

GLOBALIZATION AND A NEW EXPRESSION OF AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY: BULLYING AMONG YOUTHS

Consuelo Diodati

Researcher in Sociology
Political Sciences Dept. University of Teramo
E-mail: cdiodati@unite.it

Abstract

After 2000, western societies faced the processes of globalization – single market, adoption of the English language as a vehicle for global communications, growth of international finance, relocation of factories and production, European unification – with a growing sense of vulnerability. The effects of these dynamics were magnified by terrorism, which also became global, and the economic crisis of 2008.

The scenario described by Zygmunt Bauman of a liquid society, unable to create bonds, values, "solid" life paths, capable of giving meaning to people's lives, seemed initially pessimistic but, at a distance of about 10 years, dealing with the consequences of those challenges, it wasn't. The changes inherent in the processes that occurred since 2000 – even if started earlier – triggered uncertainties that were poorly managed, resulting in the renewed development of an authoritarian personality widespread at the social level. We are witnessing the strengthening of right-wing and extreme-right political groups that succeeded in achieving the government of countries on the Western chessboard, which use this sense of vulnerability in an instrumental way to obtain consent. Rather than demonstrating firsthand how to make the necessary sacrifices to overcome a difficult situation and stimulate the reaction capabilities of the government joined with the citizens, they create a contraposition between an imaginary "us" vs "them," and provide a scapegoat (well expressed by the Frankfurt School) on whom these problems and frustrations can be dumped, with the illusion of solving short-term problems. In this dynamic we are witnessing the growing social phenomenon of bullying.

Keywords: *globalization, changes, authority, bullying, education*

Above, a growing passion is spreading to make men conform to a model [...] Where does all this passion for uniformity come from? Diversity is the word. Let man continue to be manifold and you will not have tyrannies. I say, if they insist on this matter of uniformity, they will eventually force me, an invisible man, to turn white, which is not a color but a lack of color. Should I strive to become colorless? But seriously, and without snobbery, think of what the world would lose if this were to happen. America is a fabric of many threads; I would take note of it and let it remain that way. It is "the

*winner takes nothing" is the great truth of our country and of any other. Life must be lived, not controlled; and we reach humanity by continuing to play even in the face of certain defeat*¹

Forwards

After 2000, western societies faced defined processes of globalization: single market, adoption of the English language as the vehicle for global communications, growth of international finance, relocation of factories and production, European unification – which created a widespread sense of uncertainty and vulnerability². The effects of these dynamics were magnified by terrorism, which also became global, starting with the attack on the Twin Towers of New York's World Trade Center (an event that, streamed live by all media worldwide, will remain in the collective imagination forever) and the economic crisis of 2008.

The scenario described by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman – of a liquid society, unable to create bonds, values, "solid" or meaningful life paths, capable of giving meaning to people's lives – seemed initially too pessimistic, but at a distance of about 10 years, when we find ourselves dealing with the consequences of those challenges, perhaps it wasn't. Clearly, the changes inherent in the processes that occurred since 2000 – viewed as a watershed year between a before and after, even though the processes actually started earlier – triggered uncertainties that were poorly managed to the point of often morphing into panic and phobias, bringing out, in the opinion of this writer, the features of a renewed authoritarian personality³ widespread at the social level. We are witnessing the gradual strengthening of right-wing and extreme-right political groups, which succeeded in achieving the government of important countries on the Western chessboard and use this sense of vulnerability in their communications in an instrumental way to obtain consent. Often the very leaders of such groups seem unconvinced of their own pronouncements, but they know that with this approach they will have the support of most people. Therefore, rather than demonstrating firsthand how to make the necessary sacrifices to overcome a difficult situation (and thus encourage the population to do the same) and stimulate the reaction capabilities of the government joined with the citizens, they tend to create an "us" vs "them" contraposition and provide a scapegoat (as well expressed by the authors of the critical theory of society of the Frankfurt School in the Authoritarian Personality) on whom these problems and frustrations can be dumped, with the illusion of solving short-term problems. Within this dynamic we are witnessing the growing social phenomenon of bullying.

2. The critical theory of society

The critical theory of society saw its development and its period of greatest productivity in Germany in the 1930-40 decade, before migrating to America with the advent of Nazism. Despite its Marxist origin, this school of thought stands in contrast both with the Soviet orthodoxy, which turned Marxism into a doctrine to legitimize the state, and with

¹ Ellison, R. *Invisible Man*, 1956, p.538.

² Diodati, C. *Globale e locale*, 2000.

³ Adorno, T. et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, 1950.

social-democratic revisionism, which espoused the possibility of some sort of communism within the framework of a liberal democracy. It is precisely for this reason that it is defined as a critical theory because it addresses in critical terms these tendencies (positivist Marxism – mainly focused on the concept of work alienation) and arose in response to the crisis of European political systems, compounded by the rise of totalitarian regimes and the contradictions of industrial societies that sought methods to increase their development, in many ways similar to the societies of the 21st century.

Adorno and Horkheimer criticize a system that fosters consumption on individuals, who are increasingly hetero-directed and unable to free themselves from the constraints of a mass industrial society. This situation worsened in post-industrial societies and with the information technology revolution, as influence and reference parameters became vague, making the social actors even more uncertain because, without any script, they become even more fragile and influenceable ⁴.

Studies by this group focus on power, as a reaction to World War II and on understanding how certain aberrations could have happened. Furthermore, in the first collective empirical research, *Studies on Authority and the Family* of 1936, the importance of Freud's theoretical elaborations is outlined. Specifically, this study underlines the process of unconscious internalization of social authority through the father figure and the dynamics of society's constant repression of individuals, in a process in continuous evolution; similar elements are found in the thinking of Marcuse, another exponent of the same school⁵.

In *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* of 1947, Horkheimer and Adorno reworked the idea of reason as the basis of the Enlightenment revolution. According to the authors, in industrial societies it would no longer be possible to identify society's class-based structure and the elements of conflict/opposition. They therefore criticize the Enlightenment because it considers reason as domination: of man over the world but also of man over man as a manipulative capacity, in which rationality is reduced to a mere relationship between domination and subordination. Similarly, Herbert Marcuse posited the complete eclipse of

⁴ Diodati, R. *Tortuosa è la via dell'uomo se vuol essere libero*, 2016.

⁵ In *Reason and Revolution* (1941), Marcuse refers to Hegel: reason is historical and has the task of denying that which is inadequate and, therefore, must be overcome. It comes to coincide, in Marcuse's thinking, with the concept of human freedom, in opposition to the established order. The final function of reason would therefore be precisely the denial/denunciation of an unfair political/economic situation, through its denial/revolution. Such ideas remain constant even in the later work *Eros and Civilization* (1955), with a strong reference to Freud's theories of society as a source of repression of human instincts; which hinder pleasure because it is dysfunctional to the system. This operation takes place through a process of accentuation of scarcity, consequently the available resources alter the quality of human needs, whose energy is progressively channeled towards consumerism and a homologation of tastes/massification (art, sex, free time), as utilization repressive of energy. This concept does not identify the thing and the function, but reveals what the thing is. The abbreviation of the concept in still images, the arresting of development in vandalistic formulas and the immunity from contradiction reveal a one-dimensional mind of language. Ritualistic-authoritarian language spreads throughout the contemporary world, affecting countries both democratic and undemocratic, capitalistic and non-capitalistic. The substance of the new advanced industrial regimes is no longer manifest in alternative ways of living, but lies in alternative techniques of manipulation and control. Language not only reflects these controls, but identifies with them, even when it does not transmit orders but information, when it does not ask for obedience but choice, not submission but freedom. Control is exercised by this language through the reduction of linguistic forms and symbols used for reflection, abstraction, development, contradiction, by replacing concepts with images. A current example is the formula TLTR (too long to read).

personality, smothered by increasingly sophisticated control mechanisms aimed at overwhelming any remaining capacity for individual criticism: <<Under the rule of a repressive whole, freedom can be transformed into a powerful instrument of domination. It is not the scope of the choices open to the individual that is the decisive factor in determining the degree of human freedom, but what can be chosen and is chosen by the individual. The criterion of free choice can never be an absolute criterion, nor is it entirely relative. The free election of the masters does not abolish either the masters or the slaves. The free choice between a wide variety of goods and services does not mean freedom if these goods and services fuel social controls over a life of fatigue and fear – that is, if they feed alienation>> (Marcuse, H. 1967, p. 28) ⁶. The individual spontaneously reproduces the needs imposed on him by constant conditioning; therefore, one cannot speak of the individual's autonomy, but rather of the effectiveness of the control mechanisms, which can be found in an attitude aimed at transposing a person's own uncertainties onto a scapegoat, which becomes a fetish, a totem or a symbol of all his problems.

Moreover, at the social level, technological development and growing urbanization contributed to the reification of large masses of people in western metropolises, concurrently with the failure of the uprisings of the working classes, by now quite well integrated within the capitalist system. In this perspective, the authors criticize Weber because they believe that science, social science in particular, can never be neutral or linked to questions of faith, given also its relations with a policy that seeks direction, rather than taking on the critical responsibility towards the manifest and latent forms of political-economic domination.

3. Studies on authority and the family

The Authoritarian Personality is a sort of research report on anti-Semitism, financed by the American Jewish Committee, carried out at the University of California, Berkeley, (1944-1949) that represents a continuation of the 1936 studies on authority and the family. In the course of the research, attention shifted to emerging themes more properly related to anti-Semitism, such as authoritarianism, hence the final title. This research still represents an important reference point for the recognition of the significance of personal psychological factors that can foster the emergence of authoritarian attitudes and behaviors, which develop on a social basis, ultimately spawning mass anti-democratic movements. The study sample consisted of 2,099 white American, middle class subjects, not belonging to ethnic or religious minorities (WASP), members of military associations, universities, schools, trade unions, prison inmates and patients in psychiatric institutions; therefore, the representativeness of the American population in the survey universe is questionable. The questionnaires were based on the expression of approval – disapproval on a scale of three positive and three negative grades. Based on the results, four scales were elaborated: 1. Anti-Semitism; 2. Ethnocentrism; 3. Political-economic conservatism and 4. Implicit anti-democratic tendencies. Once the questionnaire data had been collected, the most "radical" subjects were contacted to conduct in-depth interviews. It became apparent that anti-Semitism and authoritarianism are part of a complex ideological framework oriented towards conservatism, submission to the authority of those who perceive themselves as stronger and, on the other

⁶ Marcuse, H. *One dimensional man*, 1964.

hand, exercising authoritarianism towards those who perceive themselves as weaker. In the ethnocentric process, therefore, the characteristics of one's own reference group are exalted without any critical approach, in the same uncritical way the other groups are condemned and devalued in punitive terms. There is a Freudian projection to identify a scapegoat, onto whom one's frustration, ills and dissatisfactions can be projected. This defense and self-defense mechanism by the subject means attributing to other characteristics in reality of one's own, consequently magnified with aggressive dynamics, hidden in the unconscious.

<<The authoritarian personality is the personalization of a historical-social theme: it is the historically determined way by which projection mechanisms crystallize, giving rise to a tendency towards (or acceptance of) fascism>> (Adorno, T. et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, 1949, p. XXVII). This is even more true in a society that represses individuals in their instincts, freedom, spirituality or rather does not channel them towards constructive behaviors, fostering instead mass/consumerist behaviors, oriented towards exasperated individualism and a competition not of the best, but of the more aggressive bullies.

In the course of empirical research, intraception, a term coined by Murray, is used to identify the prevalence of feelings, fantasies, intellectual speculations, aspirations in the personality of a subject with "an imaginative perspective". The opposite, extraception, indicates the tendency towards concrete, observable, objective, practical aspects. From the theory of authoritarian personality emerges anti-intraception, which is opposition to subjects with a sensitive and imaginative character, seen as a sign of weakness of the ego. <<The extremely intraceptive individual is afraid of thinking about human phenomena because he could ... think wrongly; he is afraid of genuine feelings because emotions may escape his control. Without contact with vast areas of his inner life, he is afraid of what might be revealed if he or others were to scrutinize him intensely. He is therefore opposed to indiscretion, to interest in what people think and feel, to useless talk; instead, he tries to remain industrious, to devote himself to practical work, and instead of examining an inner conflict, he prefers to turn his feelings towards something entertaining. It is worth mentioning that an important aspect of the Nazi program was the defamation of everything that tended to make the individual aware of himself and his problems; not only was "Jewish" psychoanalysis quickly eliminated, but every type of psychology, with the exception of aptitude tests, was subjected to attacks. This general attitude easily leads to the devaluation of the human object and to the overestimation of the physical object; in extreme cases, human beings are considered as if they were physical objects to be coldly manipulated, while physical objects, now invested with an emotional charge, are treated with affectionate care >> (*ibid*, p. 340-341).

During the research the authors developed a scale to identify anti-Semitic tendencies: stereotypy, rigid adherence to middle class values; tendency to consider one's own group morally in contrast with the external immoral group; contrast to indiscretion, sensuality and their exaggeration; excessive concern for power and dominance; fear of moral contamination; fear of being overwhelmed and victimized; desire to erect social barriers to divide one group from another and maintain morality and supremacy in one's group.

4. Elements of contact with contemporary reality

It is bewildering to see how these elements are widespread in the reality of the new millennium and how, in this case as well, the roots are identifiable in fear and uncertainty

linked, on the one hand, to the economic crisis and, on the other hand, to rapid change. Because of these two factors, human beings are confronted with a series of profound questions: Will I be able to work? Will I find and maintain my place in society? Will I be able to support myself and my family? Will someone else take my place? Someone who costs less? Will my identity and that of those like me be erased? If the answers to these and other questions are not clear, rather than activating resilience, i.e., the human capacity for adaptation, flexibility and reaction, identity closures and rigidities that we often see exploited by many political leaders will be activated on a global scale.

In addition, in Italy's case and not just in it, there has been a fifty-year development of democracy, after the Second World War, which has not reached maturity levels. Rather, it can be argued that while initially there was cause for hope, full participation from the people was never achieved and still there are many problems of amoral familism⁷ (Banfield, 1976). In this sense, it is worth noting how, within the dynamics of exasperated individualism, competition and victory, not necessarily by the best, but rather by the strongest or the most overbearing, re-emerges in a worrisome way throughout society: from sports to school, the workplace, man-woman relationships, etc. Likewise, there is a growing preference for pure entertainment television programming – in Italy's case accompanied by the country's ranking among the lowest in Europe for book reading (but at the forefront in the pervasion of mobile phones) with statements recorded in the Doxa survey such as "those who read, then ask questions", "those who read are strange", "those who read have psychological problems" – and strongly criticized by the European Union for the content conveyed, harmful to the dignity of some sections of the population, such as women, the disabled and non-EU immigrants.

Turning back to the authors of the Frankfurt School, it emerges how the authoritarian personality is characterized by: << a. Conventionalism: rigid adherence to conventional values typical of the middle class; b. Submission: an attitude of uncritical submission to moral authorities idealized by the internal group; c. Authoritarian aggression: a tendency to spy and condemn, reject and punish people who violate conventional values; d. Anti-intraception: opposition to subjective, imaginative, sensitive-minded individuals; e. Superstition and stereotypy: the belief in the mystical determinants of an individual's destiny; the tendency to think in rigid categories; f. Power and hardness: concern for the dimension of domination - submission, strong - weak, leader - follower; identification with the figures of power; attribution of excessive importance to the conventional attributes of the ego; exaggerated assertion of strength and hardness; g. Destructiveness and cynicism: generalized hostility and contempt for human beings; h. Projectivity: the tendency to believe that wild and dangerous events happen in the world; the external projection of emotional and unconscious impulses; i. Sex: exaggerated concern for sexual contacts >> (*ibid*: p. 332).

A further indication of a growing diffusion of authoritarian personalities and behaviors can be identified in the phenomenon of bullying. In many ways, we can argue that bullying boys always existed, particularly among adolescents. What does, then, turn bullying into a social phenomenon? What has changed?

⁷ Amoral familism studied by Edward Banfield in 1976, means that people – in particular in Southern Italy – don't trust institutions and when they need something always ask to their families. In this situation people don't create the conditions for the growth of civil society.

To begin with, there has been greater attention to childhood and adolescence issues and to certain social problems that previously remained in the shadows (as also in the case of the murdering of women) or were otherwise delegated to families, while in the liquid society the latter is increasingly failing and there is a steady growth in the legal regulation of areas previously handled in the private sphere.

Moreover, until the twentieth century, problems such as bullying concerned mainly troublesome boys, within a generally deviant framework, while at present it is found in boys "perfectly" inserted into society, with good scholastic performance, coming from wealthy families, who play sports but donate their pocket money to extreme right-wing political groups, with girls becoming increasingly involved, within a competition in which the law of the strongest dominates, without any values or points of reference.

Bullying can be defined as a harassing social behavior of a violent and intentional nature, physical and/or psychological, oppressive and harassing, which repeats over time, tending to affect people considered "weak", unable to defend themselves or easy targets, exhibiting all the characteristics of the scapegoat, combined with the elements of insecurity and frustration for the subject who carries out the violence. Moreover, bullying mainly concerns young people precisely because they are in an evolving phase and have not yet found a place in the world and a defined identity; for these reasons it is important to intervene early on these phenomena as they can permanently prevent the construction of a composite identity, as well as integration and inclusion into the social fabric.

Research in this field speaks of adolescents with problems in terms of relationality, affectivity, absent parents, similar to what emerged from Adorno's research regarding difficulty in developing intimate personal relationships (even considering the influence of the internet revolution and social media) that <<can be interpreted as one of the results of the repression of hostile tendencies that are not internalized or sublimated, but become widespread and rampant ... the low-scoring subject seems more oriented towards affection, and less towards power, than the high-scoring subject is. The former is more capable of affection because he has received more real affection. He tends to judge people more on the basis of their intrinsic value rather than conformity with social mores Since he fears punishment and retaliation less than the ethnocentric person, he is more able to truly incorporate the society values imposed on him>> (*ibid*: p. 687-688).

With regard to the situation in Italy, the data from Istat, Italy's official Institution of Statistics, show that 1 youth out of 2 is a victim of various bullying episodes and so about 50% suffered offenses, lack of respect or violence. The age most at risk is between 11 and 17 years, but the absolutely most critical period is that of middle school, between 11 and 13 years of age. In its initial phase, bullying manifests itself through insults and curse words, followed by mockery of the physical appearance and, lastly, physical aggression – 4 cases out of 100⁸.

The periodic recurrence of this kind of episodes is weekly in 9.1% of cases, broken down at 22.5% of the cases for the 11-13 year old age group and 17.9% of the cases for the 14-18 age group (adolescents). Girls are the most targeted, 20.9% of the cases, against 18.8% for boys. Among secondary school students, the data show that bullying mostly affects high school students, 19.4% of cases, while in vocational schools and technical institutes the incidence is slightly lower, 18.1% and 16% of cases, respectively.

⁸ Istat Report, 2014.

These data mean that Italy ranks third in Europe for bullying and eighteenth in the world. Indeed, this phenomenon is now being monitored at the international level due to its becoming widespread and being a transversal phenomenon affecting different social classes, societies and geographic locations (OECD, 2018). This high ranking shows, first of all, a link to a familiar attitude for bullying and lack of respect for legal and social norms (as shown in Banfield's research about amoral familism in Southern Italy).

Regarding the data on the spreading of the bullying phenomenon in the world, in Europe and in Italy the results can be broken down by geographical areas and time periods, in surveys at December 28, 2018 for the previous twelve months.

At the top of the list of bullying data we find the following countries: Philippines, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland. With regard to Japan, the data show that it always had a very high percentage of phenomena of this kind, while in the world rankings, among European countries, there is only Ireland among the top five, followed by England; Italy ranks eighteenth, Portugal twenty-first and Finland (and the Scandinavian countries more in general) twenty-ninth.

Therefore, bullying in Europe takes a leopard-spot type of configuration, except for the English and Irish islands. In reality it is closely linked to the history of each country relative to the importance given to the rights of all citizens, including minors, as well as to the evolution of the social context. In global societies, the latter is increasingly anomalous, constantly changing, uncertain – linked to the disappearance of the first educational and socializing agency of the individual: the family, which, instead of exercising its role, increasingly tends to ascribing faults to schools and society, while leaving the socialization of kids to social media and the internet.

A greater synergy between family, school and institutions, as well as a continuous and careful monitoring of social networks, are among the guidelines also identified by the former Health Minister, Beatrice Lorenzin in 2016, who said «We need to raise awareness of bullying issues among both children and parents. We must work on self-respect, respect for others and compliance with the rules».

Indeed, while the family, particularly in Italy, would still have the means to bring children and adolescents back to respecting the rules of civil society, the same cannot be said of school teachers, who even when they attempt to enforce those rules, clash with the risk of complaints and a school system focused on individual liberties and does not favor better prepared and responsible students, but merely the successful test takers, even when poorly prepared and uncivil. Specifically, the grade for classroom behavior is underrated and in the report card is listed in a separate form, as if student behavior and performance were not linked.

We reached a paradox in that it almost seems that for parents the duty to educate their children concerns only childhood (and perhaps not even that, given that, according to certain statistics, Italian children are the most rude in Europe) and stops at the threshold of preadolescence, considered by most as the age of autonomy and self-management, completely underestimating the fact that adolescence is without doubt the most dangerous period of life.

<<I am struck by the inconsistency of the educational approach of parents during the developmental age of children: they switch from a protective (hyper) attitude during childhood to an almost total laxity in adolescence, precisely in that phase of life of minors in which they tend to adopt a challenging attitude towards the family and listen to their peer

group [...] It is painful and frustrating to see that particularly now that the dangers of the world, for school-age children, have increased a hundredfold and “proteiformized”, parents reject an alliance that would relieve them, even partially, of the educational burden and would bring many advantages to both developmental agencies>> (Fidanza, 2010, p. 89). Italian families – and not just them – completely delegate to the school the task of educating their children (which is in itself deplorable because the school should complement the work done by the parents, not replace it), while at the same time considering the school a negative value, an environment that serves no purpose, and if this is how they feel, imagine their children. In this way, a harmful situation is created for teachers, deprived of an authoritativeness and a credibility acquired with difficulty, for the parents themselves, more and more “friends” of their children and less and less educators, and for children who, having verified the absence of a tacit sharing of norms between parent and teacher, feel disoriented, believe that they live in an anomic system and gradually develop a feeling of intolerance towards the institutions. Phenomena such as bullying and deviance in general then arise, as inadequate conduct indeed occurs more frequently when parents have been unable to construct valid reference figures for their children and did not provide them with the limits within which certain behaviors are not allowed.

As noted by the psychiatrist and sociologist Paolo Crepet << if an external person first says no it is an opinion; if that same no is spoken by a father or a mother it is a rule. And thus this is why many parents have chosen to identify themselves with the hybrid and hypocritical figure of parent-friend: to avoid taking responsibility for the rules >>.

Ultimately, when these children leave home and face college, they seem unable to proceed in the world without the complicit support of their parents; studies show that a very low percentage of Italians graduate from college, as recently noted by the OECD, linked to the difficulty, on the part of freshmen, to cope with the pace of rigorous and self-managed studies; they are youths unable to impose limits on themselves. Furthermore, the affective illiteracy – which already emerged in the research of the Frankfurt School – resurfaces with dire consequences: << if children grow up seeing every demand satisfied through the gift of an object, they will be led to idolize objects at the expense of relationships. Indeed, they will fear them to the point of wanting to avoid them. The decline in a young person's self-esteem, in reality, is determined primarily by parents who are convinced that, in life, the strong individual is the one who never stumbles, rather than the one who, after a fall, is able to rise again. Today we have the impression that it is common practice to lull ourselves into the illusion that it is possible not to grow and that the only way not to suffer is to avoid ties, commitments, responsibilities, stability, empathy, rather than accepting responsibility>> (*ibid*, p. 112).

Arriving to a possible conclusion, the present contribution has identified a common thread between contemporary authoritarianism and that highlighted by the authors of the Frankfurt School, with analogous modalities relating to the economic crisis, but with peculiarities proper to liquid societies and their own rapid changes, uncertainties, value and identities crises.

In this context, the role of those who exploit fear, as well as the attitude of widespread hatred - or at least, as far as the Italian case is concerned, political campaigning by focusing not on the own programmatic objectives, but rather on defects, accusations and insults to the opponent, leads to harmful consequences on behavior in general and unrecoverable distrust. As a matter of fact the adult's world: from politicians, to workers and parents is increasingly

connoted with troubling aspects of bullying (from the most ordinary cases of elderly people standing in the streets on the pedestrian crossing without anyone stopping, until the refusal of foreigners and of anyone who is perceived as different regardless of the real state of the people) in these conditions we cannot expect the youth to behave differently, where we first have a questionable and sometimes adolescent behavior, indeed, giving them such an example, it is surprising that things do not get worse than it happens.

Moreover, my university has a direct line to the Teramo lawyers' order (since the Faculty of Law is also present) and some focus groups with them show that many judges are more lenient towards political figures when they are denounced for slander and / or insult because they, now a day, consider insulting as part of the political competition. Over the years, we have also signed an agreement with some departments of the State Police for permanent education and higher qualification of some of their roles; as a university assistant professor I had meetings with them to talk about the problem of bullying and cyberbullying. Discouraging data emerges about the spread of the problem among young and very young children, and the scarce families attention. Added to these elements is the hater phenomenon, where people acting in a virtual reality, think there are no consequences to their actions, whose motivations are mainly based on boredom and personal frustration.

In particular, concerning adolescents, the data tell us of youth without points of reference following the crisis of increasingly precarious families (which do not represent a safe haven to return to), unable to take responsibility for adulthood. A situation emerges for which we realize the importance of certain things as a result of their lack, and there is a progressive growth in the legal regulation of areas that previously concerned the private sector.

Confining oneself in thinking that the situation of widespread authoritarianism we are facing is only a phase of transition (which, moreover, has been going on since 2000, therefore, too long) is worrying and means that we should all take a public position.

Each of us as a person within family, friendship network, as citizen and worker - especially where the working role is concernig educational and intellectual areas, such as us in our university professor's role - is called to play a pedagogical role of firmness but also calmness against arrogance and bullying dynamics. In this way we could tend to reward virtuous behavior and rigorously punish cheating, in order to tone down and try to bring situations back to the study of difficulties and their solutions, rather than a sport stadium climate, which only feeds confusion and aggression.

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