

Summary Report on the 5th CONVENTION ON COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Webinar 22-23 March 2024

Donatella Ciarmoli, underlining the historical value of the tradition, shows Dali's canvas between the two world wars which recalls the events that afflict both peoples and individuals as well as in the current very belligerent context; and Dali's work is full of symbolic elements such as the desert background which can symbolize the destruction brought by war as well as the skulls inside each other which can also recall the infinite series of armed clashes that history offers us but also the individual repercussion that the human destructiveness has.



Lakis Pertsemlis also focuses on the value of tradition, underlining how the community is linked to the place even if it is necessary to organize it on a register of active community and above all on the ability of its members to collaborate. Both *Lakis Pertsemlis* and *Nello Di Micco* report a very interesting experience, which they both lived in *Bologna*, of even proactive exchange on common problematic issues involving all the inhabitants of a neighborhood of the city through a collective chat that had been organized, if I remember correctly, using Facebook. It seems to me to be a brilliant example of the use of network technology. *Giuseppe Graceffa* highlights how direct representation is very important but can hardly become universal in the sense that it is impossible to involve everyone. *Rossella Giglio* underlines how positive, beyond the simple visit, it can be to experiencing the archaeological parks when combined with the psychological reflection that follows. *Giovanna Mulas* says that the agora through the media, no matter how hard we try, cannot replace the presence in person because we need to break some invisible walls like the PC screen. We feel the need to go back to hugging like a long time ago. Communication is negatively affected by the continuous use, for example, of smileys to return to real communication not simply symbolized through emoticons. We live in an increasingly "formatted" society, adds *Mulas*, in which it is always the weakest who succumb. *Lakis Pertsemlis* also focuses on the value of tradition, underlining how the community is linked to the place even if it is necessary to organize it on a register of active community and above all on the ability of its members to collaborate. Both *Lakis Pertsemlis* and *Nello Di Micco* report a very interesting experience, which they both lived in *Bologna*, of even proactive exchange on common problematic issues involving all the inhabitants of a neighborhood of the city through a collective chat that had been organized, if I remember correctly, using Facebook. It seems to me to be a brilliant example of the use of network technology. *Giuseppe Graceffa* highlights how direct representation is very important but can hardly become universal in the sense that it is impossible to involve everyone. *Rossella Giglio* underlines how positive, beyond the simple visit, experiencing the archaeological parks can be when combined with the psychological reflection that follows. *Giovanna Mulas* says that the agora through the media, no matter how hard we try, cannot replace the presence in person because we need to break invisible walls like the PC screen. We feel the need to go back to hugging like a long time ago. Communication is negatively affected by the continuous use, for example, of smileys to

return to real communication not simply symbolized through emoticons. We live in an increasingly "formatted" society, adds Mulas, in which it is always the weakest who succumb.

I underline how the main sector of study of *Community Psychology* is the research and realization of the "common good", the social construction of the territory which are then founded on what *Gioacchino Lavanco* (during the 4th Convention on Community Psychology, 2023) calls the "social capital" which recognizes in every member of the community a resource including all living animals and plants, that is to say the entire ecosystem.

If you want to socially build a territory you cannot create the *Tower of Babel*, in which everyone speaks their own language, but application techniques such as "Research Analysis" and collective empowerment techniques that must be applied by psychologists expert in *Community Psychology*. I agree with *Giovanna Mulas* that to bring together choices we need the *Agora*, that is, the public square where the members of a given territory meet in a non-virtual place and debate "looking each other in the face"! In this way there is probably the possibility of blocking negative things but also of preventing the "flock syndrome" which notoriously sees a herd of sheep proceed blindly following a leader (the shepherd, his dog or the billygoat)!

I mention the possibility, at the level of institutional structures, of adopting the "Institutional Analysis"; by the way, *Lakis Pertsemlis* mentions his experience years before in *Bologna* of the "social street": each street proposed, through all its residents and with the participatory presence of the administrators, the initiatives to be carried out.

If you want to socially build a territory you cannot create the *Tower of Babel*, in which everyone speaks their own language, but application techniques such as "Research Analysis" and *collective empowerment* techniques that must be applied by psychologists expert in *Community Psychology*. I agree with *Giovanna Mulas* that to bring together choices we need the *Agora*, that is, the public square where the members of a given territory meet in a non-virtual place and debate "looking each other in the face"! In this way there is probably the possibility of blocking negative things but also of preventing the "flock syndrome" which notoriously sees a herd of sheep that proceed blindly following a leader (the shepherd, his dog or the billygoat)!

I mention the possibility, at the level of institutional structures, of carrying out the "Institutional Analysis"; about this, *Lakis Pertsemlis* mentions his experience, years before in *Bologna*, of the "social street": each street proposed, through all its residents and with the participatory presence of the administrators, the initiatives to be carried out.

Vito Sammartano, referring to the protection of mental health and social measures of tertiary prevention (i.e. chronic mental disorder), states that small communities (neighbourhoods, streets) are probably able to cushion the dramatic contradictions between the various institutions in managing emerging problems at a macrosocial level. *Lakis Pertsemlis* talks about *Benevento's* experience in the field of mental health which is very much focused on home care and alongside a series of initiatives that can be useful not only for the patient and his family but for all the inhabitants of the relevant district. *Vito Sammartano* points out that at the community level there are unconscious processes that are not evaluated and which, also I think, insidiously hinder the community process aimed at the common good: envy, jealousy, desire for supremacy and potentate, obtaining privileges, etc.). Certainly the desire to lead and dominate others are factors that at the level of *basic assumptions* (*W. R. Bion*) materialize in the criminal aggregations of the *Third Sector*; but it is also true that in the ordinary social macrogroup the old Latin saying *Vita Mea=Vita Tua* is forgotten and therefore it is often forgotten that there is a strong reciprocity in the sense that "my good" in a unitary context is relative to "your good", to say more clearly if you stay better, I am better too and vice versa.

But there is also a problem that emerged clearly in these two days of webinars. Already in a previous issue of my magazine *Psicologia Dinamica* regarding the economic growth of a place I

used the *metaphor of the cake*: «*the Myth of Economic Growth*». For many years we have heard it repeated more and more often in all contexts that deal with economics that a nation must grow in gross domestic product, in per capita income and in exports (which clearly must exceed imports for a healthy *balance of payments*). Now if we consider planet *Earth*, as it actually is, a closed, non-expandable system - let's say, metaphorically, "as if it were a cake" of certain dimensions that cannot be increased at will - it is clear that economic growth can never concern all Nations, indeed we can easily understand how the economic growth of one will be to the detriment of the other.



Elementary! The greater the portion of cake that one or more diners manage to acquire for themselves, the smaller the portions of cake that will be available for all the rest of the diners! But in an economic system, the Western one, which mystifying predicts growth as possible for everyone, it is inevitable that many risk "running out of cake"!



It is clear that the *economic growth* may not correspond at all to economic development which instead has to do with quality of life, services, health, innovation, etc. If, for example, a new museum is built in a place, there will be no immediate economic growth but the young people and the entire community of that area will be able to benefit from a further tool for socio-cultural development and, if the new museum it will be a source of new jobs and a greater influx of tourists, resulting in proportional economic growth!" (by *Alfredo Anania*, Borsa Bisca, Dynamic Psychology, year XV, N.1,2,3 January-December, 2011). We can apply the cake metaphor to a large or small community structure, a small village or a Great European Capital, to give some examples. Unfortunately, the feeling is of being stuck in the years immediately after 1945, when *Bion* wrote that "if we have found ways to cure the single individual, we still have not found a way to cure the ills of society".

Giuseppe Graceffa underlines how the family is falling apart and no longer represents the strong cell in the transmission of the culture of the society to which it belongs. Our thoughts turn to young people and the role of the School. In this regard, *Susanna Hirsh* underlines that it should be the responsibility of teachers to help young people discover the personal inclinations of each student and help them to cultivate them, rather than trying to transmit notions in general. It is possible agree that, while not forgetting the assumption of *Dario De Martis* (*Dario De Martis*, *Ezio Boari* Institution, Family, Therapeutic Equipe) that "the illusion of the little group experiences disappointment in the large group", the only possibility that remains is to increase the little experiential groups in order to multiply the habit and attitude to the group context as a place of exchange with a high socio-relational content until we can say "the disappointment of the large group is refreshed in a vivifying way by the 'illusion of the little group'".

In alphabetical order

Alfredo Anania Psychiatrist Psychotherapist Director of the Riv. DYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY

Donatella Ciarmoli Doctor in Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology

Nello Di Micco Psychoanalyst

Rossella Giglio Archaeologist, Former Director of the Archaeological Park of Segesta

Giuseppe Graceffa Former President of the Order of Social Workers of the Sicily Region

Susanna Hirsh Dance-movement-therapist

Giovanna Mulas Writer, Essayist and Human Rights Activist

Lakis Pertsemelis Psychologist

Vito Sammartano Psychiatrist Psychotherapist Director of the DSM of Trapani

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Dario De Martis, Ezio Boari; Institution, Family, Care Team; Feltrinelli Ed. !978

Gioacchino Lavanco Community Development

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8fiLTZOmEM>