scenario and the role of wicked problems over the global competitiveness

The problem of reputation of a local area develops within a scenario that transcends the boundaries of the area itself. As Bianchi and Tomaselli (2013) noted, in today's globalized world, sharply characterized by decentralization and devolution, urban and regional areas are emerging as key players in economic and social life. Their competitiveness, liveability, and sustainable development are cornerstones to the pursuit of quality of life, economic development, and social wellness.

The concept of competitiveness, when applied to a territory, goes beyond a mere aggregation of the competitiveness of companies or other single organizations located in the area. In fact, a region itself can be considered an independent economic agent, competing on a global scale with its own capability to attract and retain strategic resources to further improve its competitiveness and preserve or increase quality of life and social wellness. The authors further discussed how interregional competition has been defined as "*a process that occurs among territorial units aiming to increase the welfare of the people living in the cities or regions by promoting the development of regional and local economy, a development that certain groups try to influence explicitly or often implicitly through local policies by competing and rivalizing with other territorial units*".

More specifically, interregional competition implies the following:

- The aim to improve the welfare of the population living in the region, which involves the pursuit of objectives related to, for instance, the income produced and distributed in the territory or to the employment rates.
- A set of different public-private players (whose interests may compete with one another), where the city (or county) government's coordination plays an essential role in the network.
- An independent position of local players in designing and implementing the territory's competition strategy.
- A shared vision of how the territory will pursue local economic and social development.
- A learning process through which territorial actors are able to dynamically adapt their policies and actions to constant changes.

Likewise, enterprises, cities, and territories may compete to attract and retain a number of strategic resources such as mobile investment, public funds, infrastructures, companies, population, human capital, tourism, arts, and global events.

In pursuing territorial competitiveness, mutually reinforcing relationships between such resources are also fostered by local decision makers; for instance, human capital, companies, infrastructures, knowledge networks (e.g., universities, research centres) and the transparency of local public sector authorization processes may further attract new companies, projects, and skills.[217]

The authors' findings correspond with what in practice has happened since the early 1990s with the first *global cities* (New York City, London, Tokyo), which are considered both denationalized platforms for global capital and, as key multicultural sites, intrinsically devoted to attracting and welcoming people from all over the world.[218] Over the decades, this phenomenon has been further developing on a global scale through city diplomacy activities in their utilitarian approach.

Briefly recalling here what has already been illustrated in Section II, cities started to cross the borders of their national states, as well as overriding their institutions (primarily, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), to become an integral part of the new global scenario[219].
At the same time, non-state territorial actors were not only players, but also receptors of globalization: small, medium and big regions, federated states and cities were seeing their "internationality" increased by growing migratory flows, or new ways of mutual interconnection thanks to technological progress, or because these local actors were being directly or indirectly influenced by monetary and fiscal policies, or by territorial development and planning projects promoted by supranational institutions (under the innovative concept of "sustainable development"), or even because ever increasing quantities of goods from abroad were pouring into their territories, etc.[220]

In urban sociology, in those years, a definition that would be widely successful throughout the 21st century (or even better, a conceptual category that saw the light in the

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217 BIANCHI, C. & TOMASELLI, S., "*Using a Dynamic Performance Management approach to reinforce the benefits of territorial strategic planning*", Paper presented at the 2013 APPAM Fall Research Conference, November 7-9, Washington DC (USA). The document can be consulted here. See also BIANCHI, C. & TOMASELLI, S., *"A dynamic performance management approach to support local strategic planning"*, in International Review of Public Administration 20(4):370-385 · October 2015.

218 SASSEN, S. & LIND, RS, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton University Press, 1991.

219 SASSEN, S.,*"Local actors in global politics"*, in *Current Sociology*, Vol. 52, No. 4, Monograph 2, 2004, p. 649 et seq.

220 BLANK, Y., op. cit., pp. 886 et seq.

early 90s, on the basis of the experience of New York City, London and Tokyo) was increasingly consolidating: the *Global City* idea.

Global cities have long been considered both a kind of denationalized platform for global capital, and multicultural key-sites intrinsically devoted to welcoming peoples and individuals from all over the world[221].

Actually, the idea of the Global City as a global financial market centre is rooted in even older scenarios. Acuto and Curtis (2018) remarked how, following the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and its replacement with a markedly neo-liberal economic system (with a clear reference to the *Washington Consensus* system), cities have become the main strategic sites for the new economic global governance.

The gap opened by the diminished state intervention in the economy, in fact, has been gradually bridged by private companies operating from the central financial districts of cities such as New York or London. These "financial" cities, in turn, were exponentially fostering both their role as transnational poles of economic decision-making and their worldwide connections[222].

In other respects, mainly in the United States, the growing interest in attracting new potential residents (mainly middle-class professionals), who were expected to trigger virtuous urban regeneration processes for the city down-towns, was leading the cities' urban fabric towards a radical reshaping, pursuing an *ante litteram* gentrification model.

There is a clear loop: the more attraction for the establishment of economic and financial global companies into the cities, the more immigration of professionals needing high quality houses and services. Moreover, a high income professional class was expected to be willing to invest in the regeneration of pre-existing housing.

However more professionals in the economic-financial sectors also meant more than a proportional increase, again, in global connections, towards both other professionals and other companies operating in financial markets. Thanks to this massive and overqualified immigration process, therefore, the city as a whole progressively implemented its worldwide network of interconnections, thus consecrating its global essence.

221 SASSEN, S. & LIND, RS, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton University Press, 1991; BAUMANN, Z., "*On Glocalization: or Globalization for some, Localization for some Others*", on *Thesis Eleven 54*, no. 1, 1998, pp. 37 and seq.

222 ACUTO, M., & CURTIS, S., "*The Foreign Policy of Cities*", in RUSI Journal Vol. 163, No. 6, December 2018.

Today it is more usual to talk about *Superstar Cities* than about *Global Cities*: in other words, the focus has shifted from the financial weight that a City gains in the global arena ("weight" which is however a benchmark linked to external factors to the City as such, first of all the trend of the financial markets) to a kind of specific *gravity* of the City as a whole. This substance could be defined as a sort of *geist* immanent in some cities rather than in others.

The supremacy, or directorate, of a few strong cities (i.e. cities with a powerful *brand*) could lead the whole system towards a serious imbalance, like a sort of urban version of the saying *"the winner takes it all"*. The most sought after cities will be able to offer more opportunities, in turn attracting more talent and generating an even greater charm in a snowball effect, thus condemning the weaker local governments towards a downward trajectory[223.]

It has been argued, with good reason, that this polarization is leading to a *"GAFA"* phenomenon[224]translated into urban areas, quite similar to what happens for an oligopoly in the business world: in this case, a (very) small number of companies that dominates the market is not beneficial for consumers, since they are forced to opt for good services almost exclusively following the oligopoly's offer rather than the market.

Bianchi and Tomaselli's (2013) findings, moreover, fully match the issues related to the identity, and therefore the brand, of a local area, which in this case is identified as its city variant (but applying criteria that can be considered common to any other type of local or regional area). Shirvani Dastgerdi and De Luca (2019) remarked how cities and megacities are faced with the impacts of globalization and are confronted by reforms in their economic, cultural, and social mosaics. Rapid growth in competition among cities is one of the consequences of globalization which is seen at different levels and in various activities.

Given the free movement of capital and people in the "age of cities", it is essential for the sake of sustainability that the city maintain residents' satisfaction with their city. In the attempt to respond to the demands of competition and attract specified target groups, there has been an increasing interest in city branding, and as a component of a broader recognition framework, cities can benefit from implementing coherent strategies concerning the management of their resources and reputation.

In conclusion, in a world where cities aggressively compete to increase investment by public and private sectors, reputation is one of the key success factors. A city's reputation,

223 FLORIDA, R., *The Rise of the Creative Class - Revisited: Revised and Expanded*, Hachette UK, 2014.
224 As known, this is an acronym defining the 4 Big Four of the tech sector: Google-Amazon-Facebook-Apple.

then, is both a lens through which information is observed and a decision criterion.[225] These findings can also be widely adapted (or even directly applied) to local areas and local governments apart from cities.

28. From a local area to the *global arena*: the shift from wicked to super-wicked problems

The shift of local governments from their "domestic" dimension as a mere parts of nation-states to a broader global relevance (or, more correctly, a translocal dimension) as explained in Section II of this study on the one hand involves the exponential expansion of the stakeholders' roles and on the other implies a much more complex scenario than what characterizes "traditional" wicked problems.

Migration flows, climate change, macro-risks to citizens' safety (from drug trafficking to terrorist attacks), and other issues are phenomena that develop on a global scale and certainly do not originate in the territory of a particular local area. Nonetheless, they can directly affect any local area at any time. Therefore, local policy makers, although their competence and jurisdiction may appear formally limited to quite a small area, could nevertheless face global wicked problems.

With regard to this last category, which is the direct result of the globalized world, Levin *et alii* (2012) expanded Rittel and Webber's conceptualization of 'wicked problems,' which lack simplistic or straightforward planning responses, by introducing the term "super-wicked" to characterize a new class of global environmental problems.

Super-wicked problems, according to the authors, comprise four key features:

a) Time is running out.

The time dimension means that the problem will, at some point, be too acute, have had too much impact, or be too far advanced to stop or reverse. This thought is developed by the authors with particular regard to the issue of climate change (which has direct effects on public health whether it is considered a wicked or super-wicked problem). The pattern, in this

225 SHIRVANI DASTGERDI, A., DE LUCA, G. *"Strengthening the city's reputation in the age of cities: an insight in the city branding theory"*. City Territ Archit 6, 2 (2019).

case, indicates that significant impacts will occur. With each passing year, they become more acute, and if we do not act soon, the risk of harm to human communities and ecosystems, as well as non-linear change and catastrophic events, will increase.

It is important to recall how the development of appropriate strategies to counteract and/or contain climate change is one of the main aims of local governments' fields of action, as described in Section II of this study. This action, as widely mentioned, has become necessary both in response to and as a consequence of the inaction or insufficient action of the international system (i.e., the traditional system led by nation-states).

As for the case study considered for the purpose of this thesis, we can also point out how the time factor has had a decisive influence due to the absence of any contrast and/or containment strategy to address the crystallization of Sicily's international reputation gap, which in some cases has been inexorably transformed from bias into apodictic certainty (recall the binomial Sicily/mafia illustration in the first section).

Eventually, the argument that "time is running out" could lead to the structural transformation of a super-wicked problem (connoted by a dynamic dimension) into a definitive alteration of the state of things and, therefore, into irreversible damage (connoted by a static nature).

Therefore, according to the authors' findings, those wishing to address super-wicked problems will not have the luxury of 'coming back' to the political system for a retry, thus exacerbating the 'one-shot' path noted by Rittel and Weber.

b) Those seeking to end the problem are also causing it.

Although the authors in the first instance highlight the specific issue of climate change, the general concept of the identity relative to the damaged and the damaging subject is clearly stated. It can therefore be said that a certain active contribution to the global problem comes from those who are suffering from it.

This pattern can develop either because of the fact that the members of a community themselves make use of goods or services that derive from the super-wicked problem (e.g., the wicked problem of prostitution on urban roads, which presupposes that there are customers of such "service" as an effect of the global super-wicked problem of human trafficking) or because they passively accept the negative effects of a super-wicked problem due to the lack of a collective perception (given that the super-wicked problem impacts the community at large and not the individual, the problem is always someone else's).

c) The central authority needed to address them is weak or non-existent.

By definition, a global super-wicked problem is supposed to be tackled by a supranational organization since its latitude crosses the boundaries of each single national authority's jurisdiction (as well as, or even more so, of each local area).

In this regard, Levin *et alii* (2012) again argue that the lack of centralized governance has repercussions at multiple levels in the case of climate change since responses require coordination not just among states but also across different economic sectors and policy subsystems at multiple political levels.

Moreover, we remarked in Section II how the system of international organizations has been enveloped over the previous decades in a growing situation of institutional paralysis (or gridlock, according to Hale *et alii*, 2013) depicted as the result of the progressive gap between the need to seek truly global and universal solutions and the international organizations' effective ability to satisfy this need.

Furthermore, Hale *et alii* (2013), who point out the empirical evidence of decline in the overall normative production of international law agreements between 1990 and 2010, premise that in the overall evolution of international relations, since the second post-war period the intergovernmental cooperative model has proved to be a winning one, registering successes in terms of stability of peace and economic growth.

The growth of international cooperation, however, has at the same time had the effect of creating strong institutional interdependence (in other terms, a path dependency), which at a certain moment turned itself into a sort of problem requiring adequate solutions.

In other words, as the authors assume, the greater this mutual institutional interdependence becomes, the greater will be the need for new and effective international institutions to cope with it (think, for example, of economic and financial global interdependencies). In turn, as the number, effectiveness, and "pervasiveness" of international institutions grow, the institutional interdependence also grows, thus triggering a vicious cycle that will lead to a situation of almost total stalemate.[226]

226 HALE, T .; HELD, D .; YOUNG, K., "*Gridlock: Why Global Cooperation is Failing When We Need It Most",* Cambridge, Polity Press, 2013.

The greater flexibility guaranteed by the coordinated action of local governments at the global level, therefore, also considers their greater care for local interests deriving from the principles of proximity and representativeness, representing an effective response to the lack of supranational governance.[227]

d) Policies discount the future irrationally.

Super-wicked problems generate a situation in which the public and decision makers, even in the face of overwhelming evidence of the risks of significant or even catastrophic impacts from inaction, make decisions that disregard this information and reflect very short time horizons.

The authors note that behavioural economists, though they focus on the individual level, have long focused on "time-inconsistent" preferences by which individuals apply a declining social discount rate to the long-term future in a manner that gives greater weight to consumption now than what the economic tool of a constant discount rate suggests is "rational." From an institutional standpoint, super-wicked problems, then, are confounded by the tendency of political institutions to make decisions that give greater weight to society's immediate policy interests and delay required behavioural changes.

In conclusion, according to Levin *et alii* (2012), these features would hence create a tragedy because governance institutions and the policies they generate (or fail to generate) largely respond to short-term time horizons even when the catastrophic implications of doing so are far greater than any real or perceived benefits of inaction. It is therefore necessary to understand how "path-dependent" policy interventions might be generated to affect future policy requirements and, ultimately, behaviour, since a new epistemological orientation—applied forward reasoning—can illustrate both the policy choices that "constrain our future selves" and generate new policy tools that set in motion these choices, consistent with long-term collective and individual interests.

The aim, then, should be to counteract the tendency of political institutions, reinforced by the *individual* tendencies of consumers and voters, to make decisions that give greater

227 The assumption also seems to be confirmed by Levin *et alii* (2012), who, again in the matter of climate change, reported the example of the EU-wide system and sub-regional systems set up by US states and Canadian provinces. In this sense, we refer to the experience of *America's Pledge* and the *We Are Still In* declaration, as described in the Section II.

weight to immediate interests and delay required behavioural changes, even when doing so is clearly contrary to long-term interests.

In a bottom-up path, primary attention should be reserved for founding a new collective consciousness rather than countering individual irrational behaviours (through which, in the final analysis, the paths of dependence are substantiated). More attention focused on coalition building on the one hand, and norms and values on the other hand, would then be desirable for unleashing path-dependent trajectories capable of ameliorating super-wicked problems.[228]

Rather than imagining super-wicked problems as a category opposed to that of "simple" wicked problems, it should be considered that the former represent the global root, or the logical presupposition, of many of the wicked problems showing their effects over a local area.

One of the main characteristics to be valued for the purpose of this study is the key role of the time factor (by which certain problems are destined to reach a point of no return), as well as the civil community role, which is called to develop a collective sense that is assumed to underly any political action undertaken at the institutional level.

29. Policy-related “wicked” problems and dynamic complexity: from the organizational to the inter-institutional perspective

Which actors should tackle wicked and super-wicked problems, and how? Bianchi *et alii* (2017) remark that the public governance literature illustrates how organizations from the public, private, and non-profit sectors and communities need to collaborate to deal with social “wicked” problems caused by the dynamic complexity characterising today’s societies. The authors assume that “wicked” problems, as complex policy problems exhibiting high risk and uncertainty and a high interdependency among the causal factors, characterise most of governmental planning, particularly where social issues are concerned; they cannot be tackled by any single organization and will typically involve multiple administrative levels and responsibilities.

This dynamic complexity can be due to a variety of factors, the most important being: multiple policy/decision makers who put different weightings on policy outcomes, requiring

228 LEVIN, K. - CASHORE, B., - BERNSTEIN, S. - AULD, G., *“Overcoming the tragedy of super wicked problems: constraining our future selves to ameliorate global climate change”,* in Policy Sci (2012) 45:123–152

policy trade-offs in time and space; multiple service pathways affecting outcomes; decision levels that are sequentially connected, introducing rigidities into the system; time lapses between stakeholder actions and the system's outcomes; significant non-linear relationships between causes and effects; and the unpredictability and uncontrollability of external factors (as perceived by policy makers) that may affect the system's outcomes. These problems are usually embedded in major social issues affecting modern life, and their interpretation is not unambiguous, because it depends on the value perspectives adopted and these differ substantially between stakeholders. Therefore, simply gathering more information is not sufficient for understanding and resolving these issues. With wicked problems, there are different interpretations of what the problem is, and there are no definitive (i.e., true or false) solutions.

Public administration has always had difficulties in dealing with wicked problems, partly because many important results take significant time to appear, so that when dealing with wicked problems, policy makers are prone to tackling short-term symptoms rather than long-term causes. This often divorces the interventions of public sector organizations from the outcomes they seek to achieve and often results in sharp disconnections between different institutions and agencies given their different processes.

The use of a short-term perspective and a sectoral approach in the formulation and implementation of strategies therefore tends to lead to a static view of the system and to a lack of coordination between different public agencies and non-profit and private stakeholders.[229] According to Bianchi *et alii* (2019), the role of public agencies in leading multi-actor collaborations aimed at building consensus among local area stakeholders on policies that may generate sustainable public value is considered a prerequisite to tackling social "wicked" problems since by definition such problems cannot be clustered within single organizational boundaries because of their dynamic and complex characteristics involving multilevel, multi-actor, and multi-sectoral challenges.

Problems such as unemployment, poverty, crime, homelessness, and low social cohesion primarily affect quality of life in society. Lack of aptitude by stakeholders to deal with these problems often undermines the performance of single organizations in a local area,

229 BIANCHI, C., - BOIVARD, T., - LOEFFLER, E., *Applying a dynamic performance management framework to wicked issues: How co-production helps to transform young people's services in Surrey County Council, UK",* in Journal International Journal of Public Administration - Volume 40, 2017 - Issue 10, 833-846; see also BOVAIRD, T. (2007). *Beyond engagement and participation: User and community coproduction of public services*. Public Administration Review, 67(5), 846–860.

which further reduces quality of life. The described issues, according to Bianchi, are particularly evident in urban contexts where inner-city areas may show serious decay. Such a state often implies escalating social fragmentation and marginalization, lack of infrastructures and public services, declining job opportunities, increasing crime rates and an eroding feeling of safety, declining attractiveness of the area, rising unemployment rates, and further social problems. Through the governance of policy networks, a public-sector institution may involve other community stakeholders in carrying out a strategic learning process aimed at framing public value, its drivers, and the strategic resources needed to affect community outcomes.

This learning process supports the design of "robust" policies underlying an outcome-based view. This may entail a co-design, co-production, and co-assessment of policies by different stakeholders with the goal of pursuing community resilience and sustainable socio-economic development.[230]

Bianchi and Tomaselli (2015) have remarked that the efforts put forth by both researchers and practitioners in the last decades have been mainly focused on an organizational (i.e., institutional) sphere, with the intent to set performance standards that can be used as a basis to foster coordination among decision makers and the accountability of managers on achieved results.

Conversely, the governance of local areas requires a focus on a multi-organizational (i.e., inter-institutional) sphere, where performance measurement/management is expected to foster coordination among different players to pursue learning-oriented strategic planning. The authors stress that the culture and practice of local strategic planning has evolved since the 1960s through three main stages:

- A first generation of plans (structure plans) was mainly developed in the UK beginning in the '60–70s following a systemic—but static—approach. This approach has been used to provide a long-term guide for changes to land use, buildings, and public spaces.

- A second generation (city strategic plans), borrowed from the business sector, was based on the pioneering work of Arthur Andersen in 1982 in the city of San Francisco.

- A third generation (local strategic plans) emerged in the early '90s to foster the governance of towns and districts through the involvement of public and private stakeholders following a pluralistic and participative perspective.

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230 BIANCHI, C., - BERECIARTUA, P. - VIGNIERI, V. - COHEN, A., *"Enhancing Urban Brownfield Regeneration to Pursue Sustainable Community Outcomes through Dynamic Performance Governance"*, International Journal of Public Administration, 2019.

Local strategic planning, the authors conclude, is an ongoing activity whose purpose is to guide action. It aims to support an understanding of the driving forces of a geographic area's performance to foster consensus building among different stakeholders, whereas a single player (e.g., a municipal administration) takes a leading role in framing the dynamic complexity affecting performance in the strategic planning process.[231] It is defined, therefore, as the guiding function of the local government within a more complex multi-actor framework, and a further step represented by the delineation of the reference network.

According to Bianchi *et alii* (2019, 2020), by fostering policy networks, different stakeholders may collaborate to mutually outline and implement strategies that can generate public outcomes at the community rather than the agency level. Such outcomes would change the stock of shared strategic resources (e.g., pollution, civic mindedness, participation in civic life, potential job opportunities and employment rates, respect for the environment, human capital, social capital, crime rates) in an area. Improving these resources is not only a means to pursuing societal sustainable development, but it is also a precondition for pursuing resilience and sustainability at the agency level. In this perspective, both community and organizational performance are strongly linked with each other.

Through this view, planning and policy design are first about a local area such as a city neighbourhood (or a region, in our case), rather than the individual organizations located in it.

Moreover, the authors remark how the implementation of such an approach is difficult to achieve. In fact, it requires complex interactions between large numbers of actors. These interactions are not simple or spontaneous.

Even well-designed collaborative programs can result in failure. This is often due to the diversity of involved stakeholders and a lack of suitable models or methods to support leadership, consensus building, and planning and implementation in order to enhance a strategic learning process among involved actors, manage conflict, build trust, pursue a common shared view, and identify and evaluate outcomes.

Consequently, different steering and management strategies are required, since research has emphasized how in today's complex, plural, and fragmented governance settings, a single organization is able to manage only a subset of the strategic resources affecting the wider system outcomes.[232]

231 BIANCHI, C. - TOMASELLI, S., *"A dynamic performance management approach to support local strategic planning"*, in International Review of Public Administration 20(4):370-385 · October 2015.

232 BIANCHI, C., - LUNA-REYES, L.F. - RICH, E., *Enabling Collaborative Governance through Systems Modeling Methods: Public Policy Design and Implementation*, Springer, 2020 (introduction); BIANCHI, C., -

30. The ultra-national variations of the inter-institutional approach: the experiences of New York City, Tokyo, and London

The interinstitutional perspective is also applied in the practice of local governments' foreign relations, or *city diplomacy*. This is either in the form of an autonomous level higher than the local inter-institutional level (whereby several local actors in the world coordinate their respective inter-institutional activities in a global multilevel cooperation) or in the form of functionalization of the local inter-institutional level to the expansion of the local area on the global scenario.

In this sense, we can here recall some points of the three emblematic case studies described in Section II of New York City, London, and Tokyo to highlight some practical applications of these principles:

a) One of the most relevant peculiarities of the **New York City** diplomatic model lies in the close link the city government has long since fostered, directly, with the United Nations Organization, whose headquarters is based there.

A specific program, emblematically named "*The New Yorkness of the UN*"[233], is dedicated to intensify the mutual learning between the City and the Organization, as well as to strengthen the socio-cultural integration between the UN multinational staff and the *new yorkers*.

Among the several initiatives the program provides for (including but not limited to studies and reports dedicated to the economic impact that the presence of the UN exercises on the city), the campaign "*We are the City of the United Nations*" stands out.

Besides, in 2018 NYC was the first city in the world to submit to the United Nations a so-called *Voluntary Local Review* (VLR), that is an in-depth report on local progress in achieving its sustainable development goals. In occasion of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019, the city government also launched the *Voluntary Local Review Statement,* an initiative open to cities, local governments and regional governments around the

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BERECIARTUA, P. - VIGNIERI, V. - COHEN, A., *"Enhancing Urban Brownfield Regeneration to Pursue Sustainable Community Outcomes through Dynamic Performance Governance"*, International Journal of Public Administration, 2019.

233 Institutional website.

world, in which the signatories formally commit to reporting to the UN on their local progress for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals.

A non-profit organization is also operating, the *New York City Global Partners, Inc.*, established in 1962 by the Mayor's office for international affairs to connect NYC with other main cities in the world, with a particular focus on commercial relationships: one could say that while the Mayor's office deals with international relations in the proper sense (including, in fact, relations with the United Nations and other state-level actors), the latter mainly manages external and foreign relations with sub-state rank actors, both city-to-city and other non-state actors[234].

In addition to the *ad hoc* activities, the Mayor's office currently manages several fixed programs, including:

- Connecting local to global (CL2G): Through CL2G, the Office shares the solutions adopted in NYC to deal with local problems with the international community, as a starting point for reflection and contribution to the international commitment to tackle global issues, from climate change to disabilities, from immigration to food security.

- Global Vision / urban action: dedicated to pursuing sustainable development goals, in constant cooperation with other New York City agencies, diplomatic missions, the United Nations, and several cities around the world, as well as with academic institutions, civil societies, and other stakeholders interested in sustainable development.

- Global Partners Junior is a program that connects almost 1,000 young people in New York, aged between 9 and 13 years, with 2,000 peers from over 30 foreign cities, through an online platform, in order to promote research among students and brainstorming of solutions to bring about lasting changes in their communities and to perceive themselves as global citizens generating local impact.

The Office also manages the annual publication of "*Global NYC*", a detailed report on the New York City's international activities and general city diplomacy issues.

b) as for **Tokyo**, essential and strategic relevance is given by the Metropolitan Government to the research & development sector, as well as to other training activities related to the Tokyo's city diplomacy.

234 ACUTO, M., *City Diplomacy* in op. cit., London, 2016, p. 515.

In this regard, according to the partnership model between local government and university, a *Tokyo Human Resource Fund for City Diplomacy* was established by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government in 2015, to develop human resources expected to play a key role in the trans-local mutual exchanges and cooperation activities.

This fund mainly consists of grants and scholarships programs for doctoral and master's degree students at the Tokyo Metropolitan University. Benefits are provided for students coming from both Asian countries and cities twinned with Tokyo, whose studies are to define innovative solutions for the Tokyo residents' quality of life improvement. Furthermore, the Fund also promotes and supports research on the use of city diplomacy as a tool for the worldwide advancement of cities and local governments.

c) as for **London,** the main focus is on the public-private partnership model specifically adopted for the city's foreign relations.

The foreign relations area, entrusted to the Mayor, was largely outsourced in 2011 to the non-profit public-private partnership company *London & Partners*, funded by the *Mayor of London Office* itself, by European and national funds, as well as by other private stakeholders (Barclay's and others), and through private initiatives.

The mission of the Company is "*to support the Mayor's priorities by promoting London internationally as the best city in the world in which to invest, work, study and visit*", or, in other words, to influence people to choose London to develop their initiatives and activities.

This on the basis of several detailed multi-year action plans, each articulated with a *business plan* and a *general strategy plan*.

In the last strategy plan, relating to the period 2018-2021, a great deal of emphasis is given to the prospects for the international role of the city after Brexit, as well as to the strategies that London should adopt to counter any potential negative spill-over effects damaging the city's economy, also in terms of reputation damage[235].

Among the countermeasures to be undertaken in this regard, two main directions have been considered as crucial, namely:

- *balance of location*, aiming to influence the balance of location between London and other cities in the EU as businesses take decisions based upon the likely outcomes of Brexit negotiations;

235 London & Partners' Strategy 2018-2021, p. 11.

- *jobs and talent retaining,* to address employers' key requirement to retain and continue to attract the best talent to London.

The foreign policy model proposed by L&P is partly derived from a more general "*good growth*" model, defined by the Mayor of London as the balance between two opposing factors: on the one hand, international audiences are hugely valuable to London, creating economic growth and therefore opportunities for Londoners; on the other, too many visitors can impact Londoners in less positive ways, creating congestion and acting as barriers to opportunities or everyday enjoyment.

The *L&Ps'* recipe for London's foreign policy action, however, is supposed to be coordinated with the so-called *Seven key points* defined by the Mayor's Economic Development Strategy:

1. the advanced urban services sector, which is helping London to work more efficiently as a city;

2. the cultural and creative industries, which contribute to the quality of life and wellbeing of Londoners and give the city a global stage;

3. the financial and business services sector, which helps to underpin the workings of London's economy as well as the national and global economy;

4. the life sciences sector, which is helping to address the major healthcare challenges facing society;

5. the low carbon and environmental goods and services sector, which is supporting the transition to a low carbon economy;

6. the tech and digital sector, which is helping to drive innovation across the economy and provide platforms to entirely new industries, business models and services;

7. the tourism sector, which gives London an international profile, attracting people from across the world, and showcases London as a diverse and open city

31. Strengthening the inter-institutional and translocal perspectives: the *whole-of-government* approach and its links with the city diplomacy practices

In this context, Bianchi *et alii* (2019, 2020) suggest that innovative performance governance methods can become key to fostering the implementation of a *whole-of-*

government (WG) approach and supporting an inter-institutional perspective where policy coordination and collaborative governance enhances better community outcomes.

The whole-of-government approach, according to Christensen and Lægreid (2006a, 2006b), could be defined as an approach which denotes public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues. Approaches can be formal or informal, and they can focus on policy development, program management, and service delivery.[236]

This approach became particularly evident as a response to the *departmentalism* pursued by the New Public Management (NPM) approach, denoting a change in emphasis away from structural devolution, disaggregation, and single-purpose organizations. Adding to the issue of coordination, the problem of integration was a main concern behind these WG reform initiatives.[237]

The concept of *joined-up government* (JUG) was first introduced by the Tony Blair government in 1997, and a main aim was to get a better grip on the "wicked" issues straddling the boundaries of public sector organizations, administrative levels, and policy areas. JUG was presented as the antidote to "departmentalism" tunnel vision and "vertical silos," denoting the aspiration to achieve horizontal and vertical coordination in order to eliminate situations in which different policies might undermine one another, so as to make better use of scarce resources, create synergies by bringing together different stakeholders in a particular policy area, and to offer citizens seamless rather than fragmented access to services.[238]

That said, Christensen and Lægreid (2006a, 2006b) propose three different perspectives from which the whole-of-government approach can be evaluated:

236 The Authors refer this definition to the Australian Management Advisory Committee's *Connecting Government* report (2004).

237 More broadly, see OSBORNE, D. - GAEBLER, T. (1992). *Reinventing Government*. New York, NY: Penguin Press; OSBORNE, S. (2002). *Public management: a critical perspective*. London: Routlege; 2002; OSBORNE, S. (2006). *The New Public Governance?* Public Management Review, 8(3), 377-387. See also PAVAN, A., REGINATO, E., FADDA, I., (2014), *The implementation gap of NPM reforms in Italian local government. An empirical analysis*. Milan: Franco Angeli.TORFING, J., & ANSELL, C. (2017). *Strengthening political leadership and policy innovation through the expansion of collaborative forms of governance*. Public Management Review, 19(1), 37-54

238 See also BIANCHI, C. (2015). *Enhancing Joined-Up Government and Outcome-Based Performance Management through System Dynamics Modelling to Deal with Wicked Problems: the Case of Societal Ageing*. Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 32, 502-505. MORECROFT, J.D.W. (2015). *Strategic modelling and business dynamics: A feedback systems approach*. Cornwall, UK: Wiley.

a) Structural or instrumental perspective

The WG approach may generally be seen as conscious organizational design or reorganization. The perspective is based on the assumption that political and administrative leaders use WG as an instrument to get government organizations to work better together.

According to the *hierarchical version*, the political and administrative leadership is homogeneous and in agreement about the use of WG measures. One option is to adopt a rather aggressive top-down style in implementing WG initiatives, while another option is a strengthening or reassertion of the centre.

The *negotiation version*, instead, is based on the notion that the public apparatus is internally heterogeneous, with different units having different structures, roles, functions, and interests. There is also heterogeneity in relation to major stakeholders in the environment, including private actors. The WG approach will necessarily have negotiative features, whether inside the cabinet, between the ministries and departments involved in intersectoral task forces, programs, or projects, or in specialized agencies involved in collaborative service delivery.

b) Cultural-institutional perspective

This approach sees development of public organizations more as evolution than design, as every public organization eventually develops unique institutional or informal norms and values.

The importance of path dependency and historical trajectories and traditions is evident in public institutions. Balancing fragmentation and integration, individualization and common identity, and market pressure and cultural cohesion is a big challenge in public sector reforms. When public organizations are exposed to reform processes, the reforms proposed must, according to a cultural perspective, go through a cultural compatibility test.

Several features of the WG approach can be understood using a cultural perspective. A central message is that structure is not enough to fulfil the goals of whole-of-government initiatives. Cultural change is also necessary, and processes and attitudes need to be addressed.

Another cultural aspect is the increased setting of ethical standards.

c) Myth perspective

Reforms and their main concepts are mainly seen in terms of myths, symbols, and fashions. These reform concepts often imitate practices in the private sector and are “sold” by private consulting firms and international reform entrepreneurs primarily to increase the legitimacy of the political-administrative system and its leaders rather than to solve particular instrumental problems. "Window dressing" is important, as is pretending to act in a successful way. Viewed from this perspective, WG is primarily a buzzword and a countermyth to NPM.

Regarding this last aspect, it seems that we can affirm the presence of characteristics in many ways that are similar, if not entirely identical, to what was denounced by Anholt (2011) with reference to the exasperation of *nation branding* as a commercial deviation of the *nation brand*: through the former, a vast current of thought had begun to introduce the idea that branding was a concept detached from the essential characteristics of the product object of its action. In other words, the branding activity would have ended up prevailing over the product, perhaps by creating out of nothing features not expressed by the same. This is also the case with regard to nations.

For this reason, in 2010/11 Anholt deepened this theory, scaling down the inappropriate level of relevance given to the communicative aspect (namely, the branding activity), as this is intended as a way to create a brand from scratch: a single logo, a professional "look and feel" on stationery, business cards, corporate videos, communiqués, press releases, websites, and so forth, undoubtedly reinforce the impression of a well-organized, modern, self-respecting state with effective and efficient structures, processes, and mechanisms.[239]

The authors, in 2006, were still wondering whether WG would continue to be a strong reform movement or gradually fade away and be supplemented or replaced by new reform initiatives. In our opinion, the former is the case, given that the basic principles of WG have found one of their most relevant applications (not in declared form but in substance) in city diplomacy practices by which the "horizontal" vision of inter-institutional cooperation has taken on an ultra-national dimension. This refers both to the structural and the cultural-institutional perspective of WG.

It is also relevant to note that according to the authors, the whole-of-government approach has raised critical issues about public sector performance in the aftermath of NPM. One may ask to what extent integrative corrections are feasible given the character of certain forms of disaggregation such as commercialization, privatization, and outsourcing. Unless

239 CHRISTENSEN, T. - LÆGREID, P., *"The Whole-of-Government Approach – Regulation, Performance, and Public-Sector Reform",* Stein Rokkan Centre for Social Studies - Working Papers 6-2006; CHRISTENSEN, T. - LÆGREID, P., *"The Whole-of-Government Approach to Public Sector Reform"* in Public Administration Review, 67 (6), 2006: 1059–1066. POLLITT, C., - BOUCKAERT, G., (2000). *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

cross-cutting targets receive equal status as organization-specific targets, WG initiatives will have difficulty becoming a major tool.

The authors argue that this is a problem that would be evident in the US political administrative system. After 9/11, major coordinative efforts in a fragmented system were undertaken, such as the reorganization of homeland security and the military. Nearly everyone agrees that such coordinative efforts are necessary to fight terrorism, but such new administrative apparatuses are also said to be exceedingly complex and ineffective, not to mention the difficulties of getting the participating subordinate administrative units to cooperate. One critical question is the extent to which such recent efforts on integration differ from earlier integrative phases, such as the emphasis in the 1970s on superministries.

In this regard, we remarked in Section II that Acuto (2014) highlighted how cities (and we would include local governments in general) claim progressively greater spaces of competence and action in the field of public security, an area traditionally considered (wrongly, the author argues) to be an exclusive prerogative of the central apparatus of the state.[240] And there is no doubt that public security has traditionally been considered one of the strongholds of state sovereignty. Accordingly, there would be no space for actions in a transnational scenario for local governments and/or their law enforcement agencies.

In this last context, the peculiar organization of the urban security sector has been placed by the city administration of New York City under a global perspective. The New York Police Department (NYPD) manages risks from abroad (here we will examine terrorism specifically) in a wider scenario of effective transnational cooperation in the field of public security. It should be noted that NYC is considered as a sensitive target due to at least two risk factors: the first relates to attacks directed against the city, and the second relates to attacks directed against the headquarters of international actors and organizations located there, including the UN.

In the aftermath of the attack on the Twin Towers, the New York City administration embraced an ambitious path aimed at strengthening its urban security skills with the establishment of a dedicated intelligence office at the NYPD and by sending its officers to Israel for specific counterterrorism training courses. The counter-terrorism section of the New York Police Department (NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau) operates using a complex structure divided into seven sections. Furthermore, in a peculiar police cooperation scheme

240 ACUTO, M., *"How Can 'City Diplomacy' Influence Security?"*, In International relations and security network, Zurich, 2014, p. 2

(which is both translocal and transnational in nature), since 2003 the NYPD has conducted its own International Liaison Program by which metropolitan police liaison officers are permanently posted for intelligence purposes at the police offices of 14 other cities both within the United States and abroad, as well as at the General Secretariat of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and the European Police Office (Europol).

The "foreign" dimension of what might appear to be an ordinary metropolitan police department, and the consequent accreditation of NYPD officials at state police bodies and headquarters in other states or even at foreign interior ministries (e.g., Qatar, Santo Domingo), have their own undoubted relevance. But it is the NYPD’s direct cooperation with OIPC-Interpol, in our opinion, where the real core of the matter must be intercepted.

This model of cooperation (which generally takes the form of an informal *memorandum of understanding*) is also known to other local law enforcement agencies. In 2004, the Metropolitan Police Service in London was the first law enforcement agency in Europe to connect to I-24/7, the global high-security police communications service that allows access to Interpol's database (i.e., the Interpol’s vital ganglia). It should also be noted that all the aforementioned forms of direct horizontal cooperation between city agencies (e.g., NYPD) and international organizations (e.g., INTERPOL), agencies of international region-based organizations (e.g., EUROPOL for the European Union), or ministerial or police bodies of other foreign states involve one of the problem areas traditionally ascribable to the category of super-wicked problems, that of transnational terrorism.

It can be concluded, then, that local governments’ foreign relations sectors can be a crucial driving force for the development of WG, and that the latter is the implicit basis of many of the models and practical experiences of city diplomacy.

32. Tracking local and global community outcomes through an outside-in view: a way to tackle super-wicked problems at a local level the through translocal networks

Resuming the path traced by Bianchi *et alii* (2019, 2020), a prerequisite to implement the collaborative governance of policy networks is an accountability system that effectively tracks inputs, processes, and outcomes. To affect community outcomes, as we will see in the following paragraphs, performance governance as a performance management mode is relevant.

In this regard, the authors preliminarily distinguish between:

A) Inside-out view

Traditional approaches to outcome-based performance management that are rooted in an organizational perspective can be defined as an *inside-out* view. Through such a view, policies are outlined through the “lenses” of each organization rather than the local area. Such agency outputs may indirectly affect community outcomes. In fact, services delivered to households may influence citizen satisfaction; e.g., larger public green areas or cleaner public roads may improve local area attractiveness.

Though an *inside-out* perspective has the advantage of focusing on the institutional setting where policies are actually implemented, it may not be that effective at addressing social “wicked” problems.[241] We believe this assumption to be further supported where it relates to super-wicked problems, which by definition exclude the notion that the resolution (Rittel & Webber, 1973) to such problems can remain entrusted to the care of a single institution or to a group of institutional actors, especially if the latter bear only local competence. For example, we can recall the previously mentioned example of the “wicked problem” of prostitution on urban roads as an effect of the global super-wicked problem of human trafficking and/or migration flows—a supranational concern whose origins, more often than not, have roots in realities that are geographically distant from those in which the final effects occur (and are perceived).

B) Outside-in view

Bianchi *et alii* (2019, 2020) observe that when such problems threaten community-level sustainable development, organizational performance can be strongly affected by the ability of different stakeholders to outline collaborative policies that generate shared strategic resources at the community level. This is what one may define as an *outside-in* perspective through which policy design is first about a local area rather than individual organizations. The role of each agency should be to focus—as a second step of analysis—on how to consistently implement community policies.

241 BIANCHI, C., - LUNA-REYES, L.F. - RICH, E., op. cit., 2020; BIANCHI, C., - BERECIARTUA, P. - VIGNIERI, V. - COHEN, A., op. cit., 2019

In this perspective, the object of policy design is the generation of sustainable outcomes at the level of local area, rather than single agency[242].

C) Outside-in view and trans-local networking: towards a further step?

In this sense, city diplomacy networks could be useful—sometimes decisive—in defining common strategies for common problems, some of which might have global implications. An example concerns the aforementioned super-wicked problems of human trafficking and/or migration flows which generate wicked problems for local areas not only in terms of urban prostitution but also of overpopulation, exponential increases in demand for social and health services, degradation of urban downtowns, related depletion of urban security and urban decorum, etc.

The program *Cities4migration* implemented by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) could represent a crucial experience in this regard. Human mobility flows essentially converge on urban areas. Although cities and local governments lack recognition of and competence in migration policies, local administrations must guarantee social cohesion and the *right to the city*. Both objectives are closely linked to the local governance of migration and, in particular, to the ability of cities to help vulnerable groups break down barriers that prevent them from accessing basic services, protecting their rights, and enjoying decent living conditions.

For this reason, according to the UCLG's general premise, local and regional governments have a vital role to play in governing migration since cities are the entry and exit points for migrants and the first respondents to their basic needs. Global agendas increasingly assume that development and welfare goals will hardly be met without addressing the status of migrant and displaced people. In addition to paying particular attention to migrants, the international community adopted the first Global Compact on Migration in December 2018.

The Global Compact on Migration marks a breakthrough in the global governance of migration with a proposed framework and common values for defining national migration policies. In particular, rights-based approaches and the involvement of all governments are advances for the recognition and guarantee of migrants' rights and the involvement of local

242 BIANCHI, C., - LUNA-REYES, L.F. - RICH, E., op. cit., 2020; BIANCHI, C., - BERECIARTUA, P. - VIGNIERI, V. - COHEN, A., op. cit., 2019. See also BIANCHI, C. - VIGNIERI, V. (2020). *Dealing with "abnormal" business growth by leveraging local area common goods: an outside-in stakeholder collaboration perspective*. International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-07-2019-0318

governments in the governance of migration. However, local governments must ensure the integrity of the process and advocate for full and formal recognition of their role in the implementation, monitoring, and review of the Global Compact.

In this context, UCLG acts globally, making visible and supporting the action of local entities in the governance of migration from three self-reinforcing angles:

The Mayors Mechanism

The newly established Mayors Mechanism is a tool for dialogue between states and local and regional governments in the framework of the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration. UCLG is a member of the steering committee of the Mayors Mechanism, jointly with IOM and OSF.

The Mechanism will incorporate the Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration, and Development as a consultative space for local authorities within the framework of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

The Community of Practice on Migration

The growing interest of UCLG members and the waves of action related to migration governance led the Executive Bureau to adopt the creation of a Community of Practice on Migration to capitalize on and disseminate the work of the organization and its members on migration governance.

The Community of Practice on Migration explores ways to implement the Global Compact for Migration at the local level while enriching the work of the Policy Council on the Right to the City. The specific objectives are:

a) Provide technical arguments and analysis to support the work of the Policy Council on the Right to the City and to generate political messages so that the voices of local and regional authorities are heard.

b) Facilitate learning and the transfer of knowledge and practices between cities on the issue of migration.

c) Accompany our constituency in the implementation and follow-up of the Global Compact.

The Mediterranean Cities Migration Project (MC2CM)

Initiated in 2015 in conjunction with ICMPD and UN-Habitat, the MC2CM project supports the development of more open and inclusive urban policies that make it possible to enhance the potential of migrants for the benefit of the whole territory. The project is a practical laboratory that allows cities to exchange their experiences and share best practices favouring the inclusion of migrants.

In the second phase of this project (2018–2021), the objective is to nourish the political dialogue on the *right to the city* through direct contact with the experiences, practices, and needs of about twenty Euro-Mediterranean cities. The recommendations and findings of the project feed into the discussions and work of both the Community of Practice, conceived as a forum for the exchange of local experiences in the field of migration, and the Political Council on the Right to the City.[243]

The same can be said for other categories of super-wicked problems, from climate change to world public health, etc.

33. Methodological notes: from *system dynamics* to the *dynamic performance management* approach

Management of a place's reputation/perception, and therefore of its overall brand, is characterized by profound political (decision-making) and social complexity. It is also cultural, as it is placed in a scenario that presents high objective and subjective dynamic complexity.

This complexity concerns the decisive influence that an immaterial and highly imperceptible factor, namely external perception, exerts on a local area. The local area, in turn, is called upon to face a scenario characterized by strong competitiveness with other local areas on a global scale.

Such problems and concerns, on the one hand, affect the quality of life of each of those local areas and related communities, but on the other hand, they do not exclusively depend on any of them. It is therefore necessary to identify the right methodologies both for a cognitive approach to the system behaviour and to model the subsequent processes aimed at driving toward the desired outcomes.

243 Data and information taken from the official UCLG website

A) System dynamics as a learning tool

Developed in the 1950s primarily by J.W. Forrester, system dynamics (SD) can be defined as an approach for modelling and simulating complex physical and social systems and experimenting with the models to design policies for management and change. According to the extensive literature on the subject, SD may be also defined as a perspective and set of conceptual tools that enable us to understand the structure and dynamics of complex, non-linear, multi-loop feedback systems.[244]

The first difficulty in defining it lies in the very absence of a univocal definition about this concept. Sterman (2002) defined system dynamics as a practical tool policy makers can use to help solve important problems; it can be valued for its applicability in science, engineering, applied mathematics, social science, philosophy, etc. Indeed, the difficulty in answering the question "what is system dynamics?" arises not because we don't know which of these things it is but because SD is all these things and more. Moreover, system dynamics is accessible to the widest range of scholars, students, and policy makers without becoming a vague set of qualitative tools and unreliable generalizations. To be effective, it is often necessary to challenge some of our most deeply held beliefs, beliefs we often don't explicitly recognize. Consequently, there is a resulting tension between qualitative systems thinking and formal modelling, between scientific rigor and the need to make decisions today, between gaining acceptance by clients and challenging dearly held beliefs.[245]

SD methodology uses and applies causal structures in order to frame the system under analysis, and this also the case for the public sector.[246] As exhaustively demonstrated by Cosenz (2010), model structures are realized by linking those relevant variables which determine a certain behaviour of the observed system over time. In these connections, feedback loops are the building blocks for articulating the dynamics of these models, and their interactions can explain the system behaviour. Such methodology identifies the complex interactions among feedback loops, rejects notions of linear cause and effect, and requires the

244 For a general overview about the System Dynamics principles, see FORRESTER J.W., *Industrial Dynamics,* Cambridge, MIT Press, 1961; STERMAN J.D. *Business Dynamics: System Thinking and Modelling for a Complex World*; McGraw-Hill, London, UK, 2000.

245 STERMAN, J. D., *All models are wrong: reflections on becoming a systems scientist,* in System Dynamics Review Vol. 18, No. 4, (Winter 2002): 501–531

246 See BIANCHI, C. & WILLIAMS, D.W. (2015). *Applying system dynamics modeling to foster a cause-and-effect perspective in dealing with behavioral distortions associated with a city's performance measurement programs*. Public Performance & Management Review, 38(3), 395–425. BIANCHI, C., BIVONA, E., COGNATA, A., FERRARA, P., LANDI, T., & RICCI, P., (2010). *Applying system dynamics to foster organizational change, accountability and performance in the public sector: A case-based Italian perspective*. Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 27(4). 395-420.

analyst to view a complete system of relationships whereby the ‘cause’ might also be affected by the ‘effect.’

This means that a given variable, *ceteris paribus*, can influence another variable (1) positively (i.e., an increase of the one corresponds to an increase of the other and vice versa), (2) negatively (i.e., an increase of the one corresponds to a decrease of the other and vice versa), or (3) according to a non-linear relation between them. If such relations take the form of closed circuits, these are defined as feedback loops and are responsible for the system behaviour. Briefly, reinforcing loops produce exponential trends of the system over time, whereas balancing loops (B) limit such effect by tending toward a steady state.[247]

Factors and links connecting the factors can be graphically shown through causal loop diagrams (CLDs). Any link has annotations denoting its polarity and delay. The polarity tells whether a dependency has positive polarity (if the cause increases, the effect will also increase compared with the situation where the cause did not change) or negative polarity (if the cause increases, the effect will decrease compared with the situation where the cause did not change). The definition of polarity is subtle, since even with positive polarity there are scenarios where the cause goes down while the effect goes up (even when there are no other causes for the same effect).[248]

B) Dynamic Performance Management

Dynamic Performance Management (DPM) is a framework which helps policymakers outline alternative policies to pursue sustainable outcomes. It also fosters policy coordination and implementation. In fact, it supports political-level entities in cascading performance goals to the administrative units at the agency level.

According to Bianchi (2016, 2017), a DPM approach is particularly valuable in such contexts, since time disjunctions between actions and results, as well as non-linear feedback relationships affecting policy outcomes, mean that decision makers cannot easily understand the structures and behaviours of the systems in which their policies will be implemented. This approach may help them to detect the risk of unintended effects of policies which, although

247 COSENZ, F., “*A System Dynamics Approach to Analysing the Effect of Clientelism on Public Organizations Performance in Italy”,* Review of International Comparative Management, Volume 11, Issue 2, May 2010, pp. 325-337

248 BINDER, T. - VOX, A. - BELYAZID, H. - HARALDSSON, H. & SVENSSON, M., *Developing System Dynamics models from Causal Loop Diagrams*, 2004

they may look consistent from a static and sectoral perspective, may fail in the long run because of lack of coordination or lack of adaptation.

Anyway, such systems should not focus only on the "fixed period" end results, i.e., the net change ("flow") generated by the implemented policies in a given time period during the initial endowment of strategic resources in all the relevant organizations. Strategic resources are stocks of tangible or intangible assets available to policy makers to make their policies successful. Their dynamics depend on the value of corresponding inflows and outflows. While changes in the strategic resources generated by the end results are indeed important, they only provide one limited snapshot. In order to understand the longer-term workings of the overall system, it is important to also focus on the performance drivers, i.e., the critical success factors for achieving these end results. Performance drivers should be measured, monitored, and, where possible, changed to a more favourable state in order to influence the achievement of desired outcomes. Performance drivers are measured as ratios between the current strategic resource levels affecting performance and the desired levels (for instance, the ratio of skills to desired skills).

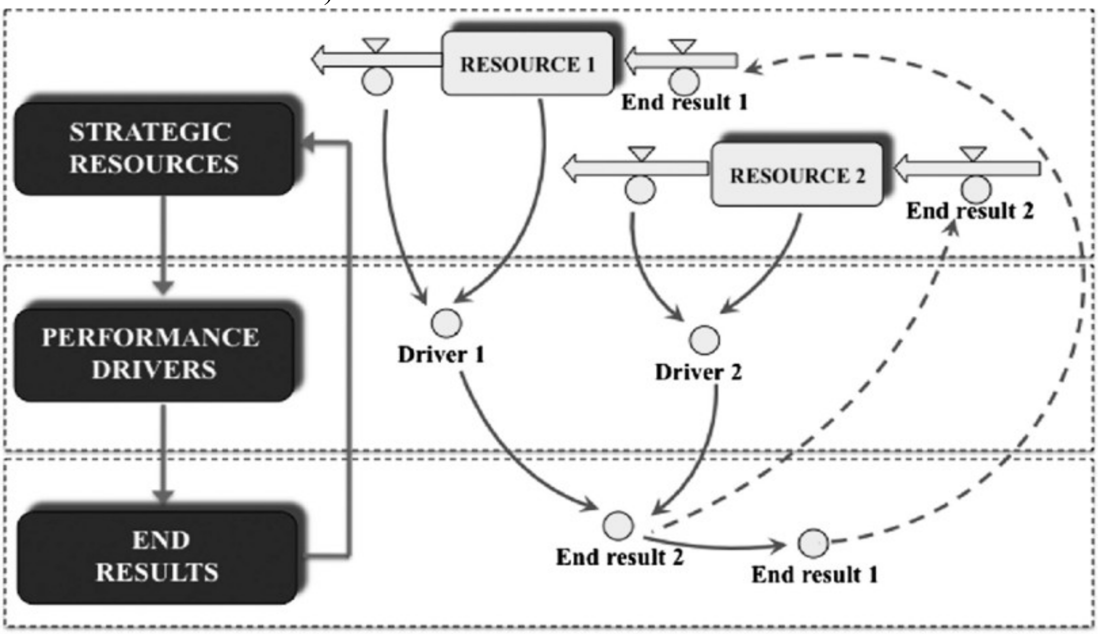

Figure 14: Dynamic Perfomance Management view
Source: Bianchi C. - Tomaselli S. (2015), p. 375

Bianchi (2016, 2017) also remarks on how it is important to outline the policy options which are believed to affect the strategic resources that will influence performance drivers and, through them, the end results, which in turn will feed back influence on the strategic resources.[249]

34. Applying dynamic performance governance to assess performance sustainability in local areas through an inter-organizational perspective

A) The basic perspective

Through DPM, performance sustainability can be framed under multiple profiles. As the following figure shows, performance can be assessed under internal, external, and "time" perspectives.

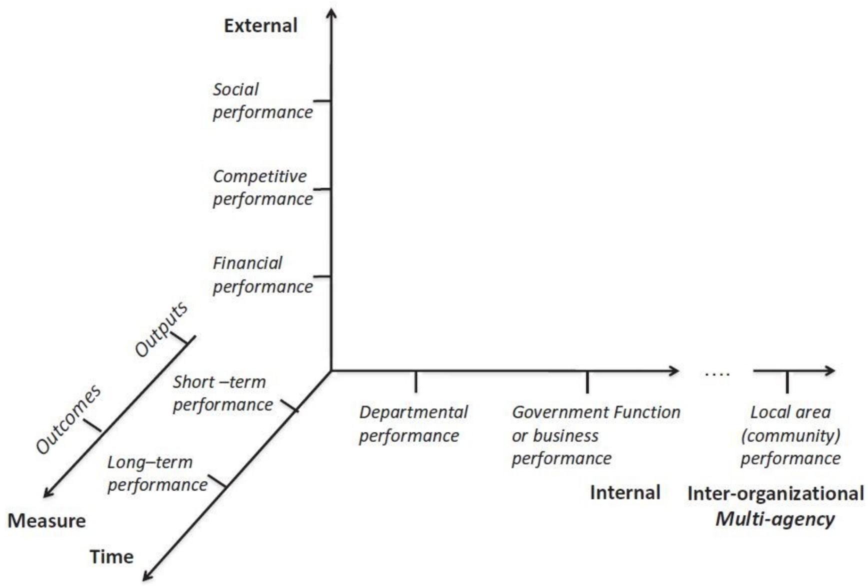

Figure 15: A balanced view of performance.
Source: Bianchi, C. - - Vignieri, V. - Bereciartua, P Cohen, A..(2019), p. 5

Under the internal perspective, sustainable performance should portray a balanced profile showing consistency between the different subsystems, sectors, and departmental/functional areas of an organization. Under the external profile, social and

249 BIANCHI C., *Dynamic Performance Management*, Springer, 2016; BIANCHI, C. - BOVAIRD, T. - LOEFFLER, E. , *"Applying a Dynamic Performance Management Framework to Wicked Issues: How Coproduction Helps to Transform Young People's Services in Surrey County Council, UK"*, International Journal of Public Administration, 40:10, 2017, p. 833-846; PESTOFF, V., AND BRANDSEN, T. (2008). *Co-production: The Third Sector and the Delivery of Public Services*. Routledge, New York, NY, USA.

competitive dimensions of performance should be designed consistently to ensure that financial performance is achieved.

Under a "time" perspective, performance sustainability should be gauged and assessed in such a way that trade-offs in the short and long term can be considered. Such a triadic framework provides a basis to perceive the mutual dependencies between an agency and its context (Bianchi, 2016).[250]

To this end, Bianchi (2016) suggests that a fourth dimension of DPM can be added as an extension of the internal dimension previously elaborated. This can be defined as an "inter-organizational" (or multi-agency) perspective. The focus of this view is on local area performance, i.e., the aptitude of stakeholders in a region (e.g., a city neighbourhood) to collaborate for developing common goods that may generate public value which may provide better conditions for local organizations to pursue sustainable development.

This value may concern the social, competitive, and financial performance for both a local area and its individual organizations. It implies that not only short-term effects of policies (output measures) but also long-term results (outcomes) are gauged and affected. Such results relate to the generation of both intermediate and final outcomes, leading to changes in common goods through collaborative policies. For instance, the change in attractiveness of a local area (final outcome) can be affected by each organization through policies aimed at improving the quality of infrastructure and services, number of businesses located in the area, average employment rate, citizen (or tourist) satisfaction, and the quality of the local environment.

By integrating the multiple dimensions of sustainable performance, local agencies in a region can join together with other stakeholders in an outside-in perspective of performance management. The role of each agency would be to focus, as a second step of analysis, on how consistently they contribute to implementing community policies. Such a perspective can be pursued by applying DPM to performance governance, i.e., through "Dynamic Performance Governance" (DPG).

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250 See also BIANCHI, C. (2010). *Improving performance and fostering accountability in the public sector through system dynamics modelling: From an 'external' to an 'internal' perspective*. Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 27(4), 361-384. ROGERS, S. (1990), Performance Management in Local Government. (Harlow, Longman).

B) DPG in fostering collaboration in policy networks.

Although common goods are not individually owned by any of the stakeholders, and therefore are not under their direct control, they are important levers for building and sustaining the performance of local areas and the quality of life they provide, such as in the case of urban neighbourhoods.

Therefore, the aptitude of a local area to generate community outcomes is a fundamental condition for the sustainability of performance in both the area and its individual organizations. Another important condition, to ensure performance sustainability, addresses how—at least in the long run—intermediate and final outcomes may systemically combine the three dimensions previously commented. These include:

- financial
- competitive
- social performance

The learning process that DPG can foster relates to the possibility of enabling local area stakeholders to frame trade-offs in time and space. Sustainable implementation of such policy requires an aptitude to balance three sets of goals, namely, financial equilibrium, quality and timeliness of urban renewal, and social inclusion.

Financial equilibrium refers to the funding capability of projects by the public sector[251]. So for example, referring a case of urban brownfield regeneration Bianchi et alii (2019) noted that quality and timeliness refer to how the public sector responds to a number of standards that are related, for instance, to usability and reliability of urban infrastructure, housing supply, access to public areas, crime control, transportation systems, and the capability of urban renewal investments to support an integration of past and present, and therefore to play a cultural role in supporting the society to preserve historical roots. Social inclusion implies a focus on targets such as social integration, social capital, and community development. There are possible trade-offs between these targets over time. In fact, the three performance areas are not necessarily compatible with one another, at least in the short run.

Furthermore, the authors remark that a policy aimed at implementing urban renewal through a massive involvement of private capital may generate prompt and sustained cash

251 Financial equilibrium is also relevant in managing trans-local relations, as we see in section II. See also CEPIKU, D., - BONOMI SAVIGNON. A., (2012). *Governing Cutback Management: Is there a Global Strategy for Public Administrations?*, International Journal of Public Sector Management, 25, 6–7, 428–36. CEPIKU, D., MUSSARI, R., & GIORDANO, F. (2016), *Local governments managing austerity: approaches, determinants and impact. Public Administration*, 94(1): 223-43.

flows to reinvest into urban infrastructure development or provide job opportunities in the area. However, it may also generate problems of social inclusion, particularly when gentrification policies are adopted and restrictions (such as pay-toll entrances) to the free access of the refurbished areas are imposed.

Conversely, the opportunity to pursue a high level of stakeholder collaboration in policy design, and the inclination to fund urban renewal with public resources (in order not to subordinate the achievement of community outcomes to the interests of private investors) may perhaps foster social inclusion, but it may also run the risk of significant delays in implementing projects due to funding shortfalls (sometimes to bureaucratic delays), leading to a negative impact on local area attractiveness, job opportunities, and quality of life[252].

C) Further remarks on a translocal cooperational perspective under a DPG approach

As noted by Bianchi and Tomaselli (2013a), in today's globalized world, which is sharply characterized by decentralization and devolution, urban and regional areas are emerging as key players in economic and social life. Their competitiveness, liveability, and sustainable development are cornerstones to the pursuit of high quality of life, economic development, and social wellness.

Section II of this thesis is dedicated to analysing how those urban and regional areas, as well as the societal form of city diplomacy networks, have been facing these changes over the previous decades, with a general focus on specific super-wicked problems.

In this regard, Minassian and Roy (2020) recognize how in recent decades, domestic governments have been compelled to change how they function and operate. On an international scale, the intensification of globally sourced economic, political, and social problems are compelling governments to think about and initiate actions beyond their borders. Traditional official government agencies operating at the municipal, state, and federal levels have been attempting to augment their capacity to cope with the growing complexities by "scaling up" their collective resources through intergovernmental cooperative action with a variety of state and non-state actors.[253]

252 BIANCHI, C., - BERECIARTUA, P. - VIGNIERI, V. - COHEN, A., *op. Cit.,* 2019

253 MINASSIAN, H.P. – ROY, R. K., *Applying Governing Networks and Multilevel Scales to Address Wicked Problems*, in Bianchi, C. *et alii* (edited by), *Enabling Collaborative Governance through Systems Modeling Methods* – System Dynamics for Performance Management & Governance, 4, Springer, 2020, 3-22. See also SICILIA, M.F., GUARINI, E., SANCINO, A., ANDREANI, M., & RUFFINI, R. (2016). *Public Services Management and Co-Production in Multi-Level Governance Settings*. International Review of Administrative Sciences, 82(1), 8–27. For an overall overview about networks at the domestic level, see also CEPIKU, D. - MUSSARI, R. - POGGESI, S., & REICHARD, C. (2012). *Special issue on governance of networks:*

Minassian and Roy (2020) pay particular attention to *multilevel governance* (which intercepts the core of this study), identifying in it two main dimensions:

A) The first focuses on the interaction between various multilevel governments and policy makers and the discrete role that federal, state, and local municipal governments play in coordinating and, if possible, cooperating in the implementation and design of policies.

B) The second involves robust levels of engagement on the part of *non-state actors* in shaping policy design and implementation.

It is crucial to note how Minassian and Roy's (2020) findings are widely confirmed, as explained in Section II of this thesis, both in studies of international law and in those of international relations and urban sociology. According to the authors, who define multilevel translocal governance as a bottom-up approach,[254] this emphasises policy making initiated by actors operating at the grass-roots level. While state actors and institutions continue to play an important role, their formal power and influence are diminishing.[255] This is particularly so in situations where the nature of a public policy problem challenges long-held distinctions between local, national, and global structures as well as those between state and civil society. Proponents of this form of governance argue that agents may circumvent arcane and slow-to-act formal governmental processes.[256] A *multilevel governance network*, as described in its second dimension, corresponds to the *city diplomacy network* within the disciplines of urban sociology and international relations.

Challenges and future issues from a public management perspective editorial. Journal of Management and Governance, 18, 1–7.

254 However, it should be noted that, again according to the translocal associative phenomena described in section II, it would be preferable to define these phenomena as "horizontal relations", without defining any vertical projection. In fact, many translocal networks create a new and autonomous set of relationships completely independent of any relationship with the superordinate authorities, at both the domestic (nation states) and international level (intergovernmental international organizations), or at most with a relationship that tends to be equal to these latters.

255 This last consideration, as already noted, represents the basis of the very constitution of several networks, as in the case of United Cities and Local Governments. Furthermore, we have already observed previously how this phenomenon affects not only nation-states, but also their stable forms of intergovernmental cooperation. See HALE, T .; HELD, D .; YOUNG, K., "*Gridlock: Why Global Cooperation is Failing When We Need It Most",* Cambridge, Polity Press, 2013

256 MINASSIAN, H.P. – ROY, R. K., op. cit., 2020. See also RHODES, R.A.W. (1990). *Policy networks: A British perspective*. Journal of Theoretical Politics, 2(3), 293–317; RHODES, R.A.W. (2017). *Network governance and the differentiated polity*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

35. Causal relationships between the negative nation brand and the "people" component

For the purposes of this study, the description of system dynamics should necessarily start from the definition of system behaviour with regard to a negative nation brand. The model of a negative nation brand proposed below consists of a causal loop diagram, that is, a structure in which variables that play significant roles in the system affect other variables according to those logical relationships that regulate their interactions. While relations are portrayed as 'arrows,' the type of relation among variables is identified by a plus (+) if positive and a minus (-) if negative. The behaviour of the system stems from the effect of the feedback loops in it.

A simplified causal loop diagram consisting of a main reinforcing loop (R1) and two internal reinforcing loops (R2, R3) can be developed. No appreciable balancing loops have been identified at this stage.

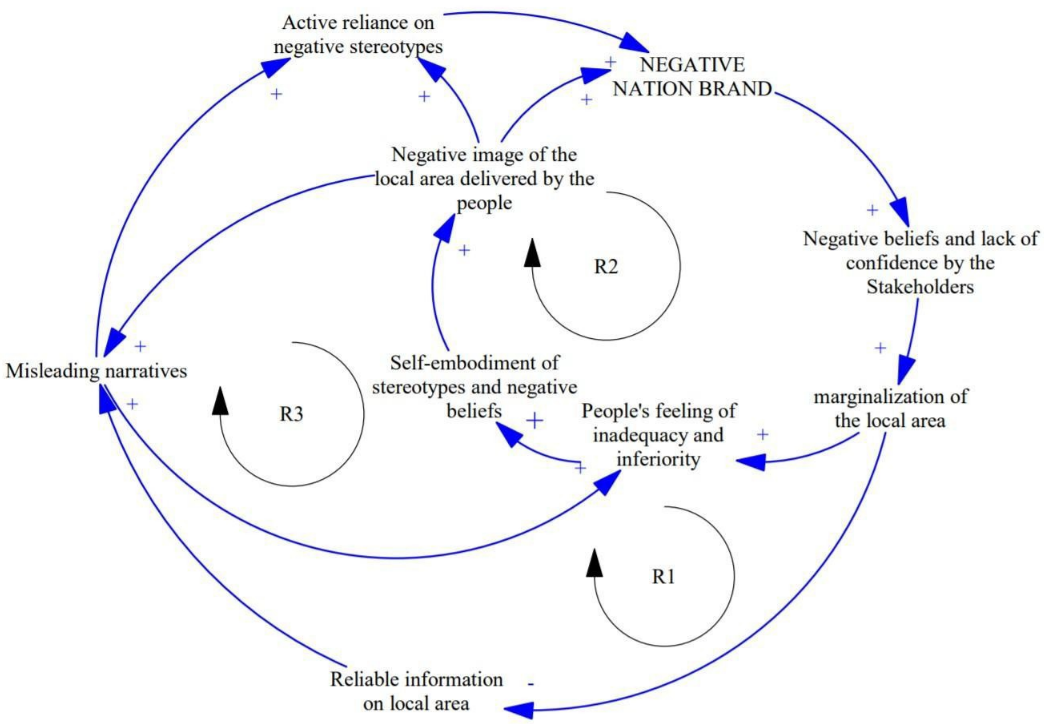

Figure 16: Model structure of negative nation brand / people component system and relations

Loop **R1** describes a system behaviour according to which, in the case of an unfavourable nation brand and in the absence of effective policies to address the problem, the negative value of the brand seems inexorably destined to increase. This is because the external stakeholders, trusting in beliefs not opposed in any way by an alternative narrative, will physiologically tend to prefer and consider local areas other than the one under consideration, with a consequent increase in the marginalization of the latter.

The smaller the influx of external stakeholders in the area under examination, however, the lower the possibility of hinging on a subprocess of disseminating new and accurate information on the area itself according to the potential word-of-mouth or other means of communication that such stakeholders could utilise based on the direct experience they could have of the area in question. On the contrary, the choice to avoid the area or to prefer other local areas can easily further strengthen the existing misleading narratives that afflict the local area, due to the risk that other actors will emulate the strategic choices of the first stakeholder, especially if the stakeholder is particularly influential (consider, for example, a hypothetical multinational that avoids opening a branch in a certain local area because it will incur further costs to “inexorably” deal with a high crime rate scenario). This dynamic, in turn, will lead other stakeholders to base their choices on the negative bias, further strengthening the latter in an exponential manner, with the final impact of strengthening the negative value of the nation or place brand.

Loops **R2** and **R3**, on the other hand, describe the further effect of strengthening the negative value of the brand due to the mental attitude and consequent behaviour of the local community, taking into account that based on the formulation of the nation brand hexagon, the "people" component contributes to the definition and structure of the brand itself. The progressive marginalization of the area of residence on the one hand (**R2**) and the growing perpetuation of misleading narratives (**R3**) will strengthen the community’s feeling of inferiority and inability to achieve anything positive (in the belief that "nothing will ever change"), thus reinforcing negative autostereotypes and the phenomena of domain avoidance and domain disengagement.

This framework, which we can define as a *cognitive dissonance*, can therefore lead the members of the community to non-constructive reaction phenomena (e.g., massive emigrations and consequent depopulation of the area) or to accept shortcuts that are further damaging to the reputation and socio-economic solidity of the local area in question (clientelism). This is based on the belief that the area has no particular value and is therefore "expendable" to personal interests (this can be considered a case of domain disengagement), or, again, on the assumption of merely communicative attitudes of contempt or self-pity.

With each of the aforementioned hypotheses, however, whether it is through a factual behaviour or a simple verbal statement, the community will produce further confirmation on its own both of the misleading narratives (objective aspect) and of the stereotypical perception that stakeholders have of the area in question (subjective aspect), and eventually of the negative value of the nation brand. With reference to this last aspect, in particular, taking into account the autonomous component of the nation brand hexagon, the "people" exercise a direct influence on the latter. Therefore, a community that is unmotivated, oriented toward "weak thinking," prone to shortcuts, and lacking collective sense focused on the common good translates into a community that while "seeking to end the problem is also causing it" (Levin *et alii*, 2012). This will reinforce the negative value of the nation or place brand.

36. Deviance factors affecting the community collective sense: the clientelism

We have mentioned the role of the community in the causal loop diagram of the negative nation brand, with particular reference to the variables that intervene in the process of self-stereotyping and disengagement from the local area of origin and belonging. Among these, we also mentioned the clientelism factor, and some insights may be useful now to better define the overall picture.

Clientelism, welfarism, patronage, and abuse of welfare can significantly influence the political choices of the civil community (transforming its essence from representing the interests of the community to satisfying the interests of the individual, or of a *niche* of individuals). To this end, Cosenz (2010) remarked on how clientelistic agreements entail votes and support given in exchange for jobs and other benefits handed over by incumbent and contesting power holders as favours. Whereas this can be a successful strategy for building political consensus and winning elections, clientelism alters those rightful dynamics among democratic actors which should normally regulate and determine a democratic system. In fact, aiming to achieve voter consensus does not ensure justice and equality in access to both jobs and services provided by public organizations.

For this reason, the author argues that many politicians are *professionals of clientelism* since they cunningly tend to hide clientelistic practices behind the guise of sustaining unemployed people, and this allows them to hire a large number of unemployed workers in public organizations. This job placement method does not take into account meritocracy, HR skills and capabilities, transparency of public action, or social accountability. From this perspective, by creating situations of over-employment and under-qualification of personnel in the PA, politicians damage both meritocracy and public accountability, as all the mechanisms of administrative control and performance evaluation are made voluntary and thus ineffective at hiding the loss of productivity caused by the effects of clientelism.

In conclusion, the persistence of clientelistic dynamics also negatively influences the entire culture of a community in terms of resistance to changing negative working attitudes among civil servants and mistrust of citizens towards public institutions. The lack of both work-oriented culture and public social responsibility dangerously damages the natural aptitude of a community to improve its socio-economic context and compromises the future of coming generations. In fact, by growing up exposed to bad working stereotypes and mistrust of public authority, young people acclimatise themselves to such behaviours and, in searching for a better future, emigrate from their mother countries, thus depriving such countries of fundamental resources.[257]

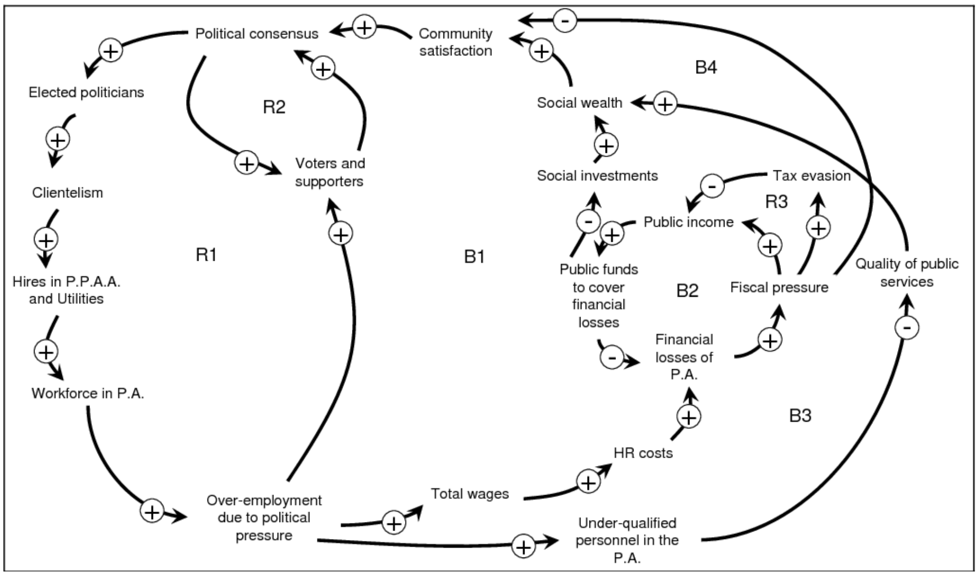

Figure 17: Model structure of Italian clientelism system.
Source: Cosenz, F. (2010), p. 331

257 COSENZ, F., "*A System Dynamics Approach to Analysing the Effect of Clientelism on Public Organizations Performance in Italy",* Review of International Comparative Management, Volume 11, Issue 2, May 2010, pp. 325-337.

Relating these considerations to the case study of Sicily, this last wicked problem, referring to a local area affected by a negative reputation and a low sense of belonging by the community, takes on particular significance in light of two main considerations:

First, as shown in the first section, due to misleading narratives (both in the active sense of dissemination of unreliable information and in the passive sense of omission of basic information), a community could have little or no knowledge of its identity (in both the historical-cultural and competitive identity sense) as well as of the origin, meaning, and function of its main representative political bodies (in the case of Sicily, the Sicilian Region).

To the same extent, individuals are not provided, either during compulsory schooling or in more advanced courses, any information about the history, structure, reasons for, and institutes of the Autonomous Statute of 1946 (which is the subject of massive and violent disinformation campaigns conducted mainly by the mass media). In past decades, this has generated the widespread belief in the Sicilian electorate that political-administrative elections for the Sicilian Region are second-class electoral competitions or a duplication on a local scale of national political competitions.

Therefore, given an overall framework in which the common interest (which is rarely perceived at the regional level) appears more acceptably expendable in the face of the specific individual interest, the ordinary problems of clientelism can be significantly aggravated by the substantial indifference of the electorate to the fate of its representative institutional body.

Second, according to a typically national anomaly, the political formations and parties leading many of the Italian autonomous regions, including the Sicilian Region itself, are the same parties operating at the national level. It is in fact known that local autonomies, in general, are born and are destined to operate in a strongly dialectical relationship with national political powers, even if in a tendential spirit of collaboration. It would therefore be expected that an autonomous region would express its own political class and its own ruling class.

The secondary derivation of the regional political class from the national one, therefore, entails further limitations that lead to greater clientelism at the local level, including:

c) Substantial and effective disinterest of the political class for strictly regional needs or events, since in general the final objective of the politician will always be aimed at tracing the *cursus honorum* of the political career up to national political representations. On the other hand, there will be a greater propensity to consider the local authority as an easy strategic resource to use for one’s own purposes.

d) Embodiment of the party's national logic and guidelines, which could at times conflict with the needs and reasons of the local autonomous body. Between the two, the politician will sacrifice the priorities of the local authority and not those of the national party. *Clientes*, therefore, will become supporters of self-injurious territorial policies. This, in turn, will significantly increase the sense of detachment of the whole community from the regional authority.

It should be noted that these two aspects (political unawareness of the electorate and distinction between the regional and national political classes) are closely related to each other. In fact, it is not reasonable to assume that any political party of an exclusively regional origin can acquire an adequate level of consensus if the electorate itself is unaware of or disinterested in the fate of the local representative body.

The latter, in fact, will tend to enable the political party to provide greater advantage in the short term with the result that, paradoxically, the regional party wishing to impose itself on traditional national parties could find itself implementing even more marked clientelistic policies than the former.

37. Components of the nation brand and the dimensions of the city diplomacy

The claim that competitiveness is global, or even inter-local, plays a crucial role in defining policies intended to tackle one or more wicked problems. This goes far beyond a mere opening statement of a scientific article.

The shift of local governments on a global level is now based on practices, models, and tools of actions massively stratified over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, with a significant qualitative and quantitative increase in the last twenty years. The nation or place brand embodies a fundamental point, perhaps the most relevant, in the context of global challenges.

It is now necessary to evaluate how, through a whole-of-government approach of dynamic performance governance, a local area can intervene concerning its brand through one or more actions necessarily destined to be implemented on a global level.

As we have seen in the previous sections, a minimum set of general cataloguing actions has been proposed both with reference to the components of the nation brand (Anholt, 2004) and to the dimensions of city diplomacy (Van Der Plujim, 2007). Unlike the components of a nation brand, the “dimensions” of city diplomacy, namely the sectors in which the sub-state local government authorities engage their own foreign relations sets, have been significantly increasing as new challenges, necessities, and super-wicked problems have arisen in the decade following their original formulation on the world scene (e.g., climate change).

Starting from the need to act on the nation brand, an effective strategy would require identifying the one sector among others that can guarantee the most successful results in redefining the brand itself. This should in turn be correlated with the identification of a corresponding sector in city diplomacy that can guarantee the greatest result in terms of circulation in the global scenario of information on the territory and, therefore, of its overall visibility.

The initial step, therefore, should be to compare the components of the nation brand hexagon and the city diplomacy dimension (which, for ease, will be analysed in their original formulation from 2007).

NATION BRAND HEXAGON *(Anholt, 2004)*	**CITY DIPLOMACY DIMENSIONS** *(Van Der Plujim, 2007)*
Governance *Public opinion about national (or local) government competency and fairness, as well as its perceived commitment to global issues.*	**Security and peace building** *Information and material support to other communities affected by destructive events or social unrest, or involved in war or post-war scenarios, etc.*
Investment and immigration *The power to attract people to live, work, or study in each country, and how people perceive a country’s quality of life and business environment.*	**Support for other communities’ development** *Economic plans for developing local communities, or to provide technical and operational aid.*

Tourism *The level of interest in visiting a country/place and the draw of natural and man-made tourist attractions.*	**Development of the local economy** *Utilitarian attraction of global capital, considerable stable investments, or episodic events of worldwide relevance.*
Exports *The public's image of products and services from each country.*	**Institutional representation** *Organic relationships with macro-actors of international relations (state actors, IOs, etc.).*
People *The population's reputation for competence, openness, and friendliness and other qualities such as tolerance.*	**Networking** *Relationships with other non-state governments and related networks of translocal relations.*
Culture and heritage *Global perception of each nation's heritage and appreciation for its contemporary culture.*	**Culture** *Contribution to global cultural dialogue, new forms of art, protection of cultural heritage, etc.*

Under a system dynamics perspective, it is now possible to draw a basic causal loop diagram describing the inferences of city diplomacy (or horizontal multilevel governance) practices on the overall nation brand of a local institutional actor, bearing in mind that this just represents a preliminary step in a complete whole-of-government framework. In other words, in this phase the acting administrative authority (the local government) is assumed as an almost exclusive actor of the scenario (or rather, the representative of the inter-institutional group), also in consideration of the fact that city diplomacy, in its essence, is a phenomenon of translocal relations and, hence, networking between local governments.

Briefly recalling what was said in the second section, the last two dimensions indicated by Van Der Plujim (2007), *networking* and *institutional representation*, do not really represent autonomous fields of action for local governments in the transnational scenario but rather the ways in which such actions can unfold. In this regard, it can be observed how networking capacity develops on the horizontal plane of translocal relations, while institutional representation develops on the vertical plane of direct relations between local governments and supranational or international subjects, namely:

- *Networking* refers to the ability of local governments to join together in pursuing shared objectives in various forms and according to various models through associative stable structures endowed with their own autonomous government apparatus and distinct from those of the individual member bodies that are part of it. These are the so-called translocal networks, which repeat for cities and local governments the same pattern of stable and mutual cooperation that states usually implement through international organizations.

- *Institutional representation* regards the capability of cities and local governments to develop and establish organic relationships with the macro-actors of international relations, namely the *pleno jure* subjects of international law (mainly international organizations and/or related agencies), to represent themselves and their interests before the international community. This applies both to the networked forms of association and to the individual cities or local governments.[258]

258 In this regard, we refer for the sake of brevity to the case studies illustrated in detail in the second section: as regards the participation of individual local governments in international organizations, we recall the experience of the Metropolitan Police Corps of New York City and London in participating in INTERPOL and EUROPOL; with reference to the (numerous) examples of participation of local government networks in international organizations or related agencies, it will be enough to recall the co-governance mechanism of the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities - UNACLA, equally shared between UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments – UCLG. UNACLA is an advisory body, established for the purpose of strengthening the dialogue of the UN System with local authorities from all over the world involved in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

38. Nation Brand and City Diplomacy under a System Dynamics view

a) Structure model of nation brand and city diplomacy

The following CLD is intended to describe a system in its theoretically optimal equilibrium. The system moves following a general framework described as follows:

a) Neutral or positive nation/place brand, well balanced between the six components and, therefore, in the absence of trade-offs in the space between them.

b) Local governments efficiently and effectively engaged in their own sustainable set of translocal relations, in the two directions described above (i.e., networking and institutional representation).

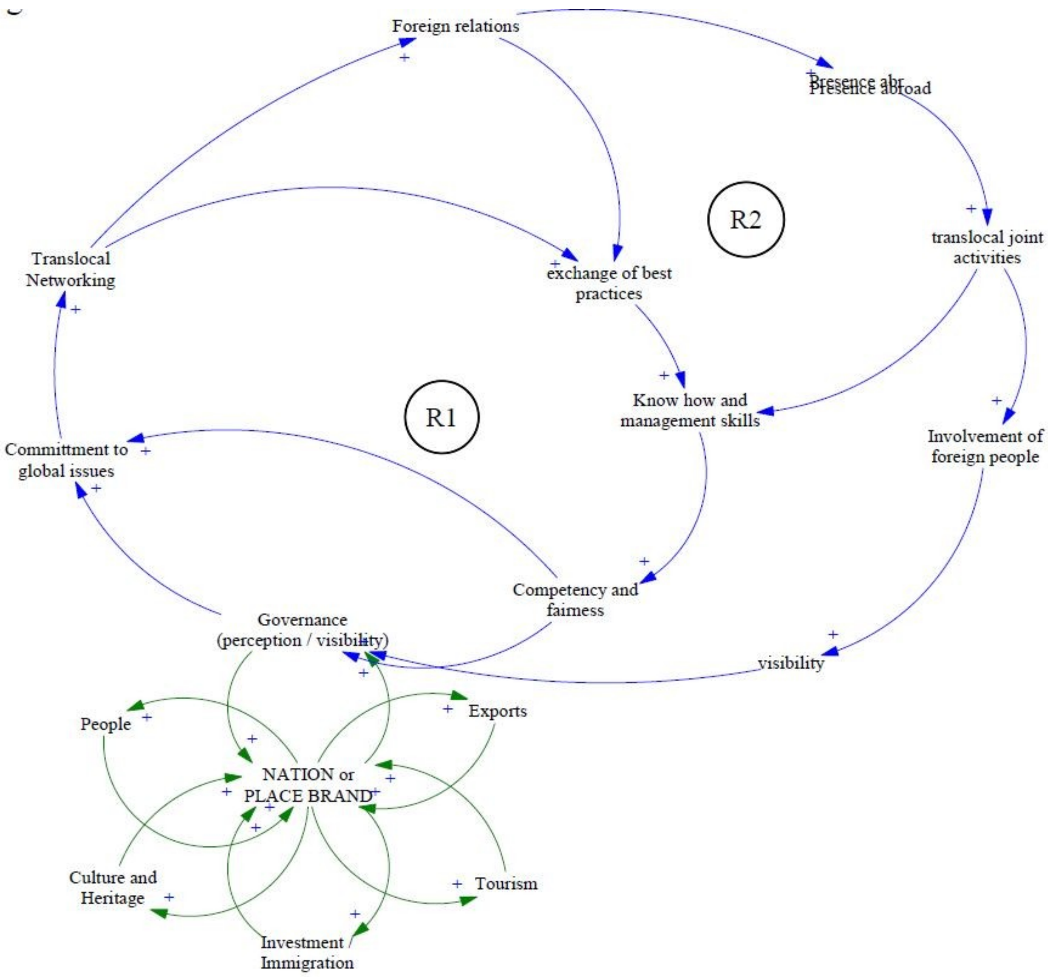

Figure 18: Causal Loop Diagram - City Diplomacy and Nation Brand

b) Nation Brand Hexagon CLD

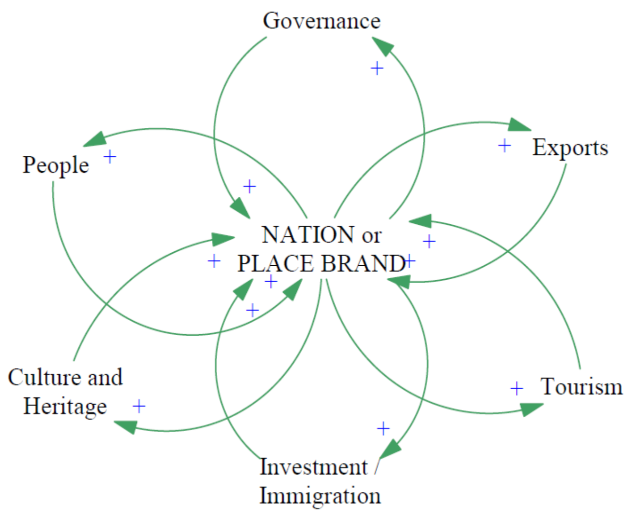

Figure 19: causal loop diagram - the nation brand hexagon

Assuming a state of perfect equilibrium, i.e., of effective sustainable implementation of each of its components, the nation brand should describe a system in which each of these components: 1) contributes equally to the solidity of the brand, proportionally reinforcing the external perception of each of the other components, and 2) can at the same time benefit from the reinforcing effect produced by the other components. So, for example, the more solid and positive the perception of the **people** component is, the stronger the nation brand will be, and the stronger the nation brand is, the more its other components will be positively perceived.

A people perceived as advanced, open minded, inclusive, etc., will be supposed to elect good rulers (governance component), generate good quality products or services (export component), be inclusive and welcoming and have access to a good education (immigration and universities component), give rise to high cultural expressions (culture and heritage component), and so on.

The same can be said for the **culture and heritage** component. It should be remembered that the two elements (culture and heritage) on which the component under consideration is articulated are not interchangeable or redundant. Instead, they describe two different and competing realities: heritage should be understood as referring to the historical background, material and immaterial, of the area under consideration, i.e., what that area has produced in the past, its role in world history, etc. Culture, on the other hand, should refer both to contemporary cultural and artistic production and its current contribution to global cultural development, as well as to the strategies adopted in the present to protect and enhance what was produced in the past (museums, theatres, archaeological parks, etc.).

Therefore, the more the history, testimonies, and cultural production of an area are perceived as strong and prestigious, the greater the people's sense of belonging in the local area and the image that this will transmit, the more prestigious the products and services connected to it (export component), the greater the desire from the outside to want to be associated with an area of prestigious tradition and high cultural importance (immigration/university components) or to want to be an active part of its development (investment), and the more reliable and competent the perception of its governance will be due to its effectiveness in the protection of cultural heritage and implementation of cultural development policies.

With reference to the reinforcing loops developing between the *culture/heritage* <=> *(nation brand)* <=> *governance* components, as well as between the *culture/heritage* <=> *(nation brand)* <=> *immigration* and *investments* components, we can recall, as stated in the second section, how in many cities in the United States in the 1980s a trend called the *back-to-the-city movement* appeared. Among other ways, it materialized in the adoption of ambitious local economic and cultural incentive policies specifically aimed to encourage the immigration of middle-class professionals.

The more attractions there were for the establishment of economic and financial world actors in the city, the greater was the need for housing for incoming professionals. Such professionals were generally of high quality, and in any case, they were willing to invest in the high-level redevelopment of existing homes. The birth of the new peculiar urbanized social category of the *young urban professional* occurred during that period and within the context of that phenomenon.[259]

Assuming, therefore, that each of the components can equally contribute to the solidity of the nation brand, and that from this contribution derive the effects of implementation on all the other components, we can argue that by leveraging one of its components, it is possible to trigger a strengthening process of all its other components.

259 BRONNER, S.J., *Grasping Things: Folk Material Culture and Mass Society in America*, University Press of Kentucky, 2014, p. 72

c) City diplomacy – horizontal multilevel governance CLD

The causal loop diagram relating to the city diplomacy system behaviour assumes a state of equilibrium on two reinforcing loops, one relating to the direct effects of participation in cross-boundary cooperation on governance skills and competences and the other relating to the effects they have on the level of perception of the latter abroad.

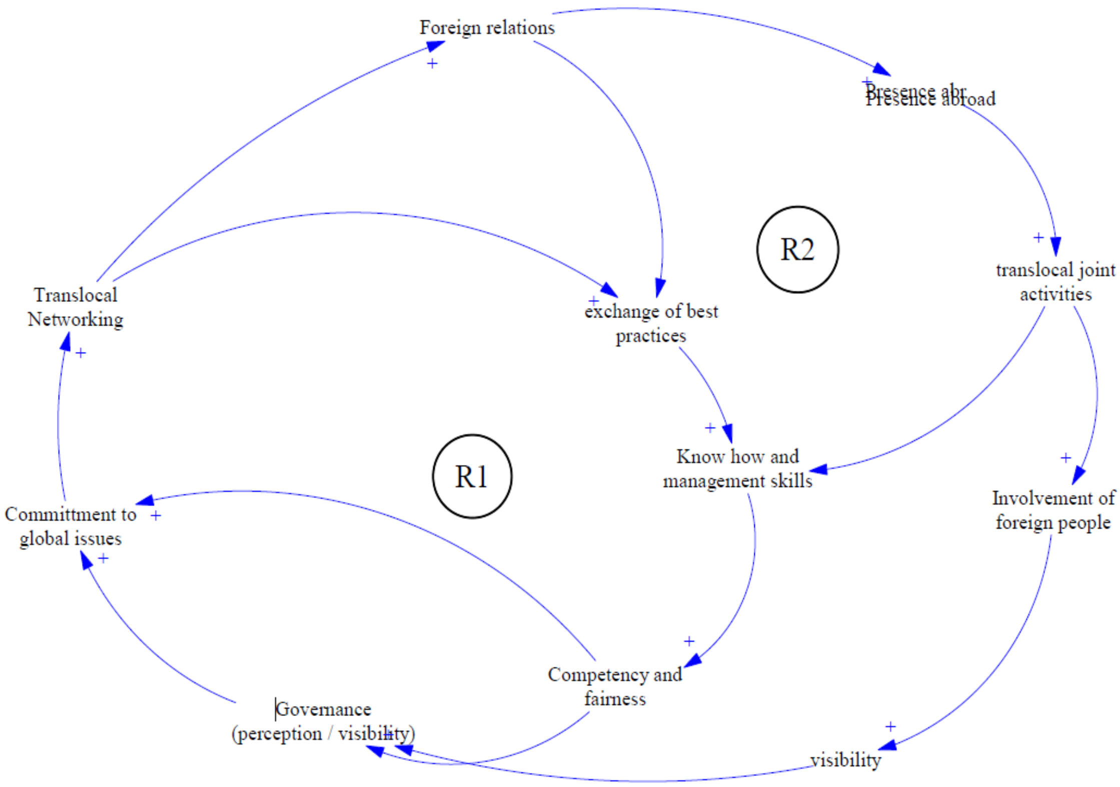

Figure 20: Causal loop diagram - city diplomacy and trans-local networking

Reinforcing Loop R1

Variable	*Behaviour*
Commitment to global issues *(shared with R2 loop)*	This indicates the level of mental openness of local governance to cross-boundary commitment to resolution of super-wicked problems of a global nature (globalization, climate change, security, environment, etc.), as well as the aptitude to intercept and interpret the positive opportunities offered by the global scenario for the wellbeing of one's own territory (e.g., international macro-events, financial investment flows, awareness of the strategic potential of the local territory in relation to the global geostrategic scenario, etc.). * * * The greater the attention and commitment to global issues, the greater the propensity for translocal cooperation through networks of local governments.
Translocal networking *(shared with R2 loop)*	Unlike the isolated and individual action of governance (also from an inter-institutional cooperation perspective), which requires the search for a specific solution to every single problem arising from the global scenario, action structured in the forms of translocal cooperation allows for learning and importing of the good practices already refined by other partners or networks (e.g., protocols and operational proposals drawn by technical committees of the local government networks) and, at the same time, sharing of good practices previously refined in specific sectors. The greater the participation in translocal networks, the greater the quantity and speed of circulation and dissemination of good practices. Furthermore, the greater the participation in translocal networking, the greater the opportunities, in general, to forge strategic relationships with foreign institutional partners.

Exchanging best practices	New best practices learned within and by a translocal environment are not limited to proposals relating only to the concrete case for which the member local government authority was seeking a specific resolution but can cover a wider range of competences. Thus, for example, in addition to a model for solving a specific problem, a general method of approach for each type of problem can also be learned (or shared) at the same time, with consequent implementation of the general skills and competence of each individual governance. These new skills and methodologies will then be used in the governance of the local area for the identification of solutions to problems, even if they are different from those for which the local government had initially undertaken the search for new solutions at a translocal level.
Know-how and management skills	The equal comparison with other foreign local government authorities also implies that the governance and effectiveness of a local government's actions are evaluated in comparison with the results obtained and the best practices gained by other local governments in the world related to the same problem. Therefore, the evaluation of consistency and effectiveness of the governance action will no longer be limited to the local area and its internal balances, even of a deviant nature (clientelism), and the government is more empowered. This factor will emphasize the accountability of governance and therefore will also implement the correctness of its action. Yet, greater competence deriving from a translocal environment implies a further greater propensity to implement the **commitment to global issues**. * * * The greater the increase in know-how and governance skills, the greater will be the competence and fairness poured into the local area.

Reinforcing Loop R2

Variable	*Behaviour*
Commitment to global issues *(see R1)*	The greater the attention and commitment to global issues, the greater the propensity for translocal cooperation through networks of local governments.
Translocal networking *(see R1)*	The greater the participation in translocal networks, the greater the opportunities, in general, to forge strategic relationships with foreign institutional partners.
Foreign relations	It should be considered that the model of translocal relations between governments of sub-state rank is, fundamentally, a phenomenon of diplomacy. In this sense, city diplomacy actions can also be understood as an opportunity for local governments to represent their own interests and those of their local communities by conducting their own foreign relations through the establishment of stable and equal relations with other local governments with a view toward making them their strategic partners. * * * The greater the network of active and not merely formal foreign relations, the greater the placement opportunities in new foreign scenarios.
Presence abroad	An effective set of foreign relations, refusing any model of purely formal non-outcome-based translocal relationships (twinning, declarations of brotherhood, etc.), is supposed to be followed by the local government's active presence abroad. This occurs through shared actions at the translocal level, which will in turn imply concrete

	contact with the foreign partner’s governance. An active presence abroad leads to an increase in the quantity and quality of potential new opportunities and shared projects, even if they are not necessarily linked to the resolution of wicked or super-wicked problems (e.g., new forms of cultural cooperation). The greater the active presence of the local government in foreign local areas, the greater the opportunities to implement new avenues of translocal cooperation.
Translocal joint activities	Each new activity undertaken with a foreign partner also involves making contact with and entering into the partner's community. This can take place both in a mediated form (city diplomacy proper through the respective government levels, e.g., the local government and the foreign partner jointly offering a shared service to their respective communities) and in an immediate form (public diplomacy, by which the local government directly addresses the community of the foreign partner, offering him services of a cultural nature). * * * The more that cooperative actions are undertaken in a city diplomacy scenario, the more the respective populations will be involved.
Involvement of foreign people	The greater the number of foreign nationals involved, the greater the visibility of the governing authority will be in foreign communities. Since this authority represents the territorial area and the community connected to it, it is reasonable to expect consistent positive effects for the nation or place brand as a whole.

39. Participation in translocal networks and its effects on the nation/place brand

The above described model concerns the dynamics of foreign relations of local governments in general and their potential implications for the nation brand (or place brand) of a given local area. However, in Section II we indicated how such relationships can generally take two different forms:

a) An unstructured form based on a series of bilateral or multilateral relationships which are entertained directly and immediately by the individual local governments acting together (in the case of cities, the definition of *city-to-city* relationships is generally used).

b) A structured form in which local governments join an independent third-party network, usually endowed with its own organs, procedures, and subjectivity (translocal networks).

Although these networks also provide forms of participation to non-governmental subjects and actors, the main key actor will still be the local government. Again, it must be borne in mind that the networks usually assume the legal and organizational form of NGOs (so, for example, the UCLG is an NGO under Spanish law).

This last consideration leads us, therefore, to make a first observation of the relationships between the members' brands and the network's brand as such. In other words, the question is whether a single nation brand can implement its own strength by simply associating it with a collective "super brand" that is already robust in itself.

As Brown *et alii* (2004) suggest, it is useful to consider the psychological basis of brand equity. Cognitive psychologists have for some time held that knowledge is represented through associative networks. Accordingly, knowledge consists of a set of nodes that are connected through a network of associations. The nodes and their relations form an 'association set,' and these association sets have been found to be useful descriptors of brand image. When two brands are paired, the image of one brand can be strengthened when its association set shares common elements with the association set of the other brand. Furthermore, a transfer of brand image from one brand to another occurs when consumers assimilate a node from one brand's association set into the association set for the paired brand.[260]

260 BROWN, G. - CHALIP, L. - JAGO, L. - MULES, T., *Developing Brand Australia: examining the role of events,* in MORGAN, N. - PRITCHARD, A. - PRIDE, R. (edited by), *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition,* 2nd edition, Elsevier Ltd., 2004, 279-306.

Laidler-Kylander and Simonin (2009) argued how in both the US and in Europe, trust in NGOs is substantially higher than trust in other groups such as business, government, and the media. Furthermore, this relative trust has grown over time. This greater brand trust potentially translates into high levels of brand equity (essentially a measure of brand strength), and NGOs are increasingly being perceived as the "new super brands."[261]

In their thorough analysis, the authors believe that the brand equity model for an NGO rests on four key variables: consistency, focus, trust, and partnerships. The first key factor is crucial for the purpose of our research. Under a system dynamics perspective, a causal loop diagram for consistency has been drawn. It consists of two reinforcing loops and one balancing loop.

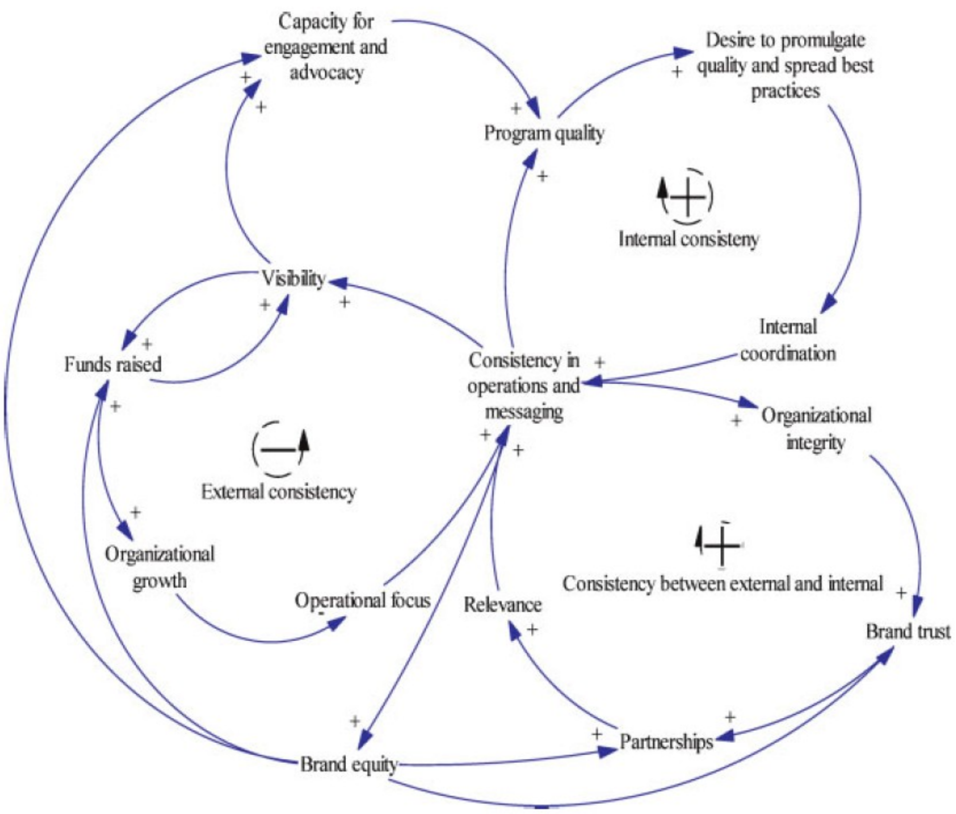

Figure 21: Causal Loop Diagram - Consistency.
Source: Laidler-Kylander, N. - Simonin, B. (2009), p. 62.

261 LAIDLER-KYLANDER, N. & SIMONIN, B., "*How international nonprofits build brand equity",* in Int. J. Nonprofit Volunt. Sect. Mark. 14: 57–69 (2009). Authors, furthermore, specify that *brand equity,* as defined by Aaker, is '*'a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to that firm's customers"* (Aaker, 1991). These assets and liabilities can be grouped into five main categories: brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other assets (such as patents and trademarks), and can be thought of as the drivers and levers of the brand.

The authors describe the causal loops as follows:

a) In the *internal consistency loop*, a reinforcing loop increases consistency in operations and enhances program quality, which in turn drives a desire within the organization to spread best practices. This stimulates an increase in the activity of internal coordination which results in more consistency in operations.

b) In the *external consistency loop*, a balancing 'messaging' loop enhances visibility, which drives both funds raised and the capacity of the organization to effectively engage and advocate. An increase in this last variable also boosts program quality, particularly in terms of advocacy. An increase in funds raised not only feeds back to amplify visibility but also results in organizational growth. It is this organizational growth, rather than simply funds raised, that can cause an organization to become less focused in terms of both its activities and its messaging. Finally, a decrease in focus leads to a decrease in consistency.

c) In the *consistency between external and internal loop*, which is a reinforcing loop, consistency produces greater organizational integrity which positively impacts brand trust. An increase in brand trust leads to more numerous and better partnerships, which in turn enhances the organization's relevance. This increase in relevance circles back to positively impact consistency. In addition to the three main loops, consistency enhances brand equity which positively impacts a number of variables, including partnerships, brand trust, funds raised, and the capacity for engagement and advocacy. The feedback from brand equity therefore magnifies the dynamics of the existing structure by strengthening both the reinforcing loops and the balancing loop.[262]

It should be noted that the aforementioned causal loop is mainly conceived for "traditional" NGOs, where internal staff is usually more relevant than the associates or "members." In other words, in traditional NGOs a stable staff is generally provided whose components are linked by employment or a consultancy relationship external to the main structure.

Besides the organization's general governance, the permanent and professional staff is entrusted with defining the NGO's general policy and taking care of its executive aspects. Members or associates generally perform the functions of funders or supporters for other reasons. Moreover, traditional NGOs count as their own strategic resource the participation of

262 Laidler-Kylander, N. & Simonin, B., op. cit., p. 62

a certain number of "volunteers," i.e., individual professionals who provide their work for free to achieve the goals and mission the organization has resolved to realize.

As explained in Section II, however, the translocal networks, although attributable to the category of NGOs, have peculiarities that make their structures more similar to those of international intergovernmental organizations. Briefly, among the other peculiarities:

a) Members (i.e., local governments) take priority. Generally, an assembly with deliberative powers is envisaged, and governance with executive functions is generally elective.

b) The professional staff is decidedly limited, while the technical committees are generally composed of subjects appointed by the members for a certain period.

c) The members are an expression of the principles of democracy (as they are bodies and authorities freely elected by the respective territorial communities for full institutional representation) and have direct executive powers in their areas of origin.

From all this, it follows that the *internal coordination* of the reinforcing loop relating to *internal consistency* should be understood as almost totally entrusted to the members of the network, i.e., to the local governments. This implies that theoretically, each member can have a more or less decisive influence on the brand equity of the network.

SECTION IV

ENHANCING A NEW SICILY'S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY SET ON A GLOBAL SCALE TO PURSUE CHANGE IN BRAND VALUE OUTCOMES THROUGH DYNAMIC PERFORMANCE GOVERNANCE

40. Internal trade-off in time and space, and the implications over a negative, damaged, or unbalanced nation brand

So far, we have hypothesized a scenario of optimal allocation of the variables in a well-balanced nation brand framework, accompanied by robust policies of active participation in the dynamics of translocal relationships. The system described, therefore, represents the desired theoretical equilibrium point. It is now necessary to consider the starting point of strong shortcomings by which the Sicilian nation brand is concretely affected, mainly under the following two aspects, one of which is internal and one external.

In the previous paragraphs, we assumed that a prerequisite for a robust nation brand is the tendential balance between all its six components. In other words, it can be assumed that a well-structured nation brand is the result of effective sustainable development policies adopted on each of the six components which are linked to one another by numerous reciprocal inferences (some of which are analysed in the previous paragraphs).

Conversely, a negative element affecting the nation brand can be considered the excessive development of one of the aforementioned components arising from policies or mental habits of governance that tend to consider one of the components as overwhelming the others, with consequent underestimation of these latest.

This framework can be further aggravated by the mental resistance of governance to recognize and take note of the existence of a general picture of a negative or strongly compromised nation brand, and the consequent absence of any effective policy design in this regard. In other words, the risk is twofold: on the one hand, the wicked problem of the negative reputation of the brand remains undisturbed in its fundamental causes, and on the other, the unsustainable implementation of one of the nation brand components (which overwhelms the others) further alters the nation brand, opposing a deviant image with another deviant image.

As Bianchi (2016) noted, framing a dynamic complex problem also implies the need for identifying trade-offs **over time** (i.e., between the short and long term) and **across space** (i.e., between a sub-system and another) in relation to alternative policies. Such trade-offs are due to policy resistance that dynamic complex systems often portray. This phenomenon may imply that after a given set of policies has been adopted and implemented to fix a problem, the system may respond by showing a performance improvement in the short run. However, in the long run, problems may bounce back, often stronger and more pervasive than in the past.[263]

Sicily, not only through its major political-administrative representation body (the Sicilian Region) but also in the multi-sectoral complex of the public/private sector, with regard to the policies aimed at consolidating its international position seems to have traditionally given maximum attention to the tourism sector (certainly one of the components that contributes to the nation brand[264]), but it has not effectively implemented—and in some cases not implemented at all—the other reputational components. This is not only the result of a deliberate and voluntary set of active policies, but it also represents what can now be considered a widely consolidated mental approach.

263 BIANCHI C., *Dynamic Performance Management*, Springer, 2016, p. 4.

264 A sustainable and correct framing of the "tourism" component in the general context of the place brand, and on the complex dynamics ruling this component, has been provided by VIGNIERI, V., "*Framing the Sources of Image of a Local Area through Outcome-Based Dynamic Performance Management*", in Public Organization Review, Springer, vol. 19(2), 2019, pages 249-271, and VIGNIERI, V., GUERRERA, A., & SCIRE', G. *Tourism Governance at Stake: supporting decision makers in a small town through an Interactive Learning Environment,* in L. Marchi, R. Lombardi, & L. Anselmi (edited by), *Il governo aziendale tra tradizione e innovazione*, 2016, Franco Angeli

Under a dynamic performance management perspective, a nation brand could be considered as a complex dynamic system in which the six components represent as many strategic resources. In this case, then, we can recall what Bianchi (2016) argued:

“*Organizational growth can be sustainable if the rate at which end-results change the endowment of corresponding strategic resources remains balanced. This implies that management is able to gradually increase the mix of strategic resources, and not only a bounded group of them, e.g., when a company fosters commercial growth only by expanding its sales force and other commercial strategic resources, without gradually increasing its production capacity. […] Resource increase is not obtained by reducing the endowment of the wider strategic resources in the local area or industry.”*[265]

Foresting just one of the nation brand’s six components (in our assumption, tourism) and subjecting the other components to it as well leads to an unsustainable growth scenario.

As for the **time** factor, under a short-term perspective, there are undoubted benefits, above all economic and partially also of image, deriving from large tourist flows that pour into the involved area, provided that the area is effectively able to cope with them. In the long term, however, proposing a purely tourism-based image for an area with a nation brand characterized by strong criticality could lead to undesired effects by crystallizing the general image of that area as an exclusively tourist destination, making it in the collective perception only a beautiful place *to see*, and not to live, to invest, etc.

This undesirable effect in the common perception can be further implemented in case of “institutional coverage” arising through the policy design officially adopted by the local governmental authority which, in leveraging tourism exclusively or in an unsustainable way, implicitly communicates that the governed area has no other strategic factors to focus on.

Furthermore, in case of a serious imbalance of self-awareness of the population (for the Sicilian case, see Section I above), another undesired relapse effect could be the further consolidation of autostereotypes as no alternative model of relationship with one's own area is introduced.

As for the **space** factor, the imbalance according to the tourism component can lead to both the inefficient allocation of resources to the detriment of all the other regional departments and, more specifically, to a singular phenomenon of "subjection" of the entire interinstitutional sector relating to cultural heritage to the interinstitutional tourism sector. In

265 BIANCHI C., *Dynamic Performance Management*, Springer, 2016, p. 88.

other words, in a scenario of unsustainable tourism growth, cultural and environmental assets are understood and interpreted by political decision makers (and, consequently, by the people) as destined only for tourism purposes.

As we have seen, on the contrary, in the nation brand hexagon, *tourism* and *culture and heritage* are two distinct and autonomous components (although they are certainly coordinated with each other) which require different approaches and create different outcomes.[266] A change in the decision-making approach will also be necessary in the sense of enhancing the culture and heritage components according to models that are completely independent and autonomous from any merely tourism-related outcome. This is also intended to achieve an internal rebalancing of the two components of the Sicilian nation brand, and a consequent overcoming of the trade-off and the resulting undesirable effects.

41. General criteria to correct negative place or nation images damaging the brand

The nation brand defines the global image of a place: by its very nature, it escapes the unidirectionality of a well-defined target. The nation brand as such can influence any target, from tourism to university immigration, to pure residential immigration, to investment attraction, etc. In turn, as we have seen, every single component that contributes to forming the brand can strongly influence, positively or negatively, or even unbalance the latter.

In a global panorama characterized by an aggressive competitiveness no longer only between states but between local areas or cities, the latter must necessarily a) confront themselves with their own image, which means confronting their own identity as it is perceived externally, and b) think in terms of global competitiveness, abandoning any reference to the national borders as a necessary consequence.

In the case of a negative and/or highly unbalanced nation brand, therefore, the priority is to neutralize the factors that have led to the negative value of the image, or parts of it, giving rise to a shared belief that is not questioned (negative stereotype). In other words, the need is

266 With reference to the institutional architecture of the Sicilian Region, this distinction is clearly present in the provision of two distinct regional departments: the Regional Department of Tourism, Sport and Entertainment (established with Regional Law 29 December 1962, n.28, and initially called Tourism , Communications and Transport), and the Regional Department of Cultural Heritage and Sicilian Identity. The latter was initially "provided" with the Regional Law 1 August 1977, n. 80 (with which, in reality, the skills of the Department of Education were extended, which was renamed with the addition of Cultural Heritage).

to correct the negative image through the identification and subsequent management of the factors and dynamics from which it originates, to restore the perception of the brand to initially neutral values and sustainably implement its growth by enhancing its critical success factors.

Gertner and Kotler (2004) in outlining some fundamental management strategies of a negative territorial brand, clearly distinguish between image and stereotype:

- **Image** is a more personal perception of a place that tends to vary from person to person. In other words, image is dependent upon the different attitudes of people. Faced with the same factor or element, everyone will respond emotionally according to their personal inclinations, tastes, and preferences. Based on these sensations, everyone will form a different personalized image of that particular place ("*different people can hold quite different images of the same place*").

- **Stereotype** suggests a widely held image that is highly distorted and simplistic and carries a favourable or unfavourable bias. The stereotype, therefore, has an objective nature, as it is linked to the image of the place and circulates with it. Furthermore, as a "fraction" of the image of the area, it circulates faster than the images derived by any individual perception since, by virtue of its uniformity, it can be communicated by the media in a univocal and constant manner.
-

Aside from ignoring negative conceptions and attitudes towards the place, then, as the authors assume, there are two main strategies to be adopted in approaching a negative place brand:

- Making a positive out of a negative.
- Removing the negative by overwhelming it with positives.

With regard to this last aspect, the strategy aims at the balancing or substitution effect that positive information should have on negative information without negating the latter. This should take place on the basis of the "specific weight" differential between the two images, in other words making the positive image the object of greater attention for the external stakeholders, provided that the positive information is:

1. ***Valid***: the image must be not far from reality.
2. ***Believable***: the image must not exceed reality, as overselling (with consequent disappointment of investors' expectations) is dangerous in the long run.
3. ***Simple***: if a place disseminates too many images of itself with no priorities, it leads to confusion.
4. ***Prestigious***: the image must suggest why people want to live in, invest in, work in, study in, or visit a place.
5. ***Distinctive***: the image works best when it is different from other common themes.[267]

The image's validity and believability are crucial factors: a negative stereotype, regardless of whether it is based on elements of truth or originates from mere invention, is supposed to be counteracted by positive information that has solid bases and foundations of reliability and reality; in other words it cannot be reduced to a mere communicative trick.

Recalling what Anholt (2010) said, as shown in Section I, a 'policy-based' approach holds that a purely communications-based approach is little more than futile propaganda since countries and cities are profoundly different from products and corporations, and that the reputations of places can only be meaningfully influenced by addressing their root causes. For this reason, images of places are largely a matter of 'reality with delay,' something relatively solid that is built over many decades, not something volatile and transient that can be pushed around at will by external agents. The art of changing people's beliefs, hence, lies in altering the phenomena which give rise to those beliefs. In this way, the 'audience' will still own its own beliefs and feel—quite justifiably—that it has arrived at it itself independently.[268]

Then, a first crucial conclusion can be traced: both in the case of city diplomacy action (regardless of which sector is involved) and in the case of nation brand management, it is essential that each action have a robust substantial basis that and no action ever be reduced to a mere communicative "make-up" operation.

Lastly, again recalling Anholt (2010), the management of the nation brand should develop through a process consisting of (at least) three components, each of which will require a series of adequate actions.: strategy, substance, symbolic actions.

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267 GERTNER, D. - KOTLER, P. *"How can a place correct a negative image?"*, in Place Branding, Vol. 1, 1, 2004, pp. 50-57.

268 ANHOLT, S., *Places - Identity, Image and Reputation*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010

The strategic three-way process to manage a nation brand (adapted from Anholt, 2010)

component	***contents and actions required***
Strategy	knowing *who* a nation is and *where* it stands today (both in reality and according to internal and external perceptions); knowing where it wants to get to; and knowing how it is going to get there. *Difficulties to deal with:* reconciling the needs and desires of a wide range of different national (or internal) actors into a more or less single direction; finding a strategic goal that is both inspiring and feasible, since these two requirements are frequently contradictory
Substance	Effective execution of the ***strategy*** in the form of new economic, legal, political, social, cultural, and educational activity: the real innovations, businesses, legislation, reforms, investments, institutions, and policies which will bring about the desired progress
Symbolic actions	➢ Particular species of ***substance*** that happen to have an intrinsic communicative power. ➢ Symbolic actions are emblematic of the strategy: they are at the same time a component of the national story and the means of telling it. ➢ A single symbolic action will seldom achieve any lasting effect. Multiple actions should emanate from as many different sectors as possible in order to build a rounded and believable image for the place; they must also continue in unbroken succession for many years. ➢ Symbolic actions should never be empty—they must be communicative substance rather than just communication

42. Choice of the strategic sectors to reframe a place or nation brand in a sustainable way: reframing the brand "Sicily" moving from the "culture and heritage" component

a) Connecting brand sustainability to the L&Ps' "good growth" pattern

Gertner and Kotler's five guidelines for designing (or reframing) a place's image, with consequent healing of the negative brand, describe as many sustainability criteria of the brand itself, thus avoiding imbalances. In turn, Anholt's three-way process effectively indicates how these guidelines should be dynamically implemented. The next step is to concretely identify the key sector among those identified in the six fundamental components of the nation brand from which to initiate the policy design aimed at reversing the negative value of the brand—in other words, the sector in which to concentrate actions intended to bring about the positive global image that will overwhelm the negative image.

In this sense, useful indications can be drawn from the criteria defined by London & Partners for the foreign relations strategies of the city of London. Recalling Section II, L&P's latest strategic plan relating to the period 2018–2021 emphasised the strategies that the Greater London Authority should implement to counter the potential negative spill-over effects that Brexit could produce to the detriment of the city's economy and reputation.[269]

Rather than a sustainability perspective, the foreign policy recipe proposed by L&P is based on a more general "good growth" pattern, defined by the Mayor of London as a balance between two opposing factors: on the one hand, international audiences are hugely valuable to London, creating economic growth and therefore opportunities for Londoners; on the other, too many visitors can impact Londoners in less positive ways, creating congestion and acting as barriers to opportunities or everyday enjoyment.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned factors, good growth should be reasonably enhanced:

- Where London has capacity.
- In sectors where London wants to remain globally competitive and create the quality jobs of the future.
- In forms that support London's diverse cultural offerings, large and small.

Capacity, global competitiveness, and cultural diversity, therefore, can become the key factors for proceeding with the analysis.

269 London & Partners' Strategy 2018-2021, p. 11

Finally, using L&P’s criterion of "capacity" to undertake a path of good growth at a global level, it is necessary to take into account not only the specific skills of the actor involved but also the tools and facilities, as well as the good practices and models, already available in the translocal relations framework.

The greater the know-how already developed and available to the field of foreign relations of a given governmental authority, the less effort and commitment will be required from that governmental authority to create apposite models and policies over time.

b) the “culture and heritage” component as the way for the Sicily’s “good growth”

Caserta *et alii* (2016) argued that in the 1960s and ‘70s, the attention given to cultural and environmental heritage as possible resources was very low everywhere: *“in Sicily in particular, there are many abandoned, dormant, or under-exploited archaeological sites. And it is not just a question of aesthetic sensitivity: what we want here above all is a concrete economic reasoning. […] It is not necessary to pay Etna, the fourth largest active volcano in the world, to make it stay where it is. For Etna, there are no other possible options. In Syracuse, the largest Greek theatre in existence cannot be moved from where it was built. The same is true for the temples of Agrigento and Segesta or the cathedral of Cefalù. If these extraordinary beauties are to be considered as resources, then it is reasonable to think of building a development path for Sicily focused on real estate resources”*.[270] This thought, although formulated with reference to the hypotheses of economic revival of the Sicilian cultural heritage, contains in itself a fundamental postulate that is valid for the entire definition of a robust Sicilian brand: the historical testimony.

We have spoken of "historical testimony" and not, generically, of cultural heritage for a very specific reason, namely to mark the difference between what objective *matter* is and what its *symbol* should be. It is this last point that the focus of the brand, namely the intrinsic message, is translated into subsequent effective communication. Moving from the "culture and heritage" component to the redefinition and restoration of the Sicilian brand could be considered the most effective strategy considering that:

1. It is precisely in the aspects of cultural identity and history that the misleading narratives identified in Section I of this study have most affected the perception of Sicily

270 CASERTA, M. – PREMOLI, A., *Mediterraneo Sicilia Europa*, Ed. Malcor D', 2016, pagg. 42-43 (in Italian).

abroad. Therefore, acting on the same component, it is reasonable to assume that the rehabilitation effects will be more robust and long-term.

2. In the culture and heritage component, compared to the other components of the nation brand, Sicily could be more competitive on a global level. In some cases, due to the uniqueness of the overall picture resulting from the simultaneous presence of several elements of heritage, even of differing natures origins (material and intangible, naturalistic and artistic, etc.), competitiveness translates into exclusivity with maximum enhancement of the distinction of Sicily from other similar realities.

3. On a global level, the culture and heritage sectors are characterized by an impressive stratification, over decades, of good practices, networks of international organizations and local governments, communication channels, support actions from the international community in general, etc.

Therefore, there is less need to commit to the formulation of new strategies and models specifically outlined for the repositioning of Sicily on the international scene through the action of cultural diplomacy, given the possibility of applying existing models and using communication channels already established.

The Permanent Representatives Committee of the Council of the European Union, in its *Draft Council Conclusions on Participatory Governance of Cultural Heritage* (2014),[271] remarked upon the following: the increased recognition at the international level of a people-centred and culture-based approach to fostering sustainable development; the importance of transparent, participatory, and informed systems of governance in order to address the cultural needs of all members of society; increased recognition at the European, national, regional, and local level of the social dimension of cultural heritage; the importance of activating synergies across different stakeholders to safeguard, develop, and transmit cultural heritage to future generations; and the adoption of a locally rooted and people-centred approach to cultural heritage in several EU programmes, including the research programme Horizon 2020 and the community-led local development approach supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds, an approach recognized by *Joint Programming Initiative Cultural Heritage and Global Change: A New Challenge for Europe.*

The cultural dimension is historically one of the cornerstones of city diplomacy. The Council of Europe claimed that the first experiences of "international" relations between cities

271 The document is available here.

resided in cultural initiatives, and these recognized the role of culture in the development of cities as the main instrument to promote democracy. The means of interaction could include cultural exchanges between local communities, cross-border cultural events, cross-border competitions, guidelines on cultural development enhancement, etc.

The Council of Europe stressed that the creation of international networks through cultural initiatives could be considered an effective development strategy for all of those territorial communities that were (and still are) pursuing improvement of their economic strength, position, and reputation in the world (also a *soft power* model). Strengthening of cultural exchanges likewise contributes to job creation, urban renewal, and social inclusion, raising the awareness of communities of key local issues concerning local resources (tangible and intangible).

Finally, the pervasive character of culture in everyday life does imply that related activities are by their own nature destined to involve different target social groups.[272] Culture and heritage are universally shared values which tend more to unite than to divide. It is therefore a sector with low or no risk of effective competition (unlike, for example, the investment or export component, or even tourism itself). There is therefore the crucial added value of the global commonality of interests in lieu of a clash scenario between these. Since it is directly inherent to the cultural identity not only of an area but also of the people who live there, the lever of the culture and heritage component is destined to produce direct beneficial effects for the people by acting on the self-perception of the same (internal effect) as well as on the perception of them from the outside (external effect).

Ultimately, culture and heritage suffer from several super-wicked problems. Among others, since early '80s it has been said that in the face of technological social evolution and well before the explosion of globalization, what was really at stake was the very survival of culture in its true meaning and essence in the face of forces that impose a single, all-pervading model of development derived from the achievements, lifestyles, and values of industrial-age civilization. The path to a planetary society was supposed to lie in the strengths and realities of international cultural cooperation and the projection of cultural values that would have respected the special integrity and specific identity of culture while building and sustaining the new scenarios.[273]

272 COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *C2C Toolkit*, 2015.

273 KIRPAL, P., "*Cultural values, dialogue between cultures and international Cooperation*", in *Problems of culture and cultural values in the contemporary world*, UNESCO, 1983

In the post-globalized scenario, cultural diversity has become increasingly crucial for a well-balanced multicultural world (a world based on the sum of multiple and different cultures). Heritage, in turn, is constantly threatened not only by the neglect of individual local governments but also by super-wicked problems of a higher level. Think, for example, of the destruction of world heritage monuments by terrorist groups, the serious compromise of archaeological assets in war scenarios, or the erosion of tangible assets due to climatic factors.

Or again, regarding intangible heritage, think of the populations who have suffered the depletion of their traditions and cultural identities due to the compromise of their freedom and self-determination by occupying governments, terrorist groups, etc., to a point bordering on the full violation of human rights.

43. Qualitative modelling in DPM and stochastic systems

We will now proceed to model a policy design hypothesis according to the DPM methodology. The aim is to tackle the local reputation problem through the actions of the local inter-institutional group on a global level. It is assumed that by providing a substantial contribution to the search for solutions to super-wicked-problems, the local area (through its internal actors and stakeholders) is able to express high-level skills that can decisively influence its perception among external stakeholders.

In conclusion, there is a main objective, that of participation in and contribution to the local governments' global policy making, and a relapse objective, which is that of improving the local reputation, and therefore the brand, before the global community.

The system dynamics approach should not be confused with quantitative modelling, which sometimes occurs as a second stage of analysis. In order to feed performance management with simulation models that portray suggested policies through DPM charts and reports, a more pervasive effort than qualitative modelling is needed. This not only requires detailed data but also the active collaboration of decision makers with basic system dynamics modelling skills.

Where few specific data are available, however, qualitative modelling facilitates the conceptualization of a system's dynamic complexity, so aiding preliminary policy design and the development of more sophisticated simulation models for measurement and policy improvement.[274] Regardless of data availability, we believe that qualitative modelling should be helpful, too, whereas quantitative modelling is impossible to lead, uncertain, and extremely difficult.

Even if a robust data set were available, it should be noted how some wicked or super-wicked issues often stem from roots in highly stochastic systems, so that any related quantitative analysis and subsequent simulation models, even though achieved on the basis a rigorously collected data set, could lead to results that can be validated at first but are not repeatable due to the casual and unexpected variation over time of one or more elements or the sudden emergence of other elements (thus making the whole model invalid).

A prominent example concerns reputational problems. It has been noted that stereotypes are created or reinforced by the media and the entertainment industry and that they deeply influence the image of a place. In this regard, Gertner and Kotler (2004) argued that any salutary images distributed by place marketers can be overwhelmed by independent film and media treatments: "*thus the effectiveness of a place marketer's sales material on the beauty of Rio de Janeiro can be instantly cancelled by news items in the New York Times about a crime and kidnapping wave in Rio.*"[275]

The example above highlights an almost totally random sequence of events, including:

1. Occurrence of a traumatic and unexpected negative event directly affecting the image of the place, in this case, an event caused by a human action. But negative events, as a variable, can consist in human actions or natural disasters. Their range can vary because of *human actions* (ranging from the crime of a few persons to a full-scale riot) and because of *natural events* (from an exceptional isolated climatic event to the eruption of a volcano, the erosion of the continental shelf, and so on). Moreover, the "negative event" affecting the place image will be perceived differently depending on the personal attitudes and preferences of each individual actor, thus giving rise to different responses by different targets, i.e., unlike in models based on objectively quantifiable values (amount of taxes, amount of public transport, etc.), the effect of a negative event on the place image will almost always be relative and subjective.

274 BIANCHI, C. - BOVAIRD, T. - LOEFFLER, E. , *op. cit.,* 2017
275 GERTNER, D. - KOTLER, P. *"How can a place correct a negative image?",* Place Branding, 1, 2004, 50-57

2. Dissemination of information about the negative event through press and media. In this case, any effect will be governed by random and non-quantifiable variables which from time to time (using the example of the press) will depend on the diffusion of the newspaper, the perception of its reliability by readers, the place in which it is published, in some cases the day of the week it is published, etc.

There are several cases, then, in which quantitative modelling is not practicable, or is even impossible, due to the stochastic environment under exam. This does not, however, in any way prevent the use of the DPM or, by derivation, the DPG approaches.

In this regard, a policy-based DPM model can be developed.

As already noted by Bianchi *et alii* (2017)[276] according to Morecroft (1988), policy-based models are (usually small) models which display important dynamic processes that occur frequently, offering modelers and policy makers a way of collecting and storing knowledge about feedback structures and dynamics of social and business systems.[277] Bianchi *et alii* (2017) also remarked on how such models are dynamic feedback systems that support particular but widely applicable behavioural insights because they are usually developed from a variety of information sources such as case studies, published articles or surveys, personal knowledge, and experience from practice. Though such models cannot be directly applied to any specific context, their value is in providing policy makers with a selective view of the feedback structure recurring in several policy domains.

Therefore, these models are not appropriate for solving specific problems; rather, they are educational tools for learning about the fundamentals of complex systems. They can improve policy making in general by upgrading the quality of a manager's mental models. They are therefore *learning tools* which can support the design and implementation of DPM systems, which can enable decision makers to better frame trade-offs across time and space.

Consequently, the qualitative system dynamics modelling approach developed below is supposed to be a first step in designing and implementing a full DPM system, and the DPM model based on qualitative analysis proposed below should be appreciated in terms of *learning environment*. It is also intended to constitute a prerequisite that should be kept in

276 BIANCHI, C. - BOVAIRD, T. - LOEFFLER, E. , *"Applying a Dynamic Performance Management Framework to Wicked Issues: How Coproduction Helps to Transform Young People's Services in Surrey County Council, UK"*, International Journal of Public Administration, 40:10, 2017, p. 833-846.

277 MORECROFT, J., *"System Dynamics and microworlds for policy makers"*. European Journal of Operational Research, 35(3), 1988, 301–320.

mind when formulating any policy concerning the vital sectors of the economy and society of a local area.

The nation or place brand is not a specific sector in which it is possible to intervene with specific and targeted policies. It is the sum of all the actions and policies undertaken, or not taken, in each of those individual sectors. Nonetheless, the nation or place brand significantly conditions, positively or negatively, the outcome of the policies adopted in each of those sectors. In a DPM model for the public sector relating to the tourism economy, the university system, exports, etc., the place or nation brand should always be inserted as a "variable." For example, it is not possible to effectively formulate a tourism revitalization strategy for an area inside Sicily without taking into account that a large number of manuals and tourist guides still advise their readers to pay attention to street shootings in Sicilian cities, and massive media productions continue to dispatch mafia movies abroad. Many of the readers or audiences will not accept the (alleged) risk, preferring to travel to other destinations.

44. The DPG chart: reframing a local brand through trans-local cooperation

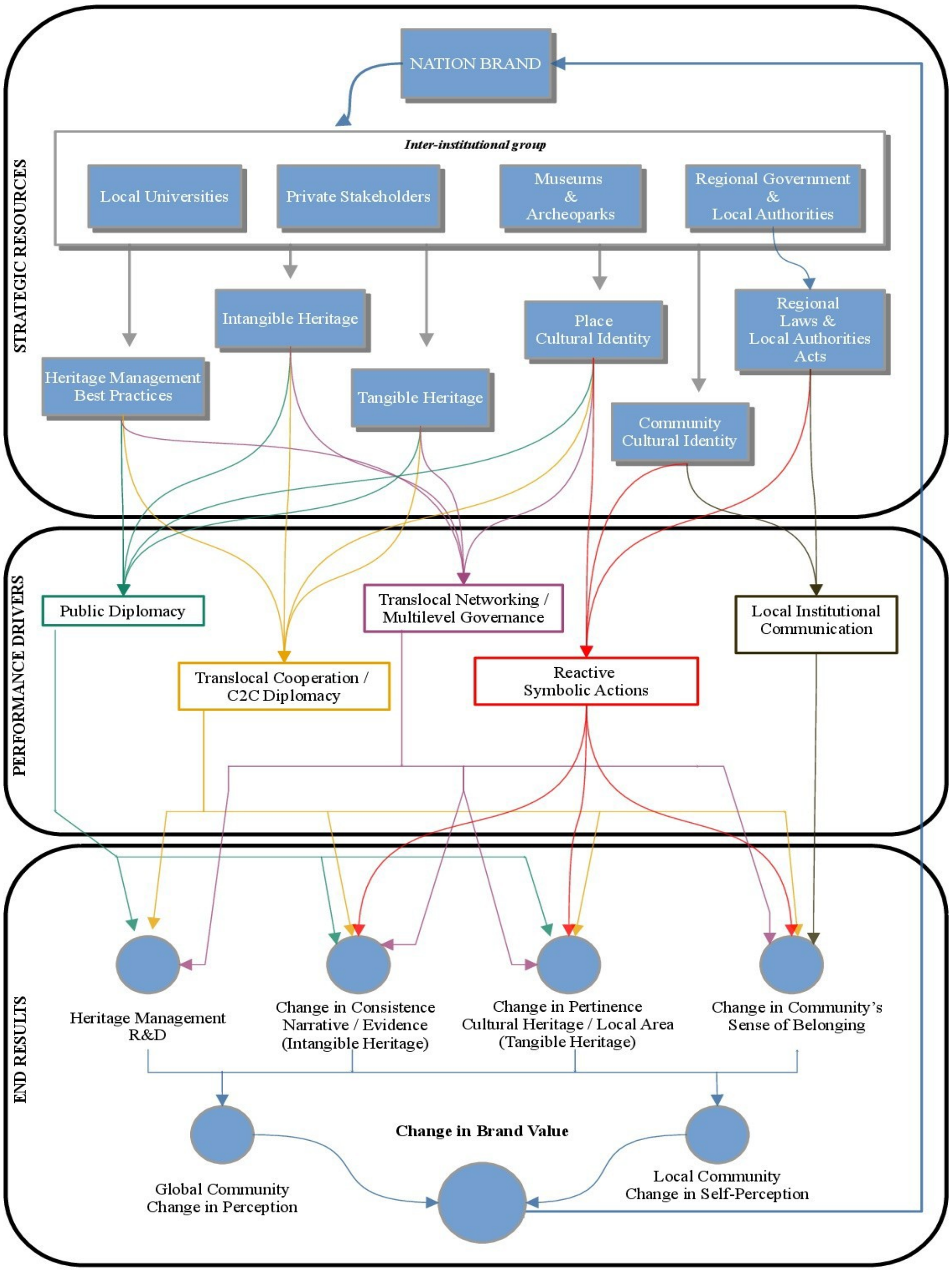

Figure 22: Dynamic Performance Governance chart

a) The inter-institutional group

Internal stakeholders have been considered as a single group called the *inter-institutional group*. It should be noted, however, that each stakeholder category which embodies one of the components of the nation brand hexagon should be considered as a "strategic resource." According the described outcome-based system, each of them will benefit from the change in value of the nation brand. In turn, the latter is also considered a strategic resource (in particular, an intangible asset or equity).

Since the model mentioned in the introduction is deliberately general (and therefore intended for any local area of sub-state rank with compromised or strongly negative place brand), it deliberately does not take into account either a specific institutional structure or eventual constraints by national laws. However, it should be noted that among the public actors, it is necessary to identify at least two different departments that are destined to interact with one another, namely:

1. The top governance structure (presidency, governor's office, mayor, etc.), which is responsible for institutional representation, in external or foreign relations, of the local area and its community. This department is expected to have (or to endow itself with) human resources and structures adequately skilled in foreign relations theory and practice.

2. The department specifically responsible for the management of territorial identity, cultural heritage, or all aspects related to the management of the brand on a historical-cultural basis. In other words, this department will be the one responsible for identifying and defining the substantial aspects of the governance action.

In the case of Sicily, it is therefore necessary to specify that the analysis starts from the assumption of the central role among the public actors of the Sicilian Region and, in particular, of the Presidency of the Region with regard to institutional representation, and the Regional Department of Cultural Heritage and Sicilian Identity as regards the substantial content of the action.

b) Final and intermediate outcomes (end results)

The change in brand value represents the final outcome, which is preceded by two intermediate outcomes:

1. In the external perception, to be understood as a subversion of negative stereotypes through the consolidation of a general positive perception overwhelming the negative. This change in perception does not refer to a specific target of observers and is expected to operate over the global plan (included any potential new stakeholder).

2. In the self-perception of the community of the local area. This outcome is strategic not only because the "people" are an autonomous component of the place or nation brand but also—and above all—because the community itself is an image carrier of the area as a whole.

As highlighted in Section I, the embodiment of the negative stereotype or self-stereotype plays a decisive role in the degradation of the overall brand of the area. Consequently, the aim is to reverse the detachment and avoid negative attitudes. This intermediate outcome is intended to transform uncritical self-perception into critical self-awareness.

Achievement of all these outcomes may be possible through the inter-institutional management of strategic, material, and intangible resources, namely the history and the cultural heritage related to the area in question. Relevant system delays are expected to operate at the intermediate outcome levels with regard to the change in external perception, as normally an image sticks in the public's mind for a long time even after it loses its validity (Gertner & Kotler, 2004).

c) Sub-system nr. 1:Tangible heritage assets present in the local area and related best practices

The massive presence of tangible assets in the area necessarily requires the development of specific methods of management, enhancement, protection, and sustainable reuse of the artefacts—in the case of historic buildings, for example, valid practices for the sustainable reuse of those assets for the benefit of the local community. This will require a different approach to planning and managing the city as a whole. In the case of a strong and heterogeneous presence of archaeological assets, both movable and immovable, the stakeholders of the local area usually develop innovative methods of research and protection of those assets.

Numerous actors contribute to these processes, including: the local area department responsible for the management of the territory and its cultural heritage; the universities, through their research activities; museum systems and archaeological parks; individuals and private sector actors, through the management of common goods or project financing; and last but not least, specific regional/local laws, measures, and acts governing all other factors.

Depending on the innovative management expertise that is involved in such a complex system of cultural heritage which more or less directly affects the daily life of the community (beyond any purely tourist need), best practices for the management of territories with a high density of historical and cultural heritage also are supposed to represent a “stock.”

In the case of Sicily, a relevant example of an innovative best practice in the management of cultural heritage is represented by the *superintendence of the sea.* This was established in Sicily by Article 28 of the 2004 regional budget law with the aim of protecting, managing, and enhancing the culture of the sea in Sicily. It operates now through the Regional Department of Cultural Heritage and Sicilian Identity of the Sicilian Region, and its tasks cover research, census, protection, supervision, enhancement, and use of the archaeological underwater heritage (historical, naturalistic, and demo-anthropological) of the Sicilian seas and smaller islands. This structure represents the culmination of a journey that began in 1999 with the establishment of a group for underwater archaeological research, the GIASS (Sicily Underwater Archaeological Survey Group) which evolved into the SCRAS (Submarine Archaeological Research Coordination Service). The all-encompassing approach is seen as a systematic approach to culture, tradition, and the history of the relationship between man and the sea by which he has dealt with issues and studied sites and wrecks inherent to the ancient age as well as medieval, modern, and contemporary maritime traditions. The operational activity was guaranteed by technical-instrumental equipment but also, above all, by the constant help of the police operating at sea (Guardia di Finanza, Arma dei Carabinieri, State Police, Port Authority, and Coast Guard). Superintendence of the sea operates now with full autonomy.[278]

d) Sub-system nr. 2: tangible and intangible cultural heritage and community cultural identity

Tangible and intangible cultural heritage combine to lead the subsystem of the local area "people" component to a significant change in behaviour and mental attitude. For the purposes of this study, the expression "intangible cultural heritage" refers to both the

278 Information taken from the institutional website of the Superintendence of the Sea.

definition adopted by UNESCO[279] and any further aspect concerning the local cultural identity, including its civil, social, political, and economic history and the intangible products deriving from it which may have contributed to the development of the local area people and of humanity.

On the basis of the realignment ratio between narrative and historical truth (i.e., the quantity of reactive and proactive actions aimed at contrasting misleading narratives), the increasing variations in the overall cultural identity of the local area are intended to implement the level of cultural identity of the community which increases or decreases due to the sense of belonging of that community to its local area and related cultural identity.

It is important to point out that the substantial difference between the strategic resource "community cultural identity" and the intermediate outcome "local community change in self-perception" lies in the fact that the former is a necessary prerequisite of the latter. In other words, reversing the dynamics of domain and/or in-group avoidance and disengagement is the basis for endowing the community with tools and resources for counteracting and overcoming negative autostereotypes (i.e., change in self-perception intermediate outcome).

279 According to UNESCO, intangible cultural heritage includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

UNESCO describes intangible cultural heritage as:

Traditional, contemporary and living at the same time: intangible cultural heritage does not only represent inherited traditions from the past but also contemporary rural and urban practices in which diverse cultural groups take part;

Inclusive: we may share expressions of intangible cultural heritage that are similar to those practised by others. Whether they are from the neighbouring village, from a city on the opposite side of the world, or have been adapted by peoples who have migrated and settled in a different region, they all are intangible cultural heritage: they have been passed from one generation to another, have evolved in response to their environments and they contribute to giving us a sense of identity and continuity, providing a link from our past, through the present, and into our future. Intangible cultural heritage does not give rise to questions of whether or not certain practices are specific to a culture. It contributes to social cohesion, encouraging a sense of identity and responsibility which helps individuals to feel part of one or different communities and to feel part of society at large;

Representative: intangible cultural heritage is not merely valued as a cultural good, on a comparative basis, for its exclusivity or its exceptional value. It thrives on its basis in communities and depends on those whose knowledge of traditions, skills and customs are passed on to the rest of the community, from generation to generation, or to other communities;

Community-based: intangible cultural heritage can only be heritage when it is recognized as such by the communities, groups or individuals that create, maintain and transmit it – without their recognition, nobody else can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage.

Data and information taken from the UNESCO official website.

44. (Follows) the performance drivers

In the DPG chart here in discussion, only *social performance drivers* are considered. These can mostly be expressed in terms of either stakeholder expectations or perceived past organizational performance. For example, a social performance driver could refer to the ratio of actual and planned social initiatives undertaken by a firm (Bianchi, 2016, p. 77). For the purpose of this study, all the performance drivers considered are correlated, according to the various benchmarks described below, with the ratio of substantial action to communication, dissemination, and sharing of effects either with the internal community of the local area or with the global community.

a) Public Diplomacy

Ratio: foreign communities based cultural projects achieved/year

Public diplomacy is intended to be an institutional communication tool by which, in the case of translocal relations, a local governmental authority (or, in a whole-of-government perspective, the local inter-institutional group) delivers its initiatives to an external community with the aim of promoting its image without any mediation by the equal foreign government authority. As a communication channel, this is just a vector for substantial initiatives that pre-date it. For the purposes of this study, initiatives in the culture and heritage sector are therefore taken into consideration.

The specific cultural declination of public diplomacy takes the name of *cultural diplomacy*. These initiatives may consist of exhibitions at foreign museums, panels in events open to the public, participation in or promotions of cultural or cinematographic reviews (provided that there are film productions validly descriptive of Sicilian history), participation in or promotions of editorial products concerning and Sicilian history and cultural heritage, patronage of cultural initiatives promoted by members of external communities to enhance Sicilian heritage and history, etc.

b) Participation in trans-local networks

Ratio: public policy proposals to tackle super-wicked problems in cultural and heritage fields/time ≤5 years

(See Section II)

c) Participation in translocal cooperation ("city-to-city" approach)

Ratio: peer-to-peer cooperation projects achieved in cultural and heritage fields/time ≤5 years

Unlike participation in translocal networks where the greatest focus is shifted to the objective aspect of actions therein undertaken, "city-to-city" cooperation focuses more on the subjective aspect in the choice of the counterpart, orienting translocal whole-of-government actions towards strategic partners selected on the basis of specific features (e.g., the simultaneous presence of several characteristics of local areas which present the same or a similar problem to be tackled). In other words, while translocal cooperation in the form of a network has its main focus on a specific activity or sector of action, the city-to-city model allows for further enhancement of the specific characteristics of the counterpart(s) as well as important approaches of solidarity in the field of heritage and culture.

We briefly recall here that, as described in Section II, the foreign action of local governments can also take place for purely humanitarian or solidarity purposes in aid of areas and communities severely affected by economic crises, natural disasters, war scenarios, etc. This is based on the postulate that only a local government has the expertise and experience necessary to effectively help another local government. This approach, within the framework of Van Der Plujim's six dimensions of city diplomacy, corresponds to the "support to other communities development" component, and some relevant experiences in this regard have been mentioned in Section II with reference to the contribution of various municipal governments and European regions to the restoration of peace and "normality" in Palestinian municipalities in the 2000s. In this regard, we recall an interesting experience which, although it concerns state agencies of the respective countries, can be adopted by a local government in favour of another local government or related agencies.

In November 2019, with the aim of restoring the National Museum of Palmyra as a means of reviving the ancient city in Syria, the Saint Petersburg State Hermitage Museum and the Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences signed agreements in Damascus with Syria's Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM). Among the long-term goals of the agreement were the Hermitage and the National Museum of Oman working together to restore 20 Syrian antiquities, primarily from Palmyra; an international campaign to restore Palmyra, which was seriously damaged by Isis; and the formation of an international expert group under the auspices of UNESCO and DGAM, together with the Hermitage and the Aga Khan Foundation.[280]

d) Reactive symbolic actions

Ratio: actions undertaken to combat the dissemination of false or deviant information about the local area/year

In the case of a brand bearing a negative value, characterized by further media or narrative depletions, the proposition of countermeasures aimed at establishing a positive perception of the brand may not be sufficient. As noted in Section I, Echeverry *et alii* (2017) argued that the entertainment industry and mass media have an important influence on people's perceptions of a country, especially in the case of negative images.

The authors define these simplifications in terms of *false realities* (or *misleading narratives* as proposed in Section I) that rely on exceptions instead of patterns, or on (subjective) impressions instead of facts.[281] On the other hand, as Gertner and Kotner recognized (2004), a positive image can be easily and suddenly overwhelmed by independent film and media treatments.[282]

Therefore, dissemination of deviant information without appreciable consequences for its author(s) degrades the effectiveness of the brand restoration action on the one hand, nullifying its positive effects, and reinforces the already existing negative stereotype (which is then be "reconfirmed" over and over again) on the other. The "reactive" contrasting action,

280 The Art Newspaper, *Russia and Syria sign agreement to restore the ancient city of Palmyra,* 19 November 2019.

281 ECHEVERRI, L., - HORST, E., - MOLINA, G., - MOHAMAD, Z., *"Nation Branding: Unveiling Factors that Affect the Image of Colombia from a Foreign Perspective"*, in Tourism Planning & Development, 2017

282 GERTNER, D. - KOTLER, P. *"How can a place correct a negative image?"*, in Place Branding, Vol. 1, 1, 2004, pp. 50-57

which might take the form of legal action or a note of protest through diplomatic channels, represents a particular species of Anholt's ***symbolic actions*** (2011) that are supposed to have an intrinsic communicative power.[283]

Beyond any actual outcome from the action undertaken (statement at the end of the judgment, successful diplomatic intervention, etc.), the basic message is that the area and/or its local community, through its institutional actors, takes a strong public advocacy position against the content of unreliable information concerning it, that is, it disclaims the content.

Another factor of intrinsic communicative power deriving from the action of symbolic reaction is the communication to the issuer(s) that the delivery of unreliable information which is detrimental to the image of the area and its community will have some costs. Given that the issuer (be it a newspaper, publishing house, film production company, or other entity) has its own brand, the questioning of the reliability of that brand will be a first cost that issuer itself will incur. Such a cost may not be convenient as in the case of an inert "attacked" party who does not oppose any kind of reaction.

A symbolic reactive action (or reaction), therefore, not only has *counteracting inferences* (which counter the effects of an action and/or informative aggression already ongoing) but also preventive inferences (other issuers, perceiving the target's reactivity rate, will refrain from disseminating further false information, considering the cost/benefit ratio as not convenient with reference to the side effects their own image could suffer). As Anholt remarked, symbolic actions should never be empty. They must be communicative substance rather than just communication: the action aimed at refuting negative information should never be limited to simply demolishing the same but should instead create an opportunity for the delivery of reliable information.

e) Change in local institutional communication

Ratio: amount of reliable and accurate information delivered to the local area by local institutional actors/year.

What has been observed with regard to public diplomacy also applies to the internal side of institutional communication, as addressed to the same local area of origin of the main actor

283 ANHOLT, S., *"Beyond the Nation Brand: The Role of Image and Identity in International Relations"* in *Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 1, 2011; see also ANHOLT, S., *Places - Identity, Image and Reputation*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010

or local authority. What changes, of course, are the recipients of the communication: external communities in the first case and local area communities in the second.

In this case, recall what was previously observed regarding image overselling: the strictly descriptive and communicative part of the substantial brand basis—i.e., the branding and public diplomacy activities, as well as truthfulness—must be contained within the substantial limits of the place/nation brand. An unsustainable image, i.e., an image artificially created for communication purposes only and whose content exceeds the substantial limits of the brand by describing imaginary or non-existent qualities, creates false expectations in external stakeholders. Disappointment owing to these false expectations results in substantial damage to the overall place brand in terms of unreliability of the *governance* component or perceived inadequacy of the other components. As demonstrated by the causal loop diagram related to the interconnections between the six nation brand hexagon components, any negative impact on even one of these components leads to a shift in loop dominance in each of the other components, giving rise to undesired phenomena and consequences affecting the entire brand.

In this sense, it is therefore necessary that public diplomacy activities (externally directed) and local institutional communication activities (internally directed) should deliver the same substantial results.

In the case of Sicily, one could consider the hypothesis in which, through an initiative of public diplomacy in cultural and heritage matters, historical aspects linked to the Norman phase of the *Regnum Siciliae* are communicated to an external community, while in providing professional training courses for regional tourist guides, the authority keeps talking about Norman "domination." In this case, two conflicting and irreconcilable narratives circulate, one communicated by the local authority and related stakeholders towards an external community and the other delivered by the local community by word of mouth, which can lead to at least two undesired effects as members of foreign communities:

a) Either base their own internal images on the basis of the public diplomacy information received by the inter-institutional group while deeming the local community unreliable (with the depletion of the "people" component);

b) Or deem "honest" the message emanating from the local community (even as it is assumed that no one would dispatch false information to the own detriment) while deeming the position of the inter-institutional group to be unreliable or "propaganda" (with damage to the "governance" component and the other stakeholders involved).

It is crucial, then, that the local institutional communication:

a) Is jointly held by all the internal stakeholders who are going to spread or deal with it. In other words, all the internal stakeholders (members of the inter-institutional group) should communicate the same substantial content, without significant inconsistencies or differences.

b) Is consistent with the external institutional communication (public diplomacy). In terms of performance measurement, any communication discrepancy which occurs within the interinstitutional group and/or between internal and external institutional communications should be considered a symptom of cognitive dissonance.

45. Conclusions

In this section, we analysed the relationship hypotheses that may exist between three scientific research sectors discussed in the first three sections and initially not connected to one another: the management of the brand and the reputation and image of an area; the inter-institutional relations that local governments can engage in outside national borders; and the methodological approach offered by the SD and DPM models in relation to sectors characterized by high dynamism.

According to an eminently qualitative approach, these relationships have been explored and applied to the case of Sicily's brand under the whole-of-government profile, which represents a highly peculiar case study of a local area with brands strongly damaged not only locally but globally. This last aspect implies that the reframing of the Sicilian brand must also take place on a global level; therefore, although Sicily is formally a local area (i.e. a region), its key players should also act on a global level.

In other words, an action aimed at changing the perception of Sicily and its components among the national stakeholders alone is neither sufficient nor effective, just as an action that focuses one only one of the brand components (tourism in the Sicilian case) is not enough since in this way a trade-off leading to unsustainable brand development would be achieved. Indeed, as has been observed, this trade-off could even contribute to further damage to the brand.

Given the substantial contents offered by the theory of the nation brand on the one hand, and by the structure of city diplomacy on the other, the methodology and the consequent model created in a dynamic performance governance environment has proved to be an effective context for a systemic and not static approach to the problem under consideration. Among the most relevant insights of the DPG model in reframing the static and monothematic approach generally followed by decision makers are:

a. There is a change in the mental models of the key actors in the area under consideration, from a purely local perspective in the management of strategic global resources. This aspect, in overcoming collaboration barriers on a global level, can be summed up by the well-known motto "think locally, act globally."

b. With specific reference to Sicily, another change to suggest is that of overcoming the local mental model of systemic underestimation/ignorance of the cultural identity of the area. This applies to all key players, including the community.

c. The DPG approach allows decision makers to perceive the long-term performances deriving from the change in local strategic planning in the management, interpretation, and communication of strategic resources of the culture and heritage component. These should no longer be valued as static assets intended for tourist use only, but as an essential dynamic element of the competitive identity of the area and its community. In this sense, extensive references have also been made to cultural diplomacy and to the prospects that the know-how acquired in the management of an enormous material and intangible cultural heritage becomes, in turn, a strategic resource to be placed at the base of the reframing action of the brand.

Another aspect by which the DPG approach has made it possible to identify further suggestions for decision makers is the correct programming of the "substance" actions defined by Anholt as the effective basis for the development of the nation brand. Intervention in the global dialogue must be effective, that is, it must correspond to one or more actions at a global level that really contribute to common growth. In other words, in order for "substance" to be realized on a global level, the contribution of the area should consist of a real contribution to tackling one or more super-wicked problems.

In the case of Sicily, this substantial contribution should be made in the culture and heritage sector where Sicily "has capacity" (applying the same criteria identified for the "good growth" of London). In the long run, this contribution should lead to the overwhelming effect on the negative image by a new positive image based on real actions and skills, intervening in the long term on the entire Sicilian brand.

Although the empirical analysis here developed focuses on a single case study, we argue that the methodological insights illustrated in the last section of the paper can be extended to similar contexts. Such similarity does not only concern the specific socio-economic issues profiling the described problem context or the size of the local area but also refers to the crucial issues for local strategic planning that an inter-institutional system implies.

CONCLUSIONS

46. General conclusions

A brand is an extremely sensitive intangible economic resource: if it does not deliver positive perceptions, it can suddenly transform into a factor of depletion exercising general effects on the entire social, economic, and cultural life of a local area or region (exactly as it would happen for an entire nation). Unlike any other material or intangible economic resource, a brand does not simply cease to produce effects if its "value" equals zero. It can create negative effects, depressing the area attractiveness and rendering ineffective in varying proportions any policy undertaken in the various sectors of the local economy.

The thesis takes into account the case of Sicily, which in many respects represents a global unicum. There are, in fact, almost no other cases of local areas, regions, or areas of sub-state importance that are long-term carriers of such a vast multifactorial complex of bias, prejudice, and negative stereotypes. Unlike similar stereotype phenomena (mostly related to individual cities in the world, or groups of them), the origins of such prejudices are most often obscure or difficult to define, in some cases dating back many decades and perpetuated over time.

This thesis has expressly taken a position not to deepen, since it is unrelated to the subject of this study, the investigation into the origins and causes of such stereotypes, deferring this instead to the work of scholars in the historical and/or sociological fields. The analysis instead has as its object the evaluation of unreliability of the misleading narratives that have led to the crystallization of stereotypes, as well as their effects on the overall image and reputation of Sicily. This is in addition to the effects of this negative stereotypical framework, which afflicts the Sicilian brand and the Sicilian community itself in terms of disengagement or domain avoidance.

In other respects, since the brand is by definition intended to exert its effects on the global level (as the sum of the external perceptions that stakeholders have of a certain place), the action for its restoration should also be conducted on a global level. Since the question regards an area of sub-state rank (unrelated to the common circuits of international relations), however, patterns and practices that have characterized non-state local governments' foreign relations and policies for decades have to be analysed as well.

So, the study has undertaken a critical analysis of the phenomenon known as *city diplomacy* (which, despite its historical origins, can be peacefully related to the foreign policies and relations of any territorial *non-state actor*) and its theorizations, practices, and structures under the two main variants of the direct relationship between two or more local governments (city-to-city models) and the organization of local governments structured in subjectively third-party networks.

These kinds of foreign relations and related structures pursue various purposes and objectives ranging from the care of their own specific interests and those of the individual member governments to the joint search for solutions to major global problems, as well as (and above all) issues that have always been regarded as the exclusive domain of domestic and foreign policy of nation-states (climate change, terrorism, public health, etc.). They may respond to utilitarian needs (as local governments cooperate in the mutual interest) or solidaristic purposes (as governments cooperate in the interests of a local government or third-party communities who have suffered serious humanitarian damage as a result of natural disasters, war scenarios, etc.).

Eventually, a dynamic performance governance approach was adopted mainly to model a learning strategy to be implemented through subsequent policies aimed at promoting the participation of the local government (in this case, the Sicilian Region) in global translocal cooperation according to inter-institutional and whole-of-government perspectives. The proposed scenario, in particular, enhances any positive impact on the brand and on the image of the local area that could be obtained if the latter were actively involved, like other local governments in the world, in research and development to tackle super-wicked problems of global interest.

More specifically, we have stressed how the local government should participate in global cooperation in sectors where it can best excel in order to initially consolidate its own brand in a very specific sector. In the case of Sicily, this sector has been identified as "culture and heritage" separate from the closely related tourism sector (which, in turn, was a limiting trade-off).

A robust *public diplomacy* action abroad is intended to be essential to any communication related to culture and heritage actions. As J.S. Nye (2008) said,

A country's soft power rests on its resources of culture, values, and policies. A smart power strategy combines hard and soft power resources. Public diplomacy has a long history as a means of promoting a country's soft power and was essential in winning the cold war. The current struggle against transnational terrorism is a struggle to win hearts and minds, and the current overreliance on hard power alone is not the path to success. Public diplomacy is an important tool in the arsenal of smart power, but smart public diplomacy requires an understanding of the roles of credibility, self-criticism, and civil society in generating soft power.[284]

The reinforcement of the local brand also results in the redefinition and strengthening of the cultural identity of the local community, strengthening its motivation, enhancing the inversion of the disengagement, avoiding circuits, and strengthening its collective sense (which, in turn, should lead to a decrease in other deviant social system dynamics such as clientelism).

The model, adopted following the qualitative analysis conducted in the thesis, is of a general type (Morecroft, 1985; Bianchi, 2017) and therefore is not aimed at solving a specific problem but rather at providing a learning tool.

Although several strategic analysis companies have developed some *nation brand* rating methods (with reference only to nation-states), we do not believe a quantitative analysis could take place. As Anholt (2011) correctly put it, a state, region, or a place is not meant to be "sold" or listed on the stock exchange. Unlike branding or marketing, a nation brand (an intangible asset which constitutes the immanent and "spiritual" basis of the former) and its

284 NYE, J., *"Public diplomacy and soft power"* in The Annals Of American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 616, n. 1, 2008.

"components" defy any attempt at quantification (history, oral traditions, people’s attitudes, culture, etc).

All this is further complicated by the fact that in the aforementioned context of global competitiveness, even local governments are moving in a highly unstable and stochastic global direction. An unexpected terrorist attack, natural catastrophe, pandemic, civil war, or political-institutional centralization policy put in place by the home state could make any balance of translocal relations change radically, suddenly, and definitively. This is unlike in the private sector, where some events are more easily predictable as they are put in place by the same actor who is affected (the failure of an entrepreneur can be attributed to his/her own bad management). Therefore, only a qualitative analysis would be feasible in these cases.

Nonetheless, this thesis also intended to demonstrate, provided that the modelling is simplified as much as possible, that the dynamic performance management approach is feasible even in the hypothesis of qualitative analyses conducted in unstable and stochastic scenarios.

47. Drafting a translocal action in *culture and heritage*: the “*Baroque”* project

As the proposed model is of a policy-based nature, it does not allow for any direct and immediate application and is physiologically destined to flow into concrete models of which it constitutes only a prerequisite and an antecedent (or a learning tool). Briefly, however, we wish to offer a potential example of a culture and heritage-based relationship between local areas.

In the example in question, the cities of Catania, St. Petersburg, and Vienna will be taken into consideration in establishing a city network focused on the management of urban centres. A determining factor of commonality between these three cities lies in the significant concentration of baroque/neoclassical heritage formally designated as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, precisely the "Historic Center of St. Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments," the "Historic Center of Vienna," and the "Late Baroque Towns of Val di Noto."[285]

285 We believe it is useful to specify that the term "Val di Noto" refers to one of the three administrative districts that characterized the Sicilian territory from the time of the Emirate of Sicily until the fall of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The term is masculine and is believed to come from the Latin *vallum*. Therefore, the sometimes-recurring translation "Valley of Noto" is completely wrong.

Regarding Catania's "strategic resource," the "Late Baroque Towns of Val di Noto (South-Eastern Sicily)" was inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2002 under criteria (i), (ii), (iv), and (v). The site comprises nine towns (and related areas) that are deeply heterogeneous in their dimensions and anthropic presence, as well as in their socio-economic relevance. It also has a very complex structure that combines both tangible and intangible heritage in the same context, as well as a combination of more than one actual or potential item of cultural heritage, each having its own specific relevance, within each individual object (for instance, stuccos or paintings in baroque churches).

As is widely known, the particularity of the site lies mainly in its non-layered and simultaneous origin: on 9 and 11 of January in 1693, about three earthquakes occurred with their epicentres located in the ancient Sicilian district of the Val of Noto, followed by a tsunami (tidal wave) which arose off the coast of Catania, severely damaging or even destroying (as happened with Catania) more than sixty towns within the relevant area. Rebuilding of the entire zone devastated by the catastrophe, among other factors, gave the community a unique chance to develop a new artistic, architectural, and planning language.

The particular style that was created in this area and later defined as Sicilian Baroque accompanied the new form of organic structuring of the urban fabric. This was presented both in purely planning and design terms (e.g., the defined proportions of width of the streets and height of the buildings, or introduction of particular anti-seismic measures) as well as in social and economic balances that demanded a ratio between various types of buildings intended for the particular social strata of the time (aristocracy, clergy, and bourgeoisie).

Between Vienna and St. Petersburg, there is a very strong factor of historical-cultural commonality that suggests a relationship between them of an almost exclusive nature: both have been the most relevant imperial capitals of continental Europe in the contemporary age. This is reflected not only in the general *geist* of the two historical centres but also and decisively in the respective urban architectures, which are rich in symbolism, and buildings specifically dedicated to the imperial apparatus and its peculiar epiphanies. Think, for example, of the imperial residences of the Hofburg in Vienna and the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, or the external residences of Schönbrunn in the Habsburg capital and of Peterhof in the Baltic one.

Finally, both cities are currently showing a fervent avant-garde cultural life, and it is therefore reasonable to anticipate the further branched development of reciprocal artistic-cultural relations.

It does not seem inappropriate to specify at this point that the very evident and macroscopic differences in "weight" and institutional status between St. Petersburg and Vienna on the one hand and Catania on the other should not be considered as a critical factor. As opposed to taking advantage of its role as both host and founder of the network, Catania would take the position of neutral third party so as to exclude any risk of comparison or, least of all, competition with the other co-founders.[286]

As for Vienna, in July 2017, the World Heritage Committee registered the site in the "World Heritage in Danger" list due to some controversial hotel building projects on the right bank of the Danube. The city is therefore having serious concerns about its urban heritage.

As for St. Petersburg on the other hand, the UNESCO World Heritage Site "Historic Center of St. Petersburg and related groups of monuments" is now considered the most complex (and complicated) of the serial urban sites, with 36 components and 86 elements on nearly 4,000 hectares of land and water. More than in its multicomponent formal structure, its serial nature lies in the fact that the site is composed of a group of typologically uniform integrals connected to one another by delicate historical and urbanistic relationships. Among these are the historic centre of the city and the other historical cities making up the site itself, sets of gardens and parks (both imperial and private), memorial and scientific buildings and monuments, historical forts and fortresses, features of the natural landscape, and elements of the city planning structure.

Furthermore, the site was located on the land of two different federal subjects (and is therefore subject to two different systems of domestic law): the federal city of St. Petersburg and the Oblast Leningradskaya, which administratively surrounds the city on the mainland.[287] One of the major problems encountered by the immense urban and extra-urban heritage of the city and of the site as a whole is the non-optimal allocation of management resources by the

286 Consider that, in the history of international relations, many non-global cities have drawn a strong image benefit from the mere fact of hosting headquarters of international organizations (think of Strasbourg, among many). In this case, this is not a question of merely hosting but of actively promoting the constitution of a translocal network whose headquarters should then *also* be hosted.

287 MINCHENOK, E., *"WHS Saint Petersburg: in need of complex solutions for a complicated system"*, panel for the conference "Historic Cities in the UNESCO World Heritage List: opportunities and drifts", organized in Turin on 7 and 8 June 2018 by the Interuniversity Department of Urban and Territorial Studies (DIST) of the Polytechnic and University of Turin, in partnership with ICOMOS, ANCSA, National Urban Planning Institute, Santagata-Ebla Study Center.

respective political-administrative authorities for the protection and safeguarding of elements of a less “touristy” nature which undergo rapid and inexorable decay and deterioration.[288]

The project therefore aims to establish in Catania a joint centre of study on the management of the UNESCO baroque-neoclassical urban centres, preceded by one or more cycles of thematic conferences together with experts from Vienna and St. Petersburg, also as a start-up function, with the following aims:

• To launch a broad public discussion on the protection of historical and cultural heritage which will involve not only the respective professional communities but also the city authorities, the citizens themselves, the mass media, potential public and private stakeholders, etc.

• To draw maximum attention, with the contribution of the mass media both local and international, to the challenges and problems of protecting the architectural heritage of urban centres and WHS serial sites.

• To focus the discussion not only on the theoretical basis of heritage preservation but also on practical remedies and best practices that can serve (or have been verified as valid) to re-enhance historical buildings, complexes, or territories currently in conditions of degradation and/or disuse.

• To design, according to the data presented in advance to the experts, possible ways and economic advantages deriving from the restoration and reuse of these objects and/or territories, and to identify the existing administrative problems and points of interest for potential investors.

• To promote for the long term international teams of urban studies experts who promote the concrete realization of projects for the reconstruction and revitalization of abandoned buildings and territories, or to formulate solutions to critical or emergency situations.

The centre should provide for a steering committee of experts (art historians, architects, urban planners, restorers, museum management experts, economists, jurists, etc.) with branches in Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Catania whose primary task is promoting at least one annual cycle of conferences and workshops on the protection of architectural heritage. This should proceed according to the following assumptions of operating models:

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288 MINCHENOK, E.,"*St. Petersburg environs: vanishing beauty*”, in Margolis, A. - Minchenok, E. - Markus, B., *St. Petersburg: Heritage at risk*, London, 2012.

• Stable workshop with minimal annual meetings, with each meeting including modules also entrusted to possible investors, members of local authorities, and other potential stakeholders.

• Maximum publicity of the opinions and conclusions of the experts through the creation of high-prestige publications and involvement of potential investors in discussions on the possibility of redevelopment of the territories considered.

• Intensive promotion of possible redevelopment projects to competent local and state authorities, as well as at UNESCO itself if the conditions are met.

• Development of building redevelopment projects for individual buildings and/or complexes in conditions of decay and/or disuse.

The three cities are intended to be the “leaders” and founders of the network. It is expected that the initiative and the network, by increasing competence and prestige, will be destined to attract other cities, both European and non-European, with similar characteristics and issues.

The project, according to the model described in this thesis:

1. Allows for the translocal exchange of strategies and best practices to tackle wicked and (indirectly) super-wicked problems.

2. Enhances the place or city brand of all participants (as they are perceived as realities committed to the protection and sustainable reuse of the urban heritage).

3. Augments the Catania place or city brand in relation to one of its peculiar and distinctive features (late baroque heritage). The city brand of Catania, as a component of the Sicilian place or nation brand, proportionally contributes to increasing the latter.

4. Through foreign relations implementation and the possibility of dealing with other cultures and mentalities, assists the renewed city brand in promoting greater self-awareness of the Catania community as well as a greater strengthening of its liaison with the city.

48. Limitations and suggestions for future studies

This study, more than any other SD-oriented study, has some obvious limitations. This is partly due to the objective that it explicitly set for itself, that of not finding a solution to a problem but signalling the very existence of a problem that is too often overlooked.

As we previously said, a DPM model for the public sector relating to the tourism economy in Sicily should take into account that a large number of manuals and tourist guides abroad still publicly advise their readers to pay attention to street shootings in Sicilian cities, and massive media productions continue to dispatch mafia movies abroad. Many readers and audiences will not accept the (alleged) risk, preferring to travel to other destinations.

At the same time, this study sought to describe the potential of a crucial sector for local governments, namely that of city diplomacy and translocal relations.

To be sure, this thesis expresses a "generalist" character, since in it, many aspects and sectors converge, including history, sociology, social psychology, international relations, urban studies, international law, etc. None of these aspects have been deepened "vertically," but the point was precisely that—to conduct a "horizontal" reasoning by connecting all these sectors with one another, even if in relation to a critical factor assumed as the basis of the case study (that of Sicily's reputation and nation brand).

The most revealing finding that we wish to highlight, however, is that in a global competition scenario, all these factors should be taken into consideration and related to one another. The cost, in this sense, is that of the already highlighted apparent scientific genericity. This could be justified by the fact that this thesis, in essence, is an invitation for future studies in each of those sectors to take into account the factors and influences deriving from other related sectors. Only in this way do we believe that a complete and reliable holistic approach can really materialize.

Finally, this thesis attempted to highlight two fundamental aspects, though in different terms and for different reasons, put forth by both Sterman and Bianchi:

1. If it is true that systems thinking and system dynamics, as Sterman says, are supposed to be "science, engineering, applied mathematics, social science, philosophy," etc., then it is equally true that all these fields of study and their agents should be able to dialogue with one another, to speak the same language as much as possible, and, in some cases, to know of one another's existence.

Intergovernmental cooperative action, horizontal multilevel governance, translocal cooperation, and city diplomacy are all different expressions that describe the same phenomenon. What changes is only the field of study (and the starting point of view) from which that same phenomenon is observed.

On the one hand, systems thinkers and modelers have powerful tools and methodologies to tackle wicked and super-wicked problems, but in the public sector related to local areas, they may not have an adequate set of case studies and established practices to analyse.

Scholars of translocal relations and city diplomacy have an impressive knowledge set and have developed methods of approach and analysis specifically tailored to this political-social phenomenon and its constantly changing dynamics, which today constitutes perhaps the most relevant part of global competitiveness. But they do not always have the right tools, even in daily practice (think of the technical committees operating within some translocal networks), to effectively address global problems, and in some cases they adopt linear thinking processes.

In this case, the present thesis aimed to create a link between these two worlds that are currently not communicating, in other words, a moment of synthesis. The cost was the oversimplification of the models and the chart proposed, which would certainly seem inadequate to a skilled "system modeler" but are complex enough for a skilled "city diplomacy practitioner."

2. System dynamics and dynamic performance management are powerful tools for qualitative analyses and highly stochastic environments, even for cases where concrete data are not available or a quantitative analysis is not practicable. DPM models, from a dynamic performance governance perspective, are not second choices or “cheaper” stuffs compared to the more complex quantitative dynamic models that are data based. They could prove, on the contrary, crucial for tackling “hidden” wicked problems which otherwise could not be solved.

It is therefore appropriate that this aspect be further investigated in the future for the benefit of dissemination—albeit according to ultra-simplified models—of the adoption of these methodologies in as many sectors as possible in public and social life. As Sterman said, the aim is to get over the tension between qualitative systems thinking and formal modelling, between scientific rigor and the need to make decisions today. The final recipients of public policies are not public officials but the civil communities they are called upon to manage. The final result, therefore, is a decisive contribution to the overall civil and social evolution and wellbeing.

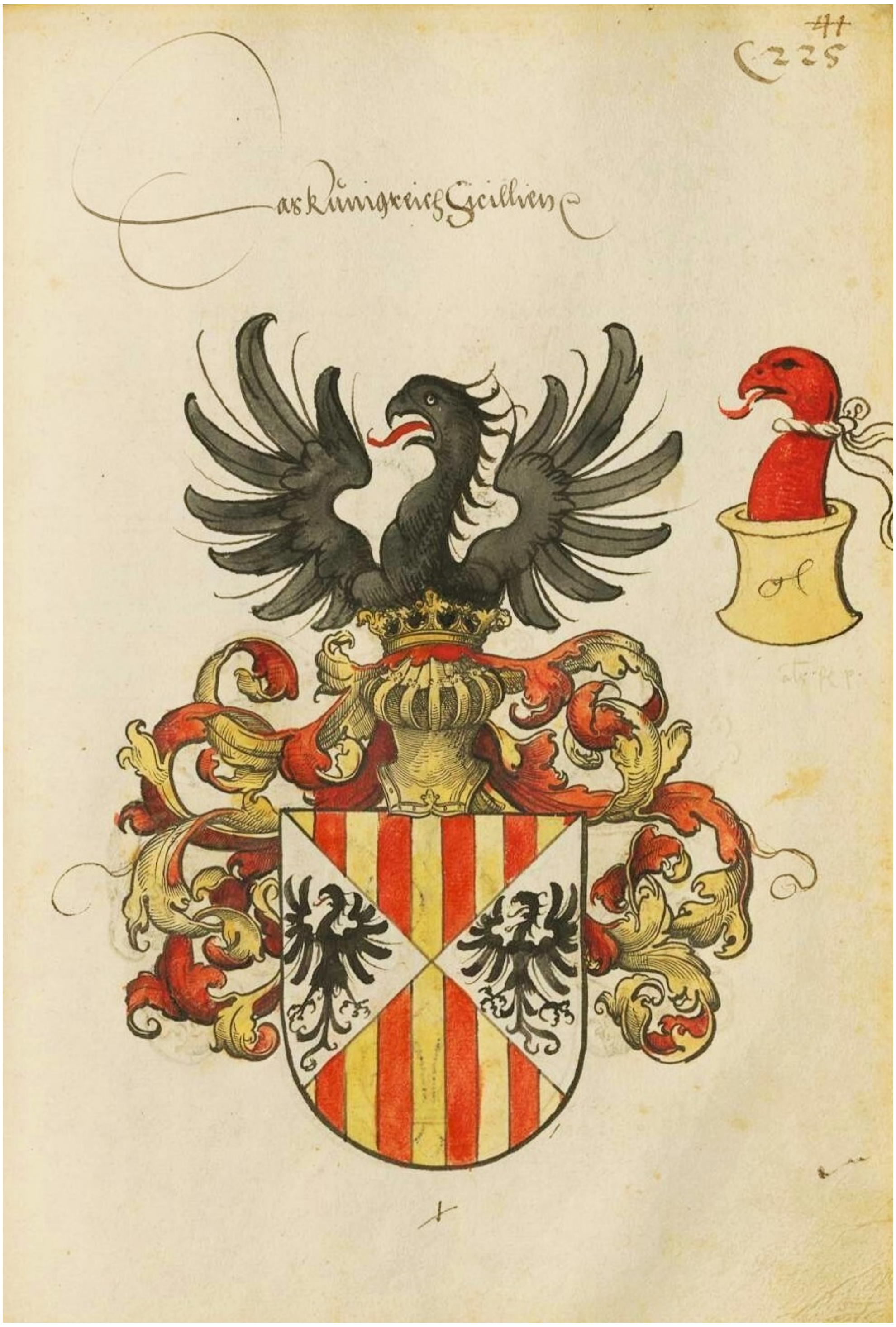

Figure 23: Coat of Arms of the Kingdom of Sicily.
Author: unknown. Source: the web

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