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PUTNAM'S *MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK*: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Robert Putnam, with the collaboration of Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, published in 1993 *Making Democracy Work: Civic Society in Modern Italy*.

Putnam is a professor of Public Policy at Harvard University and a political scientist. However, his research goes beyond political science and, according to the Economist, "his scholarship is wide-ranging" (*The Economist*, 2000). Robert Leonardi is a visiting professor at the School of Government of the LUISS University in Rome and has served as a consultant for governmental entities. Raffaella Y. Nanetti is a professor of Urban Planning and Policy at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Since the mid-1990s, she has worked on the "application of the concept of social capital to the field of development planning. (...) In the context of ongoing globalization, she has empirically identified social capital building strategies to promote sustainable communities". Her research is centered on "context specific development strategies, social capital and development planning, globalization and local development" (Upp.uic.edu, 2016).

Their study focuses on the regional governments of Italy and tries to explain differences in institutional performances amongst them. Putnam, undertaking both qualitative and quantitative assessments, concludes that social capital is the main variable able to explain differences in institutional performances.

Evidence has been brought against Putnam's findings and his work has been criticized on many aspects: superficiality in the historical analysis, in the socio-political and economic analysis and in the empirical studies have been found by other scholars, such as Tarrow, Katz and Levi.

Putnam's work had however a great impact on the social science community and among policy makers, which is important to consider to understand how astonishing are the findings of the American author.

With this work I analyze *Making Democracy Work*, connecting the study to the most eminent critics it provoked and to the consequences it brought in the worlds of policy making and research.

OVERVIEW OF *MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK*

This paper starts with a brief summary of *Making Democracy Work*, in order to touch the most relevant concepts it contains.

The main aim of the book is to answer the question: "what are the conditions for creating strong, responsive, effective representative institutions?" (Putnam, 1993: 6). Putnam tries to explain the dependent variable of institutional performance and thus to answer this broad question, studying the particular Italian regional case.

The introduction of regional government in Italy had special characteristics. Putnam studied twenty regions in Italy. Five of them were introduced before 1970 and were given greater constitutional powers with respect to the others. The remaining fifteen, created in 1970, had identical constitutional structures and mandates. Since the institutions that were introduced did not differ on organizational structure, Putnam is able to control for institutional design and to find other explanatory variables for the institutional performance. The main difference between the twenty institutions was the context in which they were introduced: Italy was heterogeneous under cultural, economic, social and political aspects. These differences led to diverging institutional performances, which decrease in quality as regions become more southern. In six chapters, each of which begins with a question and ends with its answer, Putnam emphasizes the role of sociocultural factors in shaping the quality of institutional performance.

He undertakes a historical analysis that begins in the medieval period and supports his theoretical ideas with both quantitative and statistical data, which he gathered during twenty-three years, and a game theoretical analysis.

His historical analysis starts on chapter two, trying to answer the questions on how the process of introducing regional governments arose, how these institutions developed over twenty years and what were the implications on Italian politics and government.

When in 1860 the Italian state was proclaimed, national development was discouraged by the enormous differences across the peninsula. Thus central authority was considered by the majority the solution to these divergences. Even if the central authority was strong, *trasformismo* allowed local authorities to maintain their power. During the Fascist era these practices continued and, only after World War 2, there was an attempt to formally protect regional power. In 1948, the new Constitution established directly elected regional governments. In five special regions, this mandate was soon implemented, while in the other regions this process was delayed. In 1970 the first regional councils were elected, supported by a wave of optimism for decentralization. As the delegation of power grew bigger, the enthusiasm for decentralization was decreasing due to the fact that the incapacity of the new institutions to address local problems was becoming apparent. The differences between north and south of Italy were already emerging: in the North "horizontal" collective actions dominated, while the South was characterized by "vertical" relationships, such as private petitions. Regions were given large amount of funds and in the

early years of regional institutionalism, the main occupation of regional governments was to distribute funds.

After 1970, reforms were undertaken. To study their effect, Putnam begins with the analysis of the political elite, which is an important element to understand institutional change. The new regional councils were well educated men with political experience, but modest origins. Their ability led to the gradual replacement of the province by the region. Councilors saw their occupation as a full-time job and the approach to politics became more practical and less ideological. Parties became more tolerant with each other because their views were less and less extreme. As their power started growing, regional interests were protected when they contrasted national directives. However, the relationship between local and central authorities improved. The growing importance of regions is testified by the fact that the average councilor started meeting with the representatives of regions more and more often during the decades. Despite their energetic attempts in the field of regional planning, councilors reported dissatisfaction with the effect of their effort and their initial enthusiasm declined. Bureaucracy was slow, regional administrators inefficient and projects unfeasible. The major problem in the administration was caused by the regional employees. To hire them, the criterion was that of clientelism rather than experience. Thus, the performance of regions had a large margin of improvement. Nevertheless, voters were less satisfied with national than regional government. There were sharp differences in voters' satisfaction between the northern and the southern regions: most citizens in the North were satisfied with their regional government, but none of the southern regions was able to achieve this result.

Chapter three begins with the question: do some regional governments show systematically a better performance than others, so that we can speak about institutional success and failure? To answer, one must first be able to evaluate institutional success. To do so, two elements are important: the responsiveness of the government to the needs of the citizens and its efficiency. Putnam tries to find a measurement of governance performance that is: comprehensive, meaning that it should take into account all the activities a government has to carry out and all the fields in which it operates; internally consistent, meaning that it has to find coherence in the measurements of the various activities; reliable, meaning that it should be consistent over time; "must correspond to the objectives and evaluations of the protagonists and constituents" (Putnam, 1993: 64), meaning that it must be in line with standards of the constituencies. To measure government effectiveness, Putnam uses twelve indicators: cabinet stability, budget promptness, statistical and information services, reform legislation, legislative innovation, day care centers, family clinics, industrial policy instruments, agricultural spending capacity, local health unit expenditures, housing and urban development and bureaucratic responsiveness. He finds consistency among the results given by these twelve indicators and consistency over time. He concludes that some regions have performed consistently better than others over more than a decade, even though regions were given identical financial resources and structures. He notices that the latitude and performance are

strongly related, even though it is not perfect: the group of regions in the North performs better than the southern ones.

Putnam then tries to see if the views of the citizens corresponded to the findings that could be drawn from his measurement. Asking Italians "how satisfied or unsatisfied are you with the way in which this region is governed?" (Putnam, 1993: 77), he finds that the surveys are concordant with his measurements: Italians in the regions where the twelve indicators predicted a good governance performance are satisfied, while citizens in the region that he predicted to have a low performance are not satisfied. He undertakes another similar survey, interviewing though, instead of citizens, community leaders. Most of them met regularly with regional officials, thus having a direct knowledge about the performance of the regions. Also this interview is in line with the results found with the twelve indicators.

In chapter four he asks: "what explains these differences in institutional performance?" (Putnam, 1993: 82), "what is it that differentiates the successful regions in the North from the unsuccessful ones in the South, and the more from the less successful within each section?" (Putnam, 1993: 83). He focuses on two possible explanations. The first is related to "socioeconomic modernity", the second to "civic community".

Socioeconomic modernity deals with the industrial revolution and its consequences. The north of Italy is much more advanced than the South and regressing economic modernity to explain performance gives a high correlation ($r=0.77$). Regions are divided into two different quadrants: the group of the North and the one of the South. However, differences in performance within each quadrant are not explained by economic development and regions were endowed with financial resources that favored poorer regions by the central government. Also, it is not clear if it is economic modernity that influences performance, if it is the contrary, or if a third factor is the cause of both of them.

The second hypothesis sustains the fact that it is the "civic virtue", that is the character of the citizens, that leads institutions to perform well. Arguments have been previously brought in favor and against this thesis. Putnam approaches the problem differently, trying to investigate empirically if the success of a government depends on the extent to which the community it operates into approximates an ideal community.

Putnam indicates four practical aspects for a community to be civic: civic engagement, meaning that citizens should both participate in public affairs and pursue their own interest respecting the community; political equality, meaning that all the components of a society should have equal rights and duties and that relationships among them should be horizontal and not vertical; solidarity, trust and tolerance among citizens; associations among citizens, because participants have habits of cooperation and thus associations increase the quantity of networks in a society. Putnam finds indicators to account for this four aspects of a civic community, thus he selects proper indicators of the civic-ness of a community. The first one is the number of associations such as amateur soccer clubs, literary circles and similar ones. The second is the amount of newspaper readership, since they broadly deals with

community affairs. The third is the turnout of referenda, which are occasions for citizens to show their interest in and sense of duty towards community issues. Regardless of the topic of the referendum, Putnam discovers that in some parts of Italy, citizens choose to be actively more involved in community issues. In Italy, voters can choose the party list they want to vote for and they can also indicate a preference for a certain candidate of the party they are choosing. This is called preference voting and, according to Putnam, it is an indicator of a weak civic-ness in communities because it is often the result of patron-client vertical relationships. It is also the fourth indicator of the civic-ness of a community. The four indicators are found to be highly correlated with each other, so that Putnam is able to develop a single indicator for the civic-ness of a community. Regressing this single index to explain government performance of regions shows a higher positive correlation than the indicators for economic development. Putnam concludes that "economically advanced regions appear to have more successful regional governments merely because they happen to be more civic"(Putnam, 1993: 98).

Putnam then tries to outline the main characteristics of living in a civic community. In a more civic region, citizens have less frequent contacts with representatives than in a less civic region. The level of civic-ness in the community explains the personal contacting, but education, income and other demographic characteristics cannot. All social categories in less civic regions more often engage in contacts with representatives and have the tendency to talk about patronage rather than policy. Even if educational levels among citizens in the less civic regions of the South are just slightly lower than in the northern regions, the political class in the South is much more educated than in the North. Thus, in the South, the whole political elite is composed by the privileged layer of society. In contrast, the northern politics is more heterogeneous and characterized by leaders with different backgrounds. Putnam concludes that "where associations flourishes, where citizens attend to community affairs and vote for issues, not patrons, there too we find leaders who believe in democracy, not social and political hierarchy" (Putnam, 1993 102). The characteristics of a civic community are enduring over time: in the regions that are found to be more civic according to this study conducted in 1970s, it was more likely to vote for republic against monarchy in 1946 and more likely to support the egalitarian electoral reform of 1991. However, Putnam states that "it is fruitless to ask which came first-the leaders' commitment to equality or the citizens' commitment to engagement" (Putnam, 1993 104). Apart from the tendency toward egalitarianisms of representatives of the more civic regions, Putnam finds that these leaders are able to compromise more easily with opponents than in the less civic regions. He conducts a survey asking representatives if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "to compromise with one's political opponents is dangerous because that normally leads to the betrayal of one's own side" (Putnam, 1993 105). The results show that leaders in the more civic regions are more likely to disagree with the proposition than leaders in the less civic regions. Putnam also finds that in more civic regions, the percentage of citizens that are member of a union is much higher than in the southern less civic regions, even when it is controlled for the occupation of the worker. Union membership is also unrelated to

demographic characteristics such as education. Catholic Church plays an important role in Italy. Putnam does not include religious associations in the associations he used to create one of the four indicators of civic-ness of a region. In fact, he argues that Italian Church emphasizes vertical relationships. Thus, the more religious associations in a region, the less that region is civic. In contrast with this, there is fact that political parties related with the Church, such as Catholic Action, were significantly stronger in the north of Italy. There are no differences in interest in politics between the citizens in the more and less civic regions. However, in the south of Italy, citizens deem vertical connections with representatives as important. This relationships of dependence are in contrast with the horizontal ones in more civic regions. The presence of *Mafia* and the consequent level of corruption are higher in the less civic regions. In the less civic regions, citizens "feel exploited, alienated, powerless" (Putnam, 1993 109). They also tend not to think that others will respect the rules and thus tend to violate them more easily. A third party able to enforce rules is therefore more important in the less civic regions. In the more civic regions, liberalism can be stronger because of the trust among citizens. Since the feeling of being happy in life is more common among citizens in the civic North, Putnam concludes that: "happiness is living in a civic community" (Putnam, 1993: 113).

Putnam goes further and considers various schools of thoughts that view the seeds of good governance in different elements. Putnam provides evidence against a school of thought, supported also by Rousseau, which states that political conflict hinders the development of a civic community. The data gathered by Putnam shows that there is no correlation between civic-ness and political strife. Social stability, according to Putnam's studies, is not a basis for good governance because, a full analysis of the data, shows no relationship between the two. Education could be thought to be important, but high- and low-performing regions are inhabited by citizens that do not differ by the level of education. Other theories relate institutional success to urbanism. Marx, for example, endorses that urbanization and good performance are positively related. Putnam finds instead no correlation between the two. Personnel stability, meaning the commitment of its members to the institution, could be considered one of the causes of good institutional performance, but Putnam finds no correlation between the two. The strength of the presence of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in various regions is found by Putnam as a controversial and insignificant factor for institutional success.

After the consideration and the debunking of some theories, Putnam starts chapter five asking why some regions are more civic than others. The answer lies in the past of the regions. Thus Putnam begins a voyage from the medieval era, when Italy created political advanced structures. The regimes in the north and in the south of Italy had contrasting features. The South was economically and administratively advanced thanks to the Norman mercenaries. Fredrick II issued a Constitution, stressing the importance of public order, justice and privileges of the feudal nobility. Freedom of religion and culture were supported. "By the end of the twelfth century, Sicily, with its control of the Mediterranean Sea routes, was the richest, most advanced, and highly organized State in Europe" (*Times Atlas of World History*: 124).

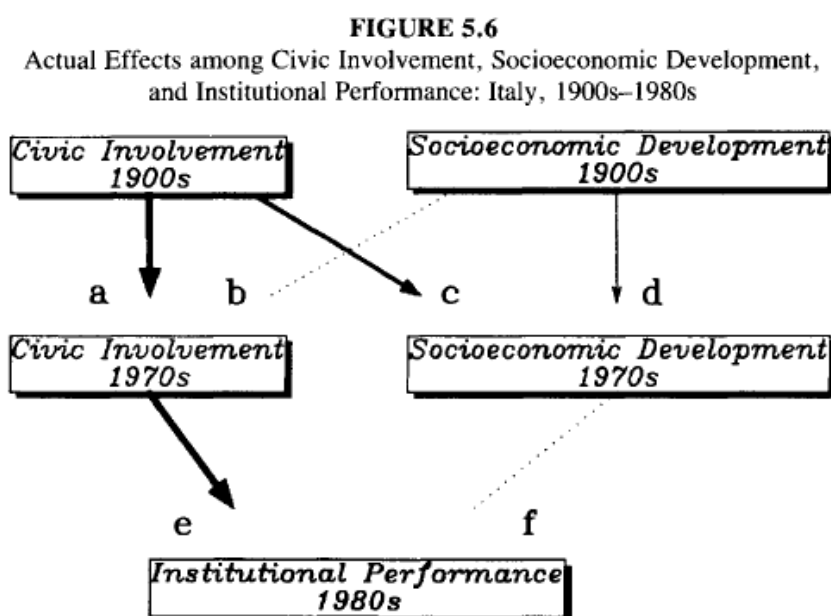
Despite this great development, the South was characterized by a strict autocracy, which brought consequences that still have an effect on the south of the peninsula. In the north of Italy, instead, towns were characterized by self-government, planting the seeds for the horizontal relationships that persisted until today. The communes that were created in the northern and central Italy emphasized the importance of common interest and the protection of its members. Associations between tradesmen and craftsmen were created for mutual-assistance. They then extended to all sectors of society. Politics in the North was not autocratic and externals to the political elite were involved too. A professionalized public administration and the important role of covenants and contracts were developed. Lay associations discarded the central role of the Church, in which vertical hierarchies prevailed. All these developments brought a high civic commitment that fostered trust and confidence. In this scenario, commerce and mercantile systems could grow, leading to economic development. However, the roots of the wealth of the north and the south of Italy differed: the first were in finance and commerce, the second in land. In the republican communes of the North, bonds of personal dependence were quite weak and were supplanted by horizontal relations of mutual aid. In the Norman feudal autocracy, feudal bonds of dependence were strong, people were treated as subjects, Church played an important role, as did vertical hierarchy. In the thirteenth century, Papacy governed in the center of Italy with less efficiency and control than the Normans did in the South. Seigniorial domination started replacing republican communal governments in the fourteenth century, with the exception of those in the center and north of Italy, from Venice to Genoa, across Emilia Romagna and Tuscany. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, some European powers as Spain and France made war against each other in Italy. This brought a great destruction in the north of Italy, but the South remained quite intact. The destruction of the North and the inviting wealth of the South led Italians to migrate from the North to the South. In the seventeenth century economical reawakening was stopped by epidemics and the republicanism and independence of cities in the North was replaced by feudal structures of power. Conflicts destroyed the social networks that had been previously created in the North. Patron-client relationships characterized now all the peninsula, with northern patrons that accepted civic responsibilities. They were called "patrons of the art" and helped financing civic life, for example with the construction of hospitals. Mutual aid between citizens persisted in the north of Italy. The heritage of the medieval era allowed cities in the North to still have some civicness, despite the feudal power and the conflicts. In contrast, in the South authoritarian politics and autocracy persisted, contrasted only by weak and sporadic rebellions. Since in the South all the subsequent ruling dynasties were foreign, the gap between the governing elite and the mass worsened. The Hapsburgs and the Bourbons, which ruled the Papal states for more than three-hundred years, enhanced vertical relationships at the expense of horizontal ones. In the North, the eradication of feudal power was a long process. After the French revolution, the establishment of social associations was stopped and suppressed both in France and Italy. The need of mutual aid increased as the industrial revolution arrived, because of the plagues of unemployment and anonymity of the industrial

agglomerates. In the first half of the nineteenth century, new popular associations, such as the Masonic lodges and mutual aid societies, were created in France. These groups were composed mainly by the popular class, but sometimes involved also other layers of the society. The interaction in groups encouraged culture and political involvement. Meanwhile, in Italy, no such kind of associations existed. However, during the Risorgimento, associations started to be created again. After the unification of the peninsula of 1861, mutual aid societies, based on practical reciprocity, developed among artisans and craftsmen. Cooperative groups arose among producers and consumers in all economic sectors. They grew significantly in the second half of the nineteenth century and, although they were formally nonpolitical, some were characterized by a main political ideology. In the north-east of Italy, many catholic associations were created and, in 1919, the *Partito Popolare*, which had catholic bases, was formed. Together with the mass-based political movements that were strengthening, the *Partito Popolare* embodied the opposition to the current political regime. Although they were ideologically different, the two parties encourage mutual aid and horizontal relationships. Meanwhile, in the *Mezzogiorno* patron-client networks persisted. There associations were far less successful than in the North. Patron-client relationships, mutual distrust and poverty fostered the amoral familism. Horizontal cooperation was so weak that the only way to survive was to rely on vertical relations. Even if the Southerners occasionally rebelled and protested, this had no permanent effect. Patron-client relations, weakness of the state, mutual distrust and need for help were a perfect soil for *Mafia* to get stronger. It provided special intangible commodities, such as protection. The organized criminality of *Mafia*, whose relations are of a patron-client typology, has persisted until nowadays.

Putnam then undertakes a quantitative assessment to measure the durability of civic traditions. As quantitative indicators of civic engagement in the late nineteenth century he uses the following: membership in mutual aid societies; membership in cooperatives; strength of the mass parties; turnout in the open election before the Fascist era; the longevity of local associations. Since the inter-correlation among these indicators is really strong, Putnam combines them in a single indicator. He discovers constancy during the century in the level of civic engagement of the different regions: where civic engagement was high a century ago, high political and social civic-ness is found today. Because of data that is missing, continuity from earlier periods cannot be quantitatively demonstrated. Putnam comments: "the pattern is stark: one could have predicted the success or failure of regional government in Italy in the 1980s with extraordinary accuracy from patterns of civic engagement nearly a century earlier" (Putnam, 1993: 151).

Putnam studies the link between economic development and civic traditions. Nowadays, regions that are more civic are also economically more advanced. Thus one could argue that economic development causes civic-ness. However, according to the historical voyage that Putnam describes, evidence is against the thesis of economic determinism. In the twelfth century, the Norman kingdom governed in an as advanced as the North *Mezzogiorno*. When communes arose in the north of Italy, the

North was no more developed than the South. Then the North developed more rapidly. After pestilences and foreign invasion, the advantage of the North disappeared. In 1860, neither the North nor the South were being affected by the industrial revolution. However, farms in the North were more efficient and productive. When the wind of industrialization blew across Italy, the North became industrialized, while the South stayed rural. Then, the North has developed more than the South. As the economic gap between the south and the north of Italy changed in magnitude and sign, civic differences appear to have been quite stable. Putnam comments that "the civic regions did not begin wealthier, and they have not always been wealthier, but so far as we can tell, they have remained steadfastly more civic since the eleventh century" (Putnam, 1993: 153). After unification, data is available so that he can undertake a quantitative assessment. He finds that, a century ago, economics and civic were not as highly correlated as they are today. As time passed, economic development became more highly correlated with the unchanged level of civic-ness. He concludes that "perhaps civics helps to explain economics, rather than the reverse" (Putnam, 1993: 154). As it is shown in figure 5.6 (Putnam 1993: 157), Putnam debunks the economic



determinism hypothesis using quantitative data. He finds that it is previous levels of civic traditions, not of socioeconomic development, that determine the present ones. Another finding is that previous levels of civic involvement are good predictors of later socioeconomic development. He concludes that "economics does not predict civics, but civics does predict economics, better indeed than economics itself"

(Putnam, 1993: 157). He also assesses that previous levels of socioeconomic development cannot predict current levels of institutional success, while previous civic involvement can. Putnam also states that civic traditions are not the only factor that led to economic progress. But regions that have strong civic traditions were able to respond better to the external events. He then tries to sketch an explanation for the causal link between civic traditions and economic development. When private economic associations are connected in a network, mutual assistance takes place. The flow of information in the network plays an important role: it allows the diffusion of technical innovations, it lowers the level of opportunism because information about the reliability of individuals increases and it encourages compromises instead of conflicts.

Chapter six begins with Putnam asking why the past is so powerful. He develops an answer using the means of game theory and the idea of social capital. Finite games as the prisoner dilemma show that

two rational players would choose not to cooperate. Cooperating is Pareto efficient, meaning that there is no other strategy that could make a player better off without making the other worse off. However, when one player cooperates, the other has an incentive to defect. Since both players are rational and there is a common knowledge of rationality, they decide both to defect. Third party enforcement can be a solution to solve dilemmas of this type, but has negative sides. In fact, the heavy use of third party enforcement is costly, unpleasant and less efficient than voluntary cooperation. Another problem related to third party enforcement is that it is itself a public good to which the same dilemma applies. However, game theory does not predict voluntary cooperation, which could explain "why uncooperative behavior does not emerge as often as game theory predicts" (Kropotkin, 1902: 166).

Putnam then emphasizes the social context in which the game is played. He states that social capital, intended as the level of trust, the norms and networks in a society, is the solution to overcome the collective action problem. To support his idea, he uses the example of rotating credit associations, which are groups where people "agree to make regular contributions to a fund which is given, in whole or in part, to each contributor in rotation" (Ardener, 1964: 201). After a participant is assigned the sum, he is no more eligible to receive it again and no third party enforcement is involved. These associations are found in various parts of the world and their existence is a counterexample to the validity of theories that support collective action problem. If players were rational, they would leave the group after they received the fund. However, in societies where networks and reputation are important assets, participants do not defect. Thus rotating credit association can exist because they "use pre-existing social connections between individuals to help circumvent problems of imperfect information and enforceability" (Bates: 398).

Putnam then states that social capital tends to be accumulated over time and must be used so that it does not get exhausted. Since individuals tend to underinvest in social capital, it is created as a secondary product of other activities. In the north of Italy, social capital was developed together with economic dynamism and government performance. Differently from the Southern counterparts, the Northerners were involved in cooperation which fostered the creation of social capital.

Then Putnam asks: "how does personal trust become social trust?". He states that "social trust (...) can arise from two related sources - norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement"(Putnam, 1993: 171). There exist two kinds of reciprocity: balanced reciprocity, where there is a simultaneous exchange of equally valuable goods, and generalized reciprocity, which is an imbalanced exchange at a given time accompanied with future expectations that the exchange will be rebalanced. The last kind of reciprocity is more likely to arise when there are consistent networks of social exchange. Many are the reasons: the individual who defects in a transaction faces higher costs as a consequence of his damaged reputation; when individuals interact in different contexts, they can agree and create norms of reciprocity; as networks become denser, reputation of individuals is more accurate and it is transmitted more easily; successful collaboration in the past encourages present collaboration. Thus reciprocity tends to arise in

societies where there are dense networks of civic engagement, represented for example by sport clubs, literature groups, mass-based parties. Only horizontal relations can create trust, cooperation and thus social capital. Networks of vertical relations do not foster the creation of social capital because information is more inaccurate, relations unbalanced and obligations asymmetric. Thus horizontal relations foster good governance, while vertical ones hinder it. Depending on the type of relations, two stable equilibria can be created: where horizontal relationships prevail, the equilibrium is one in which players cooperate; where vertical relationships are more common, the stable equilibrium is never to cooperate. Putnam concludes that horizontal bonds made economic development possible, while vertical ones inhibited it. Therefore, it is not economic development that explains institutional success, but both are the consequence of dense networks of horizontal relations. In fact, the more civic regions, that nowadays are the more economically advanced, did not begin wealthier. Economic disparity was so pronounced in the sixteenth century, that migration was from the north to the south of Italy. The last conclusion Putnam can draw from the regional experiment is that "social context and history profoundly condition the effectiveness of institutions" and that "effective and responsive institutions depend (...) on republican virtues and practices" (Putnam, 1993: 182).

CRITICS TO PUTNAM'S THEORIES

Making Democracy Work moved many critics, which address the historical, the socio-economic, the political and the empirical analyses Putnam undertook. This naturally follows from the fact that the author and coauthors of the book are specialized in different fields: Putnam is a wide-ranging scholar, Robert Leonardi is specialized in governmental issues and Raffaella Y. Nanetti is an expert of urban planning and policy.

The first group of critics addresses the historical aspects contained in *Making Democracy Work*. According to Sidney Tarrow, a professor of Political Science and Sociology at Cornell, Putnam's historical analysis is insufficient. He argues that the American author shaped history to support his conclusion, leaving aside many important aspects. The events between the medieval period and the twentieth century are not well analyzed by Putnam. In the early Italian states, after a short period in which associations flourished, urban oligarchies tried to appropriate territory and markets. Putnam totally omits this in his analysis.

Tarrow is not the only one who accuses Putnam of superficiality. Gianfranco Pasquino, a political scientist and scholar, writes that: "it is one thing to identify the political origins of contemporary political patterns in a period eight centuries ago, but it is quite another to skim through most features of the politics of the next 500 years" (Pasquino, 1994: 309).

Also Cohn (1994), a professor of medieval history at Glasgow University, sees the historical analysis too laconic. In his opinion, only about twenty pages of *Making Democracy Work* analyze the historical development of Italy and this is seen as an evidence for "scholar superficiality".

Fritz Stern, a university professor who focuses on modern history, criticizes the timing, saying that it "could hardly be more inappropriate" (Stern, 1993). In fact, after the publication of Putnam's work, scandals of political corruption, *tangentopoli*, were revealed. They involved the north of Italy and therefore they were a bad example of civic-ness and good institutional performance that was declared in Putnam's book.

The most substantial group of critics addresses the social, political and economic analysis of Putnam's work. They are mainly concerned with the associations considered in Putnam's work: critics deal with their consistency over time, the exogenous factors that may have caused their creation, their role and their connection with social capital. The underestimation of the importance of the state in the creation of civic-ness in a society, the unclear links between social capital and institutional performance and between a strong civic society and democracy received critics as well.

Tarrow argues that, even if associations are found in different periods, this does not imply that they performed the same functions in the society and not even that they implied a horizontal cooperation, as Putnam implicitly assumes. Another interesting fact that Tarrow brings to light is that the associations found primarily in the North of the nineteenth century were discovered where the socialist and Catholic

parties took place. It was part of their popular politics to create the kind of secondary associations that Putnam includes in his work. Thus the link between the level of past and present civic-ness gets weaker when the importance of progressive politics is introduced. The ultimate cause of institutional performance could be politics, which brings as a consequence civic capacity. According to this new view, it is relevant to remark that the south of Italy, from the Normans in the twelfth century to the unification in 1861, was governed by foreigners. (Tarrow, 1996).

Carlo Trigilia, an Italian sociologist and professor at the University of Florence of Economic Sociology and Sociology and Politics, provides evidence against Putnam's view of a static and underdeveloped social community in the south of Italy. He conducted a research on associational activity in the early 1990s. He found a growth in the number of associations in the South, which is a contrasting evidence to Putnam's conclusion. (Trigilia, 1995).

Another section of critics addresses the obscurity in the connection between civic horizontal associations and the formation of social capital. As Margaret Levi, a professor of International Studies in the Department of Political Science at the University of Washington, asks, what are the “mechanisms by which membership in such groups as bird-watching societies and soccer clubs lead to a high level of civic engagement, democratic politics, and a high quality government performance?” (Levi, 1996: 46). Putnam seems too simplistic when he counts the number of horizontal associations in a society. He considers micro associations such as choral societies and bird watching clubs as indicators of the stock of social capital in society and as the basis for a good democratic performance. The main distinction he makes is between associations that are horizontally and vertically organized. He writes: "dense but segregated horizontal networks sustain cooperation within each group, but networks of civil engagement that cut across social cleavages nourish wider cooperation. (...) If horizontal networks of civic engagement help participants to solve dilemmas of collective action, then the more horizontally structured an organization, the more it should foster institutional success in the broader community. Membership in horizontally ordered groups (like sports clubs, cooperatives, mutual aid societies, cultural associations, and voluntary unions) should be positively associated with good government" (Putnam, 1993: 167-75). According to Putnam, in order to positively influence institutional performance, associations must overcome social and political divisions. If political solidarities are too strong, this may undermine good governance. Therefore, Putnam does not count as civic associations those groups that advance causes, pursue changes and provoke conflicts.

Carles Boix and Daniel N. Poser try to deepen and analyze the link between civic associations and social capital, arguing that different kinds of groups have a different impact on the social capacities of the broader community. The former is a professor of Politics and Public Affairs at Princeton University and the founder and director of IPEG (Institute of Political Economy and Governance), while the latter is a professor of the Political Science Department at UCLA. They distinguish associations that create a public good, which can be enjoyed by everyone such as a better school, from the ones that create a private good.

When a public good is created, the incentive to free-ride is very high. Thus, when associations that create a public good are successful, the benefit in terms of mutual trust is highly valuable. Reputation-building plays a greater role in public- than in private-producing-good groups in two ways: it is more important for a person to have a good reputation to take part of a group where no private interest is pursued; the good reputation of a non-defecting member of a public-producing good has a heavier importance. In the measurement of the social capital of a society, public-good producing associations should have a higher weight. Even if Putnam already considers this, it is still relevant to underline the importance of considering associations that are integrated in the society. Groups that are marginalized from the society and that do not have networks with other groups are more likely to undermine the cooperative capacities in the larger community. Does Putnam pay enough attention to this aspect? Emilia Romagna is, according to *Making Democracy Work*, the most civic region in Italy, but it is also the region where the division between Communists and Catholics is starker.

Putnam makes reference to finitely and infinitely repeated games (Putnam, 1993: 166), but he does not go beyond a brief reference to their existence. This concept can be instead useful to explain why associations are helpful for the creation of social capital.

Player 1 / Player 2	Cooperate	Defect
Cooperate	8,8	0,9
Defect	9,0	1,1

Consider a game in which two citizens interact with each other and are thus the players of the game. The payoffs are the ones in the above chart. If the game is repeated a definite number of times, the Nash equilibrium is represented by the strategies (Defect, Defect), leading a payoff of (1,1), which of course is not Pareto Optimal. However, theoretically speaking, we should ask ourselves if an interaction between individuals in a society can be considered as a finitely repeated game. It is more likely that the two individuals will not for sure interact again, but may interact with a certain probability. Denote the probability with which the two individuals will not have another interaction in the future with p . Then, $(1-p)$ is the probability with which these individuals will interact again. The expected payoff for a player that deviates the first time, meaning that the first time the game is played that player plays defect, equals $9 + (1-p) * (1/p)$. If the player does not deviate, his expected payoff is $8/p$. A player will have no incentive to defect when p is less or equal to $7/8$. Thus, as the probability of interacting again gets higher, the player is less incentivized to defect. Using the following example, one can better explain why associations help to build a civic community. Associations, such as choral societies and soccer clubs, increase the probability of individuals to interact again and to engage in an infinitely repeated game rather than a finitely one. Thus, citizens will cooperate rather than defect.

Not only the link between civic associations and social capital is obscure in Putnam's work, but also "the logic of how social capital produces governmental effectiveness is underspecified" (Carles Boix

and Daniel N. Posner, 1996: 9). Putnam empirically and historically analyzes such relationship, but he does not deepen the mechanisms that make social capital such a vital element for good governance. C. Boix and D. N. Posner propose four models to explain this link. In the first one they argue that, in democratic governments, the ability of citizens to choose their representatives is fundamental. When networks are enough developed, citizens can actively participate in discussions of civic affairs. This improves their ability to choose representatives. When citizens are organized in associations, it is easier to overcome the collective action problem. Thus, citizens are able to present to the government demands that better reflect their needs. In the second hypothesis, Boix and Posner support the idea that social capital influences the ability of government bureaucrats to cooperate to make bureaucracy work smoothly. The third model asserts that social capital fosters the civic virtue of citizens, which leads to a common political identity and a better capacity of judgment, which cause good governance. In the fourth model, they argue that antagonisms and strifes among the political elite are better managed when social capital is well developed. Thus social capital brings the political elite to collaborate to accomplish goals for the common benefit and not particularistic objectives.

As Putnam reveals with the title of the book, he studies good governance performance in democratic governments. But there is no direct link between strong civic society and democratic state. As James Putzel, a professor at LSE whose research focuses on the socio-political aspects of societies, argues, in the South-east businessmen created a network of reciprocity and trust, which reduced transaction costs. However, participants are not more benevolent towards democracy because of the creation of these networks. Thus, the link between network and democracy is inexistent. Moreover, “by their very success the Chinese excluded or pre-empted indigenous groups from engaging in many lines of trade” and the Chinese Filipino community did not want to replace the current oppressive regime with a democratic one because of profits (Putzel, 1997: 942).

An authoritarian regime, which starkly contrasts democracy, can arise where civic life is strong. Sheri Berman, a professor of Political Science at Barnard University, argues that the florid civic society of the Germany of the 1920s and 30s was one of the causes that brought the Nazi Party to have power. During that period, associational life in Germany was very vibrant. Cultural and professional associations flourished. However, these organizations turned to nationalist and populist groups, such as the Nazi Party, as a consequence of the inability of the political institutions to satisfy their requests. Thus civic society in this case favored the Nazi Party.

Putnam does not directly take into account the role of the state in fostering the creation of associations. According to *Making Democracy Work*, the link between civic society and good government is unidirectional. However, the state can foster or inhibit the creation of groups and of a civic society. The state is able to facilitate the "start-up costs" that are a barrier to the creation of civic associations, thus facilitating collective action. This bidirectional link between the state and the civic-ness of a society is missing also in the game theoretical analysis of Putnam's book.

Richard S. Katz, a political scientist teaching at the John Hopkins University whose research focuses primarily on political parties and electoral systems in the industrialized democracy, criticizes the use of game theory in chapter six, saying that since social capital is important, "rational egoists of game theory ought to exploit it to their private advantage" (Katz, 1993: 16), but he does not go further. In support of Putnam's ultimate finding, it can be thought that the response to this critic can be found in *Making Democracy work* itself. In fact, the private costs of creating social capital have been different in the North and in the South because their regimes have been in stark contrast since the medieval period. This situation can be represented with the means of game theory.

Player 1 / Player 2	Create associations	Do not create associations
Create associations	5,5	2,2
Do not create associations	2,2	2,2

The situation in the north of Italy can be modelled as the above game. The Nash equilibrium is where the two workers create an association. Both players get a higher payoff than when no association is created. In the North, the costs of creating horizontal associations were lower than the benefits individuals could derive from them, thus associations were created. In the south of Italy, instead, the payoff of (5,5) could have been probably replaced by a (1,1) payoff because the costs of creating an association were quite high. Therefore citizens, as rational players, did not create horizontal relationships.

The third group of critics deals with the empirical analysis of Putnam's book. Tarrow not only criticizes the historical reconstruction of Putnam's *Making Democracy Work*, but also the empirical measures he used. Putnam's use of preference voting as a measure for clientelism can be misleading. The American author does not clearly explain why clientelism is negatively related to civic-ness of a community. One could argue that when clientelism exists, citizens and politicians have a closest contact with each other and thus this positively affects civic-ness. Corruption and clientelism, not preference voting, should have been used as measures of uncivic-ness. However, Putnam himself responds to this critic in his work. In fact, empirically speaking, it is not easy to measure corruption and clientelism directly. One must find something that can be measured in reality and that can account for these factors. Putnam used preference voting because he wanted to support his theoretical conjectures with real data.

Cohn criticizes Putnam on the basis of geographical analysis. In fact, Putnam divides the peninsula in north and south Italy. But many differences within the South and the North can be found. According to Cohn "the South of Putnam is an undifferentiated whole, (...) despite the fact that the southern regions presented very different situations in terms of the level of urbanization, agrarian systems, industrial development, the diffusion of banditry and the formation of the first mafias" (Cohn,

1994: 318). However, Putnam empirical analysis does account for differences in both the north and the south of Italy. When he relates institutional performance and level of civic-ness, regions seem to be divided into two major groups: the group of the North and that of the South. Within each quadrant differences are found. The same happens with all the empirical regressions and studies in Putnam's work.

Katz considers the implications that *Making Democracy Work* would have brought. He concludes that Putnam's work "is a deeply depressing book, because the answer to the question to what extent can democracy be produced by the judicious choice of institutional forms, is not very far" (Katz, 1993: 15). Also Putnam himself shares this view in his book. However, he responds writing that: "The full results of the regional reform, however, are far from an invitation to quietism. On the contrary, a second lesson of the regional experiment is that changing formal institutions can change political practice" (Putnam, 1993: 184). In fact, in both the South and the North the introduction of regional governments was considered to have brought significant improvements.

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK AND ITS IMPACT ON FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

POLICY AND RESEARCH

Making Democracy Work moved many critics, but its impact extends further. It is important to consider the implications it had because they concretely explain why Putnam's book is such a relevant work and why it deserves attention. The publication had effects on two main fields: the one of policy making and the one of research.

Putnam's ultimate aim was broad, as he himself states: "These unexpected elemental links between civics and economics cast new light on the long-standing debate about the North-South development gap, not only within Italy but also globally" (Putnam, 1993: 158). New questions arise on how to solve the broader debate about development in the Third World. "Studies of the Italian case have the potential to contribute importantly to our understanding of how many (but not all) Third World countries remain inextricably and inextricably mired in poverty" (Putnam, 1993: 159). Despite the critics and even if we assume that Putnam's findings are true for the Italian reality, the main question is if they can be useful outside the peninsula as the author writes. Can his findings be applied also when there is not a democratic government? In countries where people struggle to satisfy their basic needs, social capital may not be useful to understand those situations. Peter Evans argues: "if a community is riven by conflicting interests, the nature and meaning of social capital becomes more complicated" (Evans, 1996a: 14).

Notwithstanding these concerns, some claim that Putnam's findings can be used to improve the situations of both the Third World countries and the American ghettos. They argue that in the Third World social and economic development is hindered by the inefficiency of institutions (Evans, Skocpol, and Rueschemeyer, 1985; Ostrom, 1990; Evans, 1996a, 1996b). Policy makers should focus on the creation of social capital and cooperative arrangements to solve the problems of underdevelopment.

After the publication, social capital has been considered by local governments, by NGOs and by the World Bank. In October 1996, the World Bank started the Social Capital Initiative. It had three main goals: "assessing the impact of social capital on project effectiveness; demonstrating that outside assistance can help in the process of social capital formation; and contributing to the development of indicators for monitoring social capital and methodologies for measuring its impact on development" (World Bank Group, 2016).

A study of 750 households from 45 villages in Tanzania has been undertaken. Similarly as in Putnam study, to measure social capital membership in groups, networks and level of trust were taken as key indicators. Using econometrics and accounting for the size of household, schooling, household assets, market access and agro-ecological zone, the researchers arrived to conclude that social capital is an important element that affects household welfare. Household-level social capital and village-level social capital have been compared and the second one is more significant than the first one. (The World Bank, 1998).

Another study collected data from twenty countries to study local institutions and its relationship with the market and civil society. In Indonesia, Bolivia and Burkina Faso, also data at the household level has been used. The aim is "to test empirically hypotheses regarding the impact of social capital on poverty, access to health, education and credit, and effectiveness of public programs and projects". The conclusion of the study was that the composition of the members of the associations is fundamental to determine the impact these associations have. When people in the association are heterogeneous and with a good economic background, the benefits to the members of the association are greater (Grootaert, 2001).

The World Bank carried out projects to develop social capital by improvement of the community. For example, an initiative regarding micro-credit initiatives has been undertaken to improve solidarity and trust in communities. Even agricultural and environmental projects, such as joint forest management, carried out by the World Bank contributed to the development of non-formal interactions in civil societies (The World Bank, 1998). The World Bank understands that development of social capital must be done acting both at the micro, through direct support to people, and the macro level, through laws that support associations. In Bolivia, the Law of Popular Participation was implemented: local communities were given an oversight role and fiscal resources were given to authority at the municipal level. NGOs helped training groups to collaborate and monitor municipal decisions (Boone and Faguet, 1998).

Putnam's work not only had implications on the policy making, but also on the field of political science research. The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in *Making Democracy Work* should encourage other researchers to use the same methodology in their studies. After the publication, researchers must take into account the importance of social capital when they try to explain political and economic phenomena.

Putnam himself, with the publication of *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* considers again the concept of social capital, applying it now to the U.S. case. In this article, Putnam deals with the relative democratic and economic declines in the U.S. and associate them with the decline in U.S. community-oriented associations.

After the publication of *Making Democracy Work*, social capital gained attentions and importance in the social science community. To apply this concept, it is important to understand what social capital is.

Putnam defines it as the "norms of reciprocity and networks of civil engagement" (Putnam, 1993: 167). However scholars altered this definition in later years. An emblematic example is found in the articles of 1996 World Development. In each of these articles, authors use the concept of social capital to demonstrate the importance of institutional arrangements, which are considered the link between state and civil society. Each author considers different third factors that influence this relationship. Lam and Ostrom focus on a "team production" idea; Heller favors the idea of mobilization and class relations; Fox develops the idea of the "political construction" of social capital. Peter Evans concludes that it is hard to

develop a theoretical idea of social capital. As John Harriss and Paolo de Renzio point out: "if social capital is understood to mean simply 'the way in which actors organize themselves', then there is indeed a very good case for saying that it is 'the missing link' in development, for organization quite clearly matters a great deal. But to use the term 'social capital' in this way is likely to create confusion, for it came into use originally to refer to the resources that inhere in family and community organization - especially networks or contacts of connections- which can be seen as a form of capital which accrues to individuals" (1997: 932).

CONCLUSIONS

Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* brings under new light the importance of social capital for the creation of a good society and changes the world of political science and social policy.

The support of data to his qualitative reasoning enables Putnam to give even more credibility to his thesis. The fact that the author combines qualitative and quantitative approach in a single research design is the main novelty and strength of the work. The author manages to create a unique empirical model combining different indicators in order to empirically show that civic-ness is highly related to institutional performance. Since Putnam does not choose which regions to include in his study, but is able to include all the regions, the problem of non-random sampling is prevented and empirical results acquire more significance. Moreover, thanks to the peculiarity of the Italian regional case, many factors are constant. Putnam is thus able to isolate elements that are related to institutional performance.

However, this empirical approach has inherently weaknesses, since it is a hard task to find good indicators of "good governance" and of civic-ness. Other deficiencies are found in the poor historical reconstruction that seems to be analyzed to fit the conclusion. Even if it is true that Putnam could have used a broader consideration of events, historical analysis necessarily involves choosing and isolating facts.

The missing links in Putnam's reasoning are another factor that impair the solidity of the conclusion. Putnam is unclear in explaining the connections between horizontal associations and social capital and the ones between politics, civic-ness and institutional performance. Furthermore, the author does not choose a starting point for his analysis. After asking if it is culture or structure that comes before, Putnam states: "linear causal questions must not crowd out equilibrium analysis. In this context, the culture-vs.-structure, chicken-and-egg debate is ultimately fruitless" (Putnam, 1993: 181). Due to this it is hard to attach to Putnam's conclusion a predictive power. Another reason that limits the appropriateness of the findings is related to the fact that the study was undertaken in a democratic government and may not be implemented to situations which are starkly different.

Notwithstanding this difficulties, Putnam's thesis was applied by NGOs and the World Bank. It also changed the world of political science, forcing scholars to include social capital in their studies. Despite its weaknesses, *Making Democracy Work* should be appreciated for its attempt to combine qualitative and quantitative methods, to consider complex causal relationships and for the impact it had on the policy making and research fields.

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