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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to analyse the geography of social capital in Italy 30 years after publication of the book *Making Democracy Work – Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Putnam et. al 1993). We used a statistical method (DBS, Distance Between Strata), which had not previously been applied to the study of social capital, and data from the 2019 ISTAT Multiscope Household Surveys "Aspects of daily life". We analysed the distribution of social capital in the regions of Italy in multidimensional terms. With DBS it was indeed possible to consider various dimensions of social capital instead of using an overall index. It enabled us to isolate three types of Italians, which we called civic, non-civic and "disgruntled" Italians. Disgruntled Italians are citizens who take part in political and social life but have little trust in others and in public institutions. Their geographic identification is the main contribution of this article to Italian studies on social capital for at least two reasons: 1) it questions the "obvious" correlation between political participation and trust in institutions; 2) it provides an important basis for reflection on Italian civic culture.

Keywords: social capital, DBS method, civic culture, pandemic crisis, critical citizens

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to analyse the geography of social capital in Italy 30 years after that proposed by Putnam et al. (1993) in his book *Making Democracy Work*.

Observers concur that social capital and political trust have significantly declined in recent decades in almost all Western countries (Dalton 2005, Putnam 2000). Although democratisation studies have traditionally shown that at least in consolidated democracies, the decline in trust is not generally associated with a decline in general support for democratic ideals (Dahl 1989 and 2000, Kaase and Newton 1995, Morlino 1998, Klingemann 1999), many studies show that high political trust is associated with attention for civic duties, low levels of corruption, greater observation of the law and government regulations, including those related to management of the recent COVID-19 pandemic (Tyler 1990, Devine et al. 2020). Several scholars also hold that social capital and political trust affect voting behaviour, political activism and civic engagement (Putnam et al. 1993, Uslaner 1999). However, some have recently begun to question the idea that political trust and political and social participation are always closely related (Newton 1997, Kaase 1999). There is nevertheless broad agreement on the capacity of political distrust to create an environment that favours populist parties by encouraging non-institutionalized participation and by driving public feeling against the establishment (Hosking 2019).

In this framework, the case of Italy is unusual because national levels of institutional trust in the last 20 years (apart from the large fluctuation during the economic crisis of 2008-2014) do not seem to show any clear negative trend,[1] despite the economic, political and social crises that the country has undergone in recent decades. These crises have de-institutionalised the party system, especially since 2013, in a manner without parallel in Europe (Emanuele and Chiaramonte 2020), accompanied among other things by the electoral success of highly populist parties (Vampa and Albertazzi 2021). In our opinion:

1) The crisis of trust in Italy is best studied comparatively rather than concentrating solely on national trends. Indeed, compared to most old European countries, Italy stands out for people's

[1] If for example we look at the trend of trust in government in Eurobarometer data for 1999-2019, we note that trust was ~33% in 1999 and ~29%. Apart from the dip of ~15 percentage points between 2010 and 2013 (in Italy, the economic crisis of 2008-2014 only began to manifest from 2011), after 2014, trust in the national government resumed an upward trend and then became stable. See Arrighi et al. 2022, 12 for a more articulated analysis of this trend in 2007-2020.

low level of trust in its democratic institutions, which is sometimes 20 or 30 percentage points below those of northern European countries.[2]

2) Changes in trust and social capital in Italy are best identified at subnational level. Not by chance, studies on Italian political culture sprang from differences between the north-west, north-east, centre-north, centre-south and south of the country (Alberoni 1967, Bagnasco 1977, Caciagli 1988). It therefore seems necessary to focalise the geographic dimension in order to understand changes in Italian political culture.

Here we map the geography of social capital in Italy more than 30 years since that proposed by Putnam et al. in 1993. Among other things, we think that an updated and more detailed geography of social capital may help us understand the growth of anti-establishment feeling that has lately affected the political culture of the country.

In their book Putnam and his co-authors found a close link between the institutional efficiency of Italian regions and social capital[3], which he defined as *"features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (1993, 167)*. Subsequent studies then showed that social capital can also promote economic development (Knack and Keefer 2001, Felice 2010), health and education outcomes (Eriksson 2011; Kawachi, Subramanian and Kim 2008), the quality of democracy (Newton 1999; Uslaner 1999) and even individual wellbeing (Bartolini and Sarracino 2014; Helliwell and Putnam 1995).

[2] More specifically, analysing the average trust in certain political institutions between 2012 and 2019 (European Social Survey and Eurobarometer datasets), it is evident that in Italy, only 24% of respondents trust the national parliament (-36 percentage points compared to Sweden, -19 compared to Germany, -9% compared to the UK, -3% compared to France, and -1% compared to Spain). Trust in the national government is around 20%, significantly lower than that recorded in Sweden (-52 percentage points), Germany (-30 percentage points), the UK (-14 percentage points), and France (-9 percentage points). Regarding the judicial system, Italy shows a trust percentage of 43% and negative percentage differences compared to Sweden (-24 percentage points), Germany (-16 percentage points), the UK (-13 percentage points), and France (-3 percentage points). Lastly, the percentages of satisfaction with democracy in Italy are very low. In Italy, the percentage of those who are "very and fairly satisfied" does not exceed 36%, while in Sweden, it reaches 83%, 65% in Germany, 63% in the UK, and 54% in France.

[3] *Making Democracy Work* was criticised for many reasons, including for a certain determinism, for giving little importance to regional differences in southern Italy and for paying little attention to the political dimension (among others, see Bagnasco 1994, Goldberg 1996, Pasquino 1994). However, we agree with Paul Ginsbourg that these criticisms "should not allow us to forget the thrust of Putnam's inquiry - the attempt to explain how Italy's differing regional history resulted in a variable capacity for the creation of a civic community, and eventually of a civil society" (2003, 107).

However, our focus was not on the relation between social capital and the various aspects of the social, political and economic life of the country, but to investigate how social capital can be measured and to up-date the map of its regional distribution in Italy.

While we start from Putnam's definition of social capital and the dimensions of his analysis, the present study used different data and methods of analysis. Unlike Putnam, we used individual data from surveys instead of aggregate data to construct our distribution of civic culture. We drew from ISTAT[4]'s Multiscope Household Surveys "Aspects of daily life" which surveyed 20,000 families (about 50,000 respondents) and was designed to ensure representative sampling at regional level.

Regarding analysis of the data, we used a more complex technique, which we considered suitable for detecting different facets of contemporary Italian civic culture and that could also be useful for describing the situation in other countries. By virtue of a reliable database of individual data representative of the regions, which was not available in the years when Putnam wrote his book, our study was not limited to building an overall index of social capital to classify the civicness of the different regions, but used the Distance Between Strata (DBS) method to exploit correlations between different indicators and clustering processes to identify different types of civicness and describe their regional distribution. Here we describe the distribution in each region of three types of citizen:

- civic citizens;
- non-civic citizens;
- disgruntled citizens.

As we shall see, while civic citizens trust and participate in political and social life and non-civic citizens are apathetic, discouraged and not interested in the political and social life of the country, disgruntled citizens combine some features of both. The first two types are complementary and show a regional distribution similar to Putnam's geography of social capital (civic citizens are more frequent in northern regions and non-civic citizens in the southern regions), whereas the disgruntled are found in all regions but are particularly concentrated in the rich northeast regions (Friuli Venezia Giulia and Trentino Alto Adige) and in the centre, previously the "red" zone (Emilia-Romagna in particular).

[4]Italian National Institute of Statistics

The present paper contributes to the literature on social capital in two ways. Methodologically it invites researchers not to take congruence between classical indicators of social capital for granted, while offering a third civic type, useful for clarifying the geography of Italian civic culture in a complex period such as the present. Disgruntled citizens call into question the congruence between two of the principal indicators of social capital: political participation and trust in the political institutions. Among the disgruntled, political activism is unrelated to confidence in the institutions. These are active, civic citizens who consider the political-institutional sphere (the parties and all the institutions of democratic representation) to be delegitimized. They are citizens who to some extent recall the "critical citizens" described by Pippa Norris in 1999. It seems to us that this type of citizen was particularly central in the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic. This large category of active but distrustful citizens shows a form of participation that was relatively uncommon among Italians during the First Republic, namely in the years Putnam was building his map of social capital, but is central in Italian political life today.[5] Until about 10 years ago, lack of confidence in public institutions and high participation was mostly typical of electors of anti-system parties, since abstentionism was relatively unpopular as a form of protest (Tuorto 2006).

In brief, with respect to Putnam, the contribution of this paper to the literature on social capital lies in identifying a category of disaffected politically active citizens. This category is also indirectly identified by the recent literature on populism, for example studies showing that populist voters are particularly engaged in different forms of non-electoral participation (Anduiza et al. 2019, Pirro and Portos 2020) and papers focusing on the link between voter disaffection and the electoral success of populist parties (Algan et al 2017, Masala 2020, Rodríguez-Pose et al. 2021).

Before describing the structure of the paper, let us explain why we focused on data of 2019, a year between the national elections of 2018, when formation of a government sustained by Movimento 5 Stelle and the Lega placed Italy among the most populist countries of Europe,[6] and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, it was the year when populism reached its peak

[5] It is useful to recall that on the basis of Itanes data for 2002-2004, Biorcio (2007) identified a category of discouraged citizens with a developed sense of political efficacy, in some ways similar to our "disgruntled citizens", but estimated to be 10% of the national population. Here we see that these citizens reach 37% of the national population.

[6] The "Conte I" government was formed in Italy in June 2018 after the electoral success of Lega and M5S, who won more than 50% of the vote in the 2018 national elections, campaigning on "anti-cast" and populist platforms (Valbruzzi and Vignati 2018).

in Italy (recall the success of the Lega in the European elections), and when after the crisis of government provoked by Salvini in August, a new government, known as "Conte II" was formed, that would handle the first stages of the coronavirus emergency with unexpected skill.

This article consists of five sections. Section 2 regards the main literature on civic culture in Italy, concentrating on the concept of social capital and its distribution in Italy. Section 3 presents the database and the method of analysis used to plot the new regional map of social capital from individual data. In section 4 we discuss the three types of citizen identified in Italy in 2019. Section 5 concludes.

2. STUDIES ON CIVIC CULTURE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN ITALY

In the last 30 years, the concept of social capital has attracted the attention of many political scientists, sociologists, economists and anthropologists, becoming a central concept in many disciplines. The fact that it can be used in different fields has however transformed it into a many-sided concept, difficult to define and measure univocally (Cartocci 2007, 2011; Grootaert and Van Bastelar 2002; Scrivens and Smith 2013). The term has been used to mean personal resources (Bourdieu 1980; Lin 2001), social resources, collective assets and a feature of social structure that eases the actions of an individual in a structured context (e.g. Coleman 1990, Putnam 1993 and Fukuyama 1996). Many forms of social capital have emerged in the literature over the years (Bhandari and Yasunobu 2009). For example, a distinction has been made between *bonding* and *bridging* social capital (Putnam 2000), according to whether it unites persons of a small community or whether it creates social links between people with common values.

In the early 1980s, when Putnam and colleagues began their research on differences in social capital in the various regions of Italy and on the quality of regional institutions, they found that social capital was closely related to 'civic virtue'. In 1993 Putnam discovered that the poorer quality of public institutions in the southern with respect to the northern regions of Italy did not depend so much on the different economic development as on lower social capital. Lower social capital was attributed to differences in regional history and political development which today can still be linked to a delay in the unification of Italy. Late state unification, late mass education, late nation building, hosting the seat of the Catholic church are all distinguishing traits of Italian political development with respect to many other European countries and which inscribe profound regional differences in civic culture (Cartocci 2007, 14, Tullio-Altan 1986).

The Italian peninsula only became a state in 1861, after almost 1400 years of divisions. Thus it began its nation-building process about 300 years after most other European countries.[7] After WW2, the case of Italy became a laboratory for studying the link between civic culture and quality of democracy, attracting many scholars, especially Americans. The first was probably Edward C. Banfield who in 1958 coined the notion of *amoral familism* in an ethnographic study conducted in a village in Basilicata. Banfield's notion is that the material and immediate advantage of the nuclear family is maximised and it is assumed that all other families do the same. Banfield saw it as a cultural model in all of southern Italy and as featuring radical distrust in others and in public institutions; any possibility of organising collective action is excluded. Despite the criticism levelled at Banfield (e.g. Marselli 1963, Pizzorno 1967), the concept of amoral familism has profoundly influenced subsequent studies on civic culture in Italy.

The paradigmatic example of research on Italian political culture is however another, conducted by two American political scientists: *The Civic Culture* (Almond and Verba 1963). Almond and Verba compared five political systems (Italy, Mexico, United States, Germany and Great Britain), examining the relation between political culture and democratic stability. The authors were interested in discovering the reasons for the collapse of European democracies before WW2.

Their findings revealed three different ideal types of political culture: *parochial, subject and participant*. The first has a prevalence of attitudes based on particularism, localism, short-range trust and a sense of alienation from the state and politics. The main features of a *subject political culture* are respect and trust in state authority and its decisions, whereas the foundation of participant political culture is the active political commitment of citizens through free association and awareness of their capacity to influence the political decisions of the establishment.

According to Almond and Verba, the most suitable political culture for a stable democracy is *civic culture*, a balance between the second and third types. They considered the political culture of Italy in the late 1950s to be *parochial,* featuring uniform apathy and political alienation, a widespread sense of political isolation and deep distrust, both interpersonal and towards the public institutions.

[7] According to Stein Rokkan, the speed of the transition from nation building to extension of civil, political and social rights profoundly influences the quality of a country's democratic institutions (Flora 1999).

According to Almond and Verba, Italians tend to see government and politics as threatening and unpredictable, not as social institutions that can be influenced. Many cross-country studies have developed in the tradition of *The Civic Culture* (e.g. the studies based on Eurobarometer, World Value Survey and European Social Survey) that have made it possible to describe and compare the cultural traits of citizens. Also in recent years, these studies have confirmed the persistence in Italy of attitudes already partly described by Almond and Verba: vast dissatisfaction with political-administrative function, distrust in parties and politicians, independence of party images from their electoral weight, intolerance of the proliferation of parties, dissatisfaction with democratic function and distrust in others. Indeed, in the European panorama, Italy is still one of the countries in which distrust in others, public institutions, political parties and the political system as a whole is not only particularly high but is also among those with the longest history (Bordandini 2015; Segatti 2006).

Besides this cross-country comparative approach, the study by Putnam on social capital in Italy also relied on two other traditions of Italian research, based on cross-region comparisons. The first were empirical studies conducted by the Istituto Cattaneo of Bologna, which thanks to funding by an American foundation in the 1960s, began a broad project of analysis of the two major Italian parties of the time, the Democrazia cristiana (DC) and the Partito comunista italiano (PCI). Although the aims of this research were not explicitly directed at Italian political culture, but at how the Italian political system as a whole worked, delving into the cultural features of the country was not only inevitable, but also produced fundamental results (Alberoni et al. 1967; Capecchi et al. 1968). It gave rise to a tradition of studies, which in subsequent decades involved economists, sociologists and political scientists, aimed at defining and describing the economic, political and cultural features of the "red" and "white" territorial subcultures (Bagnasco 1977; Caciagli 1988; Trigilia 1986). Besides ideological contrasts, the two territorial political subcultures had developed quite similar features, based on high social integration, high political and social participation and the strong legitimacy of local political institutions[8].

[8] The "red" area featured a local political system dominated by the PCI and its associative network. It included four regions in the centre-north of the country (Emilia Romagna, Toscana, Marche and Umbria). The "white" area, dominated by the Catholic church and the DC involved three north-eastern regions (Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Trentino-Alto Adige). From an economic viewpoint, these regions were called “the third Italy” (Bagnasco 1977) because of their similar localized development model based on a system of specialized industrial districts. On regional political subcultures, see among others Almagisti 2011; Baccetti and Messina 2009; Bordandini 2006; Messina 2001.

The second tradition of research into regional differences in Italy developed parallel to these studies thanks to the work of the cultural anthropologist Tullio-Altan (1986). The studies of Tullio-Altan analyse the historical foundations of national dualism and the reasons that made the South more subject than the North to what he calls a *socio-cultural backwardness syndrome*. According to Tullio-Altan, this backwardness has three main traits that fuel clientelism and indifference to the common good: 1) exaltation of the family as the exclusive centre of interests and values; 2) widespread asociality, in the sense of lack of solidarity and sense of social co-responsibility; 3) a leaning towards subordination and fatalistic immobility, a sort of passive submission to the powers embodied in lay and ecclesiastic institutions (Tullio-Altan 1986, 32).

Putnam developed his concept of social capital and plotted the map of social capital in Italy on the basis of these studies. Empirically, his index of social capital was based on two dimensions of analysis: *political participation* and *civic or community participation*. Not being able to rely on comparable individual data, Putnam's effort was to collect aggregate data at regional level. His index combined the following four indicators: 1) preference voting between 1953 and 1979; 2) referendum voting turnout between 1974 and 1987; 3) newspapers sold in 1975; 4) association membership (1981). The first three indicators concerned the first dimension, the fourth concerned *civic/community participation.*

Putnam's map showed that the most civic regions were Trentino-Alto Adige and the two large regions with a "red" political subculture (Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany), followed by Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Lombardy, Liguria, Piedmont, Veneto, Umbria and Marche. The least civic were Campania, Calabria and the other Southern regions. Subsequent studies have up-dated Putnam's map, descending to province level and modifying indicators that had lost validity (Cartocci 2007; Cartocci and Vanelli 2015). As far as we know, the geography of social capital in Italy did not change much before 2010, the year of publication of the references cited. Moreover, the geography of interpersonal trust was coherent with the distribution of trust in other people measured by ISTAT in 2010-2012 (Bordandini and Cartocci 2014).

In our study, we constructed a map of Italian social capital at regional level, updated to 2019, using the same dimensions as Putnam but based on individual data. Aggregate data is more reliable than individual data because it is immune from random-sample and observation errors, but it is more difficult to obtain (collecting regional data can be very long and complex). Aggregate data does not allow individual attitudes (such as trust in other people and in political

institutions) to be detected but only inferred indirectly from the behaviours recorded by aggregate data.

Thus we constructed the map of regional social capital using the two dimensions adopted by Putnam (political and civic participation) with data on opinions and attitudes related to trust, institutions and social cohesion. This was possible thanks to the great ISTAT Multiscope Household Surveys database which has representative samples to regional level.

3. DATA AND METHODS

3.1 Data

The Multiscope Household Survey "Aspects of daily life" is an ISTAT annual sample survey carried out by interviewing a sample of 20,000 households (about 50,000 people). The "Aspects of daily life" survey is part of an integrated system of social surveys and collects fundamental information on the daily life of individuals and households. It provides information on people's habits and the problems they face in everyday life. The thematic areas of the questionnaires cover different social aspects, collecting data on quality of life, satisfaction with living conditions, economic situation, where respondents live, services of public utility and other topics pertaining to quality of life. School, work, family, social life, leisure time, political and social participation, health, life-style and access to services are all investigated with behaviours, motivations and opinions to obtain social information.[9]

Families are randomly extracted from the census survey list of names by a sampling strategy designed to obtain a statistically representative sample of the Italian population. The dataset used for the present study was collected by survey in 2019 and envisaged a sample of 45,483 persons (representing about 60 million Italians). However we only considered adults under 75 years with known region of residence. Thus the sample consisted of 32,558 persons (representing about 43 million Italians). Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample by region and by geographical area, specifying the number of persons interviewed (respondents) and the reference population (populations).

[9] https://www.istat.it/en/archivio/129934

Table 1. Sample distribution

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA	REGION	POPULATION	RESPONDENTS
Northwest	Valle d'Aosta	90119	753
	Piemonte	3066149	2207
	Lombardia	7095888	2800
	Liguria	1089336	1285
Former white area	Trentino-Alto Adige	757110	1958
	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	854354	1283
	Veneto	3586698	1983
Former red area	Emilia-Romagna	3094553	1685
	Toscana	2652087	1805
	Marche	1074401	1344
	Umbria	612182	901
Centre-south	Lazio	4270909	1827
	Abruzzo	932949	1265
	Molise	225249	1036
	Sardegna	1223360	1362
South	Puglia	2930256	1886
	Basilicata	395299	949
	Calabria	1388672	1582
	Campania	4222090	2634
	Sicilia	3603254	2013
	TOTAL	43164915	32558

We built 14 dummy variables from the dataset (0 absence of the property, 1 presence of the property) to describe the four dimensions of social capital selected for the study, i.e. political participation, social participation, trust in others and trust in public institutions. Some of these dummy variables were obtained from a single question, others from a combination of questions, as in the case of indices of political and civic activism.[10] Table 2 lists the dummy variables used in our study according to the above four dimensions of social capital.

[10] The indices of political and social activism are dichotomic indices obtained by combining the positions of respondents on several activities investigated by the questionnaire. The index of political activism analyses the following actions: party membership, union membership, participation in rallies, participation in marches, listening to political debates, paying money to a party, volunteer activity in favour of a party, volunteer activity in favour of a union. The index of social activism is also based on the positions of respondents in relation to the following activities: donating money to associations, unpaid voluntary work, taking part in the life of voluntary, ecological and cultural associations (see Table 2).

Table 2. Dimensions of social capital and dummy variables used in our study: labels, name of the variables, and wording of the original questions. The labels attributed to the dummy variables are also used in subsequent tables.

DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL	DUMMY VARIABLES (0-1): labels and description of the variables	QUESTIONS (range of answers)
POLITICAL PARTICIPATON	PARTPOL_D (Political activism index)**	The index combines the following actions by respondents in the last 12 months: party membership (1-2), union membership (1-2), participation in rallies (1-2), participation in marches (1-2), listening to political debates (1-2), paying money to a party (1-2), volunteer activity in favour of a party (1-2), volunteer activity in favour of a union (1-2).
	LQUOT_D (Reading newspapers)*	Do you keep informed about Italian politics by reading newspapers? (0-1)
	QUONLINE_D (Reading online newspapers)*	Do you keep informed about Italian politics by reading online news sites? (0-1)
	POLIT_D (Talking about politics)*	How often do you happen to talk about politics? (1-6)
SOCIAL PARTICIPATON	PARTCIV_D (Social activism index)***	The index combines the positions of respondents in relation to the following activities: donating money to associations (0-1), unpaid voluntary work (0-1), taking part in the life of voluntary (0-1), environmental (0-1) and cultural associations (0-1).
TRUST IN OTHERS	FIDU1_D (General trust)*	Do you think you can trust most people or are you inclined to be wary? (1-2)
	FIDU3_D (Trust that lost wallet will be returned)*	If you lost your wallet containing money and documents and it was found by a perfect stranger, what do you think is the probability that it would be returned to you? (1-4)
TRUST IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	PUNTIFI1_D (Trust in parliament)* PUNTIFI5_D Trust in the European parliament)* PUNTIFI8_D (Trust in regional government)* PUNTIFI10_D9 (Trust in local government)* PUNTIFI4_D (Trust in political parties)* PUNTIFI2_D (Trust in the judiciary)* PUNTIFI3_D (Trust in the police)*	How much do you trust the following institutions? Choose a score from zero to ten. (0-10): - National Parliament, - European Parliament - Regional Government - Local Government - Political Parties - Judiciary - Police

* Variables obtained by transforming an original variable (from a single questions with ranges 0-1, 1-6 or 1-10) into a dummy variable. Affirmative answers or medium-high levels of activity score 1, 0 otherwise.

** This dummy index combines 8 original variables. A respondent active in at least one activity scores 1, 0 otherwise.

*** This dummy index combines 4 original variables. A respondent active in at least one activity scores 1, 0 otherwise.

3.2 Methods

As we underlined in the introduction, we used DBS because it enabled us to transcend the idea of measuring regional social capital simply by combining indicators into a single general index of social capital. Using the variables described above, DBS was applied to highlight more articulated differences in respondents' answers in relation to the region where they live.

To measure the distance between people in the different regions with regard to the four dimensions (described in Table 2 by 14 variables), we applied DBS (De Santis, Maltagliati and Salvini 2015; Maltagliati and Bellanca 2020) in the following four steps.

1. First we classified individuals (the whole pooled sample) in clusters according to the 14 dummy variables. We obtained six clusters,[11] K_1, K_2…, K_6. Table 3 is divided into two sections and shows the characteristics of respondents in each cluster.

   The top section of Table 3 shows the mean/average of each variable (they can also be interpreted as percentages since the variables are dummies) for each cluster and for the whole population. For example, the first value at the top left indicates that 71% (0.71) of subjects were active politically (according to the definition of PARPOL_D), while in the whole sample (row general mean) this percentage does not exceed 25%.

   The second section of the table links these two percentages, establishing the importance of the mean of each variable in each cluster. Resuming the above example, it explains that the 71% of politically active respondents in the first cluster is almost three times (2.90 times) the percentage of politically active respondents (25%) in the whole population.

   Thus the second part of the table establishes the real positive contribution of each variable in the definition of the different clusters. We can say that clusters 1 and 2 are quite similar in terms of trust in the institutions (PUNTIFI1, PUNTIFI5_D, PUNTIFI8_D, PUNTIFI10_D, PUNTIFI4_D, PUNTIFI2_D and PUNTIFI3_D) but different in terms of political activism index (PARPOL_D). So in clusters 1 and 4 we find the same percentage of "particularly politically active" persons, whereas in the other three clusters, the percentages of respondents

[11] The results were obtained by Ward's minimum variance method for hierarchical clustering (Ward 1963), using "proc cluster" with SAS software. Other techniques were tested, without finding appreciable differences in the results.

who participated in some political activity are much lower (4-12%, less than half the mean of 25%).

Table 3. Characteristics of the six clusters: variable means and variable loadings

CLUSTERS	VARIABLE MEANS													
	PARPOL_D	LQUOT_D	QUONLINE_D	POLIT_D	PARCIV_D	FIDU1_D	FIDU3_D	PUNTIFI1_D	PUNTIFI5_D	PUNTIFI8_D	PUNTIFI10_D	PUNTIFI4_D	PUNTIFI2_D	PUNTIFI3_D
K1 "super-civic citizens"	0.71	0.71	0.63	0.90	0.55	0.50	0.30	0.83	0.86	0.79	0.82	0.55	0.82	0.95
K2 "moderately civic citizens"	0.04	0.33	0.29	0.42	0.19	0.30	0.18	0.85	0.80	0.97	0.95	0.47	0.74	0.96
K3"informed and disenchanted citizens"	0.07	0.55	0.45	0.49	0.35	0.14	0.33	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.23	0.01	0.15	0.64
K4 "active, informed and disillusioned citizens"	0.70	0.61	0.55	0.78	0.50	0.40	0.14	0.09	0.17	0.24	0.39	0.03	0.29	0.76
K5 "non-civic citizens"	0.08	0.04	0.13	0.30	0.03	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.38
K6 "moderately non-civic citizens"	0.12	0.29	0.26	0.47	0.11	0.18	0.04	0.47	0.35	0.13	0.38	0.09	0.60	0.86
General Mean	**0.25**	**0.41**	**0.37**	**0.54**	**0.27**	**0.26**	**0.16**	**0.37**	**0.35**	**0.35**	**0.46**	**0.18**	**0.42**	**0.76**

CLUSTERS	VARIABLE LOADINGS													
	PARPOL_D	LQUOT_D	QUONLINE_D	POLIT_D	PARCIV_D	FIDU1_D	FIDU3_D	PUNTIFI1_D	PUNTIFI5_D	PUNTIFI8_D	PUNTIFI10_D	PUNTIFI4_D	PUNTIFI2_D	PUNTIFI3_D
K1 "super-civic citizens"	2.90	1.73	1.70	1.67	2.03	1.92	1.83	2.27	2.46	2.26	1.79	3.15	1.96	1.26
K2 "moderately civic citizens"	0.17	0.81	0.79	0.79	0.69	1.18	1.12	2.32	2.30	2.77	2.10	2.70	1.77	1.27
K3"informed and disenchanted citizens"	0.29	1.35	1.22	0.92	1.29	0.55	2.05	0.12	0.13	0.15	0.51	0.07	0.35	0.84
K4 "active, informed and disillusioned citizens"	2.86	1.51	1.49	1.46	1.86	1.54	0.87	0.25	0.48	0.67	0.86	0.18	0.69	1.00
K5 "non-civic citizens"	0.33	0.09	0.34	0.57	0.11	0.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
K6 "moderately non-civic citizens"	0.48	0.71	0.70	0.88	0.41	0.70	0.23	1.29	1.00	0.37	0.83	0.50	1.42	1.14
	1.00	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**

1. With Table 3 we also labelled and described the six clusters detected by DBS as follows. The first cluster, called “super-civic citizens” (K1), groups the respondents who are most active and interested in political and social life. They are citizens who keep up to date, who trust others and the public institutions, including the justice system. The second cluster K2), called “moderately civic citizens”, has a similar profile for trust in others and in public institutions. The third cluster (K3: “informed and disenchanted citizens”) groups citizens who are interested in politics, even if they are not activists, but they do not have confidence in public institutions. The fourth cluster (K4: “active, informed and disillusioned citizens”) unites respondents who are informed about and active in political and social life, but have absolutely no confidence in the institutions. The fifth cluster (K5: “non-civic citizens”) brings together respondents who are apathetic, not informed and show radical distrust in others and in public institutions at all levels. The sixth cluster (K6: “moderately non-civic citizens”) unites persons with a profile similar to but less radical than respondents of cluster 5.
2. Next we calculated the relative frequency distribution of the *a priori* groups (in our case the 20 regions plus Italy as a whole) in the six clusters. Each group therefore had a specific “profile” (percentages of persons belonging to clusters K_1, K_2, ..., K_6). Table 4 shows the percentage distribution in the six clusters in Italy and in the 20 regions. At national levels the percentages ranged between 10% and 20.3%. Note that “super-civics” showed the lowest percentages in Italy (10%) as well as the different regions.

Table 4. Percentage distribution of the clusters by region and in Italy as a whole.

	CLUSTERS					
	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6
Piemonte	10	22.5	22.4	16.5	12.3	16.3
VDA	13.2	14.1	28.2	17.8	13.8	12.9
Lombardia	11.6	22	21.7	16.1	14.5	14.2
Trentino	14.1	20.1	23.5	26.8	7.6	7.9
Veneto	10.8	25.8	21.1	17.7	12.5	12
FriuliVG	10.6	24.7	23.9	20.5	9.8	10.5
Liguria	8.5	27.1	19.3	20.5	11	13.5
Em_Rom	12.1	21.9	24.5	16.1	12.5	12.8
Toscana	11.1	22.5	19.6	17.8	12.4	16.7
Umbria	9.7	20.6	19.2	16.8	13.6	20.1
Marche	9.2	21.4	22.6	15.5	14.5	16.8
Lazio	9.5	20.3	18.4	14.9	16.8	20.1
Abruzzo	11.5	19.3	17.1	17.4	15.5	19.3
Molise	9.9	17.6	16.7	12	19.2	24.6
Campania	6.7	18.2	14.6	14	20.6	25.9
Puglia	9	21.1	15.2	15	18.2	21.5
Basilicata	10	14.7	16.4	18.8	15.3	24.8
Calabria	8.2	14	15.1	15.1	18.4	29.2
Sicilia	6.8	14.6	14.4	13	23.3	27.9
Sardegna	9.5	17.1	21.4	19.9	15.2	16.9
ITALY	10	20.3	19.6	16.9	15	18.2

3. Finally we calculated Euclidean distances between pairs of regional relative frequency distributions of Table 4, obtaining a 21*21 matrix of distances.[12] Table 5 shows a complete picture of the distances between regions on the basis of the compositions of the six clusters. From this viewpoint, the distance between two regions is related to the difference in the percentage distribution of individuals in the six clusters.[13] For example, the greatest distance is found between Trentino Alto Adige and Sicily (0.316), while Piedmont and Lombardy are significantly close (0.035).

[12] In all the above calculations, the microdata items were weighted with the inverse of sampling probabilities produced by ISTAT.

[13] For example the distance between Piedmont and Val d'Aosta is obtained by the formula: $\sqrt[2]{(0.1-0.132)^2+(0.225-0.141)^2+(0.224-0.282)^2+(0.165-0.178)^2+(0.123-0-138)^2+(0.163-0.129)^2}$=0.114

Figure 1. Two-dimensional projection of the distance matrix of regions of Table

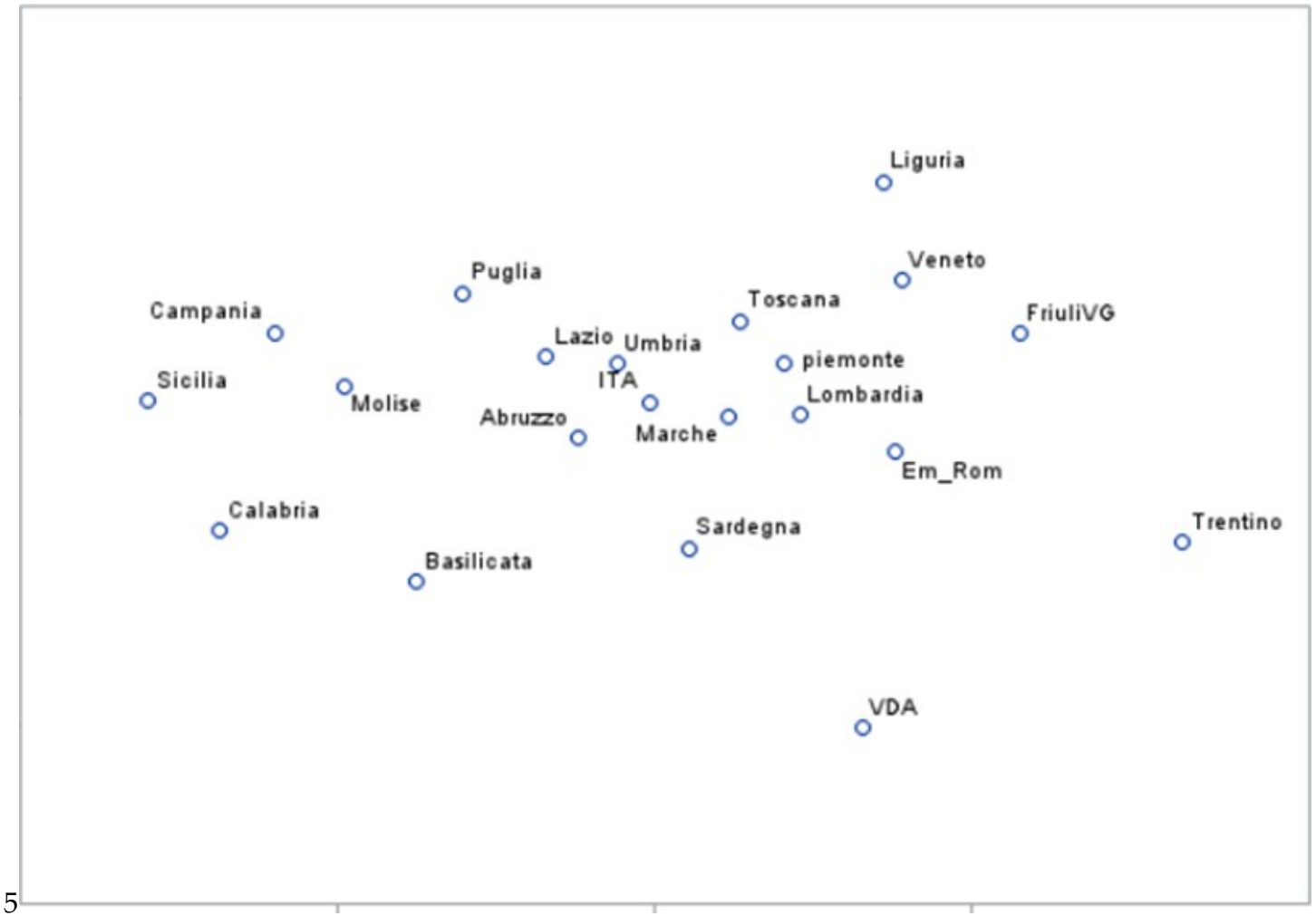

*Table 5. Matrix of Euclidean distances (21*21) between pairs of relative frequency distributions of Table 4*

	Piemonte	VDA	Lombardia	Trentino	Veneto	FriuliVG	Liguria	Em_Rom	Toscana	Umbria	Marche	Lazio	Abruzzo	Molise	Campania	Puglia	Basilicata	Calabria	Sicilia	Sardegna	ITA
piemonte		0.114	0.035	0.149	0.057	0.079	0.076	0.046	0.033	0.056	0.029	0.077	0.078	0.139	0.162	0.110	0.136	0.183	0.201	0.071	0.049
VDA	0.114		0.106	0.142	0.140	0.130	0.169	0.090	0.128	0.137	0.111	0.148	0.140	0.188	0.218	0.184	0.172	0.221	0.238	0.096	0.124
Lombardia	**0.035**	0.106		0.147	0.052	0.083	0.086	0.038	0.042	0.069	0.037	0.077	0.075	0.139	0.164	0.109	0.142	0.190	0.201	0.071	0.051
Trentino	0.149	0.142	0.147		0.132	0.092	0.135	0.130	0.146	0.180	0.168	0.205	0.181	0.265	0.283	0.232	0.225	0.292	0.316	0.148	0.170
Veneto	0.057	0.140	0.052	0.132		0.051	0.047	0.057	0.059	0.100	0.075	0.114	0.110	0.180	0.198	0.138	0.178	0.228	0.240	0.106	0.088
FriuliVG	0.079	0.130	0.083	0.092	0.051		0.064	0.065	0.087	0.127	0.101	0.149	0.140	0.215	0.233	0.177	0.199	0.255	0.273	0.116	0.117
Liguria	0.076	0.169	0.086	0.135	0.047	0.064		0.094	0.069	0.104	0.096	0.125	0.117	0.190	0.199	0.141	0.177	0.228	0.244	0.115	0.099
Em_Rom	0.046	0.090	0.038	0.130	0.057	0.065	0.094		0.066	0.096	0.058	0.110	0.107	0.169	0.197	0.144	0.168	0.217	0.232	0.088	0.082
Toscana	**0.033**	0.128	0.042	0.146	0.059	0.087	0.069	0.066		0.045	0.048	0.069	0.057	0.132	0.152	0.095	0.121	0.173	0.193	0.068	0.039
Umbria	0.056	0.137	0.069	0.180	0.100	0.127	0.104	0.096	0.045		0.051	0.038	0.037	0.095	0.113	0.066	0.084	0.131	0.153	0.063	0.025
Marche	**0.029**	0.111	0.037	0.168	0.075	0.101	0.096	0.058	0.048	0.051		0.059	0.071	0.120	0.143	0.096	0.126	0.167	0.180	0.063	0.039
Lazio	0.077	0.148	0.077	0.205	0.114	0.149	0.125	0.110	0.069	0.038	0.059		0.039	0.067	0.088	0.039	0.087	0.117	0.127	0.076	0.036
Abruzzo	0.078	0.140	0.075	0.181	0.110	0.140	0.117	0.107	0.057	0.037	0.071	0.039		0.087	0.106	0.056	0.075	0.125	0.143	0.062	0.033
Molise	0.139	0.188	0.139	0.265	0.180	0.215	0.190	0.169	0.132	0.095	0.120	0.067	0.087		0.048	0.059	0.084	0.071	0.072	0.127	0.099
Campania	0.162	0.218	0.164	**0.283**	0.198	0.233	0.199	0.197	0.152	0.113	0.143	0.088	0.106	0.048		0.064	0.089	0.061	0.050	0.142	0.119
Puglia	0.110	0.184	0.109	0.232	0.138	0.177	0.141	0.144	0.095	0.066	0.096	0.039	0.056	0.059	0.064		0.088	0.105	0.109	0.105	0.068
Basilicata	0.136	0.172	0.142	0.225	0.178	0.199	0.177	0.168	0.121	0.084	0.126	0.087	0.075	0.084	0.089	0.088		0.070	0.110	0.097	0.094
Calabria	0.183	0.221	0.190	**0.292**	0.228	0.255	0.228	0.217	0.173	0.131	0.167	0.117	0.125	0.071	0.061	0.105	0.070		0.057	0.154	0.141
Sicilia	0.201	0.238	0.201	**0.316**	0.240	0.273	0.244	0.232	0.193	0.153	0.180	0.127	0.143	0.072	0.050	0.109	0.110	0.057		0.172	0.157
Sardegna	0.071	0.096	0.071	0.148	0.106	0.116	0.115	0.088	0.068	0.063	0.063	0.076	0.062	0.127	0.142	0.105	0.097	0.154	0.172		0.049
ITA	0.049	0.124	0.051	0.170	0.088	0.117	0.099	0.082	0.039	0.025	0.039	0.036	0.033	0.099	0.119	0.068	0.094	0.141	0.157	0.049	

The differences between the 20 regions of Italy in the matrix of distances in six-dimensional space can be reduced to just two dimensions by multidimensional scaling, to produce a map (Figure 1). Application of DBS to our variables reflects the transverse division of Italy: the northern regions are closer to each other, as do the central regions and the southern regions.
Having summarised how DBS works so as to illustrate the main results and the potential of the method, we proceed to a description of the civic types that emerged. It is also possible to simplify the empirical framework from six to three clusters so as to facilitate regional comparisons and interpretation of the results.

4. CIVIC, NON-CIVIC AND DISGRUNTLED ITALIANS

In this section we concentrate on description and analysis of the three types of Italians that were revealed by merging the six clusters produced by DBS into three classes. In Table 6 we analyse the characteristics and regional distribution of "civic", "non-civic" and "disgruntled" Italians. In some regions the percentages of the three groups are very different (e.g. Trentino and Friuli Venezia Giulia), whereas in others the differences are less accentuated (Abruzzo and Umbria). However in almost all regions, the differences between the three percentages are statistically significant (1% significance level), by virtue of the large number of respondents (Table 1).[14]
Civic Italians (first column) are 30% of the sample and combine the super civic and moderately civic clusters described in the previous section. Many are interested in politics and take an active part in political and associative life, but what characterises them is their high level of trust in others and in all public institutions, including the judiciary. Among civics we find those who Almond and Verba called *participants*, persons who practise social capital, who feel co-responsible, and who read newspapers and online news sites. Non-civic Italians (third column) were also a third of the sample, merging the fifth and sixth clusters detected by DBS. They deeply distrust the institutions and have no interest in politics: they feel marginal to politics, do not take part in associative life and have negative feelings towards other people and public institutions. They resemble Banfield's *amoral familists* and Almond and Verba's *parochials*.

[14] In almost all regions it was therefore possible to define the complete ranking of the three types. The results would be even more clear-cut if we grouped the regions into two geographical areas. In the north, the "disgruntled" category would be significantly more numerous and the "non-civics" would be the least numerous type of citizen. In the south, the ranking would be "non-civics" at the top followed by the "disgruntled" and "civics".

The remaining 37% of our sample consisted of a new entry in social capital studies, or at least new in such a high percentage. They are disgruntled Italians (second column, Table 6): those interested in politics but profoundly diffident of others and especially of political institutions. They are informed, sceptical, disenchanted people, sensitive to social problems, who participate somehow in solving them but are convinced that political institutions (local, national, and European) are ineffective. Their socio-demographic profile is interesting: they have a mean age slightly above the other types (48.2 years versus 47.9 of civics and 46.7 of non-civics), they tend to be educated (21% have a degree versus 20% of civics and 12% of non-civics), they have a stable occupation (57% claimed to be employed versus 53% of civics and 46% of non-civics) and they often have professional managerial or clerical jobs (45% versus 43% of civics and 29% of non-civics). We can add that 58% of the disgruntled claim to be satisfied with their economic situation in the last 12 months, coming to lie between civics (67% are satisfied with their economic situation) and non-civics (48% are dissatisfied). Thus they are citizens with a socially non-marginal socio-economic profile. They are also characterised by their universalist and sustainable behaviour, which almost always places them closer to civics than to non-civics on questions such as the environment and respect for commons.[15] With the latter they share dissatisfaction with public services.[16]

[15] In synthesis, the data shows that 70% of the disgruntled take care not to waste electricity (against 72% of civics and 67% of non-civics), 67% try not to waste water (against 71% of civics and 64% of non-civics), 52% use transport different from the private car (against 54% of civics and 46% of non-civics), only 31% do not differentiate batteries from other household waste (against 28% of civics and 37% of non-civics) and only 29% do not differentiate pharmaceuticals for waste collection (against 25% of civics and 34% of non-civics).

[16] Civics are the only citizens to give public transport a positive score (1-10, always well over 6.5): train 6.7 (against 5.9 of disgruntled and non-civics), extra-urban buses 6.8 (against 6 of disgruntled and 5.8 of non-civics) and town buses 6.7 (against 5.6 of disgruntled and 5.4 of non-civics).

Table 6. Percentage distribution of three types of Italian citizens by region

REGIONS	CIVICS	DISAPPOINTED	NON-CIVICS
Piemonte	33%*	39%*	29%*
Val d'Aosta	27%	46%*	27%
Lombardia	34%*	38%*	29%*
Trentino	34%*	**50%***	16%*
Veneto	**37%***	39%*	25%*
Friuli VG	35%*	44%*	20%*
Liguria	36%*	40%*	25%*
Emilia Romagna	34%*	41%*	25%*
Toscana	34%*	37%*	29%*
Umbria	30%*	36%	34%
Marche	31%	38%*	31%
Sardegna	27%*	41%*	32%*
Lazio	30%*	33%*	37%*
Abruzzo	31%*	35%	35%
Molise	28%	29%	44%*
Puglia	30%	30%	40%*
Basilicata	25%*	35%*	40%*
Campania	25%*	29%*	47%*
Calabria	22%*	30%*	48%*
Sicilia	21%*	27%*	**51%***
ITALY	30%*	37%*	33%*
Maximum-Minimum	16%	23%	35%

*Significant rankings (at region level) of the three types of citizens (1% significance)
Note: In bold the significantly highest percentages in each column; the significantly lowest percentages are underlined; the significant modal class of each row is in grey.

The regional distribution of civic and non-civic Italians resembles Putnam's map of 1993. From north to south (Table 6), we see an almost monotonic trend in the percentages of these citizens. Regarding the distribution of the former, the table shows that the highest percentages (33-37%) were concentrated in the North and Centre including Tuscany. The percentages closest to the national mean (30%) were recorded in the central regions, whereas the lowest (21-25%) were recorded in the southern regions. The distribution of non-civic citizens was specular. The highest percentages were recorded in the south and centre-south regions and were much lower in the

north. However, in this case the difference between southern and northern regions was much greater. In Trentino, non-civics barely reached 16%, whereas in Sicily they were 51%, in Calabria 48% and in Campania 47%. This result is also evident in the last row of the table, where the difference between the highest and lowest regional percentages was 16% between civics and 35% between non-civics, and underlines the persistence and depth of differences between the north and south of the country. On this point, Table 6 shows that non-civics were the modal class in the south and centre-south (i.e. their percentage was higher than that of the other two types), whereas in the north and centre-north the modal class consisted of disgruntled Italians. Civics is not the modal class in any of the 20 regions.

The regional distribution of disgruntled Italians is somewhat similar to that of civic citizens.[17] The highest percentages of disgruntled citizens were recorded in three northern special-statute regions: Trentino-Alto Adige (50%), Val d'Aosta (46%) and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (44%). Percentages below 35% were recorded in central and especially southern regions: Sicily 27%, Molise and Campania 29%, Apulia and Calabria 30%.[18] On the whole, the geography of disgruntled citizens tended to be the opposite to that of non-civics. The coefficient of correlation between the two was -0.93.

Two aspects require further study in light of these results: the type of distrust shown by disgruntled citizens and the implications of their high frequency in formerly "red" regions. Disgruntled citizens are politically and socially active, but deeply distrust political institutions. Like civic citizens, they take part in political and social life, but diverge from them by being diffident about politicians. They are not apathetic, amoral familists or "subjects"; their main feature is disillusionment with politics and its institutions.

Disgruntled citizens combine participation with disillusionment: they are numerous, significant and their scepticism of the political system is quite different from that of non-civic citizens (Bordandini 2015). Their distrust is that of people who have not given up on the idea of individual political efficacy. It is probably derived more from political disillusionment than from

[17] The correlation between disgruntled Italians and civics has some interesting outliers, e.g. Val d'Aosta: the correlation coefficient increases from +0.6 to +0.7 if this region is excluded. Among the citizens of this region, the percentage of disgruntled Italians is as high as 46%, while those of civics and non-civics are both 27%. This is therefore a region where levels of distrust in the public institutions is very high, probably related to cases of corruption that emerged in the months of data collection. In any case, the results of this region should be taken with caution, since the region is very small (only 753 respondents; see Table 1).

[18] Here again, the exception of Sardinia, another special statute region, is noteworthy. Its pattern is closer to those of the centre-north than the centre-south regions (see Cartocci 2007 on this point).

general apathy or fatalism. The distrust of disgruntled citizens is compatible with political and social participation, unlike that of non-civics, which manifests as apathy, inaction and opting out, often under the belief that collective action is impossible. The disillusionment of disgruntled citizens could be changed by positive experiences or political occasions, whereas that of non-civics is more obstinate and difficult to change. We would not be surprised if more detailed analysis of the database regarding voting brought to light a link between the disgruntled and the success of the populist vote in 2018. [19]

Indeed, in the recent literature there are studies that underline the interest in politics of M5S voters and their deep distrust in political institutions, despite the electoral success of the party since 2013 and its experience in government since 2018 (e.g. Angelucci and Vittori 2021, Passarelli and Tuorto 2016).

Finally, Table 6 provides food for thought regarding the fact that disgruntled Italians are particularly frequent in regions with a strong civic tradition, where the political and social network of associations is widespread. Not by chance, the fault line between north and south is not Tuscany (as in the case of the line dividing civics and non-civics), but the Marches, namely the southern boundary of the former "red" zone.

This different geographic demarcation line for disgruntled Italians is an important difference for at least two reasons. Firstly because it is the same boundary between north and south that Putnam pinpointed in 1993. Secondly, because it tells us something about the political, cultural and also electoral crises faced in recent years by the former "red" regions. Indeed, these were regions, which in the second half of the 1990s had a strong communist subculture and which between 2013 and 2018 recorded a collapse of votes for the left.[20] In the national elections of 2013, for example, the red subcultural network came apart in many places, such that in the elections of 2018, the "red" area of Italy was declared to have substantially disappeared (Chiaramonte and De Sio 2019). Indeed, in the 2018 national elections, the centre-left was beaten by the centre-right Lega in 19/40 constituencies in these regions and by M5S in all five constituencies in the Marches (two already won by M5S in 2013). Political instability since 2020 plus the COVID

[19] Unfortunately the available data set does not allow us to analyse electoral participation or the political orientation of the disgruntled. One can only suppose that they abstain from voting in protest or vote for populist parties.

[20] It is useful to recall that in 2008, the Partito democratico (PD) obtained 45.7% of the vote in Emilia Romagna, 46.8% in Toscana, 44.4% in Umbria and 41.3% in the Marches. In the national elections of 2013 it lost 8.6% of the vote: 9.3%, 12.3% and 13.7%, respectively. In the national elections of 2018, the PD lost further votes, recording 26.4% in Emilia Romagna (-10.7% with respect to 2013), 29.6% in Toscana (-7.9%), 24.8% in Umbria (-7.3%) and 21.3% in the Marches (-6.4%).

pandemic prevent us from making forecasts, but by virtue of their nature, disgruntled Italians could well swell the numbers of non-voters.

Before concluding, it is useful to underline that besides singling out a category of citizens that probably did not exist (in the current proportions) when Putnam did his research, the present study produces important empirical evidence, namely the fact that almost 70% of Italians harbour deep diffidence towards their institutions and the political system. At the same time, however, Italy has always had a highly differentiated regional distribution of trust (Bordandini 2015). The present results change this perspective, showing that Italians who do not trust their institutions (disgruntled and non-civics) are distributed almost evenly over national territory, and therefore with respect to previous maps of Italian social capital, the decline in trust involves principally the northern and central regions.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Here we seized the opportunity of the 30th anniversary of the publication of the book by Putnam et al., *Making Democracy Work*, to analyse the regional map of social capital in Italy, and to reflect on the distrust that Italians have towards their institutions. On one hand, our findings show substantial continuity with the past, namely the persistence of a fault line dividing the north and south of the country in terms of civic culture, but on the other, a more complex political culture of Italians. Besides the existence of civic and non-civic citizens, clustering revealed a third type constituting roughly one third of the population: civic-minded citizens who participate politically and socially but are deeply disillusioned with their fellow citizens and with the institutions of democratic representation. They are disgruntled with the institutions but still active in society and broadly interested in politics. They seem to have substantially fuelled the populist drift in Italy since 2013, signalling discontent that does not depend on a lack of interest in how the country is governed.

In general, the present study reveals that today, analysis of the dimension "civic versus non-civic citizens" is no longer sufficient to describe mass orientations in our “disaffected democracies” (Putnam and Pharr 2000). The variable “civic/non-civic” is therefore no longer able to reflect the differences between electors and/or regions as it did until a decade or two ago. The advent of civic, anti-establishment citizens could be a response to the crisis of western democracies and to the proliferation of post-democracies (Crouch 2004, 2020), guided by oligarchs more concerned

with acceding to positions of power than with increasing institutional performance. Disgruntled citizens seem to us to be civics frustrated by the lack of protection against market forces due to the increasingly reduced Welfare State and a political class increasingly dependent on wealthy business elites (Gilens and Page 2014). In Italy, these citizens find fertile ground because this disaffection with democratic governance has older roots than in other consolidated democracies (recall the comparative study by Almond and Verba (1963) in which Italians describe their institutions as unreliable and inefficient). So although the rise of distrust in political institutions does not concern Italy alone, in the latter case this distrust is expressed with extraordinary force and also involves many civic citizens who until a few years ago, probably still placed some trust in the workings of the main institutions of Italian democracy.

Our finding that mistrust in Italian institutions is driven to a large extent by civic citizens leaves questions on their voting behaviour unanswered, and likewise the reasons for the divergence between civic participation and trust in politics, on their evolution over time and on the importance of similar patterns in other industrial countries. Further research based on other data sets could help to answer such questions.

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