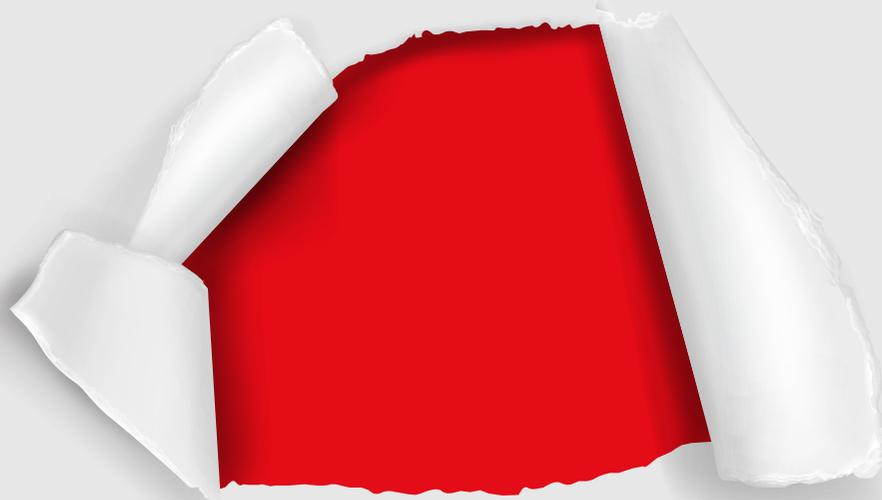




MAG

MONOGRAPHS

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revolutions

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Revolutions

by Letizia Ceriani

248 years have passed since the American independence declaration, 235 since the storming of the Bastille, 107 since the fall of the Romans. Today, thinking about it carefully, the use of the word 'revolution' clashes with the nature of our time, ephemeral and racing, where fashions and masters cite and deny each other. New and old schemes, political, linguistic, and human, deconstruct the categories on which our fragilities, made structural during the pandemic era, have crystallized.

Humans are made up of 70% water and 30% proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. Francis Ford Coppola, recently interviewed by Rolling Stone, said that, constitutionally, human beings are actually made of courage, but that, children of a culture of shame and complaint, they have over time convinced themselves that they lack it, becoming increasingly artificial, to the point of being "totally useless". We are in the post-revolution era.

The heretics of history, old and recent, whom we have tried to evoke in this monograph, are united by one factor: at the risk of being labeled as mad, violent, visionaries, they fought in the name of an idea, of a utopia. What does utopia have to do with this, you might ask. In philosophy, the term recalls the representation of a world distant from time and space through which the social and political structure is radically rethought. To speak of utopia means to speak of disobedience and freedom. Where the idea becomes action, the self takes ground.

Evoking the question of revolution, Heidegger wrote, arises from the need to criticize the system that translates into fertile, dynamic projectuality, whose effects are not scientifically predictable and measurable. It is the choice that belongs to the philosopher, the lawyer, the academic, the innkeeper, the therapist: if it is true that evolutionary and technological progress is inexorable, this does not mean that it is not always improvable. And that the action of the individual cannot in some way influence the general.

These are the steps we wanted to talk about, closing the (first) circle of Monographs.

We asked ourselves: what are podcasts doing in the world of journalism? What has become of lawyers now that they have learned to tell their stories? Now that there is VAR, will football still excite us? Why is everyone crazy about yoga now? And then, this political correctness, in the end, what is it? Facing an unstoppable climate change, how much longer can catering hold up? And again, in how many different ways have we learned to love each other?

We have also put ourselves to the test, we who try to do information. We do it for you who read, to spur you to enter between the lines of reality in an original

and unconventional way, to ask yourselves the why yes and the why no of things and transformations, already been and in being. This sometimes implies being uncomfortable, provocative, against the current in a world always too subjugated to the contingent. This is the time of courage. It is the time of possibility.

The (new) shape of news

Internet demolished the business models that the information world had always relied upon. Print media has fallen into a crisis that continues to this today; but new journalistic formats have also emerged, taking advantage of new technologies. We discussed this with Fanpage.it editor-in-chief Francesco Cancellato and Chora News director Francesca Milano

by Giuseppe Salemmè

Contrary to what many think (including the self-proclaimed intelligent chatbots I consulted before writing these words), the term “infodemic” wasn’t born during the 2020 pandemic but much earlier, in 2003. Washington Post journalist David Rothkopf had coined it to describe the sea of misleading information and fake news that were complicating the management of the SARS epidemic in China. “It is a complex phenomenon,” Rothkopf wrote, “of mainstream media, specialist media and internet sites; and “informal” media, which is to say wireless phones, text messaging, pagers, faxes and e-mail.”

That’s right, fax machines and pagers. The parallel epidemic which the journalist described as “far greater than the disease itself,” and which even the formidable Chinese government couldn’t contain, was made possible by an item capable of combining the inefficiency of a printer with the sounds of a cat trapped in a centrifuge, and a portable beeper which used to tell you that someone, somewhere, for some reason, was looking for you.

It was 2003, and the industry that had supported global information for centuries was showing its first signs of collapse. A young computer nerd who, a few months later, in his Harvard dorm room, had the idea for a new website called Facebook, would eventually bring it to its knees.

The fall of the giant

In April 2000, Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* sold 648,000 print copies. By April 2022, that number had dropped to 89,000 (142,000 counting digital copies, which didn’t even exist twenty years earlier). An 80% drop in sales (with peaks of 90%) affected all newspapers worldwide, without particular exceptions. A figure comparable to that of horse-drawn carriages after the invention of the automobile, or camera film rolls after digital cameras went mainstream.

In about two decades, print media lost what had been its main income for over a century, next to advertising. Yet, we’ve called it the “information age”, because never before have so many people had access to so

much knowledge, in such an immediate way. But it’s a new and different information: dominated by free, multimedia content with smaller and smaller processing times; that anyone can produce and distribute independently, at low cost; and within which advertising is cheap and effective as never before.

The newspaper, understood as a large container of news, has lost strength at the expense of individual contents, which have proliferated; and which are constantly fighting each other to gain users’ attention. And, even more important, the attention of the digital platforms that have monopolized our lives, suggesting what to do, read, or watch at every moment, based on our past interactions.



Democracy's functioning has taken its toll. Social media now target our preferences so precisely they have made us prisoners of many tailor-made filter bubbles. Google search results for the same keyword are different for each of us: an information distribution model that has caused a progressive polarization of political opinions.

The issue came to a head in the last ten years. In 2016, UK citizens chose to leave the European Union; American citizens elected Donald Trump to the White House. Two years later, the world discovered that both electoral campaigns had been influenced by the targeted propaganda activity made possible by Cambridge Analytica, a company that had exploited Facebook's functioning to illegally collect data from millions of people. Around that same period, American social media allowed the spread of Qanon's conspiracy theories, a far-right political group among the main instigators of the January 2020 Capitol Hill assault.

In this context, traditional media like newspapers and TV lost relevance and economic strength, and often ended up being among the first to fuel disinformation. Yet, as demonstrated by the *Guardian's* investigation that brought the Cambridge Analytica case to light, journalism isn't dead. The activity of investigating reality in order to inform the public cannot be exhausted. In fact, today everyone can take part in it, thanks to production and distribution means that have never been so economical.

But, unable to sustain itself financially according to traditional infor-

mation schemes, and with the urgent need to have access to quality information, journalism had to find new forms to work.

From the budget bill to reality tv

Facebook was the first social network in history to reach truly global dimensions (today it's experiencing a partial decline, despite nearly 3 billion subscribers). It became available in Italy in May 2008, and initially spread mostly through word of mouth: many users were particularly attracted by the possibility of tracking down old friendships, since on Facebook, unlike in other virtual places, people identified themselves with their real name and surname. By 2010, Italian users were already 18 million; 12 million used it on a daily basis.

That same year, in Naples, entrepreneur Gianluca Cozzolino founded Fanpage.it, an independent journalistic project with strong technological traction, which at that time began to exploit the new possibilities offered by SEO (search engine optimization) and content sharing on Facebook.

"We're a generalist newspaper. And a grassroots one," says Francesco Cancellato, editor-in-chief of Fanpage.it since 2021. "We cover everything the public wants to know. From what's in the budget law, to what happened in the latest episodes of reality shows: all that interests the reader has equal dignity for us, and deserves the best possible coverage. Part of this approach is also the idea of talking to people wherever they are: if they spend a lot of time on Instagram, we bring our newspaper to Instagram; if they move to TikTok, we go on TikTok. And this vocation for inclusivity and accessibility is reflected in the fact that our contents are completely free."

Being free means having advertising as the only source of income. And therefore, needing to reach a large audience: "Before the internet, people bought a newspaper, regardless of what it contained. In an online newspaper, each single piece of content is in its own way 'bought'; and therefore each content must have the potential to reach the maximum number of possible readers," Cancellato explains. "This means that, as journalists, we can't focus only on the writing. Each piece of content, besides respecting all deontological canons, must be relevant to the reader: and therefore new, interesting, useful, capable of affecting their life or answering one of their question. And this includes knowing how to write and title that content for search engine optimization."

Especially in Fanpage's early years of activity, this approach translated into a strong presence of multimedia content, particularly suitable for becoming viral on social media, with typically clickbait titles. The average Fanpage reader, like those of most online outlets, doesn't access its news from the site's home page, but from the links he finds on search engines and on social media, where it's among the most followed news outlets in Italy (Facebook followers are 8.5 million; Instagram's 2.3 million; on TikTok they're already 1.6 million).

But Fanpage's success isn't just limited to the digital world: in recent years, its journalists have curated original investigations and reports which have become increasingly relevant to national news. The latest, "Gioventù meloniana," a journalist went undercover in the youth organization of Fratelli d'Italia, the currently ruling political party, revealing the unrepentant neo-fascist tendencies of many of its leaders.



FRANCESCO CANCELLATO



The biggest moment in podcast history?

On October 26, 2024, just days before the US election vote, candidate and former president Donald Trump was a guest on the Joe Rogan Experience (JRE), the world's most followed podcast, created in 2009 by comedian, wrestler, and television commentator Joe Rogan. Lasting about three hours, the conversation between the two was for many emblematic of Trump's electoral strategy, which included very few interviews with traditional media (and journalists); but also, the completion of the digital-first revolution in the information world. The video collected over 37 million views in just three days on YouTube alone, despite the platform's algorithms being designed to not favor the spread of political content near elections.

“It was watched by 9 million people just in the first week,” Cancellato reports. “These investigations are possible thanks to the independence guaranteed by our publisher, Ciaopeople; and to a newsroom of over 70 journalists, 99% of whom are hired on permanent contracts, including many highly talented young people.”

Voices in our heads

Fanpage.it isn't the only innovative journalistic format born following the digital revolution. *Il Post*, a free digital outlet founded and directed by journalist Luca Sofri, also dates back to 2010. Now known for its clear linguistic style (“explaining things well”) have become somewhat the newspaper's trademark and for a greater degree of transparency in its editorial choices, *Il Post* has managed to gather a close-knit community of readers over the years. In 2019 the newspaper decided to leverage on its community and introduced an optional subscription: much like international outlets like the *Guardian*, *Il Post* articles weren't locked behind a paywall and remain accessible to everyone; but subscribers have access to extra content. Within four years, subscriptions came to constitute 75% of the *Post*'s income, allowing it to invest in new products: events, books, magazines. And podcasts: the daily press review *Morning*, curated by deputy director Francesco Costa since 2020, has been a significant driver for subscriptions.

Podcasts are a strange media. Defined as primarily spoken audio content, made up of multiple episodes and consultable on-demand through the internet, they're an example of a format that blossomed in Italy much later than in the rest of the world: for years Italians have looked at the “podcast” sections of their music players and smartphones without really knowing what they were about. Then, the industry suddenly boomed: the about 800,000 Italian podcast listeners in 2015 have become 17.2 million in 2024 (and now 800,000 are probably the people that make podcasts). A success rooted in podcasts' ability to slip into people's daily routine: you don't need to watch anything, you just have to listen. This makes it the perfect medium to complement routine daily tasks while listening to stories, in-depth analysis and conversations.

“I was looking for something to listen to so I wouldn't get bored while walking my dog. It was 2017,” recalls Francesca Milano, now head of journalistic content at Chora Media, the main Italian podcast company. Co-founded in 2020 by former *La Repubblica* and *La Stampa* director Mario Calabresi, in four years it has already produced more than 250 podcasts.

“I started by listening to *Veleno*, Pablo Trincia's first true crime podcast,” recalls Milano. “And then I listened to lots of prof. Alessandro Barbero's history lessons. During that period, I understood that podcasts were a very powerful tool for storytelling, but also for information. That's how I started, as a listener.” At the time, Milano worked at Italian economic newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*: “Leaving *Il Sole* was not an easy choice. I had been there fifteen years, dealing with printed newspaper, website, social media; and podcasts too. It was a home for me. But I was at the age where one has to say ‘if not now, when?’ And I believed very much in the podcast format, so I was attracted by the idea of going to a startup founded to do exactly that.”

Now that even Donald Trump spends most of his presidential campaign as a guest of big and small podcasters it's almost a given, but Milano's

was a winning bet. Chora News, the group's journalistic division, has already produced over 50 podcasts. Among the most successful there is *Stories* by Cecilia Sala, which tells a story from abroad every day in a handful of minutes; and *Non hanno un amico* (They don't have a friend), a daily appointment with Luca Bizzarri's satire. Despite the success of these products, whose listens reach peaks of 100,000 per day, their financial sustainability isn't to be taken for granted. With the exception of subscription-only podcast platforms (like Audible), all revenues can be traced down to three models: the sponsored podcast (editorially free but “offered by” a sponsor); the branded podcast (produced on commission from a company that uses it to tell about itself or its values); and podcasts with advertising spaces (which can be filled directly by the publisher or by the podcasting platform).

“We live in a world where information and entertainment have mixed,” states Milano. On platforms like Spotify and Amazon Music, among the most used for listening to podcasts, journalistic products compete side by side with Taylor Swift's albums and stand-up comedians' shows. “Di-



FRANCESCA MILANO

discoverability, that is the possibility that a podcast can be found and then listened to, is a fundamental aspect,” continues the journalist. “You can make the best product in the world, but if you don’t know how to communicate it no one will listen to it, because no one will ever find it. That’s why the strategy to convey it must be thought out from the beginning: I always say that the podcast is a medium that doesn’t live on its own, but needs to be accompanied: by social media, for example.” In this regard, in 2022 Chora acquired the social media company Will Media: a merger worth about 5.2 million euros, which has allowed the group to reach 100 people including journalists, authors, editors, audio/video technical figures, and administrative figures.

But the increasingly intense mixing with communication and entertainment doesn’t diminish the rigor necessary to make an information podcast. On the contrary: “Behind a 20-minute episode there’s generally a script of at least 20,000 characters,” reveals the journalist. “Generally, I believe that to make a podcast you need to be super competent in the subject matter you’re dealing with, because speaking directly into a microphone makes it harder to mask your gaps. Moreover, today the data collected by platforms gives us the ability to monitor listening trends in detail: when we see points where people abandon listening en masse, it’s almost always because that moment of the podcast is weak; or drawn out too long.”





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Walter Mariotti

He is considered an innovator in journalism. His alchemy blends philosophy, design, and culture. Today he directs *Domus* and tells MAG about his vision of the industry: “The use of prediction-based algorithms has transformed the information society into an oracular community. Young people? More available and less competitive”

by Giuseppe Salemme

Walter Mariotti did not plan to become a journalist. “I studied to be a theoretical philosopher” is the first thing he tells me, almost as a warning. In fact, we end up talking for almost an hour, twice the thirty minutes I had asked for. But, more than a tendency to get lost in assorted elucubrations, it’s because if one talks about innovation in editorial products in Italy, and specifically newspapers, few have more stories to tell than him.

In any case, Mariotti is truly a philosopher (with five years of studies, after graduating in Siena, in Paris, Louvain, and Harvard). Originally from Iesa, a small town in the Sieneese province, after a brief career as a public manager, he begins collaborating with the cultural pages of various publications. Until he is offered the opportunity to move to Milan to become a journalist.

In the approximately 25 years that follow, he works for numerous publishers: Class, Rcs, Mondadori, Ti Media. By a will of destiny, not programmed, he specializes in newspaper re-design: not (or not only) in a graphic sense, as he is keen to specify, but in the ideas on which they are founded. A total of 18 newspapers he works on, creating them from scratch or giving them a new form. For *Il Sole 24 Ore*, in 2008, he invented the monthly *IL (Intelligence in Lifestyle)*, an innovative magazine that was also a sales success; less fortunate was the subsequent experience, in which he was chosen to oversee the restyling of *Panorama*. Since 2017, he has been responsible for *Domus*,



a magazine specialized in architecture, design, and art, founded by architect Gio Ponti in 1928. Mariotti is the first non-architect to direct it. “Maria Giovanna Mazzocchi, the publisher of *Domus*, is an extraordinary person, in the etymological sense of the term. She understood very early and long before others that media have changed and that other projects and services needed to be developed: an ecosystem that goes well beyond social media and the internet. For *Domus*, it was no longer enough to have an architect design and manage it, not even a director; but a media manager who was also a comprehensive intellectual, who could dialogue with a guest editor, a great architect

providing a global vision.”

Introduce *Domus* to someone who has no idea what it is.

It’s difficult to talk about *Domus* to an Italian audience. It has existed for almost a century and is distributed in 89 countries: one could say that it is the only true Italian international media outlet. Personally, I consider it one of the cornerstones of Italian culture, like Olivetti or the Venice Biennale. For a long time, it was a magazine designed for professionals, those who at the end of the 1920s were Gio Ponti’s interlocutors reading about design and architecture. It was a b2b journal, as they say in jargon.

And what has changed now?

Now I’ll speak to you as an “intellectual”. Tuscan, but intellectual.

Please.

Society has changed. Architecture and design are no longer a vertical discipline for professionals or the cultured bourgeoisie. Design is at the center of our lives, it has become horizontal, it is the form that substantiates our life. All the major newspapers in the world now have a design or architecture page. The same had already happened for finance and medicine: because our life is now financialized, and physical well-being interests everyone. And so, while *Domus* has remained *haut de gamme*, refined and sophisticated, it is now

read by a segment of society that possesses the economic tools, and also wants to acquire cultural tools. Today in *Domus*, thanks to architecture, you find insights into climate, society, mobility. All from a global perspective, escaping provincialism while keeping Italian identity in mind.

Is that also design?

Of course. Let's say you have to project a city square: today you can't just deal with the materials to build it. You have to think about the people who will walk in it, their religion, their customs. And about the impact the construction will have on the city and its environment, and on those who possibly didn't want that square at all, and now find themselves forced to use it. I realize that in Italy we are still prisoners of our ideas about Made in Italy, but design is much more than product design. Today we talk about process design, design thinking, design experience. In the most advanced democracies, like the Scandinavian ones, designers were the first ones not to focus on material objects only, but increasingly on relationships between people. Which are built and modified also through objects.

«Information, if it is true information, is the opposite: it is the attempt to break the marketing game by providing tools that allow the reader to decide on his own. It's called criticism, and is not very loved by today's powers, that are actually extremely fragile»

And what do you do at Domus?

I'm the executive editorial director, which means that I work a bit like an architect. My job is to shape the vision of the guest editor: it's as if we're reinventing the magazine every year. For this, I must thank a publisher like Giovanna Mazzocchi: with all respect and gratitude to the many publishers I've worked with, I don't think there are many such personalities. Here I've had the opportunity to create several new products: *Domus Air*, a global infrastructure magazine; another on Italian culture, called *BreraZ*; another, *Worldesign*, deals specifically with process design in collaboration with the World Design Association. And then projects with international institutions, non-profit groups, banks, global industries. I was also entrusted with the direction of another legendary magazine of the group, *Meridiani*, which was a tourism magazine and has now perhaps become a travel magazine.

What's the difference?

Travel is the opposite of tourism. The word "tourism" derives from the French "tour". It entered common language at the end of the 18th century, when the idea of the spherical



WALTER MARIOTTI WITH MARIA GIOVANNA MAZZOCCHI-BORDONE

Earth definitively spread. But if the Earth is round, it means that if you start from point A, you can return there by going around it: this is the tourist's idea, who leaves with the guarantee of returning. Whereas the traveler has no guarantee: for them, the important thing is to leave, not to return.

You really are a philosopher...

A Sunday-league philosopher, maybe. But I've always tried to apply my training to the work I was doing. In IL, everything had found a synthesis: maybe not perfect, but at least complete: it was a magazine of great experimentation in columns, in language approach, in the decomposition of graphics and the relationship between past and present. It could be read on multiple levels; and it was made of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, so Hegelian in some way.

You sound really fond of that project.

In my career, I've worked on rethinking and directing many journals, but IL is one of those I invented from scratch, and perhaps my best idea. It was a supplement that brought to maturity a series of ideas, not only editorial but cultural ones. I poured into it everything I had studied or thought. And it was revolutionary

from a graphic point of view too, thanks to a young and compact editorial team made of people of great value. There too, thanks to a publisher who supported me, and a director, Ferruccio de Bortoli, who appreciated me despite being an outsider. They gave me *carte blanche*. And we won awards worldwide.

What didn't work out in Panorama?

To talk about that experience, I must start from the end of the previous one. After almost five years at Il Sole, the management group that had recruited me, changed. I tried to stay and dialogue, but the new editorial and corporate line made me uncomfortable, perhaps because I had been too comfortable before. So I accepted the challenge of being in charge of a conceptual redesign of Panorama; although things weren't very clear to begin with, let's put it this way. To cut it short, we didn't see eye to eye and one fine day I found myself without work.

Was it a difficult moment?

Things always come together, for better or worse. The end of Panorama for me coincided with separation and other very unpleasant things. My son was three years old. I chose not to react professionally but to reflect, stop,

take care of him and meanwhile do some consulting for companies, making use of my experience. Then, with time, things started turning around again. When the *Domus* publisher called me, things were spinning almost too vertiginously; and in recent times I had received three different offers. I decided on the one that seemed most suitable for me. It was the best decision of my life.

Looking at all the newspapers you've innovated during your career, one would think that it wasn't the internet that created the need to reinvent journalism in order to make it work. That the need to innovate has always been there.

Certainly. The difference is that with the internet, the era of mass media has ended and the era of personal media has begun. Digital communication networks have become the basic structure of society. As sociologist Manuel Castells wrote, the city has become a digital city. And as my mentor Jean Baudrillard had written much earlier, we are now at the fourth stage of value, where meanings and signifiers are now detached and travel through ironic refraction. But I don't want to bore you... except to add that the use of prediction-based algorithms has transformed the information



WALTER MARIOTTI WITH FERRUCCIO DE BORTOLI

«I find today's young people much better than my generation. I say this with the maximum objectivity possible. They are more available and less competitive; more humble and interested in collaboration»



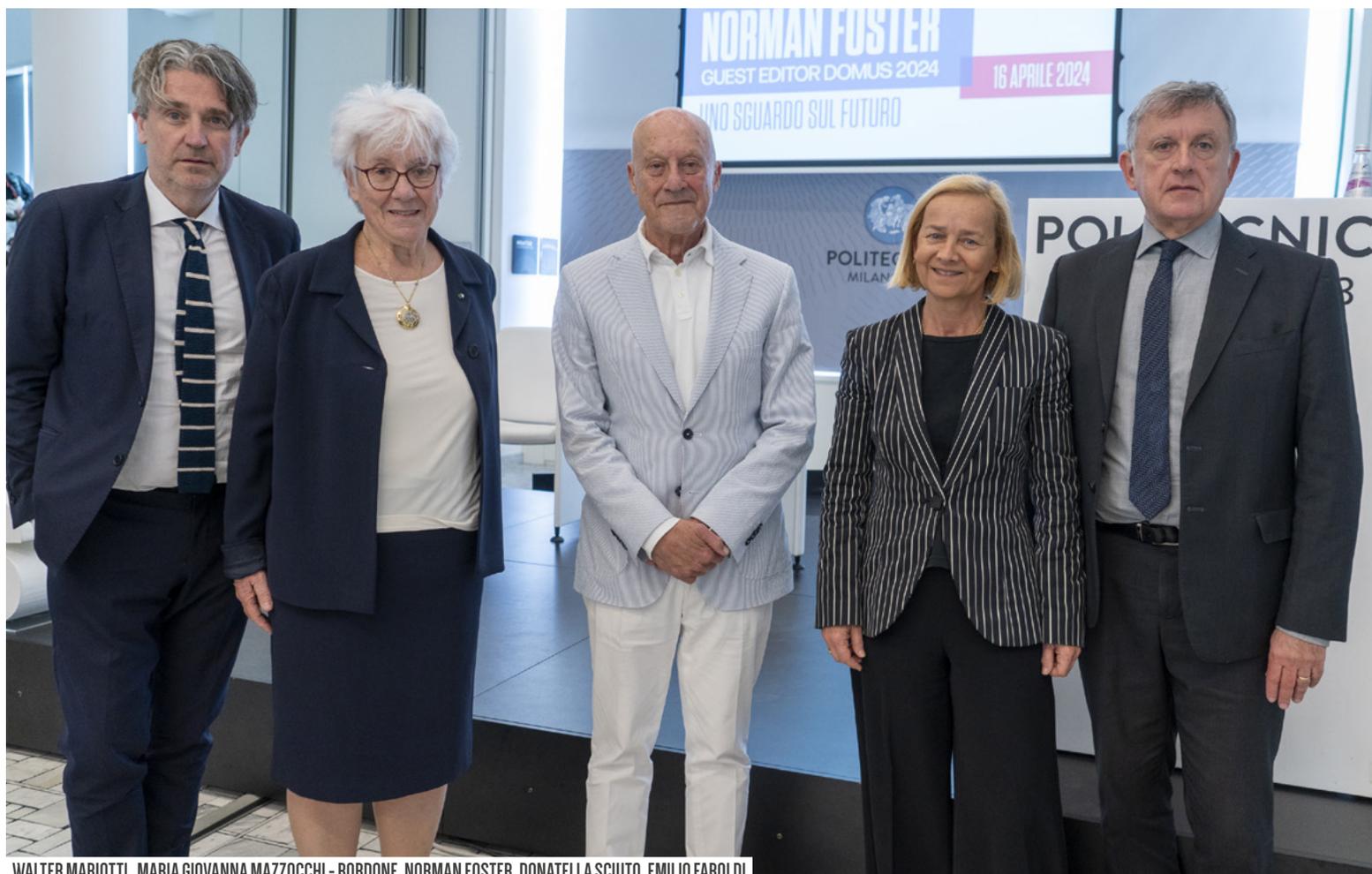
society into an oracular society.

Can you explain that more clearly?

Journalism is a descriptive model of reality which requires interpretation: I go, I see, I verify, I report. All of these things have been superseded by the electronic and then algorithmic transformation of society. Paradoxically, we've gone back to a model no longer based on discovering the new, but on prediction through the old. Like an oracle. Today we have artificial intelligence that does nothing but recombine old inputs, and gives the impression of creating something new, but the "generation" it is currently capable of is not very different from the "hallucinations" of which there is now extensive scientific literature. In any case, by doing so, it betrays the principle of describing reality and is therefore the opposite of journalism. I'll make a comparison: algorithms and description of reality are in the same relationship as between Chinese medicine and Western medicine. Chinese medicine is preventive, based on a predictive model aimed at preventing the onset of diseases; while Western medicine, when a symptom appears, analyzes it and tries to get to the causes. They are antipodal.

Is this why journalism is perceived to be in crisis?

Montanelli used to say that the true owner of the newspaper is the reader; and that problems begin when the true reader of the newspaper becomes the owner. The crisis of newspapers stems from the fact that they have often stopped being informative products. Information is the opposite of communication, which is always and in any case a marketing operation aimed at selling something: even an idea or a point of view. Information, if it is true information, is the opposite: it is the attempt to break the marketing game by providing tools that allow the reader to decide on his own. It's called criticism, and is not very loved by today's powers, that are actually extremely fragile.



WALTER MARIOTTI, MARIA GIOVANNA MAZZOCCHI - BORDONE, NORMAN FOSTER, DONATELLA SCIUTO, EMILIO FAROLDI

So, according to you, newspapers today think about selling their ideas more than informing.

It was the publisher's choice, but journalists are also responsible because they accepted it over the years. And, to tell the whole truth, journalists had been a super privileged category for a long time. Not your generation, and I would say not even mine, but previous generations enjoyed a top-tier social consideration and economic conditions. To maintain these, and to balance the books, at a certain point the mission changed. But in this new perspective, we ultimately discovered that, at least in Italy, very few readers were even interested in journalism as an objective tool for understanding reality in the first place. They were more interested in tools that confirmed the ideas they already had.

What about the new generations? Are the young journalists you work with more aware of these changes and therefore advantaged? Or does the lack of "traditional training" penalize them?

I find today's young people much better than

my generation. I say this with the maximum objectivity possible. They are more available and less competitive; more humble and interested in collaboration. Probably because they live in a world of great scarcity: both economic and of opportunities. And, as the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset said, man is determined by his circumstances: everyone is a child of their time. But I think this current age is dense with opportunities, if one knows how to see them.

But what age are we living in today?

A strange one. One in which technology has surpassed ideology, as Martin Heidegger said. It's no coincidence that today everyone is liberal and believes in free market, from China to Ecuador. Everyone's a capitalist and a consumer. This uniform thought is one of the effects of the technological era we live in. But as Emanuele Severino would have said, the technological phase is just a stage in human development. Like all stages, it will end. And paradoxically, I have great faith in the future.

What makes you hopeful?

It's not a banal optimism of will, to be clear.

In some way, it's a scientific or, better, esoteric evaluation. I think of the first Homo Sapiens, who found themselves dealing with a hostile and overwhelming nature: that's when architecture was born. When human intuition and creativity developed to balance the absurd and inhospitable circumstances in which man found himself. And now we are in a similar but reversed situation: in a world of scarcity of human and industrial opportunities, we have to invent them. And the technology that once helped man defend himself from nature must now defend nature. Here, the wonder of young people is that they have become more creative; and I see that even universities are finally abandoning the rhetoric of professionalization and returning to being places that produce knowledge, more than just skills.

What is knowledge for you?

The experience of the world and of oneself, which expands inner possibilities and therefore changes the world. I would say that knowledge is the experience of spirit, of the soul, which is something real, concrete, and serious. At the basis of every revolution, after all, is the revolution of oneself: the French Revolution happens

«To those who want to do this job, I say travel and learn another language. Cultivate culture and knowledge. Plato said that wonder is the origin of philosophy: perhaps it is also the origin of journalism»

because some gentlemen, tired of someone claiming to govern by divine right, convinced themselves first that they could change things. The most important changes do not happen progressively; they're more like rips. Experiences accumulate, but at a certain point a leap occurs: nature works like this, science works like this, and so does the human being.

What advice would you give to a young person dreaming of becoming a journalist?

To study Sanskrit. But since that's difficult, to study another language. Or to fall in love. Cultivate knowledge and culture. Travel: but not on

press trips or touristic destinations. Break out of clichés. We have all absorbed a scientific paradigm that wants everything measurable, verifiable, reproducible: it is not. We live an existence fundamentally linked to mystery. A young person, who in theory has more time at their disposal, must commit to living it as a protagonist, animated by what will be done, what will be seen, what will be wanted. Regardless of individual experiences, the important thing is to have an approach that allows to be amazed by the world. Plato said that wonder is the origin of philosophy: perhaps it is also the origin of journalism.



Lawyers, profession and Truth

If you think that artificial intelligence is the innovation that will forever change the sector, you are wrong. Everything has already happened. It was communication that has revolutionized the profession

by Nicola Di Molfetta

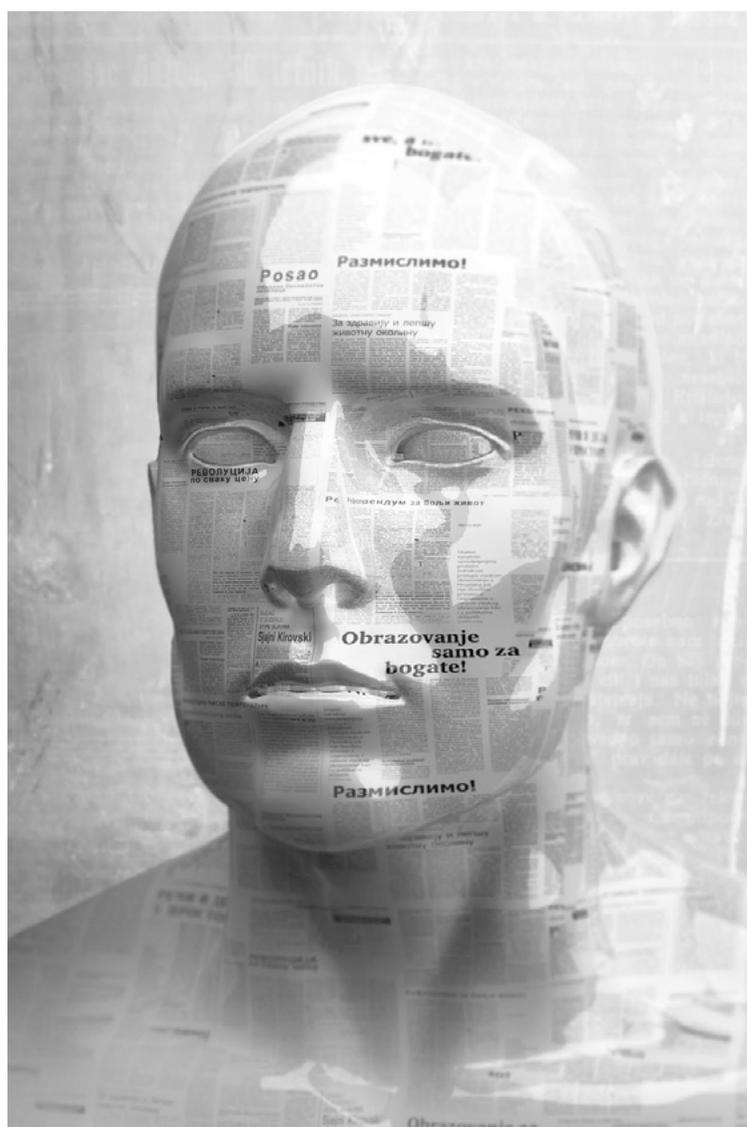
When I was asked what the transformative event for the legal profession in the last thirty years had been, I had no doubts and I answered: communication. Not to turn water to my own mill (which I live from legal communication, indeed from information on the sector), but because the more I think about it, the more I realize that without the communicative turning point, the market for legal services as we observe and interpret it today would not exist. I realize that it is legitimate to ask (even with a certain tone of controversy) whether, after all, it was communication that gave life to the legal services market or whether the latter stimulated a new branch of specialization in the varied universe of information? We are at the egg and the chicken, you might say. After all, the market has always been there. Whenever a transaction takes place between a buyer and a seller of a good or service, we can say that there is a market.

But this has not always been peaceful in terms of legal services.

There are sales that escape the most traditional classifications of economic science, if only because they involve the most delicate sphere of everyone's life with deep ethical implications. Which one? Health, obviously. This, as we know, can be declined into two subcategories: physical, the first, and social, the second, by convention because after all there is a remedy for everything. Maybe.

Physical health is taken care of by doctors. The second, on the other hand, is dealt with by the specialists of the legal professions, the jurists and, first and foremost, the lawyers who, it is good to remember, are not only agents of justice, but also agents of socio-economic development. Good lawyers mean good business, good interactions, good contracts. Lawyers are the remediators par excellence, for that matter. The fact that these, when they need to explain the importance of their function and the relevance of their specializations, make ample use of health metaphors, I think is just a coincidence. Even if, actually...

I won't deal with the white coats, as the title of this article suggests. I



wouldn't know where to start, after all. Although I can say one thing about it: the sector in which they "operate" moves an annual expenditure of over 10 trillion dollars (OECD data): well over 10% of global GDP. Has healthcare become a business? Yes, it has become a business. With good blessing of Hippocrates, Apollo the doctor, Asclepius, Hygieia and Panacea, that is, all the deities to whom the famous Oath of the Kos physician was dedicated.

On the armies in uniforms, on the other hand, I can leave my two cents, if only because I spend a lot of time on the category and in some way I can claim to have made a fairly rounded opinion about it, although (I know) controversial.

Here too, I would start from a purely economic basic fact. The sector, worldwide, generates a turnover of 787 billion dollars, according to the latest estimates of the International Bar Association (IBA). Then, if we add to these the taxes paid on such services (191 billion) and the induced (637 billion) we can say that the legal industry moves, in total, a turnover of 1.6 thousand million dollars with its 20 million lawyers scattered all over the planet. NOTE: doing the sums, this means a per capita turnover of just over \$39,000. In Italy it is about 40,000 euros a year, for many years... When we say that the whole world is a village. END OF NOTE.

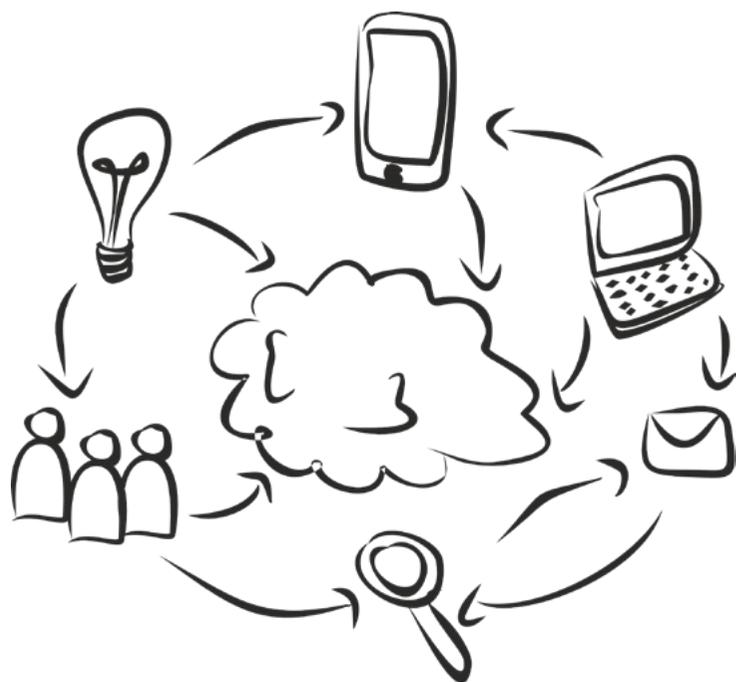
Are you getting lost among the zeros? You are not alone. And it doesn't matter. Because generally these figures are the result of estimates, processing of averages, specular equations aimed at providing an order of magnitude rather than measuring the finances of the category with Cartesian precision, which, as is easy to imagine, does not distribute such income equally among its adepts. Just to play a little with the numbers (we've done thirty, let's do thirty-one) we can say that, if in the world there is a lawyer who earns 11 million dollars a year (trust me, there is and it's not just one) there are another 282 who, at least in theory, struggle to put together lunch and dinner with the profession. But is this also true for Italy? I'd say yes.

Always because the world is a big small town where everyone knows everyone and in the end nothing new ever happens, just know that 16,000 Italian lawyers produce about half of the category's income (which of lawyers, in the Bel Paese, counts more than 240,000, see issue 181 of MAG) and here too there are those who have lunch and dinner in starred kitchens every day, and there are those who make do with a toast and a half mineral water while waiting for better times. This is a fact.

But why this long premise? Because to talk about communication and lawyers as well as the impact the former has had on the destinies of the latter, we cannot talk about the legal profession as a whole and indistinct, but we must focus our attention only on one side of the prism. In particular, on that piece of professional population that seems to have made it or that at least seems to have better interpreted the spirit of the times by choosing the path that, in the end, turned out to be the most apt to enjoy a decent share of

«The spread of law firms has been accelerated by communication, which on the one hand has served to make these organizations known to clients of all sizes and in every latitude, and on the other hand has been fundamental in talking about this new way of carrying out legal activity to colleagues and potential new partners»





the contemporary legal business. The business law. Hordes of lawyers who have gone well beyond the artisanal dimension of the past and have decided to change their condition by giving rise to large organized structures. In English we call them law firms. Translated? Legal factories. Does it give you an idea? It does, I'd say. Defining certain behemoths, law firms, risks being reductive. The first, the largest in the world, Kirkland & Ellis, in 2023, with 3,500 professionals *world wide*, generated revenues of over 7 billion dollars. Do we agree that this is a real business? We agree.

Seen from there, the classic law firm (lawyer, secretary, two trainees and a ficus benjamin in the waiting room) seems to belong to another planet. Or at least to another era. In the last thirty years those large organizations have begun to spread all over the world, changing the way the profession is practiced.

In its time, the phenomenon also overwhelmed continental Europe, Italy included (the cradle of law), and was literally accelerated by communication which on the one hand served to make these organizations known to clients of all sizes and in every latitude, and on the other hand was fundamental in talking about this new way of carrying out legal activity to colleagues and potential new adepts: the workers (from no less than 180,000 euros a year) of the modern factories of the law.

Every rebirth starts from the recognition of the truth, Piero Calamandrei wrote, more or less, in 1921 in *Too Many Lawyers!*, and in this Darwinian process started by the multiplication of competition in the category and the spread of law firms around the world, the truth is that communicating (one's uniqueness and one's model) has become a necessary action to compete.

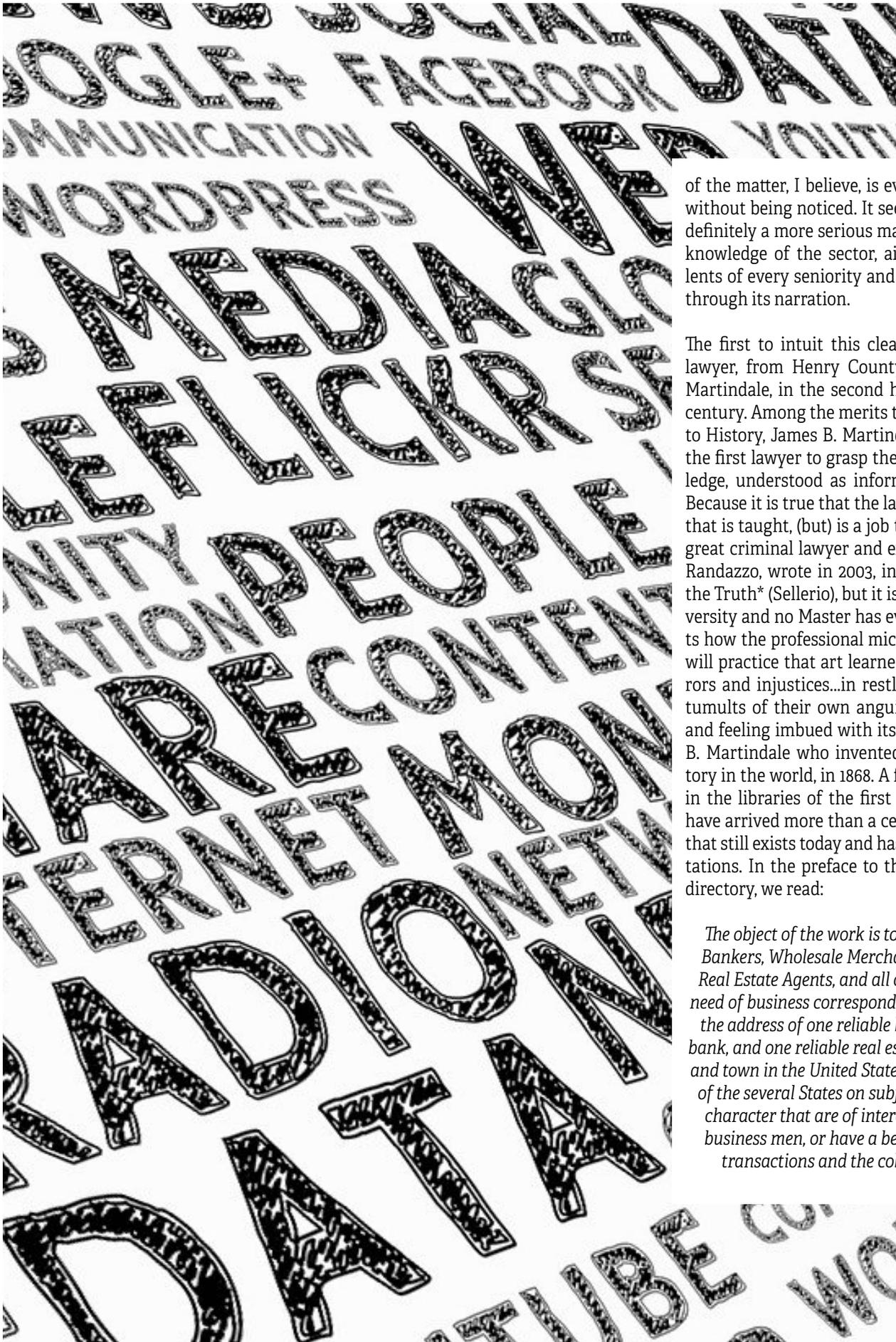
Between the mid-1990s and the first two decades of the 2000s, being on the market also became a matter of image.

The market. Europe. In the internal debate within the legal community invaded by international signs and new models of approach to the profession, the usefulness of the lawyer has found itself arm in arm with the figure of the useful lawyer who does not interpret his role as a mere "obligation of means", but considers the commitment to the result a duty. Communication has worked on the narration of this "other approach", efficiency-driven and performance-oriented, to the role of the professional. But since there is no revolution without upheavals and dissent of all kinds, even the advent of legal communication has caused its fair share of crisis. A crisis that has swept away the consciences of many, giving rise to doubts and dilemmas bordering on the existential. To communicate or not to communicate? This is the question that many have asked themselves, genuflected before the altar of ethics.

The legal profession has been reasoning about its role in ethical terms since the dawn of time. From Pliny the Younger with his dissertations on *advocati fides*, to the reflections on the qualities of the lawyer and the nature of his office, which began in the 19th century and, in fact, have never ended.

Speaking of oneself and for oneself (in the exclusive sense of one's own interest, for the purpose of personal and self-serving promotion) has never been considered a good thing. In *Rules for Forming a Lawyer*, in 1827, the jurist Luigi Rubino collected and translated from French a series of writings (ancient and modern) reworked to illustrate the profession and bring it closer to new generations. In the fourth part of the work, entitled *On the Qualities of the Lawyer*, at point 10, Rubino writes: "The Lawyer must neither boast and praise himself, nor scold and humble himself for a ridiculous excess of modesty." The complexity

«Knowledge of the sector, aimed at attracting talents of every seniority and degree, can only pass through its narration. The first to intuit this clearly was an American lawyer, from Henry County (Indiana): James B. Martindale»



of the matter, I believe, is evident. To be seen but without being noticed. It seems like Totò. But it is definitely a more serious matter. Also because the knowledge of the sector, aimed at attracting talents of every seniority and degree, can only pass through its narration.

The first to intuit this clearly was an American lawyer, from Henry County (Indiana): James B. Martindale, in the second half of the nineteenth century. Among the merits that have brought him to History, James B. Martindale has that of being the first lawyer to grasp the importance of knowledge, understood as information on the sector. Because it is true that the lawyer's job "is not a job that is taught, (but) is a job that is learned," as the great criminal lawyer and expert in ethics, Ettore Randazzo, wrote in 2003, in his **The Lawyer and the Truth** (Sellerio), but it is also true that no university and no Master has ever taught his students how the professional microcosm in which they will practice that art learned "fighting against errors and injustices...in restless nights and in the tumults of their own anguish...wearing the robe and feeling imbued with its charm." It was James B. Martindale who invented the first legal directory in the world, in 1868. A fundamental tool that in the libraries of the first Italian studios would have arrived more than a century later. A product that still exists today and has inspired various imitations. In the preface to the first edition of this directory, we read:

The object of the work is to furnish to Lawyers, Bankers, Wholesale Merchants, Manufacturers, Real Estate Agents, and all others who may have need of business correspondents away from home, the address of one reliable law firm, one reliable bank, and one reliable real estate agent in each city and town in the United States; also to give the laws of the several States on subjects of a commercial character that are of interest or importance to business men, or have a bearing on mercantile transactions and the collection of debts\...

Today, legal information is fed by *tsunami*-like waves of accredited, official, coordinated and source-controlled communication. The problem is no longer to know the sector. The biggest challenge that all the operators in this sector have to face is that of decrypting its representation, which is not always related to the truth.

The infodemic is the disease of the early 21st century on a global level. We know too much and paradoxically end up knowing less and less. Meanwhile, the banks that once enclosed information on the sector in a high and inaccessible dam have broken and thousands of lawyers flood the web and social media with words and images not always necessary, not always of interest, not always authentic.

Speaking of this, I will never forget the scene. A few years ago, a lawyer who had long since passed the age of fifty and who had always boasted to me of never having succumbed to the vain temptation of media visibility, called me announcing the exception he was about to make to his rule of voluntary and conscious silence. "I'm sending you a really important news. I've followed the most interesting operation of the last ten years. A complex deal, full of legal implications that will set a precedent. It's not that I'm interested in appearing. But this thing is too relevant not to give public notice." I told him I would wait for it with trepidation. I also asked him if he wanted to start hinting at it, so that I could prepare and gather a bit of documentation in view of the writing of my article. "I'll provide everything myself - he said sternly. Meanwhile, I'll have my photo sent to you." He kept his word. At least in part. A few minutes after our exchange, I received an email from his

«Communication has served to shed light on some fundamental notions. Some examples? What a law firm is like, what are the different models of professional association (or company) in circulation, how the governance of these structures works, how much one earns, from which training paths the new lawyers arrive»



secretary that read: "*As agreed with lawyer P.B.*". And nothing else. Just an attachment: 11.5 Megabytes. His photo. Just the face. An unrealistic close-up. A giant close-up of his hooked nose surmounting a complacent grimace on his mouth. Tortoiseshell glasses, the stern gaze of a Cicero and a freshly trimmed beard. That face remained silent staring at me for a few minutes. I thought the text with the press release concerning the historical operation would arrive shortly. Meanwhile, the minutes passed. Nothing happened. Nothing would happen. To this day I wonder what that news was. But the most important thing that that episode made me understand over the years has been the urgency to exist that at a certain point began to be felt even by those who had always made a point of honor of their "invisibility".

The problem is that for a lawyer who naively sends only his effigy and then gets panic about saying, perhaps because he is not sure about what he can actually reveal or perhaps because in the end he has remained convinced that one is noticed more if one does not make oneself noticed, there are now thousands of others who without any filter and without any strategic reflection launch themselves into communication regardless of whether they have relevant things to share or not. Or rather, without worrying about understanding whether what

<At the moment communication has become representation, it has begun to move away from the truth again and this, albeit with a background noise close to deafening, risks causing a new silence in the sector because the representation, today, lingers more and more in a hagiographic narration>

they decide to want to tell can be of interest to others: the professional community or the market.

At the moment when communication has become representation, it has begun to move away again from the truth and this, albeit with a background noise close to deafening, risks causing a new silence in the sector.

What happens to communication in the legal sector is a mirror of the times. This is a contemporary evil. A disaster that Yuval Noah Harari describes well in his latest essay, **Nexus** (Bompiani), dedicated to information networks. The truth is laborious. Harari, in a recent interview with **Robinson** (la Repubblica), recalled that truth "is complex" and the problem is that we are increasingly used to simple things. Furthermore, he added, "truth is usually uncomfortable and people don't like uncomfortable things. They prefer stories that make them feel good even if they're not true" and in this regard he told the story that when movable type printing was invented, the most read book of the century was not a fundamental text like **De revolutionibus orbium coelestium** by Copernicus, but **Malleus Maleficarum** by one Heinrich Kramer: a manual for

witch hunting full of legends and esotericism.

The representation, today, lingers more and more in a hagiographic narration. This is the abracadabra we have to deal with. And here it builds worlds and scenarios that day after day move a step further away from the factual reality of things.

It can happen to receive press releases from law firms that are not law firms, "news" about lawyers who are not lawyers, partners who are not partners, victories that are defeats, and tons of said and unsaid that raise a smoke beyond which it is increasingly difficult to understand what is really happening in the sector. So communication is filled with emperors convinced they are displaying magnificent Baroque robes, which in the end turn out to be sadly naked at the height of the media spotlight.

Containing this drift and preventing communication from moving too far away from information is the new challenge. The new silence to be broken. The puzzle to be solved to allow a category so fundamental for civil progress not to remain entangled in a marginal metaverse that it has built for itself, leaving to others, indeed to a few, the control of true knowledge and that of its own future.

The history and timeline of advertising: from caves to the global village

For 15,000 years, humanity has promoted itself and its creations. This evolution is intrinsically linked to the figure of consumers, who today are co-producers, remarkably attentive to corporate stances on contemporary issues

di Benedetta Miarelli

“Just do it,” “Think different”, “A diamond is forever”. For each of these slogans, a specific tone of voice likely took hold of the narrator in your mind—the voice that spoke through their advertisements. TV, billboards, social networks, radio ads: advertising is inescapable, even if we try to avoid it. This is a testament to its effectiveness.

The Italian noun “pubblicità,” according to etymological reconstruction by the Treccani Encyclopedia, means “to make public” or “to make known,” deriving from the Latin *publicare*. In contrast, English prefers the Latin *ad vertere*, meaning “to go toward” or “to pay attention to.” It is precisely due to the breadth of meanings conveyed by this definition that pinpointing the exact origin of this practice is nearly impossible.

However, the premise of modern advertising coincides with the advent of movable type printing by Gutenberg. It was printing techniques that enabled the creation of posters and periodicals, produced en masse, where advertisements first appeared.

A significant demarcation in advertising history is the rise of international trade: the necessity to highlight product virtues emerged, giving birth to the merchant-entrepreneur and the introduction of luxury and exotic goods. The first printed advertisement in English, dating back to 1477, was created by William Caxton, promoting a liturgical manual titled *The Pyes of Salisbury*, which contained rules for reciting prayers according to the Salisbury Cathedral rite.

Fast forward a few hundred years, and we find ourselves in the midst of the Industrial Revolution: advertising becomes a standalone industry. This marks the first time in history when supply exceeds demand, necessitating stimulation of the latter. Urban growth, the advancement of printing, and the need for companies to promote their products on a large scale led to a massive proliferation of newspaper ads. In Philadelphia, in 1841, the first advertising agency was established: Volney Palmer, introducing a professional intermediary system between publishers and advertisers. Palmer did not merely sell advertising space; he

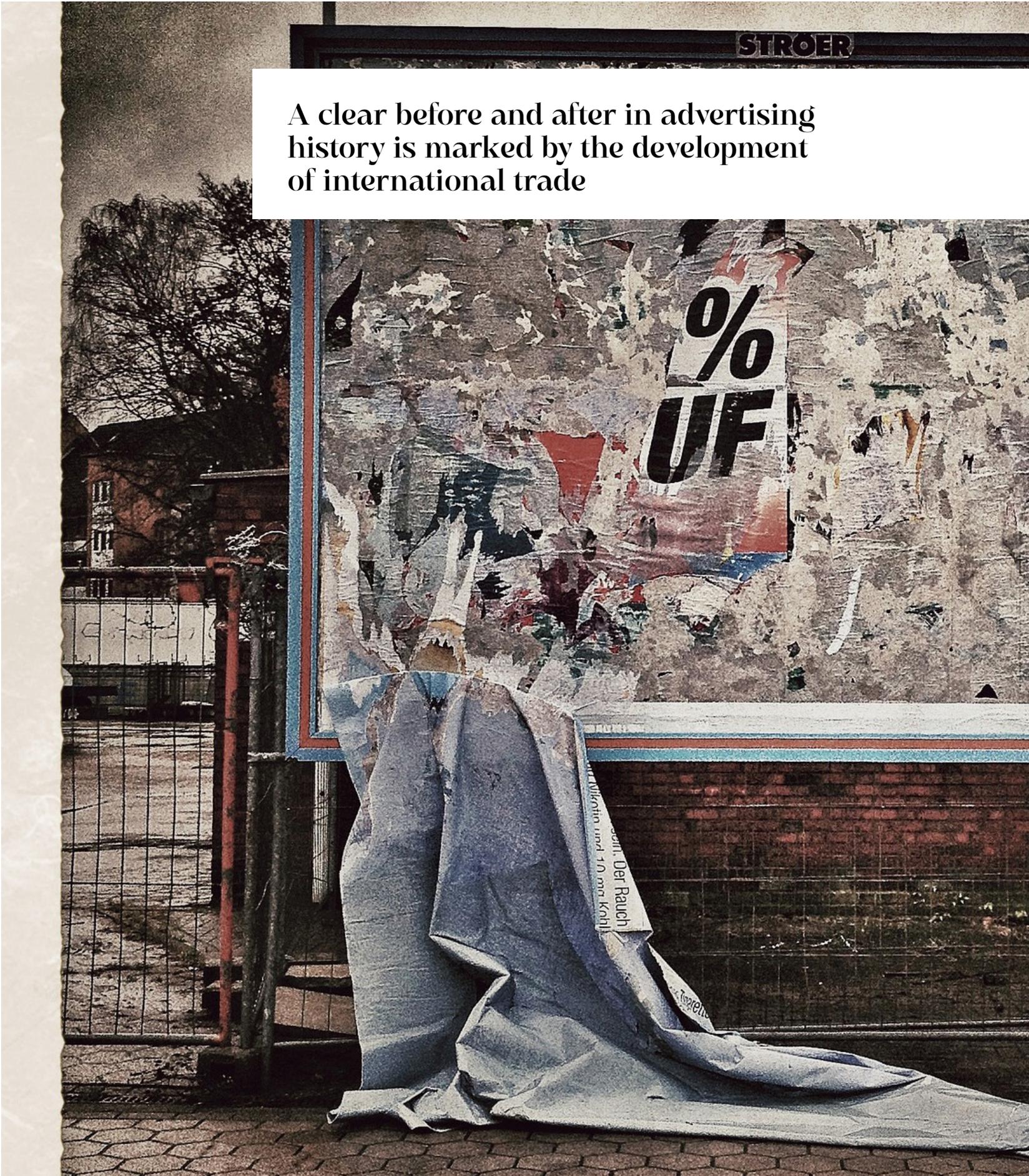
provided a comprehensive service that included rate negotiation, space management in newspapers, and creative consulting.

The 1920s marked a monumental shift in advertising history: radio made its triumphant entrance into homes, giving advertising its own voice. For the first time, advertising messages could literally “whisper” in the ears of millions. Advertisements caught consumers off guard while they prepared dinner or listened to their favorite songs, seamlessly blending into their daily lives.

It is no coincidence that 1922 became a memorable year: the Queensboro Corporation, a real estate company in New York, aired the first



A clear before and after in advertising history is marked by the development of international trade





radio commercial, paving the way for a new era of communication.

However, it was in the post-World War II era that we witnessed a true revolution: the advent of television. The small screen radically transformed advertising, offering previously unseen possibilities. Moving images, sounds, music, and words converged into a single experience capable of capturing attention like never before. While abroad the focus was on commercials already established in other media, Italy chose a completely original path: Carosello. Structured in four episodes with musical interludes, Carosello was the only space the Italian television wanted to dedicate to advertising.

The resistance of Italian radio and television to advertising was twofold: on one hand, it was seen as a disturbance to viewers, and on the other, the self-financing of Rai through the licensing fee. Consequently, strict regulations were imposed for those wishing to use airtime during the program, established by Sacis following the agreement between Rai and the Ministry of Posts: the films had to consist of 100 seconds of entertainment (during which the product could not be shown) and 35 seconds for the “commercial tail”; the name of the product or brand could not be mentioned or written more than six times, and competing brands could not appear in the same broadcast.

In the 1970s, the optimism of the economic boom began to wane, overshadowed by the 1973 oil crisis and the resulting inflation. Demand decreased, leading to a surplus in supply. Advertising needed to be strategic rather than merely creative: it was no longer just about promoting a product but deeply understanding the desires and motivations behind consumer choices.

Al Ries and Jack Trout were among the first to approach advertising scientifically. According to their theory, consumers can only remember a limited number of products at a time, prompting each company to carve out a specific niche in the market and, if necessary, displace competitors. BMW took their studies to heart, introducing the iconic slogan “the ultimate driving machine.”

Meanwhile, the wave of sexual liberation led to

more suggestive and enticing advertisements, including the memorable “Call me Peroni, I’ll be your beer.” Carosello ended its run on January 1, 1977. During this time, private television stations emerged, ready to reshape the television landscape, culminating in the launch of Canale 5 in 1981. From this point onward, the bond between television networks and advertising tightened as commercial networks adapted to investors’ needs.

Entering the last decade of the 20th century, we witnessed the rise of thematic television channels specializing in specific genres. Consumers began reflecting on the ethics of consumption, making increasingly conscious choices. Companies felt the urgency to cultivate loyalty, establishing authentic relationships with their audience. In this context, they sought to evoke childhood memories by reintroducing iconic products—like Leone candies or Roberts talcum powder—through a marketing approach rooted in nostalgia.

The 1990s were undoubtedly the era of the Internet revolution. Initially, the web served merely as a tool for email exchange, and no one foresaw its profound impact on marketing and the world. The debut of online advertising occurred in 1994, with the first banners appearing on the internet. Within a few years, companies recognized that the future of advertising lay in digital platforms, which by 1995 boasted 16 million users.

As we entered the new millennium, alongside various eschatological concerns, an unstoppable and frenetic change unfolded. Crafting advertising strategies for a continuously evolving audience became an unprecedented challenge: traditional analyses based on lifestyle and socio-cultural segmentation quickly showed their limitations.

As Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen stated, “The same per-

son can simultaneously be an American citizen of Caribbean origin, with African ancestry, a Christian, progressive, female, vegetarian, marathon runner, heterosexual, supporter of gay and lesbian rights, theater lover, environmental activist, passionate about tennis, jazz musician, and deeply convinced that there are intelligent beings in space with whom we must communicate as soon as possible. Each of these communities grants this person a specific identity. None can be considered the sole identity or the only category of belonging.”

Meanwhile, in 2005, a cognitive revolution reached fruition: the birth of Web 2.0. Platforms like YouTube (launched in 2005) and Facebook (launched in 2004 and opened to the public in 2006) completely redefined the concept of online advertising, introducing video formats, sponsored posts, and targeted advertising. The ability to share content, comment, and interact directly with brands radically transformed the relationship between companies and consumers.

This revolution, fueled by innovation, is inherent to the figure of the consumer: no longer passive but informed and capable of interacting with both brands and other consumers, bridging any geo-temporal gaps through the network. Consumers have become co-producers, remarkably attentive to corporate stances on contemporary issues.

As I write this in October 2024 at 3:56 PM, I have consciously and unconsciously encountered at least a hundred advertisements since this morning—spam emails, web banners, influencers showcasing products on social media, promotional interludes while I listen to my favorite songs... Perhaps to escape the omnipresent advertising of today, I should retreat to a cave. Maybe Lascaux, France, and imagine going back 15,000 years. Yet, upon reflection, that wouldn’t work either.



Economic Revolutions throughout History: A global journey

Throughout history, economies have undergone profound and rapid transformations known as economic revolutions. These shifts have fundamentally changed how societies produce, consume, and interact. Countries like Spain, with their rich and complex history, have witnessed these changes and adapted their economies and societies to meet new realities.

by Mercedes Galán



1. The Agricultural Revolution: The First Major Shift (Neolithic - 18th Century)

The Agricultural Revolution marked the first major leap in economic history, characterized by the transition from hunter-gatherer societies to agricultural communities. The development of farming allowed for mass food production, which spurred population growth and led to the establishment of permanent settlements.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS:

- Introduction of the plow and crop rotation techniques
- Storage of agricultural surpluses
- Demographic expansion driven by increased food production

GLOBAL IMPACT:

- Led to the rise of civilizations in regions such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley
- Encouraged social hierarchies and the specialization of labor
- Initiated early trade among agricultural regions



2. The Commercial Revolution: The Rise of Trade and Capitalism (15th - 18th Century)

During the Early Modern Period, the expansion of international trade and the discovery of new territories triggered the Commercial Revolution, laying the groundwork for modern capitalism. The creation of financial markets and banking systems facilitated economic growth and global trade.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS:

- Establishment of global trade routes
- Creation of trading companies like the Dutch East India Company
- Use of paper currency and the rise of banking
- Exploration and colonization of territories in the Americas, Africa, and Asia

GLOBAL IMPACT:

- Massive influx of precious metals, such as gold and silver, from the Americas to Europe
- Formation of an interconnected global economy
- Economic and social disparities grew in different regions



3. The Industrial Revolution: From agriculture to industry (18th - 19th Century)

The invention of the steam engine and the mechanization of production marked the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, transforming economies from being primarily agricultural to industrial. This shift led to massive urban growth and profound changes in labor and social life

KEY DEVELOPMENTS:

- Invention of the steam engine, railways, and steamships
- Mechanization of the textile and steel industries
- Establishment of factories and new forms of labor organization
- Emergence of labor movements and the first labor laws

GLOBAL IMPACT:

- Rapid economic growth in Europe and North America
- Poor labor conditions and child exploitation during the initial phases
- Rise of the working-class movement and the introduction of labor regulations



4. The Technological Revolution and the Information Age (20th - 21st Century)

With the invention of computers and the advent of digital technology, economies transformed once again, ushering in the Technological Revolution. Information became a critical resource, and globalization accelerated due to telecommunications advancements.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS:

- Digitalization of the economy, with the rise of e-commerce and digital banking
- Growth of technology sectors like artificial intelligence and robotics
- Emergence of smart industries and precision agriculture
- Expansion of remote work and digital services

GLOBAL IMPACT:

- Creation of new industries and the transformation of traditional ones, such as manufacturing and entertainment
- Changes in job nature, with a shift towards the service sector and technology-based work
- Digital divide between countries with and without access to technology



5. The Green Revolution: Towards a sustainable economy (21st Century)

Climate change and the need for sustainability have sparked the Green Revolution, which aims to shift production and consumption models toward more environmentally friendly practices.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS:

- Development of renewable energy sources (solar, wind, geothermal)
- Circular economy initiatives promoting recycling and waste reduction
- Implementation of national and international laws to support ecological transition
- Growth of sustainable tourism and eco-friendly business practices

GLOBAL IMPACT:

- Increased investment in clean energy and reduction of CO2 emissions
- Policy changes to promote sustainable practices in businesses and governments
- Challenges in ensuring a fair transition for workers in traditional industries

THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION:
Continental Europe, Mesopotamia and China.



THE COMMERCIAL REVOLUTION:
Europe, China, India and the Americas.



THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION:
United Kingdom, Western Europe and Usa.



THE TECHNOLOGICAL/GREEN REVOLUTION:
All continents.



The corporate lawyer: anatomy of a transformation

The surge in in-house legal functions has gone hand in hand with the satisfaction of management, who over the years have become aware of the advantages of in-house counseling: it saves money, it is timely, and it is more efficient.

by Michela Cannovale

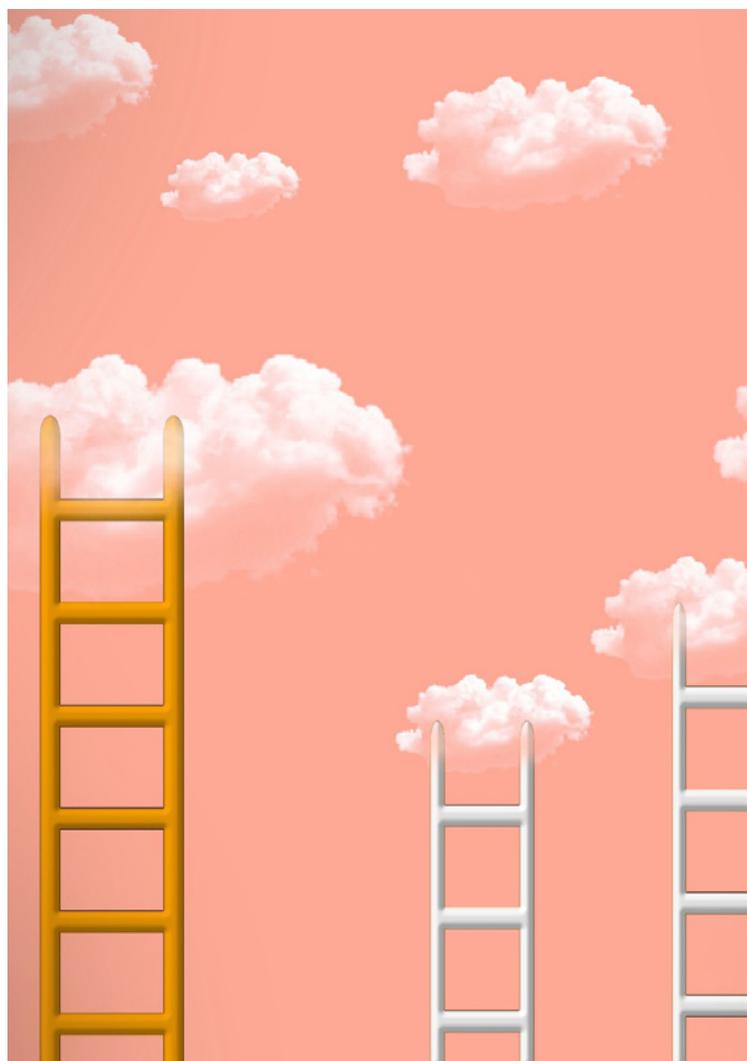
Not long ago, they were simply intermediaries between the company and the law firm. Today, they have secured a front-row seat in the C-suites of major corporations. We're talking about corporate counsel, who have undergone a true empowerment in recent years, both in terms of numbers and in their approach to legal matters and business.

The meteoric rise

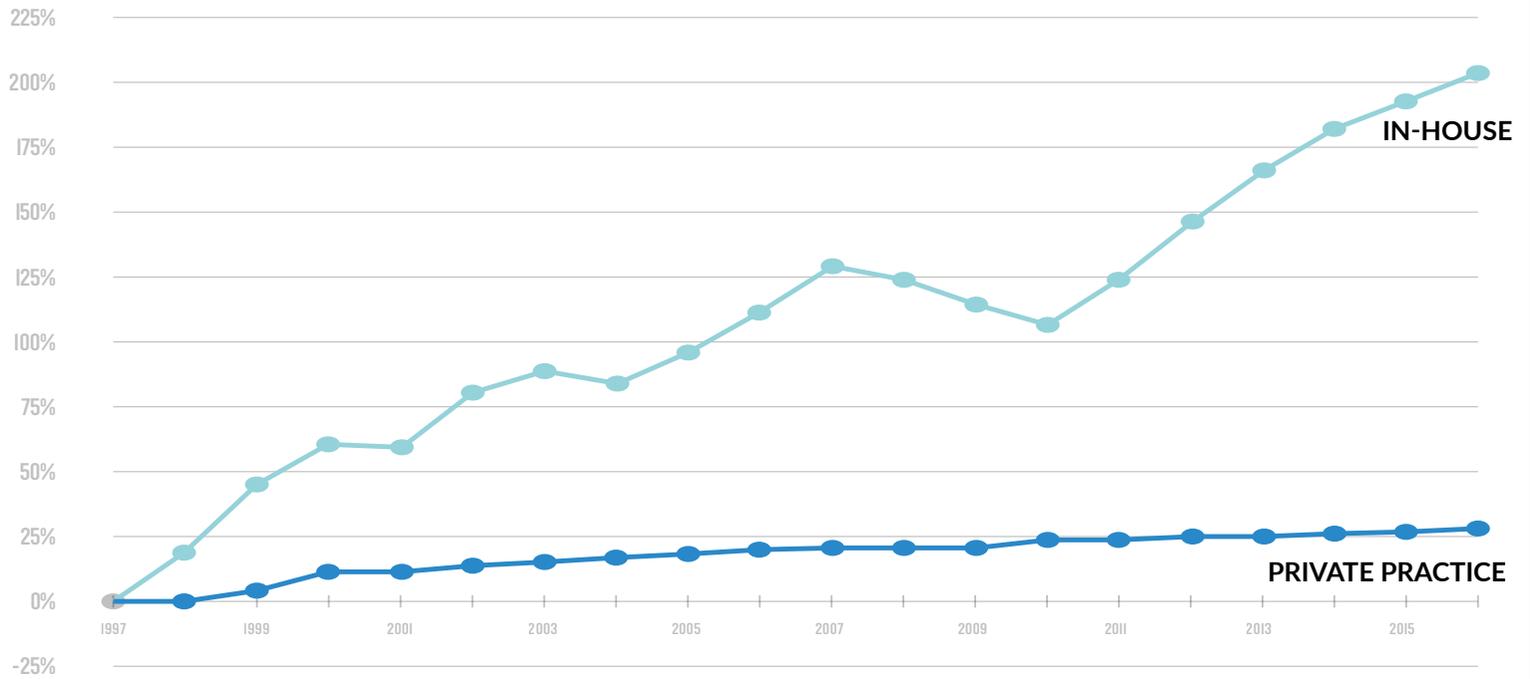
Let's start with one of the most significant data points that emerges from a historical comparison: for decades, the landscape of legal counseling in US companies (the first to equip themselves with in-house lawyers) remained largely unchanged. The percentage of lawyers employed in the private industry, according to Forbes, hovered just between 10% in 1960, 11% in 1970, and back to 10% in 1980.

At first glance, nothing at the time seemed to foreshadow a change. But as often happens in the history of great transformations, it took just one individual to upend the status quo. That person was Ben Heineman, who in 1987 took on the role of senior vice president and general counsel at the GE behemoth. Expanding the company's in-house legal department was one of the new general counsel's main goals. He succeeded: when he left the company in 2005, his office had grown to around 1,400 lawyers. As he recounts in his 2016 book "The Inside Counsel Revolution," GE aimed for "a dramatic shift of power from outside law firms to in-house departments, both in terms of managing legal matters and controlling financial resources." Heineman embodied the figure of the "statesman-lawyer," tasked with solving the most complex challenge facing general counsel: "To be a partner to the board of directors, the CEO and business leaders, while at the same time remaining the guardian of the company."

The transformation of in-house counsel into a statesman-lawyer not only rewrote GE's history, but paved the way for a new way of conceiving corporate legal counseling, profoundly influencing the sector to



The increase in in-house and private practice lawyers between 1997 and 2016



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

this day. It's no coincidence that the growth of in-house lawyers has been meteoric since the 1990s. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 1997 and 2017 in-house legal departments have seen an expansion 7.5 times greater than law firms. Between 1997 and 2016, the number of in-house lawyers more than tripled, from 34,750 to 105,310.

From the shadows to the summits

The surge in in-house legal functions has gone hand in hand with a certain satisfaction on the part of company managers, who over the years have become aware of the strategic advantages of in-house counseling compared to external counseling. Cost savings, first and foremost: it has been realized that the internalization of legal matters allows for a significant reduction in legal costs compared to outsourcing to the open market. Timeliness: if there is an in-house office, the likelihood of urgent disputes (related, for example, to contracts, compliance, IP protection or sector regulatory requirements) being addressed immediately or at least in the short term increases significantly. And then efficiency: it goes without saying that having a team of dedicated professionals allows for a more proactive and efficient management of routine legal matters and associated risks.

There are also other reasons why the role of the in-house lawyer has been successful. Interviewed by MAG, Giulio Fazio, general counsel of Enel until 2023 and member of the executive committee of Aigi - Associazione Italiana Giuristi d'Impresa, recalled that "initially, the in-house lawyer was used to strategically and privately manage some more delicate issues. The first corporate lawyers were basically the boss's lawyers, who cared more about the administration of the boss's affairs than the business, which is why external law firms were relied upon." It was for this reason that the in-house lawyer was considered a staff function, assisting the front line. "It was a kind of overhead, one of the heads to be cut when it becomes necessary to tighten the belt," Fazio stressed. Also Robert Eli Rosen, professor of law at the University of Miami, has pointed out in several articles that in-house lawyers were originally relegated to a position of marginality and subordination, and that the very expression "house counsel" was comparable to that of "house pet."

Then, around the turn of the millennium, these figures underwent a new leap in status: from a peripheral and non-essential function, they began to ascend to the role of general counsel, key figures in defining and managing the company's legal needs. A leap that represented not

just a change of title, but rather, as mentioned at the beginning, a revolution in the approach of large companies to their legal affairs. From the new millennium to today, the management of corporate legal matters has been increasingly internalized. “More for less,” we have written several times in our articles, referring to the growing increase in tasks and responsibilities that has characterized the activity of legal departments in recent years. This has allowed them to deepen their knowledge of their company’s industrial sector, concentrating the last bastion of external consultants in three specific areas: litigation, extraordinary transactions and corporate restructuring.

From private practice to the corporation

As Ermanno Cappa, founding partner of the Cappa & Partners firm and former in-house lawyer in the banking sector from the 1970s to 2007, explained to us, the birth of the in-house lawyer was “a revolutionary phenomenon in various respects. Limiting ourselves to considering the most tangible ones, I think it is undeniable that the company, at least the most enlightened one, by internalizing a good part of the legal safeguards, has equipped itself with an obvious competitive factor, both in terms of rationalizing costs and, above all, in terms of internalizing a greater awareness of its own legal needs. The market has transformed very slowly, ultimately favoring companies equipped with a quality in-house legal department. The first companies to feel the need for an in-house



ERMANN0 CAPPA



GIULIO FAZIO

lawyer were those with a strong international vocation, without distinction of business sector.”

But how long did it take for the in-house profession to become “frequent” in Italy, initially considered second-tier compared to the “original” one in the open market? For Cappa, “as far as large companies (and medium-sized companies, especially if located in Milan) are concerned, I believe I am not mistaken in stating that in about twenty years, from the early days of Aigi to the late 1970s, there was a strong increase. For small businesses, the path may still be a bit long.”

The in-house profession reached its peak between 2010 and 2020, a period in which many private practice lawyers decided to move in-house due to the long and stressful working hours in the firm. Today the gap seems to have narrowed slightly: after Covid, law firms have improved partner retention rates by granting more flexibility in a context where salaries were already higher than in-house (and have further increased, with an average annual increase that, according to the Censis report on the legal profession, reached 12.2% in 2021, bringing the value to €42,386). As Nicoletta Ravidà, partner at KeyPartners, had explained to MAG: “In law firms, a winning mix has been created: a balance between private and working life, rising salaries and recent government policies aimed at reducing taxes paid by self-employed professionals (the 15% rate for all incomes between zero and €85,000 actually allows for very high remuneration).

ration, often higher than that of a corporate executive). In the meantime, in-house salaries have not changed.”

The attractiveness of the in-house legal market, while grappling with its competitor in private practice, continues to remain high. As observed by Inhousecommunity, in 2023 the lawyers who moved from private practice to in-house in Italy alone represented 11.3% of the total job changes reported during the year, a figure slightly lower than the 12.8% reported in 2022.

“Many years ago,” observed Fazio, “ending up in a company was almost a fallback: you ended up there by chance, after a competition. External consulting had a much higher level of specialization and competitiveness, with significantly higher salaries. Today, the in-house profession is definitely more appealing, so much so that the academic offer has also intercepted this phenomenon: many universities have set up courses with subjects that serve to master elements of corporate complexity and master’s degrees that are actually dedicated to those who want to become corporate lawyers.”

The transformation to date

Let’s now consider the radical change the corporate lawyer has undergone to date. As Fazio pointed out, “in the early days of companies, in the 1980s and 1990s, the lawyer was a pure consultant. In the second phase, starting from 2000, the lawyer became a business partner, but still remaining a counselor and without yet expressing all his potential. Then, in the third phase, the current one, the in-house lawyer has begun to play a deeply pervasive role in the company, which implies the ability to make managerial decisions and which also has a weight in compliance, previously entrusted to the audit teams. From a business partner, he has become a business manager. He is no longer a consultant who intervenes to solve problems, but a leader who plans business strategies together with the company management.”

So, where once the legal team operated in isolation, providing mere technical advice on request, today the general counsel is called upon to actively contribute to corporate discussions and strategic decisions, adding value in every area, from corporate governance to risk and crisis management. But they must also plan budgets, stay up-to-date on technological developments, deal with ethics and even compliance. In short, a new figure has emerged in which the boundary between legal and managerial skills is increasingly blurred.

A demanding client

If it is true, as Cappa affirmed, that “in the realities where there is a quality in-house lawyer, who has the opportunity to confront equally qualified external lawyers, a winning synergy is triggered between the two orders of professionals, which does a lot of good to the company,” it is also true that the evolution of the role of the in-house lawyer allows us to observe the legal market from a perspective still different from that offered by the – “increasingly communicative”, notes Nicola Di Molfetta in this issue of MAG Monographs – law firm, provider of the legal service: that of its client. And we also know that the type of advice requested has also changed, that the in-house lawyer is an increasingly demanding, rigorous, sometimes even inflexible client.

As in the case of Nicola Verdicchio, chief legal officer of the multinational Pirelli & C., who had told MAG in June 2024: “We start from a basic concept: the selection of the wrong law firm risks compromising the achievement of the business objectives that the in-house counsel must pursue. If there is a need to resort to the help of external professionals, it is because important objectives are at stake.”

The transformation of the figure of the general counsel has led to a change in power dynamics: it is now the in-house legal departments, not the external consultants, who define and assign the work, circumscribing the collaboration dynamics. This paradigm shift, combined with the new market demands, has guided the traditional relationship between general counsel and partner towards a new dimension. It is no longer just a matter of status or decision-making autonomy, as evidenced by the GE case of Heineman, but of a complete redefinition of the way legal expertise is integrated into the business world. The empowerment – because that’s what it is – of the in-house legal consultant from a mere provider of opinions to a strategic leadership figure has triggered a domino effect that is also redefining the role of law firms. So much so that today the expectation of influencing crucial business decisions with a legal perspective that goes “beyond the role of the lawyer” extends to both sides. If the in-house legal department sits in the driver’s seat, the external ones are always ready to act as co-pilots. Or, to use a very trendy expression in the market, if the corporate lawyer is the general practitioner, the external professional operates in the guise of a medical specialist. A dynamic that in recent times has intensified the search for high-quality external partners, capable of effectively supporting the growing needs of companies.



The energy of stars

International experimentation on nuclear fusion continues, playing an important role in the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan. However, investments and new technologies are needed to grow this resource: tools that are still to be built.

by Eleonora Fraschini

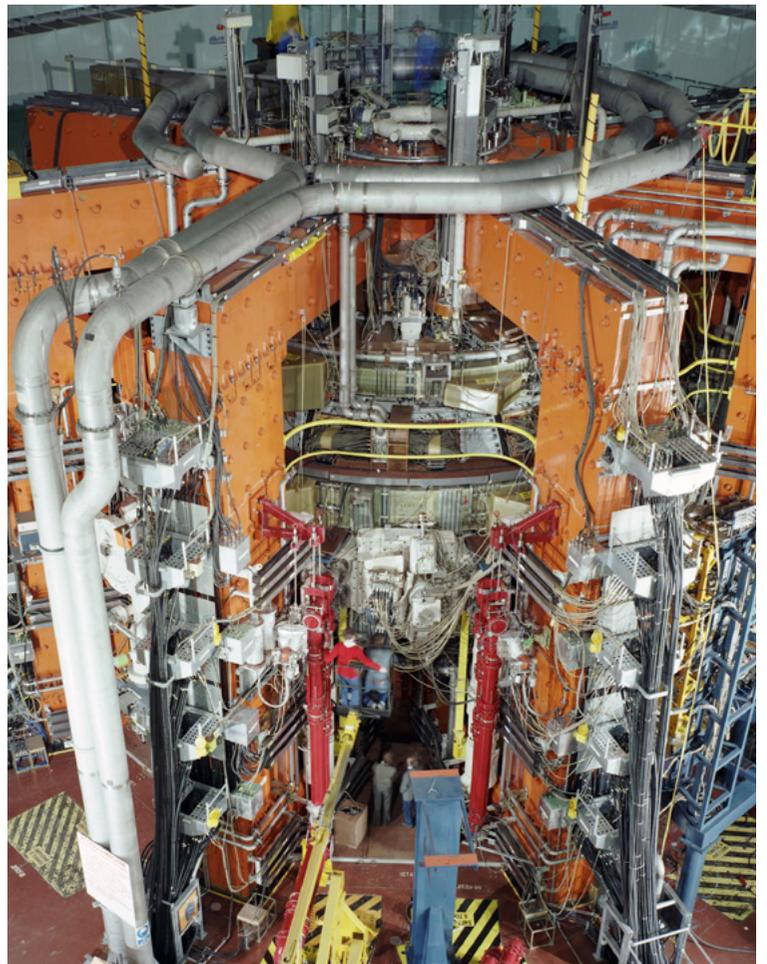
Finding new solutions to address our planet's hunger for energy has become a primary objective for all institutions, and recent events have shown its urgency. Among the projects brought back into the spotlight is nuclear energy production, which has seen some important developments in recent years.

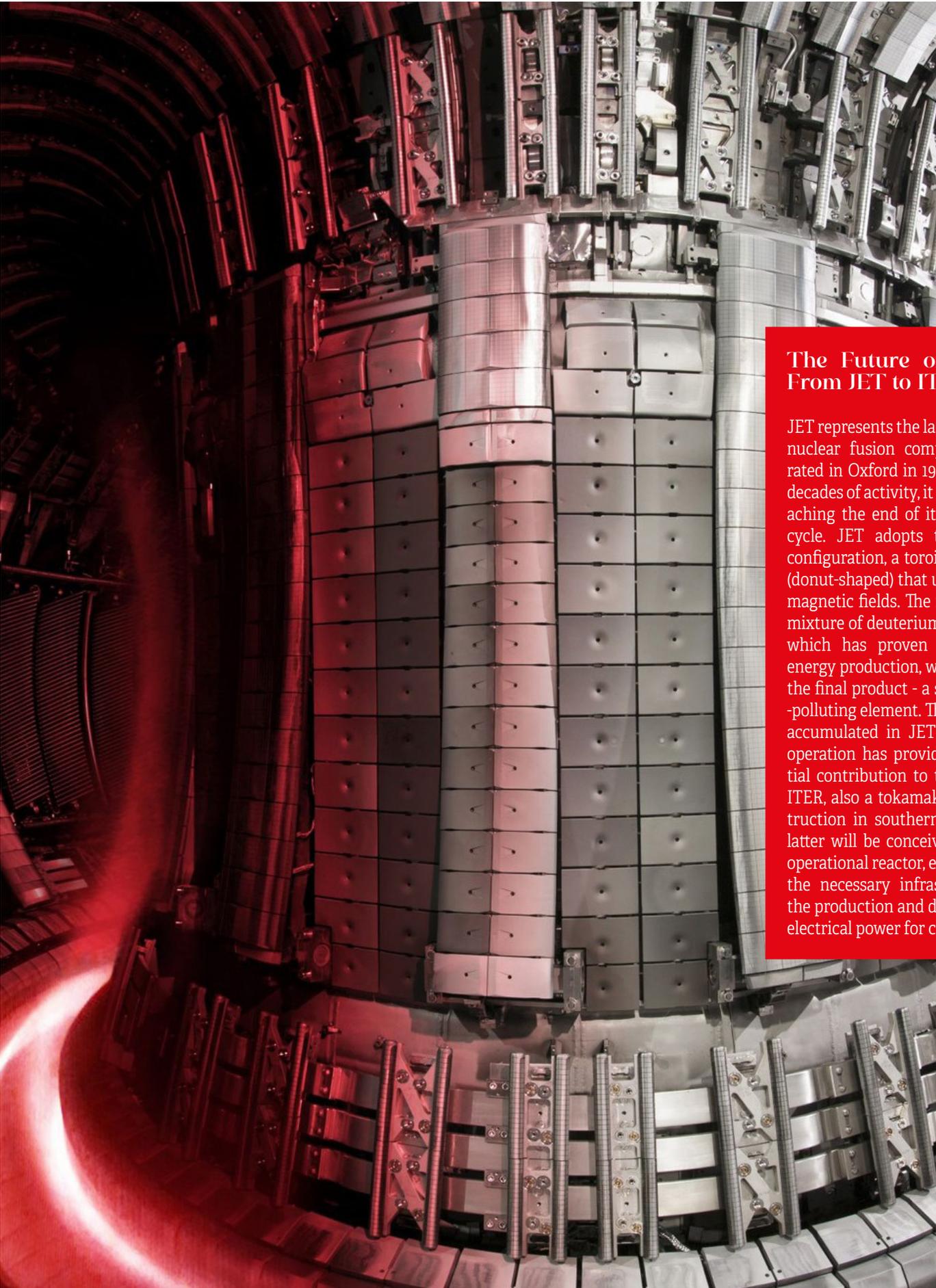
The experimental nuclear fusion facility JET (Joint European Torus), located in Oxford and managed by the EUROfusion consortium, achieved a historic milestone this year: it managed to generate 69 megajoules over 5 seconds, using just 0.2 milligrams of a combination of deuterium and tritium, the isotopic variants of hydrogen. This result surpasses the previous record, achieved by the same laboratory in February 2022, which stood at 59 megajoules.

For scientists, this is a crucial moment in fusion research, as it confirms our ability to generate energy with this method in a stable manner. However, this doesn't mean we're ready for operational power plants: the path toward implementing real fusion reactors still presents numerous challenges to overcome. The JET facility is a demonstrative structure, designed to prove the technical feasibility of nuclear fusion. Like all other existing facilities, it still cannot generate more energy than it consumes to start the process, and the energy efficiency is not sufficient. The next step is to verify these capabilities in newly conceived operational structures, including the innovative ITER project in France.

Nuclear Fusion

"It's the reaction that powers the stars and is therefore called 'the energy of the stars.' In our research work, we try to replicate fusion on Earth to make available a safe, sustainable, and inexhaustible energy source," explains Alessia Santucci, an Enea researcher from the Nuclear Department. In videos produced by the National Agency for New Te-





The Future of Fusion: From JET to ITER

JET represents the largest existing nuclear fusion complex, inaugurated in Oxford in 1984. After four decades of activity, it is now approaching the end of its operational cycle. JET adopts the tokamak configuration, a toroidal structure (donut-shaped) that uses powerful magnetic fields. The fuel used is a mixture of deuterium and tritium, which has proven effective for energy production, with helium as the final product - a safe and non-polluting element. The knowledge accumulated in JET's decades of operation has provided an essential contribution to the design of ITER, also a tokamak under construction in southern France. The latter will be conceived as a fully operational reactor, equipped with the necessary infrastructure for the production and distribution of electrical power for civilian use.

chnologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development, Santucci explains that the implications of nuclear fusion are fundamental, as this technology could offer an eco-sustainable energy source. But what characteristics make it revolutionary? Let's take a step back: the nuclear energy exploited so far is that derived from nuclear fission, a process that releases energy by dividing nuclei of heavy and radioactive elements (like uranium) into lighter components. Fusion, instead, operates according to the opposite principle, joining light nuclei to create heavier ones. During this process, a slight loss of mass occurs that transforms into energy. The process brings several advantages: it produces more energy per unit of fuel used, doesn't use radioactive materials, doesn't generate radioactive waste, presents no risk of chain reactions, and requires more readily available and safer raw materials. The main challenge lies in controlling the reaction, which requires extremely high temperatures (150 million degrees Celsius in JET's case), involving considerable energy expenditure. The challenge therefore consists in surpassing the energy breakeven point. Once this milestone is reached, it will be possible to utilize a sustainable, reliable, and efficient source.

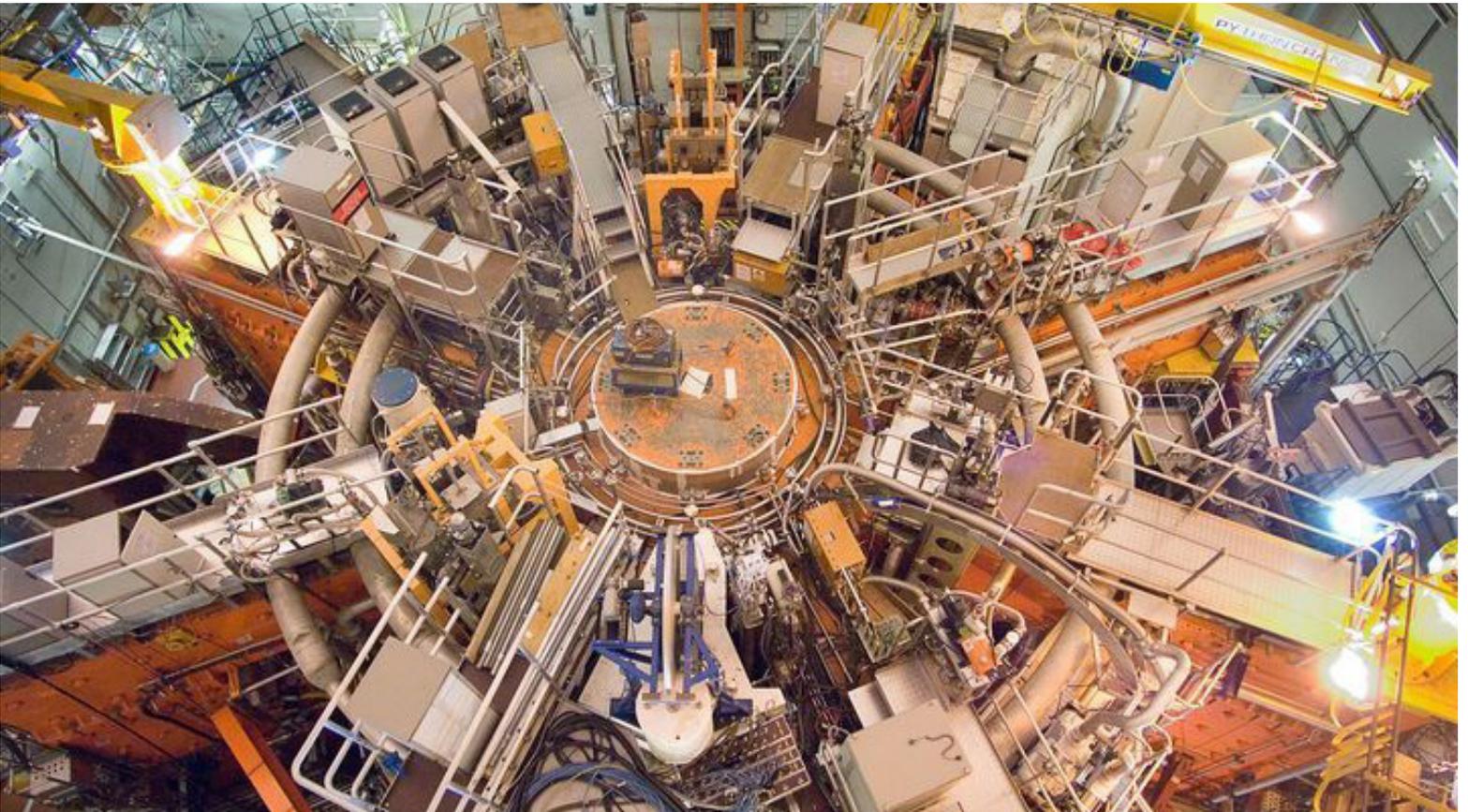
Where We Stand in Italy: The PNIEC and Funding

The exploitation of nuclear energy is also an important point in the PNIEC, the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan, sent last July by the Ministries of Environment and Energy Security and Infrastructu-

re and Transport to the European Commission.

The Plan, in particular, presents among its objectives the use of nuclear fission in the medium term and fusion in the long term. By 2050, overall, they could cover about 11% of electricity demand (with the possibility of reaching 22%). In the scenario where nuclear plant activity is maintained at 50% of maximum potential, the share of nuclear generation would reach 8 GW by 2050, of which 7.4 from fission and 0.4 from fusion. However, large projects also require massive investments, and on this front in Italy, the tools are still all to be built.

"Based on the text of the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan, our country's capacity to cover more than 10% of its electricity needs by 2050 through nuclear energy with SMR (Small Modular Reactors) systems has been projected," confirms Eugenio Tranchino, partner at the Watson Farley & Williams law firm. "That said, from our point of view, regarding private capital and project financing, nuclear power does not represent a reasonably viable solution today. Although particularly debated, nuclear power is not in line with classic project financing standards, which, in order to ensure a certain degree of project bankability, usually prefer more proven technologies with low probabilities of failure." Regarding the share of generation through nuclear fission, "we must add the delicate issue related to waste disposal: currently stored in temporary deposits that Italy sends abroad periodically, high-radioactivity waste remains waiting for appropriate allocation within a national repository, whose construction - according to the latest words of Minister Gilberto Pichetto Fratin on the topic - will have to wait at least another decade."



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The Iberian green revolution

From wind power to renewable hydrogen, Spain and Portugal are leading Europe's energy transition to a carbon-neutral future

by Ilaria Iaquina

No revolution is more urgent or radical than the green revolution. For **Greta Thunberg's** generation, a future powered by fossil fuels is simply inconceivable. Oil and gas, they demand, must become relics of the past, replaced by the promise of renewable energy.

At the forefront of this transformation in Europe is the Iberian Peninsula. Spain and Portugal have not only set new records but are challenging the very foundations of the global energy system. From the vast wind farms stretching across Spain to Portugal's pioneering hydrogen projects, the Iberian Peninsula is leading the way towards a greener, more sustainable future, in Europe and beyond. In a world racing towards decarbonisation, Spain and Portugal show that the future isn't just green — it's already here.

In the first half of 2024, Portugal quietly reached a remarkable milestone, generating 82% of its electricity from renewables, led by hydropower at 39%, with wind and solar making up the rest (see [Iberian Lawyer N. 137](#)). The country is aiming for 85% renewable electricity by 2030, a goal that puts it ahead of most European countries. Meanwhile, Spain is also making impressive strides, with 50% of its electricity coming from renewables in 2024 and gas-powered generation dropping by 34%. For the first time, wind and solar have overtaken fossil fuels in Spain's energy mix, marking a pivotal moment in its green transition.

Both countries are demonstrating that the shift to green energy isn't a distant dream — it's happening now. And it's happening fast. After all, under the European Green Deal, EU nations are committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, with intermediate goals of reducing emissions by 55% by 2030.

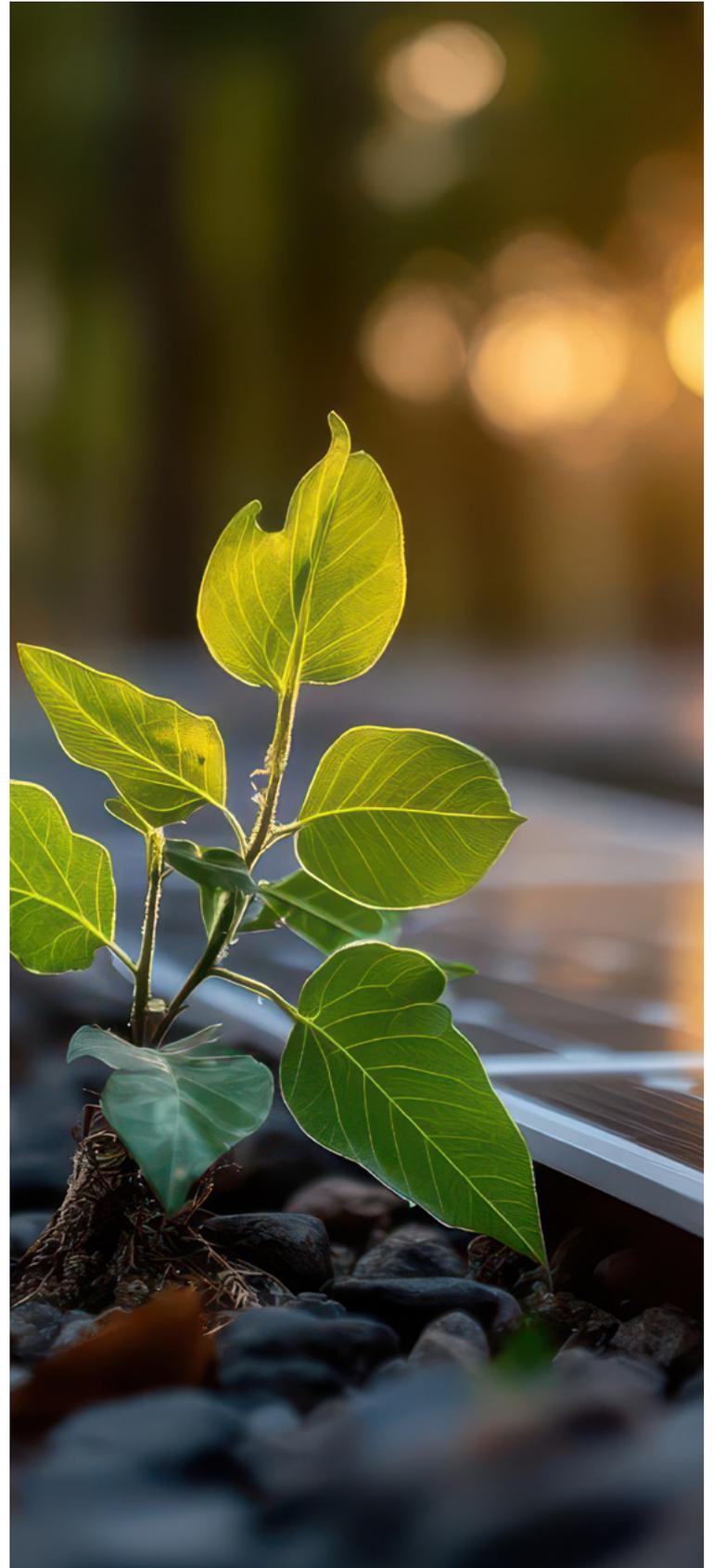


Spain: from wind to hydrogen

Spain's renewable energy growth has been nothing short of spectacular. As Europe's second-largest wind power producer and a global leader in solar capacity, Spain's renewable energy expansion hit a milestone in 2023, with installed photovoltaic capacity surpassing 15 GW. The country has set ambitious goals, aiming for 74% renewable electricity by 2030.

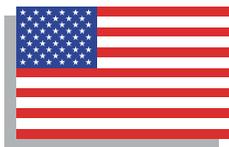
"Spain plays a crucial role in the global renewable energy landscape, primarily due to its leadership in wind and solar power. — says **Dídac Severino**, partner at Pérez-Llorca — Key initiatives include massive deployment of solar and wind power, improvements in energy efficiency, and a focus on renewable hydrogen, positioning Spain as a vital contributor to Europe's decarbonisation goals. Looking ahead, Spain's influence in global renewables will likely grow as it accelerates investments in green energy and grid infrastructure while supporting its leadership in EU climate objectives".

The [Global Trend Report 2024](#) ranks Spain fourth worldwide in renewable energy potential, just behind the US, China, and Germany. Ongoing investments in solar energy and cutting-edge technologies, such as battery storage, highlight Spain's central role in the ongoing energy revolution. "Spain's energy transition will be driven by tech-



GLOBAL RANKING IN RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL

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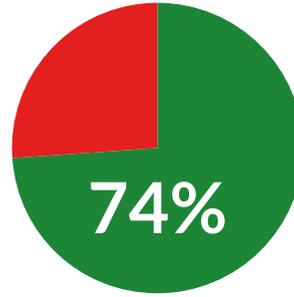


Source: Global Trend Report 2024

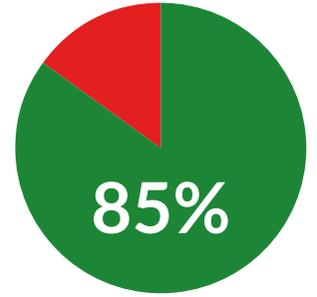
nological innovations like battery storage, renewable hydrogen and the development of synthetic and biofuels and gases. — confirms Severino — Spain's rapid deployment of renewable energy has led to grid congestion and pricing fluctuations and storage is critical for balancing supply and demand and avoiding grid saturation. However, its growth is hindered by the lack of capacity payment mechanisms that would ensure reliability in times of low generation. Renewable hydrogen and the development of synthetic and biofuels and gases are emerging as a vital component of Spain's future energy mix. Hydrogen, synthetic and biofuels and gases will assist in storing surplus renewable energy, will provide a flexible energy source that can complement renewable energy in times of low generation and will help with decarbonising sectors that are difficult to electrify, such as heavy industry and transport, including aviation and shipping. In parallel, we can identify the urgent need to upgrade Spain's grid to accommodate new energy demands such as hydrogen projects and data centres that will place substantial pressure on grid stability and infrastructure. As these new consumers enter the market, modernising transmission networks is crucial for efficiently integrating renewables and maintaining grid reliability”.

It's not just about natural resources. Spain has also implemented bold political initiatives, such as the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC). The plan sets clear, ambitious goals and supports innovative projects like renewable hydrogen production, a potential game-changer in





renewable electricity by 2030 in Spain



renewable electricity by 2030 in Portugal

15 GW

of installed photovoltaic capacity in 2023 in Spain

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS DRIVING SPAIN'S ENERGY TRANSITION



Battery storage



Renewable hydrogen



Synthetic and biofuels



Associados to *Iberian Lawyer* (see *Iberian Lawyer N. 137*) , positioning the country as a European leader in sustainability.

Portugal's energy sector has also benefitted from hybridisation and repowering projects, driven by new legislation. However, **Gonçalo Capela Godinho**, managing partner at Pérez-Llorca in Portugal, warned to *Iberian Lawyer* that issues like low energy prices are impacting the financial viability of new projects. This highlights the need for regulatory revisions to ensure the bankability of future investments. The country has a unique opportunity to integrate renewable energy with other sectors, such as water management and waste treatment, to further enhance its sustainability efforts. As Correia states, "In the coming years, the Portuguese energy sector has everything to continue to progress and be a world reference. The most accurate advice on this path is the one I would give to any decision-maker: clear laws, simple and transparent rules, and above all, a guarantee of legal and regulatory stability," he assesses.

Despite this progress, legal and regulatory hurdles remain. Licensing processes, in particular, have been cited as a bottleneck. **Ivone Rocha**, partner at Telles has emphasized that the slow pace of licensing and limitations in the distribution network are critical issues that need to be addressed if Portugal is to meet its ambitious 2030 targets. "These are the two areas where it is important to work to accelerate the implementation of renewables, renewables in Portugal, with the risk of not

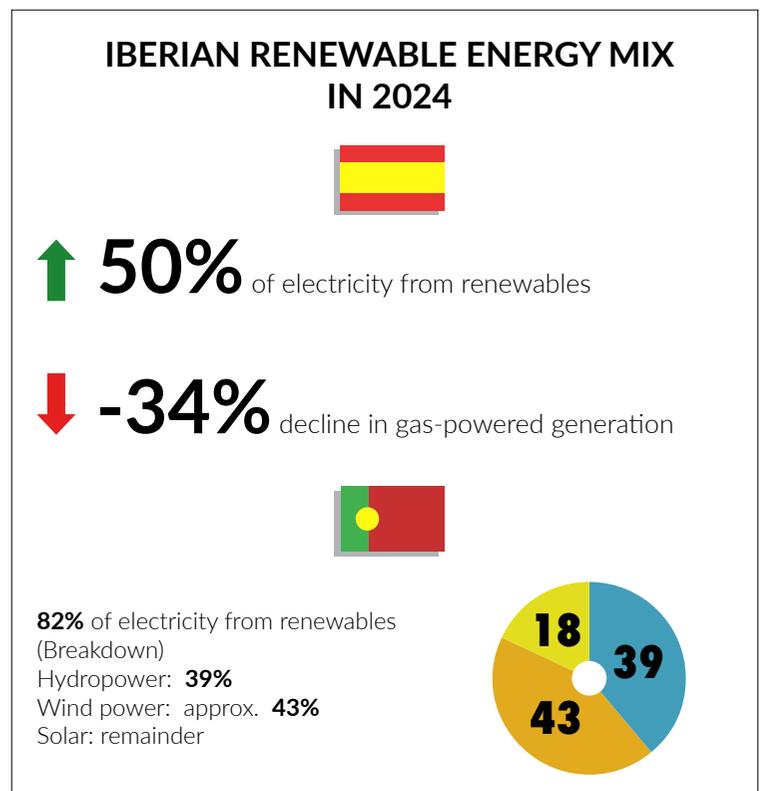
the global race for clean energy. However, challenges remain: slow regulatory processes and grid limitations are still major obstacles.

Spain's success can also be attributed to private investments. According to **Alejandro Alberte**, partner at Pérez-Llorca: "The main support so far coming from the public sector has been the auctions to award Contract for Difference (CfD) agreements. Considering that price forecasts anticipate a significant fall in energy market prices, entering into CfD agreements or private PPAs would certainly play a key role in the financing of these projects and thus in achieving the 2030 targets".

Portugal: a quiet record-breaker

While less high-profile than Spain, Portugal has made significant strides in renewable innovation and infrastructure expansion. The country's success in green energy isn't just down to its natural resources but also its investments in grid modernisation and energy storage solutions, essential for managing the intermittent nature of wind and solar power.

Portugal has introduced major reforms to drive its green transition, including Decree-Law 84/2022 and the Biogas Action Plan 2024-2040. Both aim to promote the use of renewable energy and diversify its sources. "The current contribution and national targets are among the most promising at the European and global levels. Portugal is attentive to the introduction of new technologies, seeking to create conditions for pioneering solutions", said **João Rosado Correia**, partner at Miranda &





being able to achieve the PNEC targets for 2030”, warns Rocha to Iberian Lawyer.

A joint path to energy leadership

Spain and Portugal aren't just leading Europe — they're setting the pace in the global race toward carbon neutrality. Spain ranks among the top five worldwide for wind power, while Portugal boasts one of the highest renewable electricity penetration rates in the world. Both nations are proving that with the right mix of policy, investment, and innovation, a green future is within reach.

“Spain has remarkable potential due to its own energy resources such as wind, solar, and new technologies like green hydrogen. The key point for Spain's contribution to Europe's energy security will be the development of relevant energy interconnections between states”, highlights Alberte. This reinforces Spain's critical role not just in renewable leadership, but also in ensuring Europe's energy independence in the face of geopolitical challenges.

The question is no longer whether Spain and Portugal will hit their targets — they've already shown they can. The real challenge now is scaling faster, navigating regulatory hurdles, and setting even more ambitious goals for the next decade. As the world works to cut emissions and tackle climate change, Spain and Portugal are proving that the future of energy isn't just green — it's already here.

Light money

Electronic payments, challenger banks, and fintech: the cashless revolution is well underway. Last year, digital transactions reached their highest market share ever. However, Italy is lagging behind

by Eleonora Fraschini

The first credit card was issued in 1950 by Diners Club and was initially accepted at 27 restaurants in New York. Cardholders would show it to settle their bill at the end of the month, with an added fee. Seventy years later, cashless payments have made remarkable progress: credit cards have become a part of daily life, alongside other tools that enable peer-to-peer money transfers. In finance, challenger banks, fintech, and cryptocurrencies are widely used and recognized. This phe-

nomenon, known as the Cashless Revolution, marks a social and economic transformation characterized by the gradual shift from cash to digital and electronic payment systems. According to the latest report from the Cashless Society Community, in 2023, digital payment methods and cash reached an equal market share globally in terms of transaction value. This 50% benchmark suggests significant growth potential: projections indicate that by 2026, digital transactions will quadruple

from 2017 levels. Additionally, in 2023, digital transactions saw a 56.7% increase over 2020, underscoring the pandemic's acceleration of digitalization. However, digital payments are not equally distributed across regions: Asia accounts for 45.8% of transactions, America 31.8%, Europe 19.2%, Africa 1.6%, and Oceania 1.5%.

In Italy, specifically, data from the Politecnico di Milano's Innovative Payments Observatory



shows that transactions made through digital channels increased from a volume of around 244 billion euros in 2018 to 440 billion euros in 2023, with the first half of 2024 showing an 8.6% growth. Italy also climbed four spots in the index ranking countries that most utilize digital payments. Despite these encouraging figures, the report notes that Italy remains among the 30 economies where cash usage is most prevalent.

New business models: challenger banks and neobanks

Digital transactions have introduced numerous advantages, including efficiency, which has reduced the time and costs associated with commercial exchanges, and payment traceability, helping curb tax evasion and money laundering. A third impact is the emergence of new business models, such as challenger banks, which cater to a digital-oriented clientele seeking simplified banking services accessible via mobile devices, challenging traditional banking models. One of Italy's first banks with this mission is Hype, which identifies as a neobank. "We don't work against traditional banks but focus on continuous innovation," explains Luca Grampiochia, Deputy CEO of Hype. The aim is to establish a new relationship between financial service providers and customers: "We do this through the tool that now serves as the anchor for any activity: the smartphone. Our goal is to fill a gap and meet a need by adapting how we store, exchange, spend, and manage money to the new ways digital has accustomed us to, just as with shopping, travel, and entertainment. This requires, and continually involves, re-designing an entire world." Ten years ago, users didn't demand personalized service and adapted to bank hours; now, clients want more control and flexibility: "Internet banking alone is no longer sufficient in addressing the 'when'—what truly matters now is 'what do you offer specifically for me,'" adds Grampiochia. Neobanks meet two major challenges: the customization of financial services with ease of use and maintaining simple management despite the complex guarantees required.

Fintech: headwinds and tailwinds

Another trend within this context is fintech, encompassing all technological innovations in the financial services sector. It includes a wide range of services: from digital payments to crowdfunding, online trading, peer-to-peer lending, and even cryptocurrencies and blockchain. In recent years, the sector has seen exponential growth: according to CB Insights, global investments in fintech reached record levels in 2021, surpassing \$130 billion.

Notably, as mentioned, digital payments and mobile banking have surged, with the emergence of apps that integrate multiple financial services on one platform. "The competitive advantage of a fintech company," explains Salvatore Borgese, Strategy & Business Development Executive Director at Mooney, "lies in delivering innovative user experiences that can surpass traditional financial service models. Distinctive factors include speed in launching new services, flexibility in partnering with third parties, and the scalability of the business from a local context to a global market. It is also essential to generate value for all stakeholders, including end customers, business partners, employees, and investors." The sector, however, faces important challenges related to regulation, data security, and the need to build consumer trust. These issues, coupled with recent geopolitical uncertainties, have led to a sectoral downturn. In 2024, global fintech investments fell from \$62.3 billion in the second half of 2023 (with 2,287 deals) to \$51.8 billion in the first half of 2024 (with 2,254 deals), marking the lowest level since the first half of 2020. Another essential angle in cashless technologies and fintech is sustainability. Borgese notes, "This involves fostering financial inclusion, enhancing access to payment services through both digital and physical touchpoints aimed at both those familiar with banking systems and the broader population. It also means driving business models that positively impact the environment and advancing corporate practices in terms of equity, transparency, and meritocracy. Crucially, these drivers must be in full synergy and harmony with business sustainability to ensure both dimensions can develop tangibly and unambiguously over the long term.

DIGITAL PAYMENTS THE 10 MOST IMPORTANT MOMENTS

1950 - Introduction of the Diners Club Card

The first modern general-use credit card, created by Frank McNamara after an embarrassing experience of being unable to pay for a restaurant dinner.

1958 - Launch of American Express

American Express enters the credit card market, transforming the card from a niche tool into a mass-market phenomenon.

1967 - Installation of the First ATM

Barclays Bank installs the first Automated Teller Machine (ATM) in London, revolutionizing cash access and paving the way for automated banking services.

1973 - Creation of the SWIFT Code

The introduction of the SWIFT system standardizes and speeds up international bank transfers

1994 - First E-commerce Transaction

Pizza Hut conducts the first online sale, ushering in the era of electronic commerce

1998 - Birth of PayPal

PayPal revolutionizes online payments by introducing a secure way to transfer money via email

2007 - Apple Launches the iPhone

Apple's iPhone transforms smartphones into mobile payment platforms, paving the way for mobile banking and digital wallets

2009 - Birth of Bitcoin

The creation of the first cryptocurrency by Satoshi Nakamoto introduces blockchain as a new paradigm for digital payments

2011 - Launch of Google Wallet

Google introduces its digital wallet, followed by Apple Pay (2014) and other NFC-based contactless payment systems

2020 - Post-COVID Digital Acceleration

The pandemic accelerates global adoption of digital and contactless payments, leading to a permanent shift in consumer habits

The silent regime change of big tech

In July 2024, a software error from a little-known company paralyzed the world for a day and created billions of dollars in damage. It was a sign of the great power acquired by large technology companies, which control strategic infrastructures and influence our lives without being subject to any democratic control.

Must we resign ourselves to the privatization of digital space? Or is change still possible?

by Giuseppe Salemmè



“I don’t know about you guys, but, um, you know, I’ve been thinking recently that... that you know, maybe, um, allowing giant digital media corporations to exploit the neurochemical drama of our children for profit... You know, maybe that was, uh... a bad call by us. Maybe... maybe the... the flattening of the entire subjective human experience into a... lifeless exchange of value that benefits nobody, except for, um, you know, a handful of bug-eyed salamanders in Silicon Valley... Maybe that as a... as a way of life forever... maybe that’s, um, not good.” [Bo Burnham, Inside]

CrowdStrike is an American cybersecurity company that generates over 3 billion dollars in annual revenue. Founded in 2011, it went public on Nasdaq in 2019 and has over 24,000 clients among public and private entities, including most of the Fortune 1000 companies. Yet, it was only on July 19th, 2024 that most of the world’s population became aware of its existence.

It was 6:09 AM in Italy when CrowdStrike released a worldwide update for one of its products, the corporate antivirus Falcon. Almost immediately, all Windows virtual machines receiving the update stopped functioning correctly and entered an endless loop of blue screens and restarts. The problem spread like wildfire on the interconnected global technology network.

It was soon discovered that the update contained a bug, a malfunction that escaped routine control procedures. Despite CrowdStrike stopping the update distribution after just over an hour and releasing a bug fix before noon, the world had had plenty of time to go crazy. Over 5,000

flights were canceled; many hospitals were forced to postpone non-urgent procedures; several TV channels could no longer broadcast; many banks, factories, and stores were forced to close. In more than ten American states, even the 911 emergency number stopped working properly. All because of a single line of incorrect code in an update for a single program, which remained online for just over an hour. After the emergency subsided, the damages were calculated: over 8.5 million computer systems crashed, with an estimated total damage exceeding 10 billion dollars.

Three days later, the former head of the UK’s national cybersecurity center, Ciaran Martin, tells The Independent: “The worst is over. But global disruptions like this are likely to happen again, unless governments and industries work together to prevent it.” But such collaboration is far from guaranteed.

Many think that the CrowdStrike bug should be a wake-up call. With digital spaces increasingly at the center of our lives, how much of our future depends on a handful of private companies managing them with transparency and diligence, respecting laws and human rights? Is there a way to prevent the debate about the role of modern technological companies from being reduced to a mere act of faith by the population towards a group of extremely powerful digital era magnates? And above all: how did we get so deep in their web?

The new digital order

“Who rules the world?” was, at least throughout the second half of the twentieth century, a fairly easy question to answer. Today, it is much less so.



GIORGIA MELONI AND ELON MUSK

The United States, with a record military spending of almost \$900 billion per year (higher than those of the 12 countries following it combined), are still the world's sheriffs. Economically, the landscape is multipolar: Usa, China, Europe, and India, while experiencing alternating phases in their commercial relationships, remain solid and connected markets.

But in the 2000s a new, digital order emerged next to them; which "is not managed by governments, but by technology companies," stated political scientist Ian Bremmer in a 2023 Ted Talk. Over time, we have delegated enormous responsibilities to these private entities: they store the data of billions of people and host on their servers infrastructures of all types, including governmental and military ones. They have gained the ability to shift the power balance of an armed conflict and to decide whether a political leader has the right to reach millions of citizens with a tweet. They unilaterally decide who can access their services, at what price, and under what rules and limitations; and they influence mood, opinions, actions, and relationships of those who use them every day.

The world was not prepared for such a change. The neoliberal theory that informs the global economy was shaped in the twentieth century, when no one could have imagined the disruptive impact that the digital revolution would have had. Scholars like Friedrich Hayek or Milton Friedman were convinced that competition would prevent individual entities or conglomerates from accumulating too much power. Their greatest fear was more that political power and economic power would end up concentrated in the same hands.

But even that fear is slowly starting to come true. The revenues of big tech companies like Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Meta, or Apple are in the hundreds of billions of dollars: comparable to the Gdps of small states. Combined, they would alone represent one of the top twenty economies in the world. Yet, according to a report from the Cgia of Mestre study office based on Mediobanca data, large web companies, since 2014, have evaded taxes for 99.7 billion euros just in Italy. Thus, creating a vicious cycle that increases economic inequalities and, at the same time, makes the rest of the world increasingly dependent on the services they offer.

In Covid-marked 2020, with most of the world's population on a lockdown and healthcare systems on their knees, online shopping giant Amazon achieved record revenues of 386 billion dollars, with an increase of almost 40% from the previous year; in the first 21 months of the pandemic, its founder and ceo Jeff Bezos increased his personal wealth by 81.5 billion, equivalent to the total cost of a triple Covid vaccination dose for the entire world population. Elon Musk, founder of automotive company Tesla and space company SpaceX, and also world's richest man, acquired the social network Twitter in 2022 for 44 billion dollars. After changing its name to X and firing 6,500 employees in six months, including almost the entire content moderation team, Musk has even modified the platform's code to give priority to his posts. In the following months, he announced support for Donald Trump's US presidential candidacy, supporting his election campaign with over 75 million dollars in donations, in exchange for the promise of a future government position.

No king

The CrowdStrike bug revealed how technological companies control strategic infrastructures for the entire world population. Especially in Europe, most companies overseeing key resources like energy, transportation, and telecommunications maintain some direct or indirect relationship with state authorities, a remnant of the public initiatives that created them.

For big tech, it was not so: they moved for years in total autonomy, favored by enormous investments they could guarantee governments, but above all by the lack of awareness of possible negative consequences of the technologies they were developing. Until 2014, Facebook's motto was literally "Move fast and break things", demonstrating how no one anticipated that the digital world could become as important as the real one.

When state authorities began to worry, it was already too late; the chances of having a classic state-subject relationship with these entities were minimal. The 2016 Apple-Fbi case was emblematic: never had a company managed to resist the pressures of such a powerful authority (which in that case was requesting access to the iPhones of the two San Bernardino attack terrorists). The matter left no doubt about the power balance between governments and technology companies: whether cooperating or confronting, it had to be done on an equal footing.

In recent years, attempts to curb the power of technology companies have been numerous and with varying effectiveness. In 2024, after a long process, one of the two pillars of the global minimum tax came



PAVEL DUROV



into effect, a measure by which OECD, G20, and the European Union set a global minimum tax rate of 15% for large multinationals, particularly aimed at discouraging the race to the bottom of tax rates that many governments engage in, in the attempt of attracting big tech to their territories (the so-called fiscal dumping). The actual results of this process are yet to be evaluated; because the other pillar of the regulation, which aimed to redistribute digital companies' profits based on the geographical location of consumers, has not yet been adopted by individual states. The difficulties have led some commentators to describe the attempt to instate a global minimum tax as a "failure".

The last few years have been characterized by hundreds of millions of euros worth of fiscal transactions concluded by companies like Facebook, Netflix, Google, and Airbnb. In September 2024, the European Court of Justice confirmed that Apple will have to return the 13 billion euros (about 3% of its global turnover) that the Irish government had granted in violation of state aid prohibition, in a judicial dispute ongoing since 2016.

In the same days, European judges also confirmed a 2.4 billion euros fine imposed on Google in 2017 for abuse of dominant position related to its proprietary price comparison service: a sanction that brings the total sum Google has had to pay the European Commission for antitrust law violations to 8.25 billion euros. Just a month earlier, a US federal court had established that the company, owner of the world's most used search engine, had abused its dominant position to prevent other companies from developing their own search engine. Among the possible sanctions proposed by the US Department of Justice there's the "dismemberment" of Google: the company could be forced to sell some of its divisions. A path that seems almost impossible to implement, but would constitute a historic precedent. Especially because Big G is not

alone in antitrust troubles: in Europe alone, over the past twenty years, Apple, Intel, Qualcomm, and Microsoft have all received billion-euro fines for restrictive competitive behaviors.

2024 was also the year of the first arrest of a big tech leader. On August 24th, Russian Pavel Durov, founder and ceo of messaging app Telegram, was arrested by French police and accused of twelve crimes (including dissemination of child pornographic material, drug trafficking, fraud, and criminal association). All charges are connected to Telegram's failure to collaborate with investigations into criminal bands that had chosen that platform for communication.

Nothing is inevitable

Listing the big and small problems that this technological oligopoly is causing is relatively easy. It is much more difficult to propose solutions and practical initiatives aimed at improving the situation. Traditional tools like antitrust or data protection laws have proven effective only to a certain point: the power exercised by large tech platforms is global, and the international community struggles to provide responses on the same scale.

Many have tried to address this issues. The aforementioned Ian Bremmer, in his essay *The Technopolar Moment* (Foreign Affairs, 2021), explored the possible geopolitical implications of creating a new technopolar order; Shoshana Zuboff's analysis in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (2018) focused more on the commodification of users' personal data and the manipulation of their behaviors and political opinions. In *Technofeudalism* (2023), former Greek minister Yannis Varoufakis compared digital platforms to private fiefs over which the owning companies have absolute power, and describes the new capitalism they lead as based no longer on controlling means of production but "means

of behavior". These authors also propose various original and improvement-oriented solutions to the problem: from creating a World Data Organization modeled after the Wto, to guarantee that personal data treatment respects certain standards; to introducing new fundamental digital rights; even to transforming digital infrastructures and big tech into democratically managed common goods.

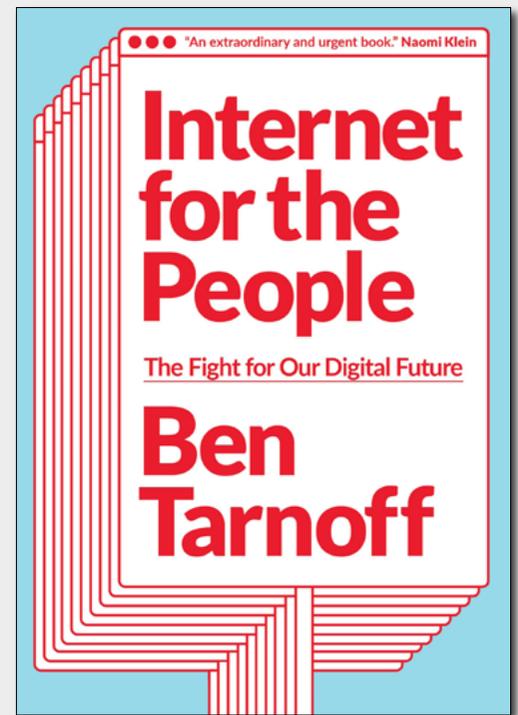
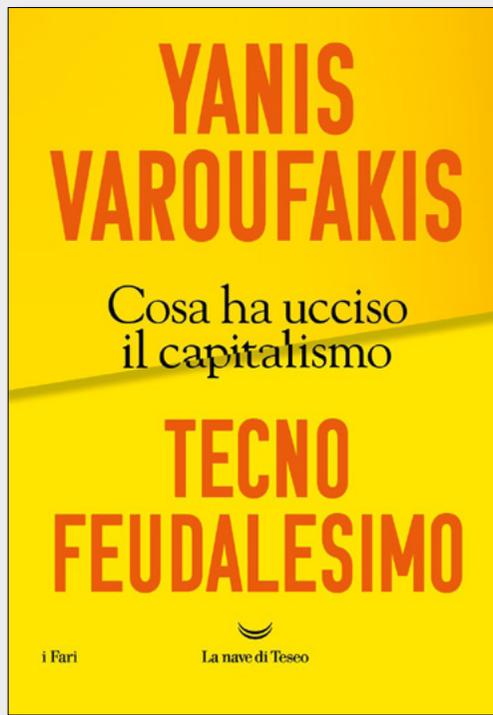
Obviously, these are utopian solutions. Not only because the facts demonstrate that even fining one of these companies requires years-long processes; but especially because we are accustomed to seeing everything related to technological progress as inevitable. The speed of the technological process has caught us off guard and convinced us that nothing can ever keep up with it.

Yet, a less superficial look at the history of tech reveals that things could have gone very differently, many times. Arpanet (1969) and Nsfnet (1985), two networks using embryos of the same technology that powers today's internet, were created by United States government agencies. The World Wide Web we know today was born in 1989 at Cern, another public organization, after years of research by universities and research centers (which were also the first to benefit from it). Only in the 1990s did the digital space become a commercial space and the first private internet providers emerged: to ensure sufficient financial resources for network development to accommodate an increasing user base, and from the general conviction that private entities would

manage everything more efficiently. A grounded, understandable, and even shareable choice. But, indeed, a choice.

As were choices those documented in Ben Tarnoff's *Internet for the People*: many legislative proposals aimed at creating "public lanes on the information highway", and to ensure the existence of digital spaces regulated by dynamics different from those of profit, have been undermined throughout the years. In September 2024, a Stanford University study group including former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice published the *Digitalist Papers*: twelve essays that extensively analyze the relationships between digital society and democracy, and put forward concrete proposals aimed at ensuring that spaces increasingly concentrating social, economic, and political life are not subtracted from some form of democratic control.

What has not happened until today could happen in the future. As Mark Fisher wrote in *Capitalist Realism*, "emancipatory politics must always destroy the appearance of a 'natural order', must reveal what is presented as necessary and inevitable to be a mere contingency, just as it must make what was previously deemed to be impossible seem attainable." After all, the history of technological development is a story of utopias becoming reality. Why should making the digital world more democratic be an insurmountable obstacle to our proven ability to make even the most improbable dreams come true?



revolutions

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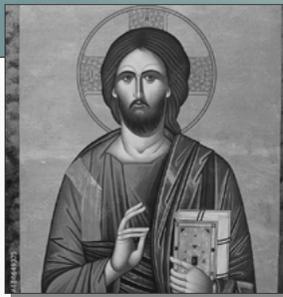
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Revolutionary Lives

Every revolution has its martyrs. Whether they sacrificed their lives or were forced to bow their heads, their ideas survive the course of history, despite adverse tides. *Tamen movetur.*



JESUS OF NAZARETH (7-6 a.C. – 36-37 d.C.)

Place of birth: Bethlehem, West Bank (Palestine)

The Quote: *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.*

Jesus (from Aramaic Joshua) founded Christianity, a religion that recognizes him as the Christ, Messiah, in the Jewish tradition “the son of God.” Born in Bethlehem under Roman occupation, at the age of thirty he began preaching his beliefs, leading to the conversion of hundreds of people. In disagreement with the elders of the Sanhedrin, he was condemned to crucifixion, by the final decision of the Roman prefect Pontius Pilate. After his death, the Catholic Church of Rome was born.

JEANNE D'ARC (1412-1431)

Place of birth: Domrémy-la-Pucelle, France

The Quote: *Where you see a failure, God sees a victory.*

Born into a devout peasant family in Burgundy, she claimed to have heard “celestial voices” that led her to join the French army at the age of fifteen, during the Hundred Years’ War. After overcoming resistance and passing numerous examinations, the “Maid of Orleans” became a military leader, leading soldiers to the siege of Orleans and saving the Loire. The following year, she was captured by the English and condemned to be burned at the stake as a heretic and witch. She was rehabilitated after her death, beatified and canonized in 1920 by Pope Benedict XV.



GIORDANO BRUNO (1548-1600)

Place of birth: Nola, Italy

The Quote: *Freedom of thought is stronger than the arrogance of power.*

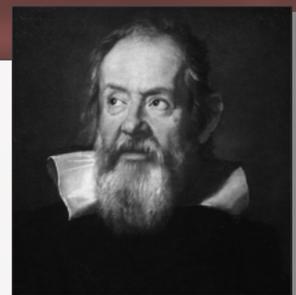
A member of the Dominican order, priest, and Doctor of Theology, Giordano Bruno supported the Copernican theory, asserting a pantheistic conception of the universe and advocating for the separation between religion and the study of nature. Tried for heresy, he was condemned to burn at the stake, where he died on February 17, 1600. He went down in history first as a “most obstinate heretic” and later as a “martyr of the new and free philosophy.”

GALILEO GALILEI (1564-1642)

Place of birth: Pisa, Italy

The Quote: *Who does not know the truth is foolish, but who knows it and calls it a lie is a criminal.*

A key figure in the scientific and astronomical revolution, he supported the heliocentric system and Copernican theory. After initially supporting him, the Pope and the Jesuits declared him a heretic as he denied Aristotelian natural philosophy and the Holy Scriptures. He was tried, condemned, and forced to recant his astronomical convictions, then confined to his villa in Arcetri. Only after his death was his method recognized by the Church, and 359 years later, Pope John Paul II acknowledged the errors committed and rehabilitated Galilei.

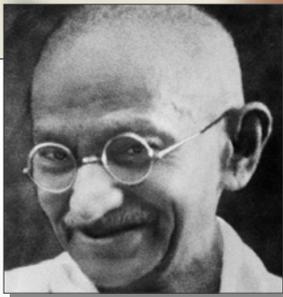
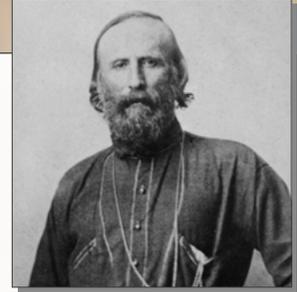


GIUSEPPE MARIA GARIBALDI (1807-1882)

Place of birth: Nice, France

The Quote: *Here we make Italy or we die!*

Known to history as "the hero of two worlds," he was an Italian general, patriot, military commander, and politician. A key figure in the Expedition of the Thousand, which led to the annexation of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, he participated in the constitution of the nascent Kingdom of Italy. A Freemason, republican, and anticlerical, he was elected as a deputy of the Kingdom and founded the League of Democracy. He died in Caprera in 1882, at almost 75 years of age.



MAHATMA GANDHI (1869-1948)

Place of birth: Porbandar, India

The Quote: *An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.*

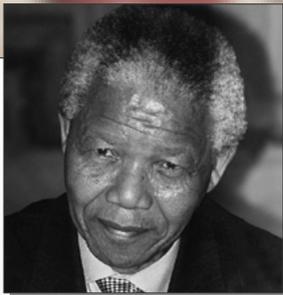
Gandhi revolutionized the very concept of revolution, demonstrating that social change could be achieved through peaceful resistance. His principle of non-violence (ahimsa) and strategy of civil disobedience inspired liberation movements worldwide. His struggle for India's independence became intertwined with broader battles against racism, the caste system, and social injustice. He was assassinated in 1948 by an extremist.

ROSA LUXEMBURG (1871-1919)

Place of birth: Zamość, Poland

The Quote: *Freedom is always the freedom to dissent.*

A Marxist theorist, philosopher, and activist, Luxemburg represented a unique voice in the European left. Her vision of socialism, critical of both reformism and Leninist centralism, emphasized the revolutionary spontaneity of the masses and democracy from below. Co-founder of the Spartakusbund (Spartacus League) in Germany, she participated in the German Revolution of 1918; she was kidnapped and brutally assassinated on January 15, 1919, by militiamen hired by the social democratic government.



NELSON MANDELA (1918-2013)

Place of birth: Mvezo, South Africa

The Quote: *It always seems impossible until it is done.*

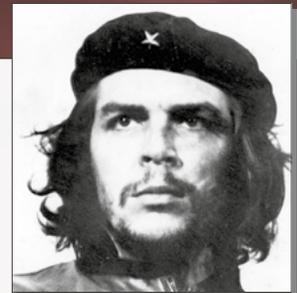
Politician, activist, and pacifist, he was the first non-white president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. A lawyer committed to civil rights and leader of the anti-apartheid movement, he served 27 years in prison for his fight against racial segregation. He won the Nobel Peace Prize and the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

ERNESTO "CHE" GUEVARA (1928-1967)

Place of birth: Rosario, Argentina

The Quote: *And if it's worth taking the risk, I'll gamble even the last fragment of my heart.*

A key figure in the Cuban Revolution alongside Fidel Castro, Che Guevara was an Argentine guerrilla fighter, writer, politician, and physician. After Cuba, he took the continental revolution to Congo and Bolivia, where he met his death in 1967. His face has become the universal symbol of resistance against imperialism and revolutionary ideals.



Cesare Battisti

Between fine dining, new nutritional sources, and gastro-sensationalism, food is going through a phase of rethinking: how much longer can we eat this way? In the restaurant industry today, “it takes vocation to survive.” The owner of Ratanà restaurant has plenty of it, always keeping pace with the (crazy) times of cuisine, while staying faithful to the principles proclaimed by Slow Food almost forty years ago: respect for food and the earth.

by Letizia Ceriani

Eating is a cultural act. It's perhaps one of the most overused yet fitting phrases in gastronomic reflection of recent decades. Eating is certainly a cultural act, it's an agricultural act, as someone else added, but above all, it's a necessary act. If changes are a symptom of the times, this 2024 continues to carry the aftermath of a period, the pandemic one, that has marked History, habits, our way of nourishing ourselves and eating together. Milan, in this sense, is a case study. This is according to Cesare Battisti, born in Milan in 1971, a chef and entrepreneur in name and deed, owner of Ratanà restaurant for twenty years, a temple of risotto alla milanese and sustainable cuisine, and co-founder and partner of three other establishments: Pastificio, a fresh pasta laboratory, Remulass, a bistro in Porta Venezia, and Silvano Vini e Cibi al Banco, which has introduced a new model of conviviality in the never-sufficiently saturated Milanese square.

He meets me at the restaurant, located in the heart of Isola, in Gae Aulenti square; it's a mild autumn afternoon and the pots are already sizzling in the kitchen. He arrives a bit late, out of breath, apologizing while warmly shaking my hand. We sit down, he offers me a glass of water. I ask him what he thinks cuisine has to do with revolution. I don't mince words, and he accepts the challenge. He's a straightforward, visceral, passionate man, reflecting for a few seconds before answering: “For me, revolution isn't a total subversion, but a rediscovered joy.”

He talks to me about an authentic return to the times of the land, fairly paid farmers, diets rich



«The revolution in the kitchen is not subversion, but rediscovered joy»

in protein including plant-based ones, food for everyone, small shops and small producers, a world where he would like his children to grow up. It seems like an image light years away from us, yet «it's a path already traced», Battisti insists.

Chef, where does your love for Milanese cuisine come from?

From a very young age, I worked in Milan's great restaurants, and at 19, I went abroad working on cruise ships and traveling the world. Returning from Australia, I remember it was winter, Milan was immersed in fog, and I thought: why isn't Milanese cuisine well-known? Milanese cuisine is serious business. Just think that abroad, people know risotto, they never talk about “Italian rice,” and 95% of the time it's saffron risotto... It's risotto alla milanese. Just like veal cutlet or panettone, which is the most eaten dessert in the world. Milan is a discreet city that has always welcomed everyone and still does today, albeit in a contemporary way. Perhaps that's why it's much easier to find sushi, Thai, or Cambodian restaurants rather than a Milanese restaurant.

It's an international city now.

It's an open city. Even in the post-war period, it was “Milan col coeur in man” (Milan with heart in hand), welcoming everyone and making them become Milanese in turn. For all these reasons, I believe it deserves at least a nomination as one of Europe's food capitals.

A Milan that welcomes everyone... but also where restaurants often face crisis.

Milanese restaurants often face crisis because needs have changed. Today, people want to recognize themselves in something strongly identitarian, and we are proud representatives of one of Milan's culinary and cultural identities. In other words, they seek something immediately recognizable, that gives satisfaction through well-executed dishes made with excellent raw materials, but above all simple and immediately understandable. A tradition that's not distorted but projected into the future. They call us modern trattorias, contemporary osterie, but I don't identify with these definitions.

Why?

Because they don't mean anything, we're just a restaurant like any other.

So: people have changed, habits too, values as well. Is a revolution happening?

Revolution is an incredible word because it implies not conforming, total subversion. Yes, priorities have changed: people no longer seek to appear elegant or sophisticated, they just want to feel good at the table. The revolution of priorities has changed the order of things.

Doesn't this happen in all epochs?

Not in all epochs, in my opinion. Ours is a moment full of possibilities, for those who want to seize them, full of changes, able to listen to consumer needs. Cuisine too is a language in constant motion: it evolves or regresses. For this reason, here at the restaurant next year, you'll surely find dishes already on the menu today, but in their 2.0 version, keeping pace with people's changing palates.

But change isn't always negative...

No, indeed! I believe that, contrary to what they say, it's the most beautiful period of the last 200 years.

Oh really?

Today we breathe possibilities. Restaurant industry, in the last ten years, has experienced almost schizophrenic media attention and now we're beginning to see the results. This puts us at a crossroads: either what we've learned in this time is employed and we subvert what we are to create new opportunities, or we risk succumbing. In some cases, we, cooks, chefs,

«We all, chefs and restaurateurs, are at a crossroads: evolve or devolve»

restaurateurs, haven't been able to reinvent ourselves, to risk, to change. Let's not blame the customer if they no longer want what we offer, but let's evolve along with their needs.

And if we fall?

Covid brought everyone to their knees, and we too asked ourselves questions. Our luck is that after almost twenty years, we have a strong identity, and we're well established in Milan's restaurant scene. This allowed us to move a bit more freely even during the pandemic period, so much so that during those times, we acquired a business. It was probably crazy, but we knew that sooner or later Covid would give us a break. So we asked ourselves what customers would want once it was all over.

And what did they want?

They wanted freedom, to be in open spaces. After months of home confinement, people were seeking, and still seek, sometimes spasmodically, what they had lost during that period: conviviality. So we said to ourselves, why not break down the idea of a restaurant and open a place without frills, with quality and super-conviviality?

And so Silvano Vini e Cibi al Banco was born. What kind of place is it?

It's a place free from schemes and dogmas.

Do they still exist?

I think human beings still impose on themself-



PASTA, CHEESE AND ZUCCHINI (RESTAURANT RATANÀ)

ves schemes that are difficult to respect, most often failing... this is because dogmas have become useless. And, apart from dogmas, people tend to give little importance to real values.

Which are?

In one word, respect. For raw materials, producers, people who work with you, economic sustainability! Too much importance is given to form and not substance. And this for me is not a subversion, it's a rediscovered joy, a return to real things.

Do you think respect is a value shared by few?

Everyone knows what's happening in the world, but there's really little awareness. In Buddhism, you must be present in the present moment, you must know what's happening around you; if we apply this principle to restaurant business or entrepreneurship in general, if we were all more present to ourselves, we would know how to judge a project's feasibility.

And if it doesn't work?

Without fear, you abandon that path and reinvent yourself.

Economic sustainability above all. Being both owner and chef at the same time isn't simple at all.

We live in the time of “chef patrons”, but 90% of them aren’t entrepreneurs. A restaurateur must first be an entrepreneur of themselves but must also have an enormous social responsibility. When I opened Ratanà, there were six of us, now, counting Remulass, Pastificio and Silvano, we’re 72. This didn’t happen because of my skill, but because I surround myself with capable people who correct me every day. And I understood this because I grew up on the street and I know that for businesses to work, they must feed everyone.

Especially because restaurants are important businesses for the country.

The latest FIPE-Confcommercio data say that restaurants generate 5% of Italian GDP and absorb 40% of Italian agricultural production. It’s a very important sector and everyone should realize it.

Is eating a cultural act?

Eating is a cultural, agricultural, social act, an act of love. Food moves everything, even politics. It’s fundamental, especially in our country, which has the most extensive cuisine and biodiversity after China. We have dozens of oil cultivars, more than a hundred types of totally indigenous rice, some products aren’t original to our country, but precisely because of this, biodiversity is unparalleled, due to the dominations we’ve undergone over the centuries, from Arabs to Spanish to Austrians. Our gastronomic culture is the result of this melting pot of products, uses, constructions. And there are no standardized dishes; each region or province interprets recipes in a unique and original way.

In the vast sea of restaurant offerings, how does one stand out?



RISOTTO VECCHIA MILANO (RESTAURANT RATANÀ)

«Food moves everything, even politics»

Identity, like tradition, is something fluid, passed from hand to hand. Ours, for example, is that of a Milanese restaurant. And what does a traditional Milanese restaurant do? It hands down traditions. The word tradition comes from the Latin tradere, which means to deliver, to bring to, even to carry across the river. It's essential to take the delivery and carry it forward, but not as it was delivered, otherwise it's a sterile exercise, you need to put something of your own into it. We are protagonists today and in twenty years it will be those to whom we'll hand down what we do.

And so the perpetual cycle of tradition and innovation is fed. What will tomorrow's cuisine be like?

More conscious, surely. There's an unacceptable consumption of meat and earth's products. Carlo Petrini has said it more than once: food produced in villages normally never leaves the radius of a kilometer. And the world is fed 80% with 20% of our lands, full of intensive cultivation, hormones, phytopharmaceuticals, unjustified air travel. In the world, if techniques and ideas traveled more, and products less, we would all be much better off. Even Pasolini had said that when farmers disappear, Italians will disappear too. In the '60s, 56% of Italians were dedicated to agriculture, more than half, while today only 3% of Italians practice it, and of these, 80% are over sixty. If there isn't a quick and fast return to the land in the coming decades, we won't have anything left and our granaries will be empty.

But the path to follow is already traced. The directives are there.

We have a big responsibility. We've forgotten that hospitality is a wealth, our wealth, and that the earth is the most precious thing we have.

Where to start again from?

From contacts with suppliers, from people who work the land. Milan is Italy's most agricultural city – the South agricultural park extends over 42,000 hectares – and this is our identity. This is the real revolution: returning to dealing with all the people who give you food, returning to human relationships, to shops and small producers. We must think about a better future for our children, for those who will come after.



CESARE BATTISTI

Love in the plural

How non-monogamy
is redefining romantic relationships

by Glória Paiva

Have you ever heard of a throuple? Maybe you're the child of separated parents, or do you have a stepchild from your partner? Have you attended the wedding of a couple who met on Tinder? Have you ever considered opening up your relationship? Or created a profile on a dating app? Today, you've probably answered "yes" to at least one of these questions, but just a few decades ago, they would have been unacceptable or even unthinkable. What has changed when it comes to sex and relationships in recent years? Throughout human history, the very concepts of love and marriage have transformed countless times, shaped by social, geographical, technological, and economic forces. They continue to shift even now, as we witness what seems to be the dawn of a new era for sex and romance.

As the only possible model of family unit for the last 5,000 years, the monogamous and heterosexual family is being questioned, remodeled, analyzed, and rethought. It has never been so easy to get divorced, and new forms of relationships have never been so widely discussed. According to the latest Eurostat data, since 1964, the marriage rate in the EU has declined by almost 50% in relative terms (from 8.0 per 1,000 persons in 1964 to 4.2 in 2022). Over the same extended period, the divorce rate has doubled, increasing from 0.8 per 1,000 persons in 1964 to 1.6 in 2022. The number of births outside of marriage has also doubled since 1993 in Europe. In Europe today, 41.8% of children are born to parents who are not married—non-marital unions, cohabiting couples, or single mothers, a lower average than countries like France (63.5%) and Portugal (60%).

Legal or informal alternatives such as registered partnerships or married couples who live in separate houses have become more widespread. Last year, a BBC report showed how the trend of "weekend marriages", or couples living in separate homes, has grown in Japan. In the report titled "Is 'separation marriage' key to a healthy relationship?", an eight-minute video shows the Takeda family, which includes husband Hidekazu and wife Hiromi, who live in separate houses, with their toddler living with Hiromi. According to the BBC, with the increasing number of dual-income households and women choosing not to give up their careers after marriage, this arrangement is becoming increasingly common.

According to **Rui Diogo**, a biologist, anthropologist, and Portuguese-American researcher at Howard University, monogamy is not natural among primates, but family formations vary in human societies according to social, economic, and geographical contexts. "In regions with food scarcity, polyandry (a woman having multiple partners) is common to limit the number of children and maximize resources", Diogo explains. In regions with more resources, the opposite trend may occur: men have multiple partners to maximize the number of children.

Friedrich Engels, in "The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State" (1884), connects monogamy and the modern ideal of family to the development of agriculture and private property. The agricultural surplus generated the concept of inheritance, justifying the control of female sexuality and monogamy as bases for the establishment of patriarchy over the last 5,000 years. Engels lays the groundwork for what Silvia Federici calls "domestic proletariat", where, "while men worked outside, women performed unpaid caregiving work", according to **Mar Bastos**, a Brazilian journalist and researcher of non-monogamy theories.

Marriage and love, together: a recent invention

The connection between love and marriage is a recent cultural construct. According to **Regina Navarro Lins**, a Brazilian psychoanalyst and writer, the courtly love of the troubadours, which emerged in the 12th century, gave rise to the concept of romantic love, in which the beloved was idealized and unattainable. "Only in the 19th century did love begin to gradually enter marriage, becoming definitively integrated by 1940", explains Lins. With the advent of mass communication, films, radio dramas, soap operas, and paperback romances helped create, in the popular imaginary, an ideal of relationships with the man-woman couple at the center of life and as a synonym for the only possible "happy ending".

It was after World War II that young people began to question societal values. The invention of the birth control pill paved the way for the



REGINA NAVARRO LINS

sexual revolution of the 1960s. “At that moment, sex was dissociated from procreation and allied with pleasure”, explains Navarro Lins. Counter-cultural movements, feminism, hippies, LGBTQ+ and anti-racist movements emerged, which continue to evolve and to transform mentalities today by promoting a critique of hegemonic thoughts. Historical factors such as the emancipation of women, the rise of a culture of individuality, and less social pressure to remain married, along with economic crises, overlap and challenge traditional views on love, sex, and affection. With the internet, the sharing of knowledge and the latest waves of feminism have raised greater awareness of issues like gender-based violence, inequality, intersectionality, interracial relations, rape culture, sexuality, and female empowerment, to name a few.

Another recent, sociological factor that could have reinforced this transformation is the COVID-19 pandemic. Mar Bastos notes that romantic love, by excessively valuing the couple in the hierarchy of affections, obscures the importance of community in people’s lives. However, with the isolation imposed by the pandemic and many couples having to work from home, the imbalance in the division of caregiving tasks between men and women became evident. Between 2020 and 2021, there was widespread discussion about the increase in cases of domestic violence. “With the confinement of monogamous couples, there was a tensioning of this hegemonic discourse. Community support disappeared, and women became exhausted. I think there was then a more intense search for critical content regarding traditional models, giving more visibility to the issue”, Bastos points out.

A broader and more inclusive view of romance

Idealized and exclusivist love remains a popular theme in hit songs and streaming productions, but a new perspective is paving the way. “In the past,



**350 MILLION PEOPLE CURRENTLY
HAVE DATING APPS ON THEIR
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**according to Business of Apps*

**57% OF GEN Z INDIVIDUALS
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RELATIONSHIP ***

**according to Ashley Madison and YouGov research*



NAVIGATING ROMANCE IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

How the Internet, social media and AI are transforming courtship and relationships

From flirting with likes and emojis to dates set up through apps, the internet has been a crucial factor in the revolution of affective relationships. Artificial Intelligence also plays a role in this context, with robots participating in the simulation of sex and affection.

A study from Stanford University (USA) showed the evolution of American couples over the last 90 years. In 1930, most couples met through family, school, and friends. In the 1980s and 1990s, many met in bars and at work. Since 2012, the internet has become the primary means of connection, with 61% of couples currently meeting online.

It is estimated that around 350 million people currently have dating apps on their phones, an increase from 250 million in 2018, according to Business of Apps. A report from the Pew Research Center revealed that 30% of American adults have used an online dating service. "Just as the invention of the home telephone established the habit of long conversations and scheduled dates, the internet also impacts how people relate to each other," emphasizes Brazilian psychoanalyst and author **Regina Navarro Lins**.

Long-distance and multicultural relationships, fueled by video calls, are also contemporary phenomena. And what about the search for affection in robots or artificial intelligence? For Portuguese-american anthropologist **Rui Diogo**, technology can distance people from naturalness. "In Japan, considered the most technological country, sexual activity is low, with married couples having relations only once a year," he states.

Rui Diogo believes that technology has not solved the problem of lack of time, impacting the frequency of affective encounters. "There is a disconnect between the sexualization of the economy and real sex, which has decreased in large cities," he asserts. Generation Z, for instance, the most connected of all, is having less sex than any previous generation in history, according to the Kinsey Institute. The consumption of sexual chats with AI has been increasing, eliminating emotional bonds and connection to reality, according to Spanish psychologist **Silvia Sanz**. "This way, there are neither emotional ties nor communication difficulties," she reiterates.

Still, there are reverse movements, although they are not widely represented. In August, a new trend of flirting in supermarkets emerged in Spain, going viral worldwide. "These trends show that people are also tired of flirting through apps and social networks; they want to meet like they used to. There is a new longing for physical connections," concludes Silvia Sanz. At the intersection of the physical and digital worlds, relationships are transforming, creating new opportunities for love, but also new challenges.



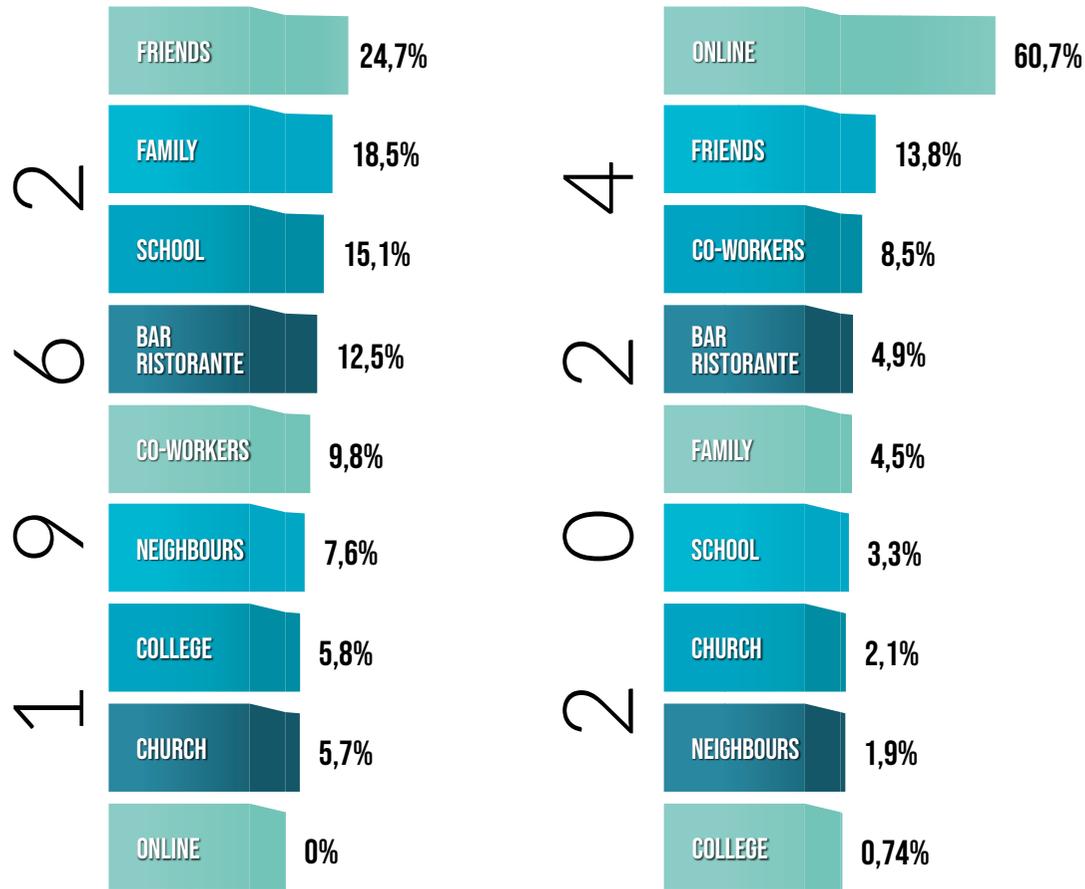
men who had multiple relationships were seen as 'champions,' while women were labeled in a pejorative way. Today, we know that women can have the same desires and enjoy sex just as much as men", comments Spanish psychologist and sexologist Silvia Sanz. Additionally, there is now much more emphasis on maintaining sexual satisfaction in relationships. "Today, it is considered important to take care of one's sex life, just as we take care of other aspects of life", says Silvia. As a result, many couples are seeking solutions to address a lack of desire and satisfaction. Modifying relational agreements, opening up possibilities for new partners and experiences, has become an increasingly common alternative in this regard.

Millennials and Generation Z are the generations most open to alternatives to monogamy. According to a study conducted by the website Ashley Madison and YouGov, involving 18,000 adults from 10 countries, 57% of individuals born between 1995 and 2010 say they consider a non-monogamous relationship. Among millennials, 43% view non-monogamy as their ideal relationship model, according to a 2020 YouGov survey of 1,300 Americans.

To find partners—and themselves—in a different way of relating, discussion spaces have proliferated, both online and offline, like PolyPortugal, a community that present itself as a "safe space for people who believe in consensual non-monogamy." **Emma Fontes**, 49, joined the group in search of new networks. "It's very important to avoid isolation and have new references when abandoning monogamy", she explains. The group's perspecti-

SILVIA SANZ

HOW COUPLES MET



Source: "How couples meet and stay together". Stanford, CA: Stanford University Libraries

ve, according to Ema, is not limited to romantic and sexual relationships but is a rejection of an entire system that promotes a tendency towards isolation. For Mónica Silva, 52, who is also part of the community, non-monogamy is a large umbrella encompassing many ways of living and a continuous learning process. "The important thing is to practice ethically", she states.

In her bestseller "Monogamous Mind, Polyamorous Terror," Spanish author Brigitte Vasallo reflects on monogamy as a hierarchical system. At the top of this pyramid is the romantic couple, and the desire to occupy that exclusive and special position often requires giving up one's own identity and other significant relationships, which are not necessarily sexual. Alternatives to monogamy, however, face legal and social barriers. For **João Pinheiro**, 30, also from the PolyPortugal community, discrimination is one of them. "We feel a lot of pressure from friends,

family, and society in general to build a nuclear family. Non-monogamy is an undervalued model, considered unserious", he observes. Mar Bastos notes that the hegemonic system imposes itself. "The laws in most countries support this system, forcing you to marry one person to, for example, extend benefits like insurance, pensions, citizenship, and inheritances", she analyzes.

Monogamous or not, new and future generations will undoubtedly be able to choose their affective paths with more awareness and freedom, and perhaps this revolution is still just beginning. For Regina Navarro Lins, fluidity and respect for individuality will increasingly be part of people's affective lives. "In the 1950s and 60s, no one believed that divorce would become a common occurrence 30 years later. In a few decades, it will be absolutely normal for people to adopt other models of relationships", she assesses.

Yoga Revolution: the long wave from India to Wall Street offices

Stefano Simontacchi: "In a frantic life like ours, we are constantly in a state of hyperactivity, but disciplines like yoga and meditation can help us regain balance and calm. That's why they are conquering more and more people globally."

by Michela Cannovale



Inhale, exhale. Settle on the mat, let your body find a natural position... Gently bring attention to your breath... Observe how the air flows naturally in and out of the body... Inhale, exhale. With each inhalation, feel the belly rising gently... With each exhalation, allow the body to relax ever more deeply... Inhale, exhale...

The instructor's voice spreads through the room without signs of fatigue as our bodies mechanically pass from the sukhasana position to the padmasana, from the agnistambhasana to the virasana. It's a sound that I hear and don't hear, it only reaches me in spurts.

Imagine that each inhalation brings new and vital energy... Each exhalation releases unnecessary tensions and thoughts... Now let's start making the breath deeper and more conscious... Inhale... Inhale slowly, counting to four... Hold the breath gently for two... Exhale slowly, counting to six... Eeeexhale...

I try to focus on the rising belly, the relaxing body. I release unnecessary thoughts... Wait, which ones are unnecessary? And which are necessary? That call tomorrow morning seems quite necessary. But maybe not now? Hang on, did I get the pastries for Mariella? No no no, we're not there yet. I try again. The goal is to empty the mind. But how is this concept of emptying the mind even possible? Empty the mind! It can't be done, especially if that thought there, emptying the mind, remains a fixed idea while you try to empty it. Impossible! Okay, wait, get focused. Breathe. Inhale, exhale. Inhale, exhale. Yes, focusing on the breath seems like a good idea. I focus on the very light sound of the air passing through my nostrils. A faint whistle. How embarrassing. Am I the only one who hears it? Oh god, maybe I'm disturbing someone?

That's more or less how my first yoga class went. This business of the breath has never really suited me, or I've never fully understood it, but one thing has always been clear to me: the activity itself would allow me to cultivate health and tranquility. To work on the joints, the nerves, the blood, the back. And this was enough to convince me to continue - at first with consistency, then occasionally.

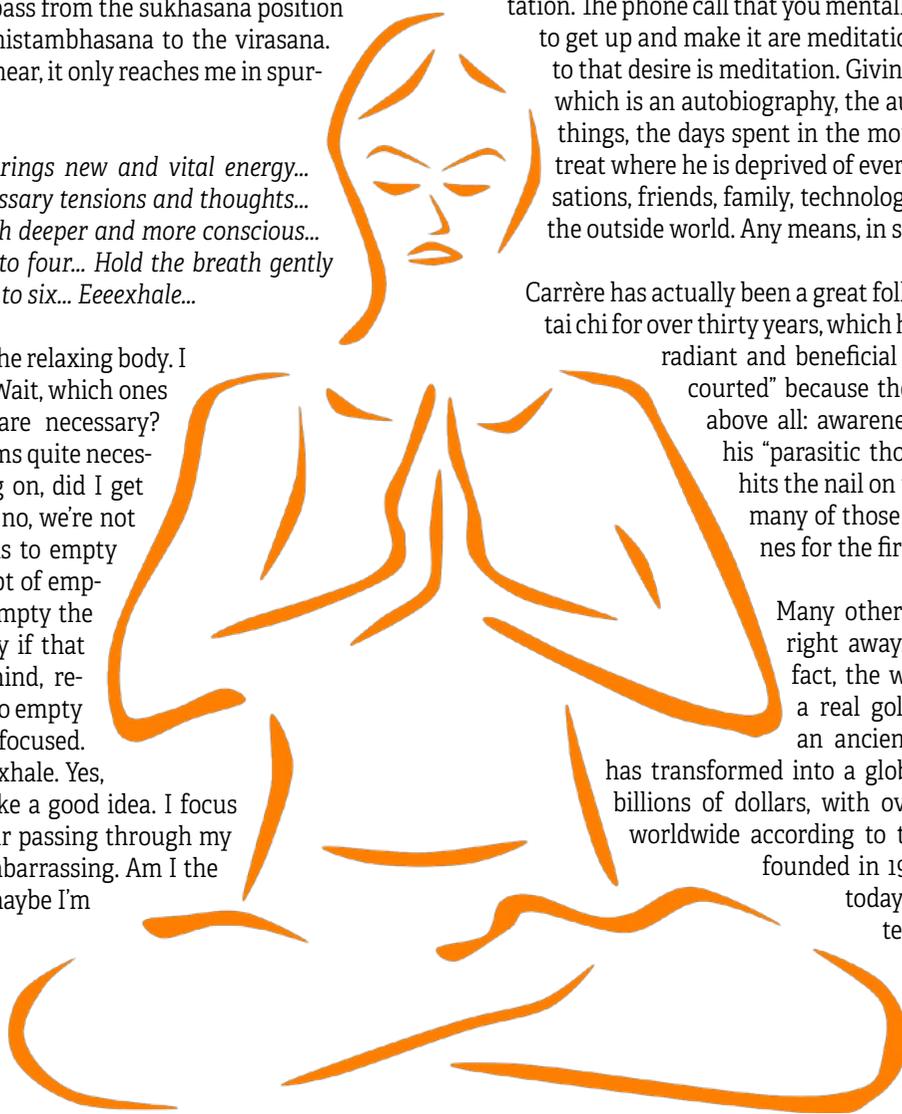
I've also tried meditation, but without much success. After all, the practice of yoga is seen by many as an ideal preparation for meditation: they say it facilitates the transition to the mental serenity necessary for an effective meditative practice. I made an attempt. And it's true that with yoga I've gained in tranquility, but not enough to be able to sit still

and silent for an indefinite time. It's a limit, but we all have them. And I completely identified with the words of Emmanuel Carrère who, in the novel "Yoga", explains that meditation is "everything that happens within us in the time during which we are sitting, still and silent. Boredom is meditation. The pain in the knees, the back, the neck is meditation. Parasitic thoughts are meditation. Stomach gurgling is meditation. The impression of wasting time doing a pseudo-spiritual nonsense is meditation. The phone call that you mentally prepare and even the desire to get up and make it are meditation. The resistance you oppose to that desire is meditation. Giving in, no. That's it." In the book, which is an autobiography, the author describes, among other things, the days spent in the mountains during a spiritual retreat where he is deprived of everything: books, phone, conversations, friends, family, technology, any means of contact with the outside world. Any means, in short, on which I live and feed.

Carrère has actually been a great follower of meditation, yoga and tai chi for over thirty years, which he himself defines as "sublime, radiant and beneficial practices that I have always courted" because they have given him one thing above all: awareness. Yet, with his "knee pain", his "parasitic thoughts" and his "gurgling", he hits the nail on the head about what I believe many of those who approach these disciplines for the first time experience.

Many others, on the other hand, like it right away. And decide to continue. In fact, the world of yoga is experiencing a real golden age. What was born as an ancient spiritual practice in India has transformed into a global phenomenon that moves billions of dollars, with over 300 million practitioners worldwide according to the Yoga Vidya organization, founded in 1978 in India (exactly so!), and today with affiliated centers scattered around the globe. And the numbers are set to grow even further. The association's forecasts are clear: by 2025, the sector will reach a market value of over \$200 billion, more than double the \$90 billion at the end of

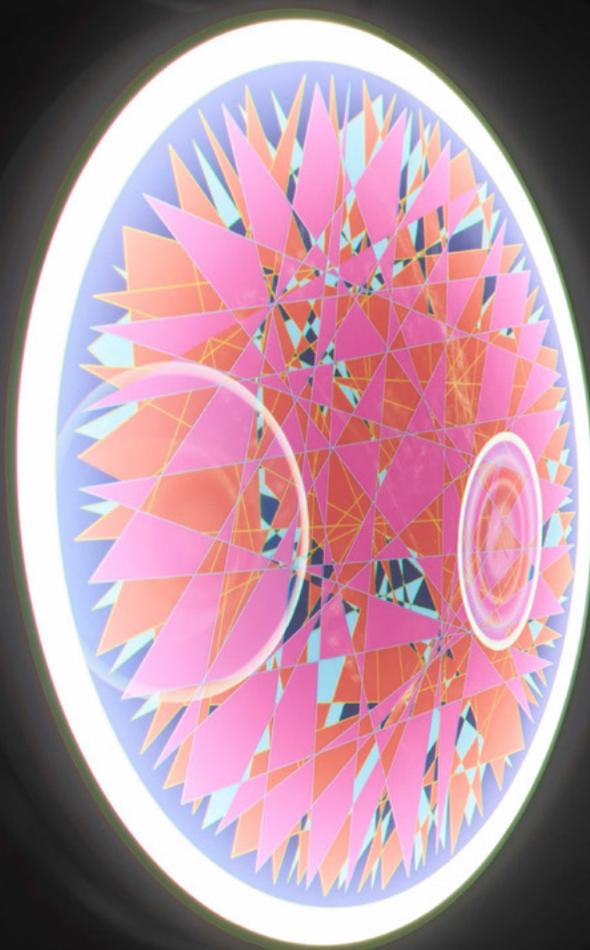
2023. A significant figure that testifies to how this discipline is becoming increasingly mainstream, especially in the West. If in India paradoxically only 12% of the population practices it, the United States - where a 50% increase in those choosing to practice yoga has been recorded since 2020 - lead the ranking with over 36 million practitioners and more than 22,000 dedicated centers distributed across the territory. Canada, Australia, Singapore and Ireland follow. Yoga Vidya even reports that in the UK and France the popularity of online yoga has increased by 400% in the last four years.



To understand the reason for this success, I turned to Stefano Simontacchi, a tax specialist among the most prominent partners of the law firm BonelliErede, president of the board of directors of the Buzzi Hospital Foundation, president of the Fondazione per la Scuola Italiana and a board member of Rcs and ISPI. Simontacchi has been practicing yoga and meditation for a long time, like Carrière. “Driven by a deep desire to understand the meaning of life - he tells me - thirty years ago I began my search. Like many tax consultants and lawyers, I spent a long period of apprenticeship and sacrifices, and it was precisely during that path that I began to feel the need to find deeper answers. I immersed myself in spiritual literature, which in turn allowed me to meet various healers and shamans and then to approach yoga, meditation and qi gong (an activity related to the Chinese tradition and martial arts that consists of a series of physical exercises, mental concentration techniques and breath control, ed). In a frantic life like ours, after all, we are constantly in a state of hyperactivity, but these disciplines can help us regain balance and calm. That’s why they are conquering more and more people on a global scale.”

How can he be wrong? How, if many of us live a life of rushing, where we unconsciously reproduce a model that demands that we study, work, and make a career at all costs? “I felt the need to stop for a moment, and so I had the opportunity to approach art,” he says, explaining how The Prism, his artistic alter ego and interactive project, was born, creating a connection with the public through circular works (signed by Simontacchi himself) that serve as emotional portals, inviting meditation and spiritual awakening. “The Prism was born with the aim of offering people living in cities a refuge from urban frenzy, a place where they can carve out time to reconnect with themselves and their spiritual dimension. We live in a crucial era of deep transformation: the isolation period during Covid, the fear of death, the wars that remind us how fragile life is, the advent of artificial intelligence that, while freeing up time, poses new ethical challenges. All these elements push us to put the human being back at the center, to stop and ask ourselves: who are we really? What is our purpose? How do we really want to live? The Prism, through the stimulus of meditation, wants to be precisely the space in which to stop and reflect on these questions.” Because The Prism, in fact, is a real physical space: opened in 2024 in Piazza Napoli in Milan, it is a multifunctional environment that allows visitors to discover Simontacchi’s artistic production and, through a path divided into seven rooms, each with a specific name and function, invites the visitor on an emotional and spiritual journey to rediscover themselves.

Browsing through the Yoga Vidya statistics, I find that the profile of those who practice yoga and meditation corresponds to the fe-







STEFANO SIMONTACCHI

male gender (72% globally), although in India the proportion is reversed with a male predominance (55%). The reasons driving the choice of these disciplines are diverse: 61% seek greater flexibility, 56% want to reduce stress, 44% aim to increase physical strength. More than 30% then do it to combat depressive symptoms.

The Covid-19 pandemic has contributed to giving a vigorous boost to the phenomenon. Not only to that of yoga, moreover, but to any activity that could be carried out within the walls of the home. As highlighted by the Washington Post, since the lockdowns were implemented, the home fitness sector has recorded unprecedented explosive growth. Instructors of the most varied disciplines, yoga in the first place, have started to stream the lessons that were previously held in the gym. Sales of sports equipment and clothing have skyrocketed. From January to November 2020, around 2.5 billion health and fitness apps were downloaded worldwide, according to Sensor Tower data, with a 47% jump compared to the same period in 2019. The “Home Workout - No Equipment” app, the most popular of the year, was downloaded 43.5 million times, more than double the previous year. Peloton, which offers yoga and meditation sessions among its courses, has recorded a 382% growth in digital subscriptions.

Simontacchi comments: “Today we are witnessing a growing popularity of meditative and wellness practices, so much so that many companies offer them as benefits to their employees. In fact, a renewed awareness of the importance of reducing stress and finding one’s true self has developed, a trend that the pandemic has further accelerated because it has forced us to confront an essential question: what kind of life are we really living? This has triggered a broader reflection on the relationship between work and private life, pushing us to search for greater balance. Look, for example, at the Netherlands, where the working day now ends at 5pm and after dinner, at most, people decide to continue working from home and no longer from the office because they no longer give up their social life. There is an awareness that sacrificing personal relationships means impoverishing ourselves as human beings and losing

«A trend has developed that the pandemic has further accelerated because it has forced us to ask ourselves: what kind of life are we really living?»

precious opportunities for growth and personal enrichment.”

In short, if there was one merit in the global health emergency we experienced during Covid, it was that of bringing to the forefront the importance of the concept of time for oneself and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle. Not surprisingly, since then, many have begun to see yoga not only as a physical activity, but also as a tool to manage stress and anxiety. On the other hand, scientific research is also confirming the various benefits of the discipline at both the physical and mental levels. Studies recently published in the *Translational Psychiatry* journal have shown positive effects on cognition and memory, with potential implications for the prevention of cognitive decline and Alzheimer’s. Regular practice would also help manage conditions such as hypertension, insomnia, diabetes and gastrointestinal disorders.

“The effects of yoga are now the subject of numerous investigations. But to fully benefit from it - Simontacchi explains - I believe it is necessary to approach the practice with a neutral mental state, maintaining a skepticism that is, however, constructive and open. The key is to get rid of three fundamental obstacles: fear, guilt, and expectations. Through practice, over the years I have developed a concept I call the “empty channel”: a process of ego annihilation obtained by freeing oneself from these limits. I arrived at this because I had the opportunity to observe that 99% of human suffering derives from what is not present in the present moment but is rather linked to the past or the future. We rarely live truly in the present. Through a path of spiritual growth, on the other hand, events that we previously perceived as traumatic can be transformed into positive and constructive experiences. Balance, however, is not a definitive goal, but a state to be constantly sought: it is a journey of constant growth and improvement. This path has taught me to live every experience with greater awareness.” Like Carrère.

Four years after the first lockdown, it seems clear how the threat of the virus itself, and not just the drastic interruption of commercial activities, has polarized attention around the concepts of health and general



THE PRISM

«Once upon a time,
a lawyer was born,
grew up and concluded
his career in the same
law firm, following a
predetermined path.
Today, we are
witnessing
an awakening
of consciences»

well-being. Today, yoga is finding space in ever-new areas: from school to the work environment, from tourism to medical therapy. In India, the government has launched initiatives to integrate yoga into the education and healthcare systems. China has been doing it for years. While globally hybrid forms and therapeutic applications are multiplying.

This seems to be not just a passing fad, as some argue, but a revolution in the notion of well-being that promises to profoundly influence the future of physical and mental health. And, in this regard, Simontacchi clarifies: “The real revolution is not yoga itself, but rather the long wave that, accelerated by the Covid pandemic, has brought the individual back to questioning the meaning and purpose of life, rediscovering the importance of doing what truly fascinates him. This is the real transformation underway. Once upon a time, a lawyer was born, grew up and concluded his career in the same law firm, following a predetermined path. Today, on the other hand, we are witnessing an awakening of consciences, a process of awareness that practices like yoga and meditation help to achieve. It is a path of reconciliation with the world, of liberation from stress, of the ability to interrupt the whirlwind of thoughts to reconnect with one’s essence, unplugging from the daily routine and rediscovering oneself.”

The instructor’s voice resumes, I hear it again.

Inhale, exhale. Inhale, exhale. Feel how the breath creates a space of calm within you... With each breathing cycle, let the body become lighter... The mind clearer... The heart more open... When the mind wanders, gently bring it back to the rhythm of the breath... Do not judge, simply observe... Inhale, exhale... The breath is the bridge between body and mind... Between the external world and the internal... Between movement and stillness... Inhale, exhale...

Therapy in the digital age

Against prejudices and social stigmas, e-Health platforms, primarily Unobravo and Serenis, are promoting a culture where psychological fragility falls within a more authentic dimension of care. Thanks to unstoppable technological development and the sensitivity of new generations, the online therapy market is increasingly attracting media and investor interest. Revolution or flash in the pan?

by Letizia Ceriani



Burnout, demotivation, anxiety, irritability, depression, dissatisfaction, loneliness. On October 10th, World Mental Health Day was celebrated, promoted by the WHO, which states that by 2030, depression will be the primary cause of disease globally, considering that already in 2016, suicide was the second most common cause of death among 15–19-year-olds and the eleventh cause of death overall, with 4 cases per 100,000. A recent WHO report also highlights that psychiatric patient assisted by specialist services in 2020 exceeded 700,000 units.

It is now well-established that the pandemic has had a highly pathogenic effect on people, giving rise to a true global crisis. Particularly concerning, as recent sector studies emphasize, is the percentage of disorders among children and adolescents: in Europe, among the identified pathologies, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders (EDs) represent over half of the cases and are constantly increasing.

The concept had been reiterated by the European Union as far back as 2013, when the 194 member states signed a global mental health action plan to be implemented by 2030, emphasizing healthcare, digital support, and the need to normalize the mental dimension in the workplace.

These are data, numbers, realities that do not leave anyone indifferent. In this context, in Italy, from 2019 onwards, some authorized medical centers in the form of platforms have tried to provide, if not a solution, a concrete response, with the aim of making care more accessible by shortening distances, containing costs, while maintaining high-quality performance.

Get sent to ... a good one

From the intuition of psychologist Danila De Stefano, the *Unobravo* platform was born in 2019. After graduating with a degree in Clinical Psychology, the practitioner told MAG, and moving to London, away from family



DANILA DE STEFANO

and friends and tried by the very tight work schedule, De Stefano felt the need to start therapy but struggled with high costs and long waiting lists. Working as a remote psychologist herself, however, she discovers a new mode of therapy that is effective and potentially affordable for everyone. Thus, Unobravo was born: the service uses an advanced algorithm that matches each patient with the Unobravo professional best suited to their needs, based on the results of an online questionnaire.

Five years after its founding, De Stefano leads a clinical team of more than 7,000 professionals, specializing in 15 different orientations, who have reached more than 270,000 people in recent years. Unobravo aims “to be able to have a profound impact in the lives of more and more people and actively contribute to building a society where mental well-being is considered a priority.”

Stigma, censorship, taboos. Mental health, for De Stefano, is still not a totally accepted issue in our society, at least not in Italy, where only since 2022 has the Psychologist Bonus been introduced, which became structural in the recently approved Budget Law. However, for the 175,000 applications that arrived at Inps last spring, only 10 million were allocated, which will supposedly cover only a small percentage of aid.

There is a clamor for structural change, what De Stefano calls, in his recently published first book *Inside Minds, Out of Taboos*, a “gentle revolution,” silent, nonjudgmental, that has the well-being of patients and

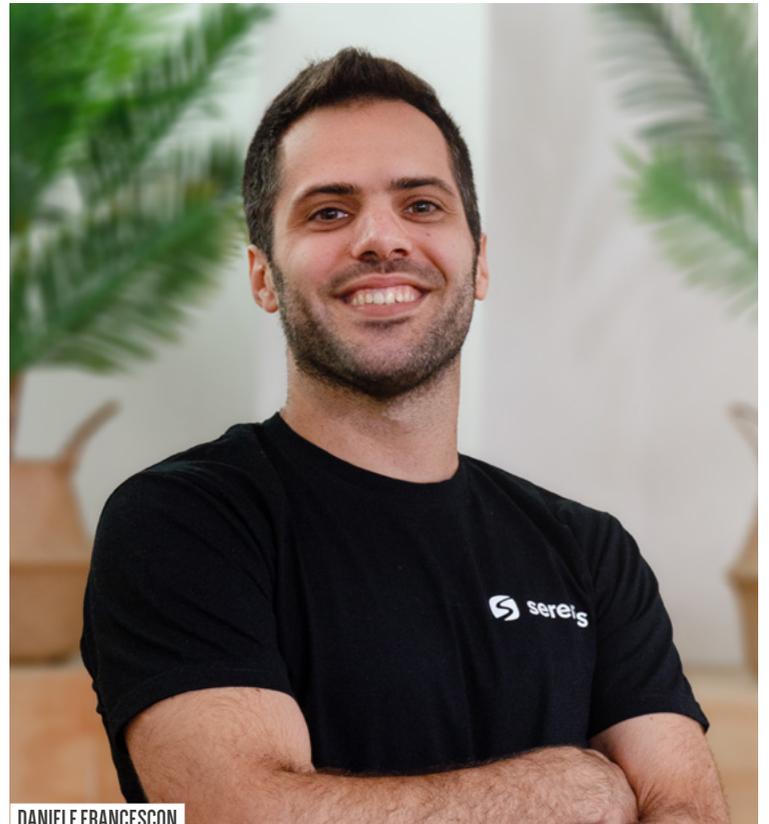
psychologists at heart. “Online psychology offers therapists new opportunities to work,” comments Unobravo’s founder, ‘allowing them to reach more patients,’ giving them the chance to keep up to date through continuing education and the possibility to specialize in specific areas.

Openness to dialogue, to listening to the other, is the basis for participating in the much more complex pattern of change in society, which is increasingly being told with new symptoms that in turn demand new clinics and not aseptic and standardized classifications. How far can the algorithm go?

As you want me: Serenis, tailor-made service

Vital the digital tool to achieve the highest level of accuracy and attention to service users. How are therapists assigned to patients? It’s very simple: starting with a questionnaire that can be filled out online-a real test-the result is the formulation of a preference that leads to the assignment of a therapist. The first interview is free of charge and, if he or she satisfies, one begins the process, which costs, roughly, around 50 to 60 euros per session with a minute amount that can vary depending on the offer, usually 45 to 60 minutes.

The accuracy of the algorithm is the dogma of Serenis, the second e-Health platform in Italy, born as a tech start-up in 2021 from the idea of Daniele Francescon and Silvia Wang - economist and manager he and entrepreneur she - who already had experience in tech and marketing behind



DANIELE FRANCESCONE

them. The then-new entry convinced the market right away; a year and a half after its launch, Serenis closed a series of investment rounds bringing on board Angelini Ventures, Azimut Digitech Fund, Invictus Capital, Exor Seeds, the Agnelli family's venture capital vehicle, and FG2 Capital, participated by the venture capital arm of Cdp (Cassa Depositi e Prestiti), confirming investors' interest. Today, Francescon explained to MAG, Serenis has become large and has 1,500 professionals who are not left alone. The Srl offers them support and flexibility: «The relationship with our psychotherapists does not have any exclusivity: they work when they want, they do not have contractual clauses that oblige them to behave in a certain way, we are simply an enabler for their online work». Francescon and Wang also recently launched a management software called *Gesto*, designed to simplify for psychologists and psychotherapists the bureaucratic aspects of their work, such as managing master records or billing.

The platforms, by helping to expand a professional circuit, have actually fattened a very promising global market. According to a study by U.S. consulting firm Frost & Sullivan, the telemedicine and online medical consultation market will reach a turnover of 17 billion by 2026. Confirming the scale of the system is Teresa Perretta, a psychologist who has been in private practice since 2011 and is now part of the Serenis team: we are facing «a real revolution».

For a good practice

The platforms provide immediate and ready-to-use solutions, but there are those who warn about the type of approach in fear that progressive commercialization will lead to commodification of the profession. Giulia Maffioli, president of the National Association of Psychologists and

Psychotherapists, in an interview with *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, expressed the doubt that in the dimension of extreme convenience that is created in the online session, we end up forgetting the 'relationship,' made up of «difficulties, discomforts, emotions of the patient not verbalized». Missing, according to Maffioli, would be the context, intimate and sacred, that makes authentic therapeutic work possible.

It is true, we mentioned earlier, that telemedicine platforms have inserted themselves into a structural vacuum given by the resounding delay of institutions that have not been able to respond promptly to psychological emergencies.

With great power comes great responsibility: the tool requires to be used with foresight, keeping in mind the focus of the exchange. Counters Teresa Perretta: «The online setting like the in-presence setting provides for a two-way therapeutic relationship, where another is present, as a necessary communicative condition for resolving even relational conflicts. Life that takes place outside the setting, whatever its nature, is directed toward improving awareness, personal evaluation and that of objective reality, of which others are part».

And if the reaction of institutions has undoubtedly been slow, the same cannot be said of the National Council of the Order of Psychologists, which in November 2022 convened an ethics committee to draw up together with a number of platforms, including Serenis, TherapyChat, Mindwork and Minders Community, the Manifesto Guidelines for Online Psychological Support with the aim of establishing some principles to regulate an area that first and foremost should protect the beneficiaries, namely the patients. It will be a nonlinear process, but one that is



TERESA PERRETTA



certainly already underway.

Also at the embryonic stage are studies demonstrating the effectiveness of online therapy. Calmed, in this regard, by the intervention of the president of the Order of Psychologists, David Lazzari, recently released to *Open* news outlet: «The online modality has spread recently, starting in 2020, so there are still too few studies showing its effectiveness compared to traditional therapy. The ones we have shown us comparable effectiveness to in-person therapies. So, we need to have more research to understand which disorders and situations are treatable in this modality», counting that not all methodologies are transferable “on the screen”. The responsibility is delegated to the skills of the therapist who must be able to grasp the details of a world that has new stimuli, all to be decoded.

Whether opposed or in favor, «the truth is that this new modality is unstoppable», Lazzari concludes. Unstoppable yes, but always perfectible.

Stay hungry, stay worried

The contemporary myth of performance and technology is experiencing obvious fatigue. Social, youth and communication, are working synergistically to give a privileged spot to the topic of mental health, but it is also true that we cannot and should not stop here, at the stage of mere diagnostics and the solution within the reach of video. We need to give a role back to the relationship, whether online or in-person.

A lucid mind on the contemporary psychoanalytic and philosophical landscape, Argentine Miguel Benasayag, in his book *The Age of Intranquility. Letter to the New Generations*, published in 2023, addresses a society hyper-stimulated, distracted and deceived by the dynamics of efficiency, connectedness, hyper-modernity, social development without deficit or fragility, a humanity immersed in the “chaos of complexity.”

Against productivist dogma and cybernetic time, the philosopher’s call is to look beyond the screen by tearing apart its veil to encounter life. A desirable method of work for all.

It's already a new kind of football

Former referee Luca Marelli was the first leader of a small Italian community interested in discussing football refereeing with greater awareness. Today, on Dazn, he explains and comments on referees' decisions, which are increasingly influenced by technology: "Var has served the game; being able to listen to referees' voices is a revolution. Future? The challenge system: so that teams realize how difficult it is to referee"

by Giuseppe Salemmè

It was the afternoon of August 19th, 2017. Turin's Juventus Stadium hosted Juventus-Cagliari, the first match of the new Serie A football season. Not a big match in any sense. But it found a way to enter history when, near the end of the first half, a Juventus player, Brazilian left-back Alex Sandro, made a late challenge on Croatian striker Duje Ćop, in the defendant's penalty area.

Referee Fabio Maresca initially didn't intervene. Then, prompted by his assistants through his earpiece, he went to the sideline to review the episode on a specially set up monitor. The on-field review of the challenge lasted about ten seconds. Then the referee returned to the field, blew his whistle, and traced in front of him, with his two index fingers, the shape of a typically "television-like" rectangle. And he then pointed to the penalty spot.

It was the first intervention in Italian football history of VAR, an acronym for video assistant referee used to refer to both the technology itself and the referee assistant who manages it.

The first tangible version of that "moviola in campo" ("instant replay on the pitch") that many Italian fans and commentators had called for for decades, arguing that it would prevent referee errors and eradicate the suspicions and conspiracy theories that had always accompanied Italian football narratives; another, more conservative group argued instead that such an innovation would end up distorting the most beautiful game in the world, filling it with interruptions while trying to reach an unattainable perfection.

More than seven years have passed since that day. Who was right? (For the record: in that match, Gianluigi Buffon put everyone in agreement by saving the penalty and paving the way for Juve's victory, who then went on to win their sixth championship in a row.)

Impact

A first point must be immediately awarded to the "pessimists": the controversies, conspiracy theories, and behind-the-scenes speculations



LUCA MARELLI



about football haven't ended. At all.

Luca Marelli, while not a pessimist, was certainly among those who had predicted this outcome. Between 2001 and 2009 he refereed almost 150 matches between Serie C, B, and A, while he also practiced law in Como, his hometown. In 2016, after the end of his referee career, he opened the website "Il blog di Luca Marelli." "At that time there was a big lack of information about the refereeing world. So I decided to open a blog to provide some basic education about rule interpretation; where I also responded to every single user who asked me questions or made observations," he tells MAG. The blog quickly became a landmark for a small community of enthusiasts; and Marelli became the unofficial "Supreme Court" of the football refereeing world, thanks to his precise and detailed explanations of various decisions. Following that experience, in 2021 Marelli would join the team of the online sports broadcaster Dazn, where he still comments on Serie A refereeing episodes today.

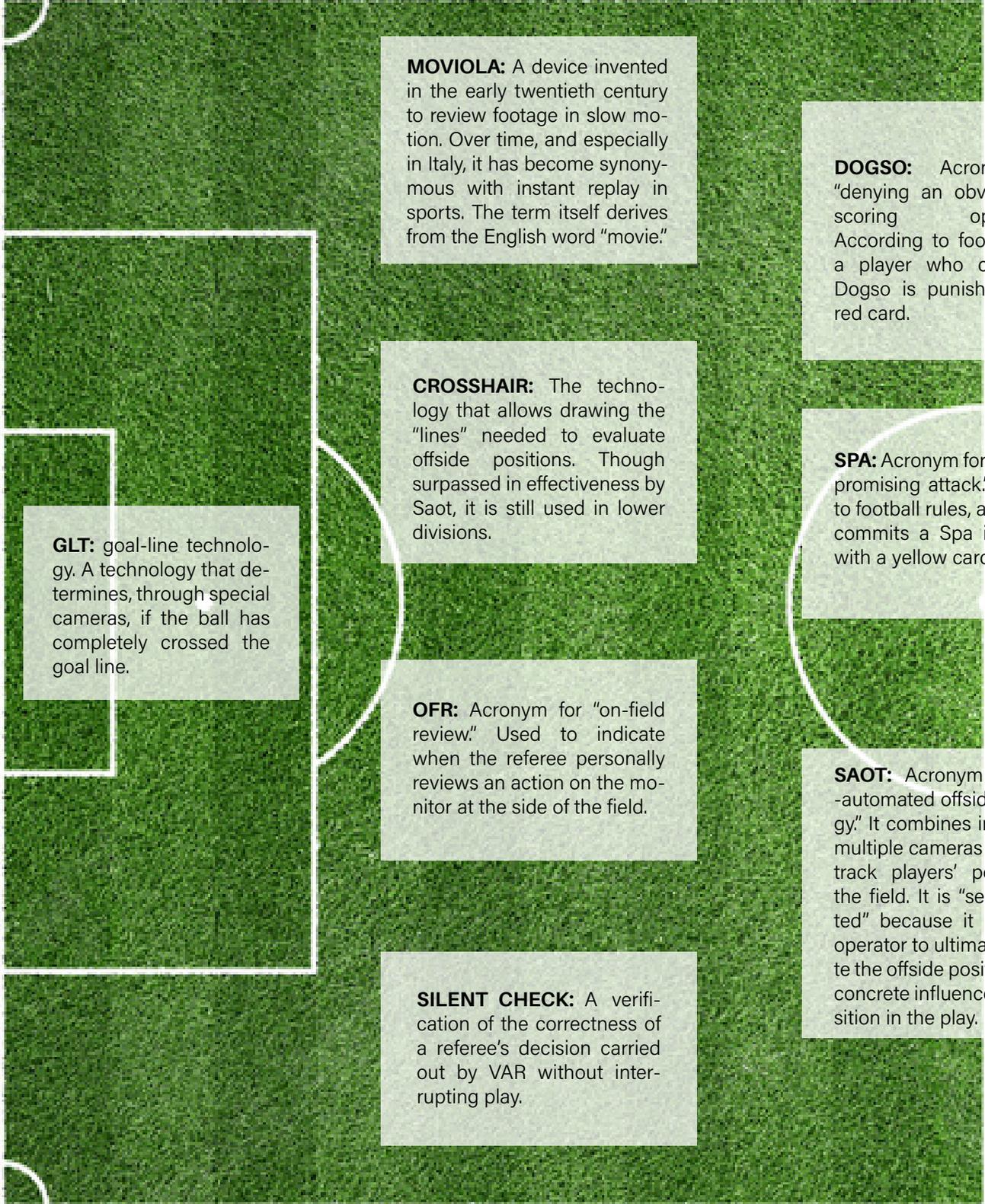
But already during his blogger days, months before the official introduction of VAR in football, Marelli had issued a warning: manage your expectations. In an blog post titled "Why VAR Won't Change (Almost) Anything," Marelli wrote: "Episodes that generate endless discussions will continue to generate do so, with the aggravating factor of bad faith suspicions." "More than articles, they were 'thinking out loud' reflections," the former referee clarifies today. "But having already participated in some tv shows, I knew something about the world of communication: there, the desire to understand is always weaker than the

desire to argue." However, he admits that the chosen title was a bit extreme: "It may not have served to eliminate controversies, but VAR has definitely served the game. Think about last September's 'derby di Milano': without VAR, Milan would have been awarded a penalty for a touch that was judged as handball in real-time, but was actually a shoulder. Such a decision would have altered the result of the match, and people would have talked about it for days if it hadn't been corrected by VAR." Marelli has a point. In the few cases where VAR can actually intervene (namely the awarding of goals, penalties, and direct red cards, and in cases of "mistaken identity" of the player to be sanctioned) referee mistakes have actually decreased: by 86%, as stated by referee designator Gianluca Rocchi, in 2022. The following year, VAR was further implemented with a new technology that allows detecting offside with almost absolute certainty: semi-automated offside (SAOT). A goal-line technology (GLT), which alerts the referee as soon as the ball crosses the goal line, has already been active since 2016.

Evolution

The rules of the game of football were designed (and have evolved over the years) to be applied by a referee on the field, directly in touch with players and in real-time. The introduction of subsequent video control on referee decisions represents in this sense a conceptual revolution: "Today, in a top-tier match, more than 30 cameras are pointed at the field. The Lega's tv direction uses 21, plus the 12 that make SAOT work: it's a lot. This means we can see practically everything that happens

TODAY'S FOOTBALL TERMINOLOGY



GLT: goal-line technology. A technology that determines, through special cameras, if the ball has completely crossed the goal line.

MOVIOLA: A device invented in the early twentieth century to review footage in slow motion. Over time, and especially in Italy, it has become synonymous with instant replay in sports. The term itself derives from the English word "movie."

CROSSHAIR: The technology that allows drawing the "lines" needed to evaluate offside positions. Though surpassed in effectiveness by Saot, it is still used in lower divisions.

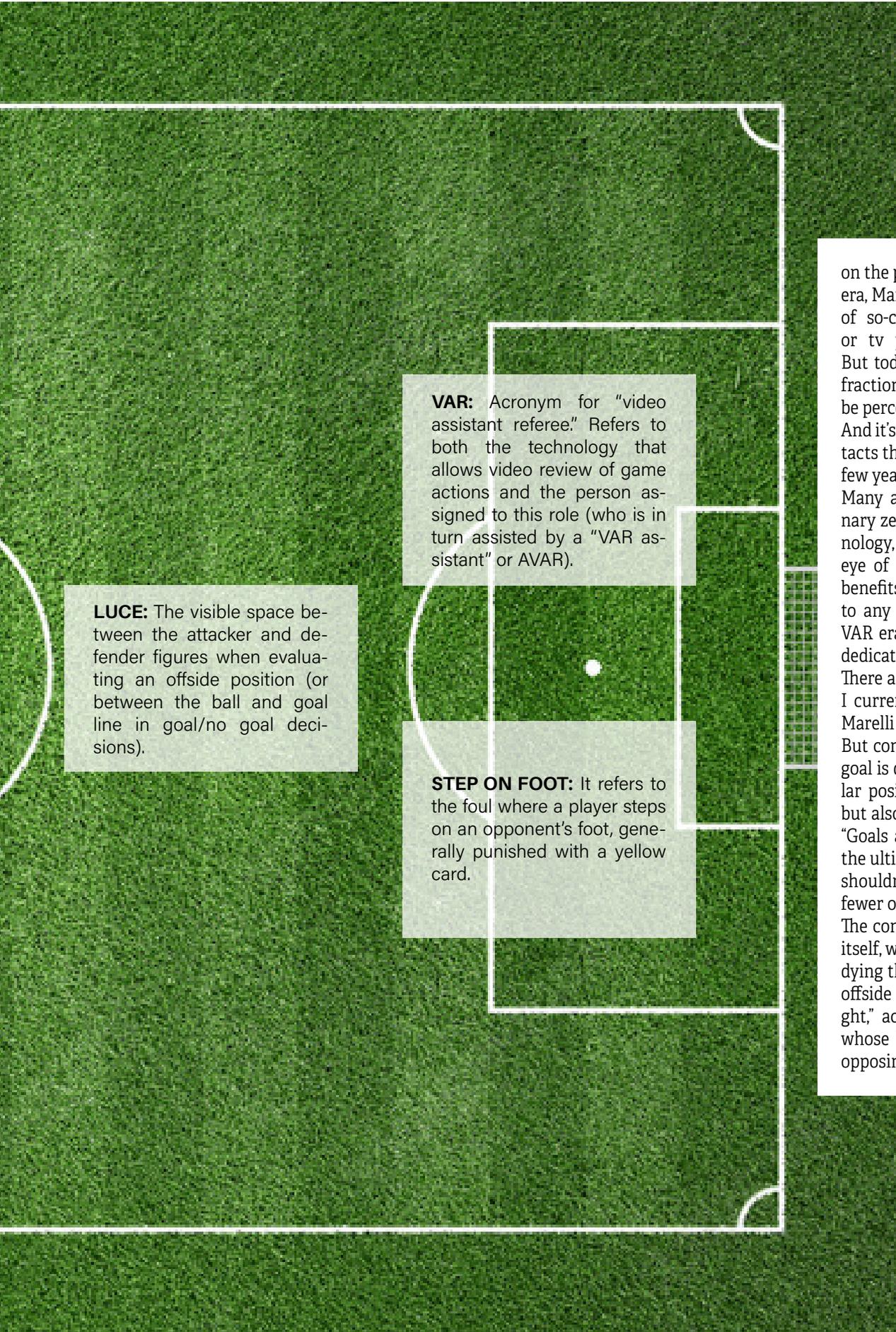
OFR: Acronym for "on-field review." Used to indicate when the referee personally reviews an action on the monitor at the side of the field.

SILENT CHECK: A verification of the correctness of a referee's decision carried out by VAR without interrupting play.

DOGSO: Acronym for "denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity." According to football rules, a player who commits a Dogso is punished with a red card.

SPA: Acronym for "stopping a promising attack." According to football rules, a player who commits a Spa is punished with a yellow card.

SAOT: Acronym for "semi-automated offside technology." It combines images from multiple cameras to precisely track players' positions on the field. It is "semi-automated" because it requires an operator to ultimately evaluate the offside position and the concrete influence of that position in the play.



LUCE: The visible space between the attacker and defender figures when evaluating an offside position (or between the ball and goal line in goal/no goal decisions).

VAR: Acronym for "video assistant referee." Refers to both the technology that allows video review of game actions and the person assigned to this role (who is in turn assisted by a "VAR assistant" or AVAR).

STEP ON FOOT: It refers to the foul where a player steps on an opponent's foot, generally punished with a yellow card.

on the pitch." On his blog, in the pre-VAR era, Marelli often criticized the awarding of so-called "rigorini" (light penalties, or tv penalties) for minor contrasts. But today the picture has changed: "Infractions that twenty years ago couldn't be perceived are now impossible to miss. And it's normal to have penalties for contacts that would have been overlooked a few years ago."

Many are critical of this new "sanctionary zeal." Semi-automated offside technology, for example, often ends up in the eye of the storm despite the objective benefits it has brought: "If we think back to any post-match Monday in the pre-VAR era, we all remember entire shows dedicated to discussing offside positions. There are no more now: thanks to SAOT, I currently consider a solved problem," Marelli states.

But controversies resurface each time a goal is disallowed for millimetric irregular positions, imperceptible to referees, but also to fans and players on the field. "Goals are the beauty of the game, and the ultimate objective of those who play: shouldn't we create conditions to see fewer of them disallowed?" many ask.

The concern has been taken up by FIFA itself, which recently declared it was studying the possible reintroduction, in the offside rule, of the old concept of "daylight," according to which only a player whose body is entirely beyond the last opposing defender would be considered

offside. But Marelli is skeptical on this proposal: “Many forget it, but that offside rule was in force until 2007. It was abolished because it was totally impossible to apply: the linesmen had to go by feeling, basically. And indeed there were tons of errors. With the current rule, instead, even in Serie C we manage to have excellent level assistants who make mistakes very rarely.” The “lower divisions” issue, often overlooked, is really important: “With SAOT, in theory, it would be possible to verify if there is ‘daylight’ between an attacker and a defender. But the cameras and technological infrastructure that allow it to function are too expensive to be sustainable in lower divisions.” Clearly, “fragmenting” football by applying different set rules to different categories is not a viable path.

The same goes for the “effective time” rule, which many fans and insiders often openly advocate for, in an attempt to limit time-wasting and cheap obstructionist tricks by benches and players. The fact that a football match consists of two 45-minute halves, where the clock never stops, is a fundamental element of the game. And the game, for Marelli, “works well as it is. Rather than changing it completely, I’m in favor of a compromise proposal: applying effective time only in stoppage time, to ensure that, at least in those minutes, the game won’t allow any time waste.”

The former referee is much more open to another proposal, that of “VAR on demand,” following the “challenge” model that has been in force for years in tennis or volleyball. In October, the FIGC asked IFAB, the “guardian” body of the rules of the game, to begin experimenting with it in youth championships and Serie C. “It’s a proposal that I evaluate positively for two reasons. The first is that right now VAR is a tool exclusively available to the referee, while in my opinion it should be made available to the game itself: and therefore also to the teams, through captains or benches,” Marelli states. “The second reason is that, finding themselves evaluating whether to consult VAR or not, the teams themselves would realize how difficult it is to referee.”

He’s right, it is a difficult job. And it looks like the public is finally starting to acknowledge this.

Openness

“They have twenty-two legs, and so do we. The ball is round; the goal is square; the referee is a cheat” said Oronzo Canà to his players in classic Italian football-themed comedy *Lallenatore nel pallone* (Trainer on the Beach). A joke to tell the truth: in football, the figure of the referee is as essential as the ball, goals, and legs. To ensure compliance with the rules, certainly; but, historically, to have someone to blame when things go wrong, too.

If regulatory and technological innovations haven’t put an end to refereeing controversies, they have already indisputably changed them. First and foremost, with the introduction of VAR, the person of the match director is no longer the only lightning rod for fans’ lowest instincts. But supporters have also had to make a “quality leap” to keep up with the controversies. New protocols, guidelines, and circulars have multiplied to regulate the new tools; and new concepts like DOGSO, SPA, and step-on-foot have been born. The rules have stratified, and refereeing dynamics have become more complex: spending weeks arguing about the body position of an attacker relative to the invisible line that star-

ts from the last defender, or about the regularity of a touch halfway between shoulder and arm, if it ever served any purpose, has suddenly become obsolete, insufficient. Something else was needed, something better. And it came.

In September 2023, six years after the introduction of VAR, streaming service DAZN aired Open VAR for the first time. The program (born in collaboration between Italian football and referee organizations, and whose episodes are available for free on Youtube) hosts each week a member of the National Referees Commission (CAN) who, in dialogue with journalists and sports commentators, explains the most interesting or controversial refereeing decisions of the season. More importantly, it does so by listening to the original audio communications between referee, assistants, and VAR while those decisions were being made: something unprecedented for Italian football (and not only). “I find that Open VAR has been a true communicative revolution: for the first time we can listen to referees’ voices during the review process of any episode,” states Marelli, who participates every week in the process of choosing episodes to examine. For him, a precursor of “well-done” refereeing analysis, it’s a bit like coming full circle: “During the blog era, I often wrote about the need for AIA (the Italian referee association) to open up to the public, to communicate: it was probably then that fans also began to feel this need. And today I can say I’m very proud to collaborate with the broadcaster that finally made it happen.”

In a handful of years, that niche of football refereeing nerds that used to gravitate around Marelli’s blog has grown and become mainstream. But the most fascinating aspect of Open VAR is in the new light it sheds on referees: for the first time, we can judge them on how they actually do their job, and not just on the final decision they make: “Referees and assistants are the first to be happy about this more thorough public scrutiny. It valorizes them, and it makes people understand that their decisions aren’t the result of subjective evaluations. Behind every choice there are lots of steps to follow: watching the images, choosing the most suitable replays, reviewing them, understanding which rule to apply and if it can be applied. All in a minute, a minute and a half. Their great professionalism comes out.” Youtube comments on the first episode of Open VAR were enthusiastic: “The behind-the-scenes makes the decision time seem endless, but during the match we don’t notice anything: that’s incredible”; “One episode was enough for me to understand how complex it is even to be in the VAR room, and how great referees are at quickly evaluating and verifying hundreds of rules applied to the field in real time.”

Open VAR allows the human side of the referees to emerge for the first time: it’s impossible not to feel at least a little human empathy for their role. And that’s one thing that we need to value and protect, in an era where artificial intelligence seems to take over every field and human activity. But Marelli, as a former referee, doesn’t believe those technocratic visions by which even referees would soon be replaced by supposedly superior and infallible algorithms: “I don’t believe AI has great prospects in football. It has always been, and always will remain, a game of men and women. Of their athletic gestures, and of their ability to play with that ball that, one way or another, we’ve all been chasing for a lifetime.”



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Escalation

a story by Nicola di Molfetta*

At nine o'clock in the evening on an ordinary autumn Wednesday, the Inbox icon in the bottom right-hand corner of Massimo Segagni's laptop desktop flashes for an instant, followed by a trill. There is a new message. The editor-in-chief of BusinessToday, it reaches out like a cat and pulls himself up from the slump into which he has been dragged by the article he is passing in the morning edition of his online newspaper. It is an "eneid" signed by a certain Egisto Rossano, chief performance consultant of Settembrini & Co - a leading strategic consulting firm - entitled: Enterprises and advisers, route to competitiveness. A text of sixteen thousand keystrokes, spaces included, that the editor suggested to publish the following day at dawn, when that blob of adverbs and adjectives that swallowed a half opinion worth of note could ruin the day for the smallest possible number of readers, while still making happy the good Rossano and above all his managing director who, also for 2027, has decided to renew Settembrini & Co's support to the activities of the small sector newspaper.

- Max, will you take care of this?
- Sure director, I don't have a damn thing to do anyway...
- Come on, it's only a matter of eliminating a few typos and a couple of repetitions... Just cut it down to four thousand characters. Otherwise, who's going to read it?!
- Exactly...
- Don't be like that. See you tomorrow?
- Yeah, yeah. See you tomorrow.
- Have a nice evening!
- Good evening to you!

Two hours have passed. Massimo is still there. He works at the slowness of boredom. And when he hears the blin of his e-mail, he wonders how it is possible that there is someone who at that hour, without the slightest sense of decency, enjoys writing to the editorial mail to forward a request or, even worse, a press release. If it's not spam or the news of the year, thinks Business Today's editor-in-chief, it might just be a pain in the ass: a correction, a request to supplement a news item from two days earlier, or a proposal for an exciting in-depth report on the effect the climate crisis is having on the Euro-Asian markets.

Massimo, who until a few minutes before was dreaming of a cigarette or rather a beer at the Bootleg Pub together with Lucilla or, alternatively, with a couple of ex-colleagues from Corriere, bradypically stretches out a hand on the ergonomic mouse received as a gift from the company after five years of honourable service, and like a consummate poker player decides to go and see. After all, they say, the flowing text by the generous Dr Rossano can wait, and I really need a break to recover from the torpor that only certain useless infinitives are capable of provoking. So much poetry, in that five-foot-six by eighty-five-pound financial chief editor.

The subject of the e-mail is: Invoice pdc LopeLex. It was sent by Saverio Gilli. A communicator. That Gilli who occasionally writes to the newspaper to offer a technical commentary on this or that new law in the field of savings and financial law on behalf of one of his countless business legal consultancy clients. Lawyers. A pleasant person this Gilli, despite everything. Although he never saw his face, dear Max always imagined him that way. A chubby face, breath smelling of Mentadent Plus, a nice black moustache or perhaps a goatee, and the long hair of someone who ended up working in a public relations company that deals more with law firms than anything else, partly by chance and partly by accident because, if it had been up to him, he would have spent his life doing something else, perhaps volunteering for one of those non-profit organisations that try to save the world without profit.

The tone of his messages, that always courteous prose, and the whole repertoire of Good morning, Good evening, Sorry to bother you, Thanks for your attention and A dear greeting, which he never misses in his fraternal-style letters, have always made that Saverio Gilli very likeable.

What's up, Saverione bello? The journalist asks himself as he hovers the cursor over the title of the message to explore its content.

Only because it's you, dear Gillino, because otherwise I would have left by now, and good night. It is a payment reminder, written in perfect Gillese. There is everything there should be in such cases: an indication of the expected fee for the communication plan devised for this LopeLex associated law firm; a passage reminding the recipient that the deadline for such payment has already expired a few weeks ago; a useful line to make it clear that this request will be the last one in good-natured tone, while any subsequent communications will arrive on the letterhead of another law firm charged with protecting the agency's interests. Even in this mischievous, the Gilli style is perceived and seems to make the message less harsh, which, although calm and cordial, leaves no room for misunderstanding. These guys from LopeLex associated law firm need to kick out the grain. And fast too. After all, when it comes to money... In this case it is a 3,388 euro bill plus VAT. Certainly not an astronomical figure. But these days..., thinks Massimo.

In any case, it is clear that this is a mistake. The good Gilli forwarded to the BusinessToday editorial office a message that was intended for the LopeLex firm's answering machine. Only, the good old communicator mistakenly included a group e-mail address in his copy. Evidently a mailing list of journalistic contacts that also included BT's.

Not bad, dear Xavier. Our Max thinks, pointing his hands on the armrests of the swivel chair and hoisting himself up for a few seconds in an elliptical fashion like a Korean gymnast on the parallel bars. Then he sits back and after harpooning Gilli's e-mail he moves it without wasting any more time into the virtual bin of his PC, which confirms the successful elimination by playing the sound of a crumpled sheet of paper, or something similar.

Well, back to Dr Rossano! young Max tries to take courage. He only has

a couple of thousand jokes left to churn out and he'll finally be done. But first, our procrastinator decides to stretch his legs and go for a coffee at the machine. He notices that Lucilla is still in the secretary's office. Even today he spent a lot of time thinking about her. About her white silk blouse and the elegance of that pair of dangling earrings she showed up at the office with. He has been wanting to approach her for weeks to ask her out. But he gets shy with her. And every time he finds an excuse to put her off.

Tonight I have no alibi, he says to himself. In front of his door, he drums his knuckles on the jamb. Coffee before you go? She smiles at him and says she will only accompany him. If he were to drink another coffee at that hour, he wouldn't sleep a wink all night. They stay together for a few minutes. To Max it seems only a few moments. Again, he didn't have the courage to ask anything. They talked about the cold that doesn't come. Of the floods in Sicily. About the umpteenth blockage of the metro line 4. Lucilla also showed interest in the new editorial plan presented by the editor the week before. Lucky her.

Back in front of the computer screen, Massimo Segagni taps his fingers on random keys to bring the machine out of the stand-by stupor it has been in during his absence. Another mailbox notification appears on the desktop. There is a new incoming message. Subject: Invoice pdc LopeLex.



It's Saverio again. He realised he had accidentally forwarded the debt collection file to the 'Gior.Uno' list.

'Dear friends, I think it is clear to you that you were not the addressee of the previous e-mail,' he writes in perfect Gillese. 'Please ignore the message and forgive the inconvenience. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a good evening, in the expectation of soon having the chance to hear from you or meet you in one of our usual initiatives.'

No problem dear Gil, think Max. To want to hurt you is impossible. Then, with an automatic gesture he also gets rid of this message, ready to finally get back to work.

Not even time to reopen the draft of the Rossaneide he has been working on since a quarter to seven, when a new trill reopens the matter of the 3,388 euros (excluding VAT) owed by LopeLex's lawyers to GR Communications Srl. It's Matteo B. Another journalist. Massimo knows him. He works for Money & Honey, a very vertical publication, the official organ of the Italian honey producers' association. Massimo used to play five-a-side football with Matteo B. Then he got married and decided to quit. Massimo, on the other hand, continued with his younger colleagues, leaving a cruciate, an ankle and even an Achilles tendon on the field. The apologist, like his colleague from Business Today dot itti, also realised his mistake right away, only unlike him he felt obliged to reassure Xavier and acknowledge his message of apology. 'You're welcome, Save! I'll talk to you soon.' And hello to Matteo as well.

Now, though, let's really try to close this article, otherwise it's getting dark here, thinks Max. By the way, Lucilla's gone too, and the reasons for still being in the editorial office have definitely collapsed below the zero line.

But the matter of Gilli's e-mail seems to conspire against him. There is a new message. The electronic missive is from another recipient on Xavier's List.

How many people have you shoved into that group, blessed Gillino? Max would like to ask the pr gentleman.

The sender is a certain Lodovico Morelli from Economiaweb. With a hint of acidity he asks why his address is in 'this chain'. He adds no more. He doesn't give a damn about the apologies, which have already been sent, about the human error already confessed, about the fact that it is now late and perhaps it would be enough to overlook the issue to see it fade away, like the end of a 1980s pop song after the third minute and twenty-two of playback. This Morelli's words are like the first thunder announcing a storm. And indeed, not even a minute passes that the Inbox icon comes alive, certifying the receipt of yet another message. T.T@qualcosamail.it, skipping all pleasantries, latches onto the question of his exalted colleague Morelli, confirming that he (or she, in fact) also finds himself in this e-mail chain without knowing why. Then he remarks: 'I would suggest deleting any other email with this subject line immediately before opening it and before it goes viral. Thank you and good work'.

Max wonders if this T.T. has even a vague idea of how e-mails work and the difference between stating the obvious and demonstrating one's intellectual superiority by limiting oneself to silence.

Inbox. You have one new message.

I knew it, says Max, who in the meantime has decided to close the text under revision even though it is still one thousand two hundred and sixty-five characters longer than the editor asked him to. Besides, it is so boring that no one will get past the fourth line.



He is Anton Luca, Saverio's colleague and partner. He has understood the turn that the LopeLex case is taking, and cannot bear to see his partner swept away by the wave of controversy along with his load of good feelings and sincere contrition.

Anton Luca's surname is Rancore, and he has a very different temperament from that of dear Xavier. Max imagines him, seated at his computer or on an underground platform, mobile phone in hand, typing a quick, sarcastic reply to whoever else is thinking of joining the chorus of sorrow for the disturbance caused by the unwanted e-mail. Rancour immediately levels out. He too thinks that greetings and courtesies can be taken for granted and writes an incipit with an obvious pulp subtext: '... And above all,' he writes, 'I would suggest replying only to the sender and not to everyone. Thank you, full stop.'

As if to say: you snooty dickheads, if you don't stop replying to this message, which, as has already been explained to you, started by mistake with your copied mailing list, this matter will never end. All you have to do is ignore it so that it immediately disappears from your screens and your miserable existences (because if you are still there at this hour, clinging to a useless controversy about cosmic nothingness, it only means that your lives have been a mistake made by chance).

Anton Luca, communication expert that he is, cannot help but be aware of what he has just done. He took a bucket, filled it with petrol and threw it on the fire of a controversy that at this point flared up into a blaze.

In quick succession, Adriano (Agenzia News), Elli (Radio 7 on 7) and Ada (Focus Finance) wrote again 'to everyone' asking to be removed from the list to which they had never explicitly subscribed.

Giorgio Arciprete, a freelancer for years in the pay of Parole e Speranza, makes a desperate attempt. Maybe, he thinks, 'they really haven't understood.'

And then he types, after a few moments that 'if we all answer again, this will continue indefinitely. We have to stop answering the e-mail because we are all in cc.'

Max can feel the panic spreading through the network. And he knows that soon someone is going to blow the whistle.

Resigned to his plans for the evening, he would now give up his Inter jersey autographed by Javier Zanetti for a beer and a tub of popcorn.

There's a new message. Max wastes no time. It's Valerio B. Trading Insight. It is he who takes it upon himself to stir up the people of the electronic conscripts. 'Next time I'll get my

my lawyer! Anyone who wants to consider asserting our rights against this continued disrespect can contact me privately. Personally, I am fed up with certain abuses. I am sorry for the mistake, but I make it a matter of principle.

Continued disrespect? wonders Max, imagining his colleague armed with all his indignation as he writes to the Readers' Mail of the Grande Quotidiano Nazionale in the hope of enjoying the fifteen minutes of fame promised by the prophet, in the Thursday edition, recounting his tragedy as a journalist violated by the constant barrage of junk mail that clogs his mailbox and condemns him to an eternal Recherche.

The situation is out of control. Ours imagines the face of poor Xavier, involuntary instigator of this wave of mass indignation. 'But how do you manage your mailing lists!?!' rants Camilla (Politics-Mind). 'Delete me!' orders Malcolm (Daily Bugle Italia). 'Delete my address as well. Thank you!', joins Paolo (Catholic Family).

There is no hope, thinks Max. Who, however, is surprised by a new message. Twenty-five lines that ooze authority and could give a decisive twist to the whole matter.

They were penned by Ivan C. (whom ours has already decided to rename 'The Great') of the authoritative international newspaper Herald Money. After reiterating that continuing to reply 'to everyone' will only contribute to making this round of unsolicited e-mails endless, he orders in capital letters:

'FROM NOW ON, DO NOT REPLY AND YOU WILL NOT GET ANYTHING TO ANYONE! Then he adds in brackets (for Saverio: don't reply either, you don't need to underline what happened again. Don't even write to thank me, that's fine).

Wow, think Max. All that's missing are the theme song and credits. The fact that the Great One has decided to intervene personally, spending sixty, maybe ninety seconds of his invaluable time as columnist and Italy correspondent of the prestigious rosy newspaper on this story, can only silence the rest of Xavier's list. Even the fiercest of them will only be able to take a step back, recoil in a silence of acceptance after the closing words uttered by the doyen of the category, not so much out of compassion for the unfortunate communicator, as out of dutiful respect for the colleague's rank and seniority.

End of show.

Massimo Segagni decides it is time for him to go too. He puts his glasses back in their case. He locks the drawer with his notebooks and Atlantis Bic. Then he goes to the bathroom to take a leak before going to the pub, hoping to find some more company. It is almost eleven o'clock. He switches off the desk lamp, letting the room sink into the bluish darkness of computers in power-saving mode. He puts on his mackintosh with its worn sleeve edges and walks out without noticing yet another hissing sound that shakes his computer.

The Inbox icon rises again. There is a new message. Subject: Invoice pdc LopeLex.

*What you have read is a work of pure fiction. Any reference to events, things, people, is to be considered purely coincidental and product of the author's imagination.

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What we did

by Nicola Di Molfetta

MAG's first series of monographs comes to a close with this issue dedicated to *Revolutions*. We plunged into the ordinary flow of information events with grace and a desire to change things, a desire to throw a bucket of ice water in the face of our routine conformism. The programme manifesto spoke of bringing the thoughts of our community members to the boil. As an innkeeper, it is not for me to pass judgement on the outcome of the operation. But of the substantial result (of the product) of this work carried out by the editorial staff of LC Publishing Group, I can say that I am very satisfied. I am talking about my colleagues Michela Cannovale, Eleonora Fraschini and Letizia Ceriani, and my colleague Giuseppe Salemme. They have been the guest editors of these four special issues of MAG, which have tried to provide a further change of perspective in the observation of the world around us and the phenomena that run through it.

The *Beautiful Buildings* we told you about were not just brick constructions signed by archistars, but the new concepts of space and time in contemporary life and society that are shaping our lives and the idea of the future.

The *Amazing Thought* of the second cover went beyond the algorithmic sequence of synthetic intelligences that are beginning to surround us and influence our way of life between new certainties and old hallucinations.

The *New World* we landed in on the third leg of this journey was that of the feminisation of society, professions, economics and science to try to understand what will change when this process is complete or what will remain the same as before, because in the end change is only a transitional phase.

The idea behind *Revolutions* is precisely to synthesise all these phenomena.

Stillness does not belong in our lives and the search for something new, the desire to overturn what does not work, to rewrite the rules of what does not lead to anything good is a primordial instinct. An urge that in history has led to great battles and petty insurrections: after all, that is how we are made, drama and comedy. How many useless battles do we devote our limited forces to? The *Escalation* story in this issue of Monographs is about the crusades that demolish humanity: those fought on matters of principle.

In short, at the first turning point we can say that we have opened up a space for the exercise of free thought. We have thrown open the windows of our minds, let in new air, and shown that even in the field of information there are infinite ways of recounting what exists.

All that remains now is to turn the page. And discover what the next chapter will be about.

