RE.CRI.RE

BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CRISIS AND THE CRISIS OF REPRESENTATION

Symbolic universes matter

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OVERVIEW

1. FRAMEWORK
2. THE ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL MILIEU
3. SYMBOLIC UNIVERSES MATTER
4. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY-MAKING

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 649436

1.FRAMEWORK

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Culture matters

- Culture affects ways of feeling, thinking and acting (cultural mediation).
- It cannot be bypassed by the reference to abstract normative framework defining what is right, just, functional (actor's interpretative autonomy).
- The greater the uncertainty and instability, the more people feel, think and act in terms of affect-laden generalized meanings that defend the sense of identity but provide simplified maps of the world, therefore make available few resources for understanding problems and finding solutions addressing the challenging changes (uncertainty-affective sensemaking link).
- Accordingly, culture - and more in general the basic mechanisms of sensemaking (i.e. how people feel, think and act) - have to be recognized as a dimension that cannot be reduced to others (e.g. to the economic and legal factors), but require: a) to be taken into account in policy-making and b) to be considered as a specific goal of policy-making.

Symbolic universes

SCPT defines such systems of assumptions: symbolic universes, due two main characteristics of them:

a) their affective, pre-semantic valence- they are used by people in the socially suggested directions before their rational argumentation enters into their minds (Valsiner, 2007);

b) the fact that they envelop the entire field of experience, rather than single parts of it. They function as the universe of sense the persons have created for themselves, and in which they are completely embedded.

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Specificity

- Processual approach – meaning-making rather than meaning
- Performativeness of meaning
- Linkage of psychological and social level
- Focus on variability and difference

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2. THE ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL MILIEU

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Method

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Sample

	Sample and goals	N.	Countries
Sample 0	Convenience	7207	15 countries
Sample 1	Homogeneous [Age*Sex] - MAXIM. VAR. Map of the symbolic universes	727	Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Spain, UK
Sample 2	Stratified (POST-HOC) [Age*Sex*NUTS1] Estimation of the incidence of symbolic universes within European societes	4051	Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, UK

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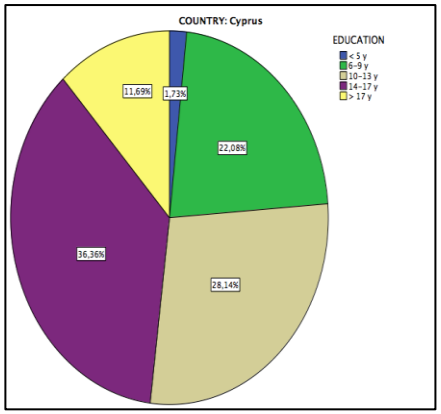

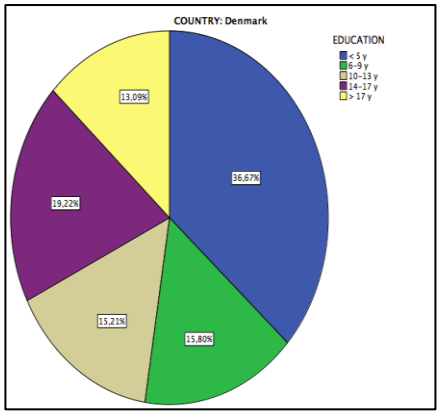

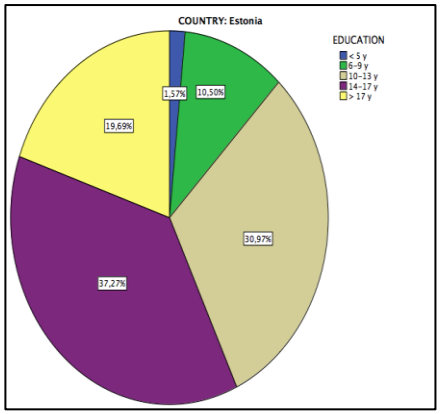

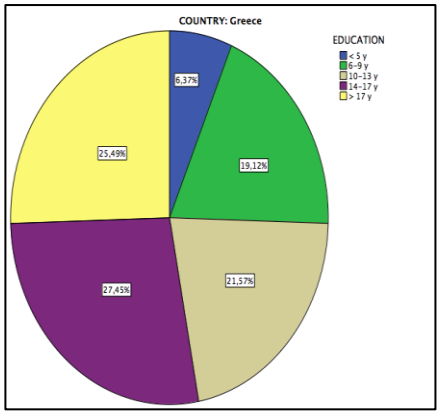

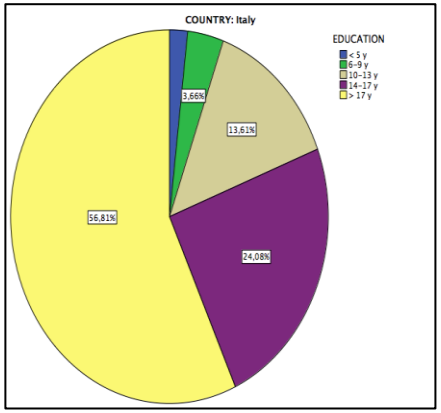

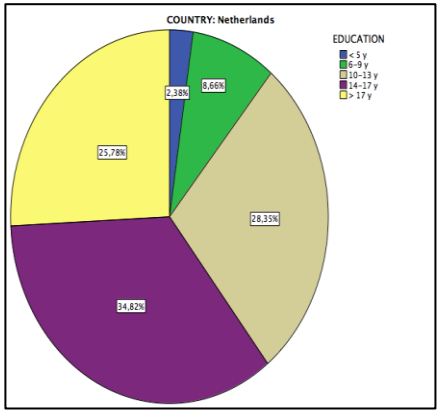

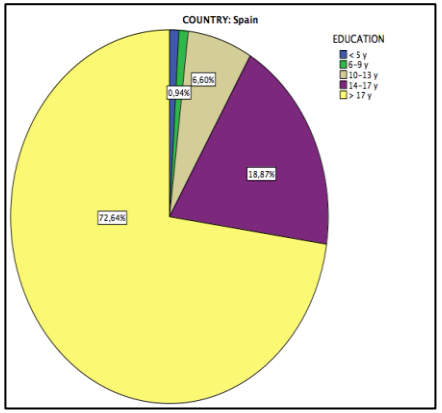

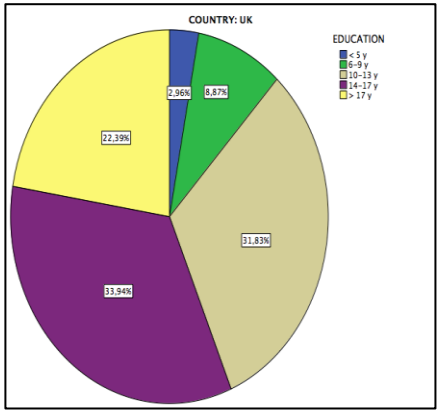

Education

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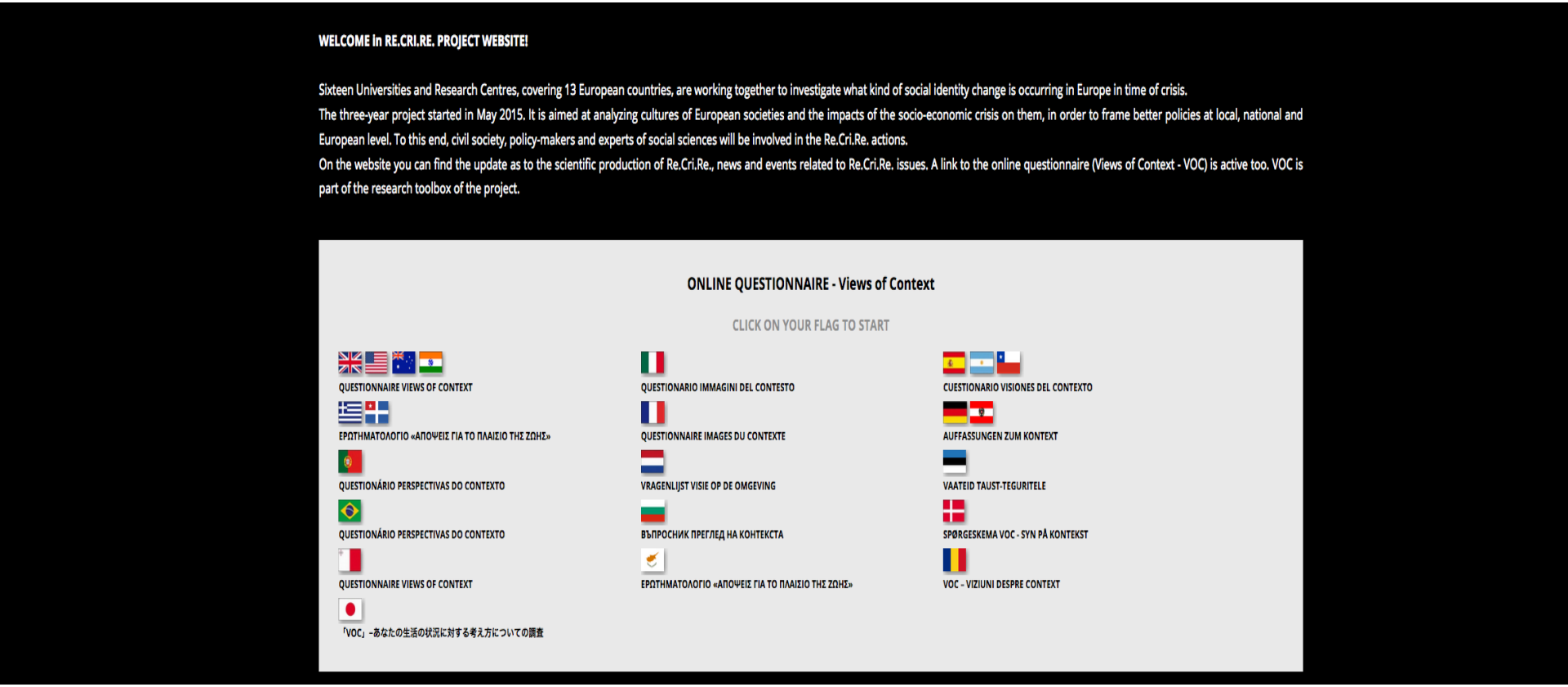
VOC on Web

www.recrire.eu



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Results

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Symbolic Universe 1. Ordered universe

Cluster 1 is characterized by two relevant facets – on the one hand, a generalized positive attitude toward the world (e.g. institutions and services, the future), considered trustworthy, receptive of the efforts to engage with and to improve it; on the other hand, the identification with transcendent values and ideals (e.g. justice, morality, solidarity; rejection of opportunism, conformism and power) fostering commitment on making things better - where such commitment is meant as a value in itself: the way of making life meaningful, rather than of pursing material interests.

The combination of these two facets outlines what we interpret as the basic assumption substantiating this symbolic universe: the faith in the inherent ethic order of the world. Rightness, morality and efficacy goes together, what is just is also efficacious in rendering things better, because the universe follows its own harmonious design. The behaviour has to conform to and reflect such universal order and in so doing one can trust in being on the right side of the history.

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Symbolic Universe 2. Interpersonal bond

Cluster 2's comprises a group of responses detecting a positive, optimistic vision of the world, as a place meaningful and fulfilling.
On the other hand, the world these responses refer to is not the universalistic one of the previous symbolic universe; rather it is the vital world of the interpersonal, emotional bonds.

To be part of such world is an end in itself: sacrifices (in terms of adaptability and conformism) done for it are repaid in terms of safety and fulfilment, as well as promote moderate sense of agency, trust and openness to novelty.

The title of the song – *all you need is love* –depicts the basic feeling this symbolic universe consists of.

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Symbolic Universe 3. Caring society

The Cluster 3's profile is characterized by a vision of the society and institutions as trustworthy providers of services and commons (e.g. education, health, security, development), receptive to the demands and needs of people.

This vision fosters the generalized feeling of confidence with life, optimism in future, sense of agency – what one has to do is to keep oneself within the rules of the game, there being those who takes care of handling it for the best.

It is worth noting how in the case of this symbolic universe the trustworthiness attributed to institutions does not means passivity and dependency; rather it works as the grounds of the sense of agency: people identified with this symbolic universe feel to be able to pursue purposes because they feel to be part of a system that supports and allows their efforts.

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Symbolic Universe 4. Niche of belongingness

The Cluster 4's profiles shares a similar anchorage to the primary network characterizing the Cluster 2.

Yet, in this case such an anchorage is combined with a negative generalized connotation of the world being outside the primary network – in terms of pessimism in the future, fatalism, untrustworthiness of agencies and institutions.

In such a context, the primary network is not a matter of pleasure, an end in itself; rather, it is a necessity responding to the need of finding shelter from and surviving to the anomic, threatening outside.

Consistently with such a feeling, the primary network is connoted in terms of familistic power (see the agreement with the statements "success depends on forming alliance with stronger people" and "sometimes one has to break the rules to help ones' loved").

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Symbolic Universe 5. Others' world

The Cluster 5's profile outlines a fully negative, even desperate vision of the world – generalized untrustworthiness, sense of impotency, lack of agency, anomy.

The world belongs to those who have power – the defeated have only the chance to try to survive day-by-day, surrendering to those with the power to lead the game.

Morality and values are a luxury one cannot afford when the only possible concern is to reduce the damn.

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Conclusive remarks

- 4 out 5 symbolic universes consist of a way of interpreting the reality by reason of a specific anchorage (i.e. the ethical norm, the institutional order, the emotional experience interpersonal bond; the belongingness).
- One symbolic universe can be viewed as the anomic reaction to the failure of those anchorages.

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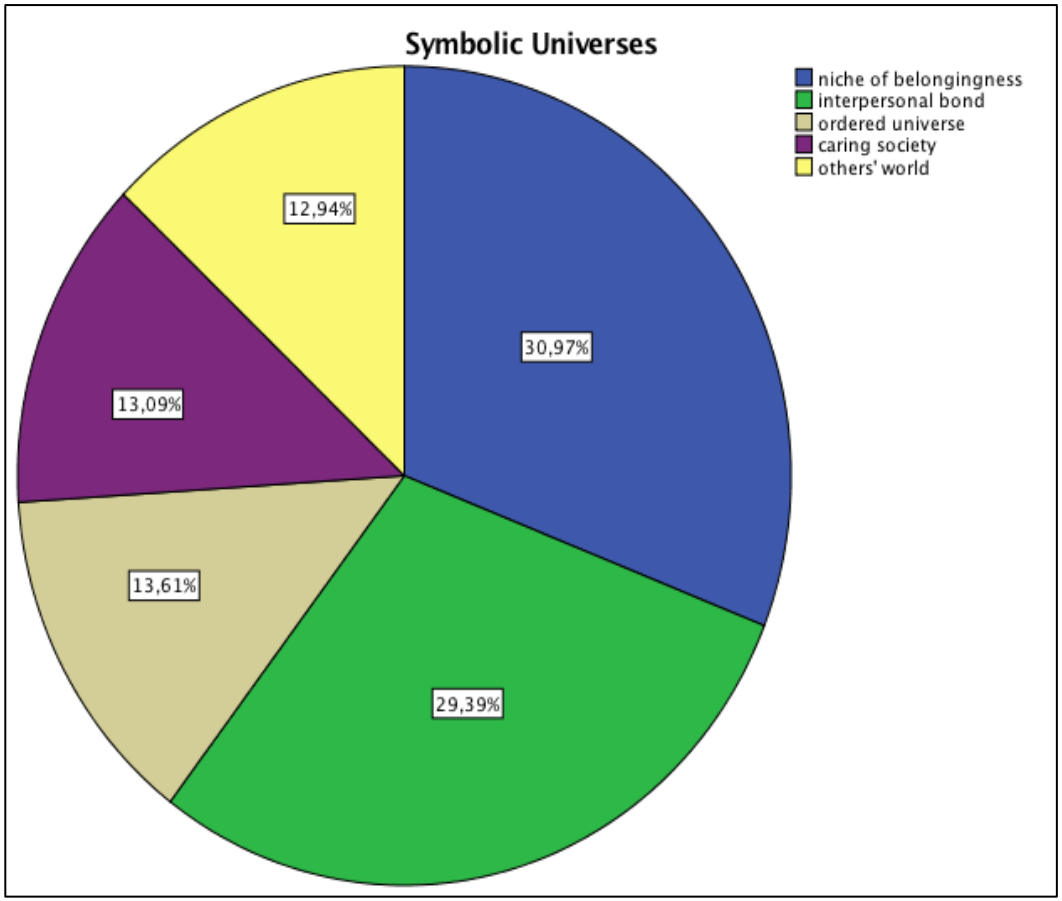
The incidence of symbolic universes over the sample



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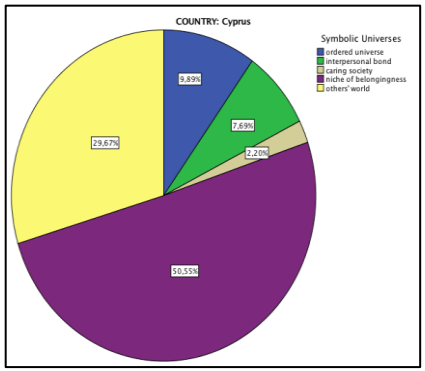
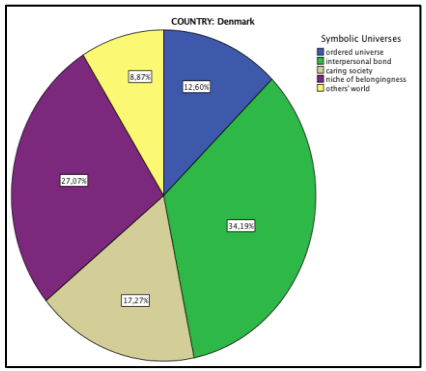
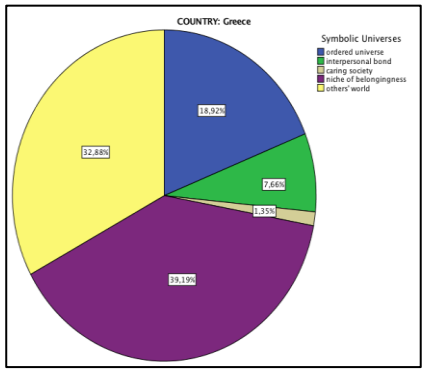
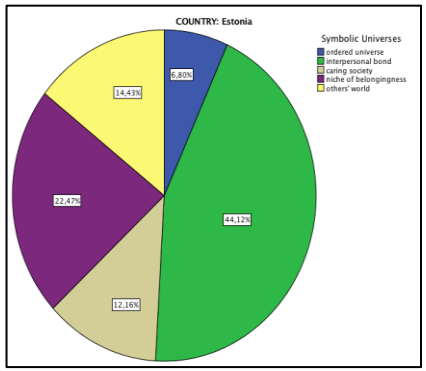
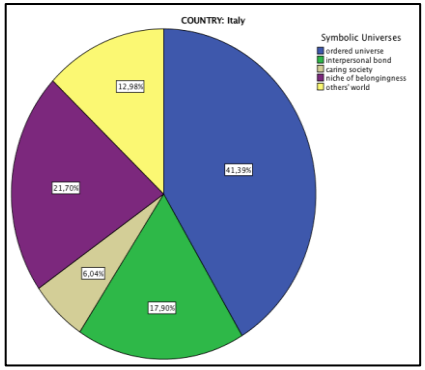
Within country incidence of the symbolic universes

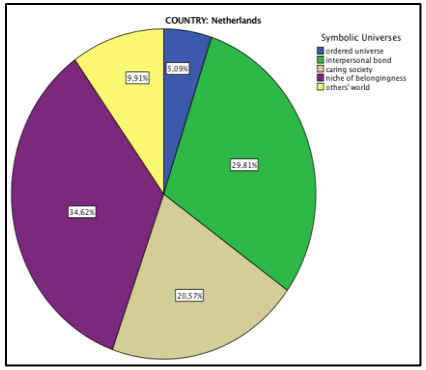


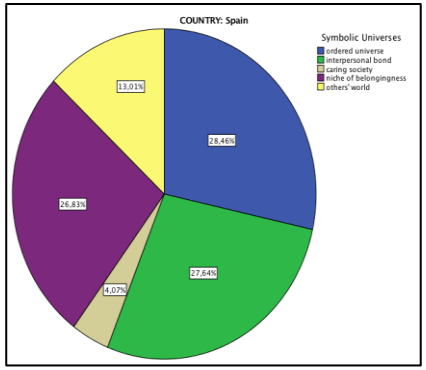


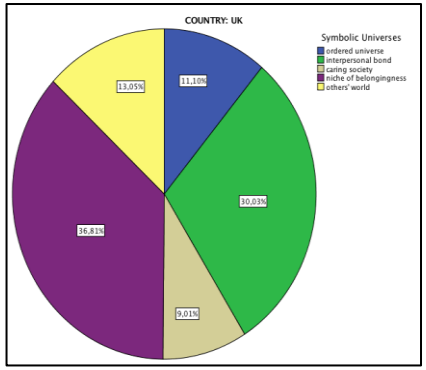












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3. SYMBOLIC UNIVERSES MATTER

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Symbolic universes and psycho-social characteristics

People identified with the symbolic universes regarded as cultural resource (*ordered universes and caring society*) are characterized by:

- functional forms of thinking (risk propensity, flexibility),
- openness to experience,
- commitment to relating,
- positive feelings,
- valorisation of otherness

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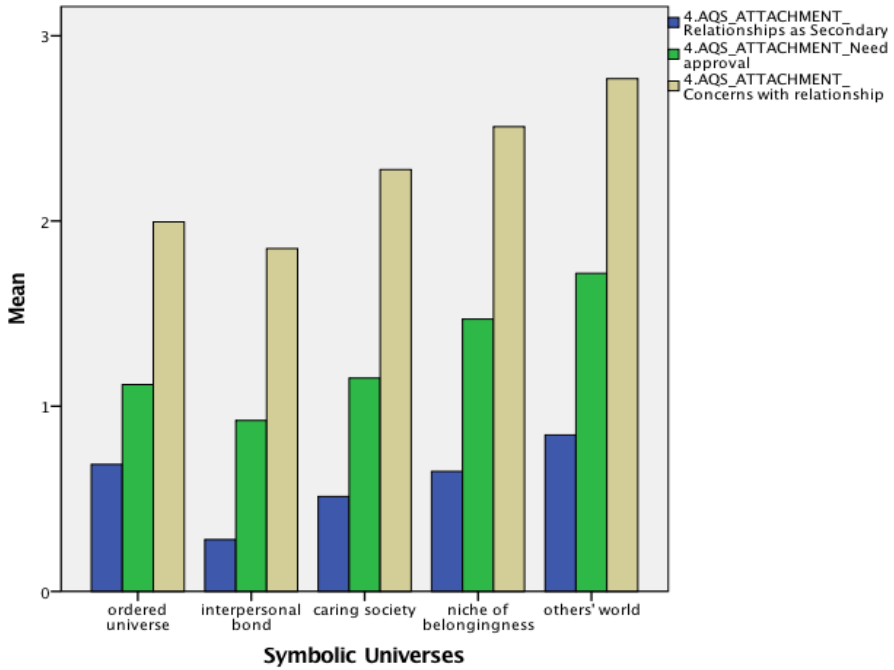
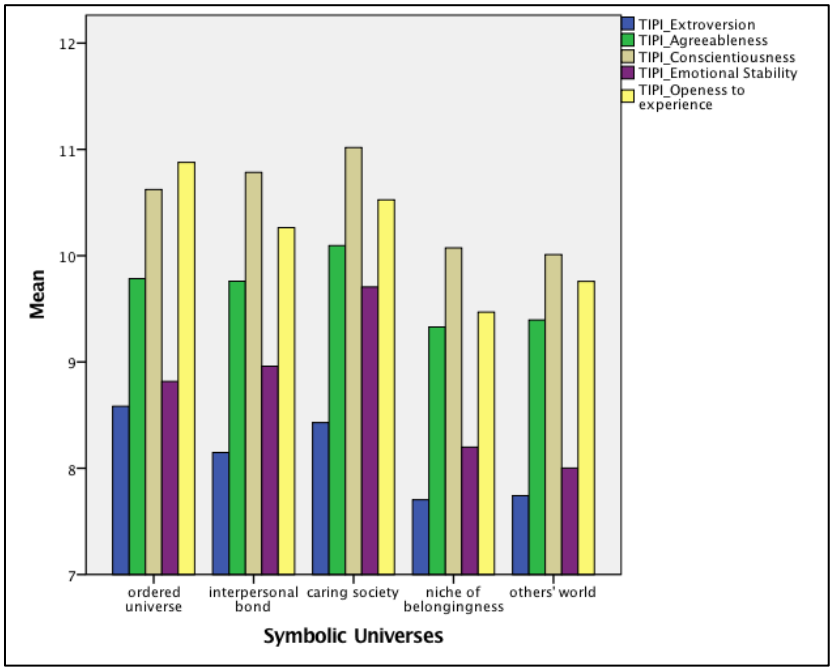
Symbolic universes and psycho-social characteristics



Attachment Style Questionnaire * symbolic universes



TIPI (BIG5)* symbolic universes

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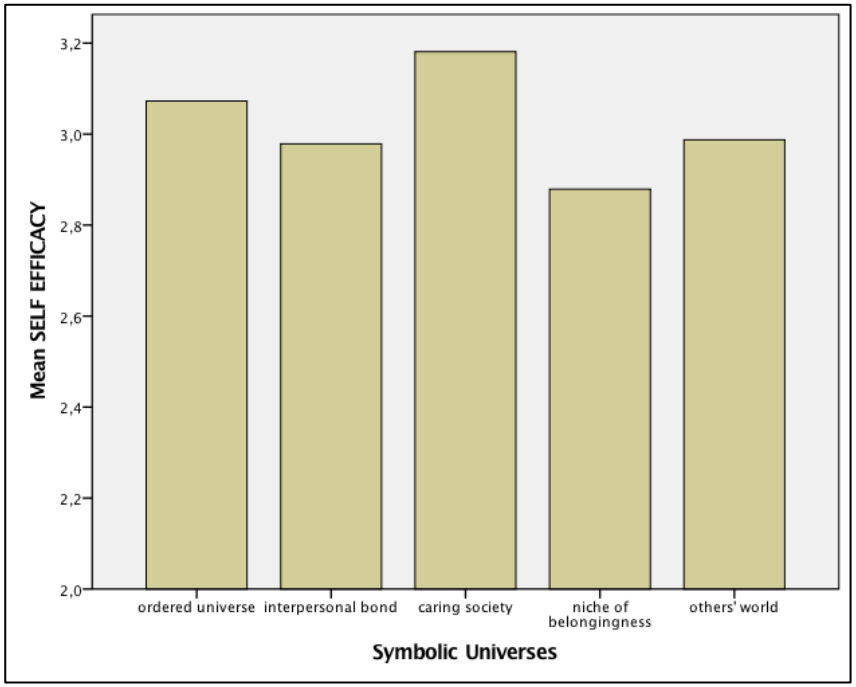
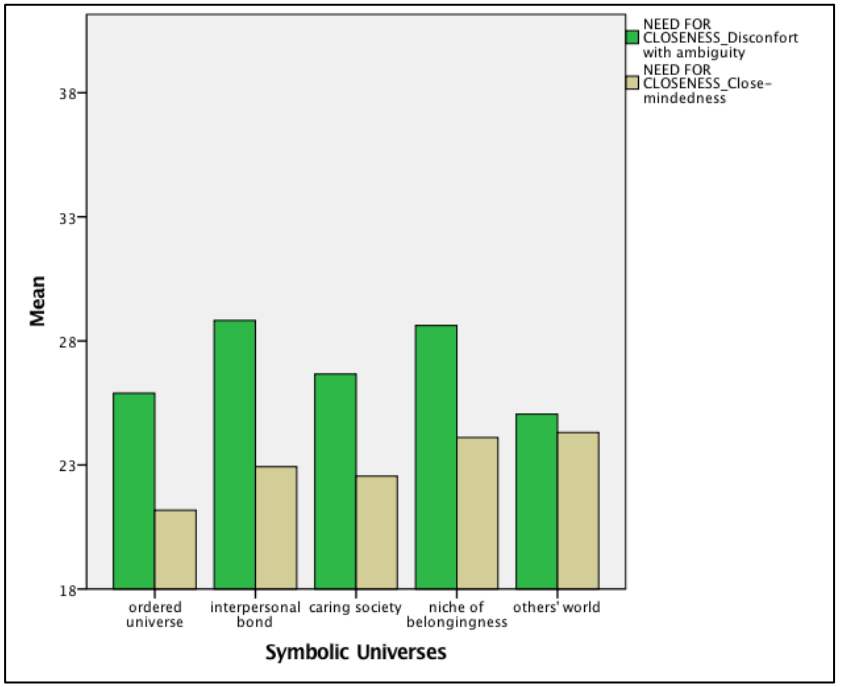


Self Efficacy * symbolic universes



Need for closure * symbolic universes

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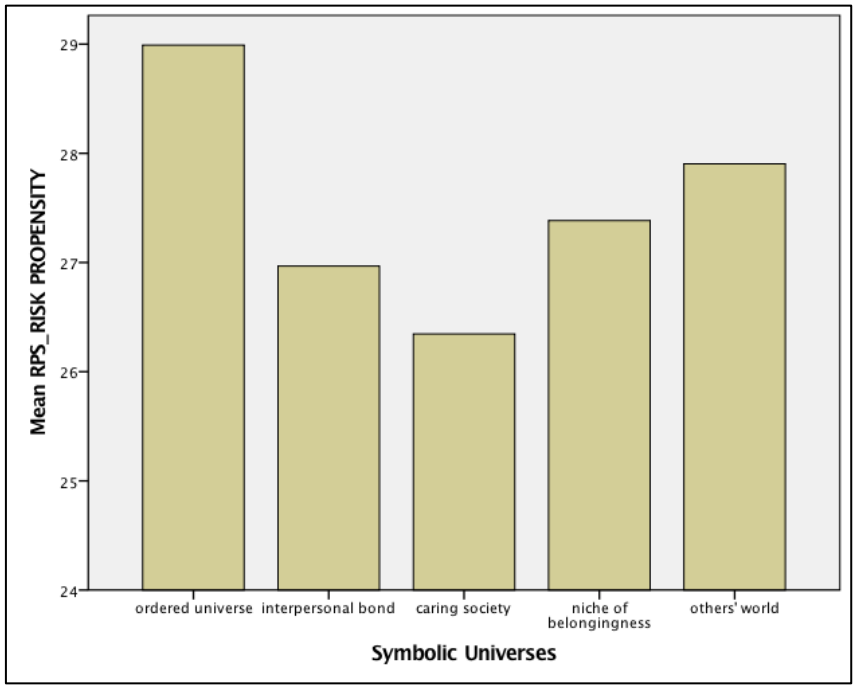
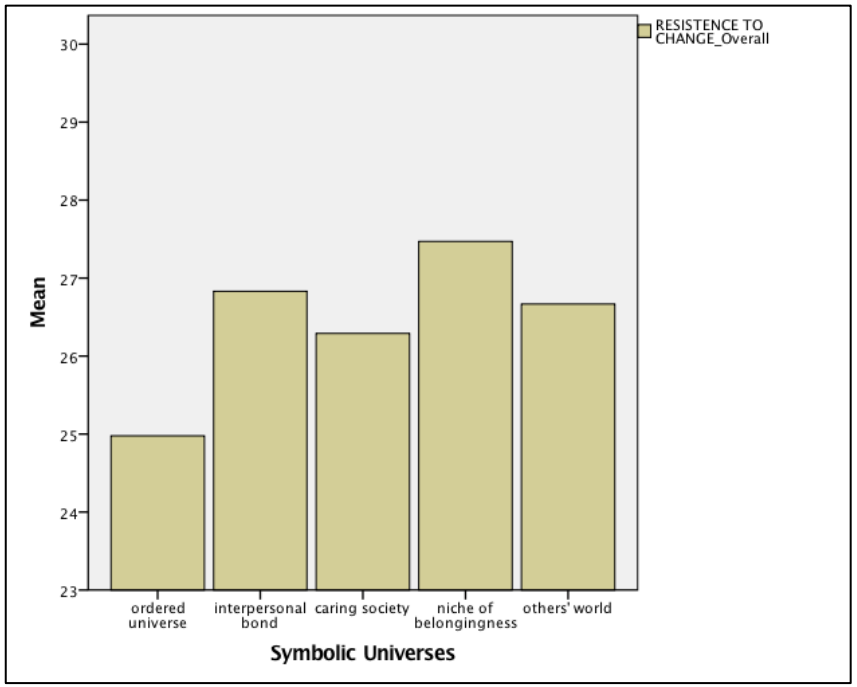


Risk Propensity Scale * symbolic universes



Resistence to change * symbolic universes

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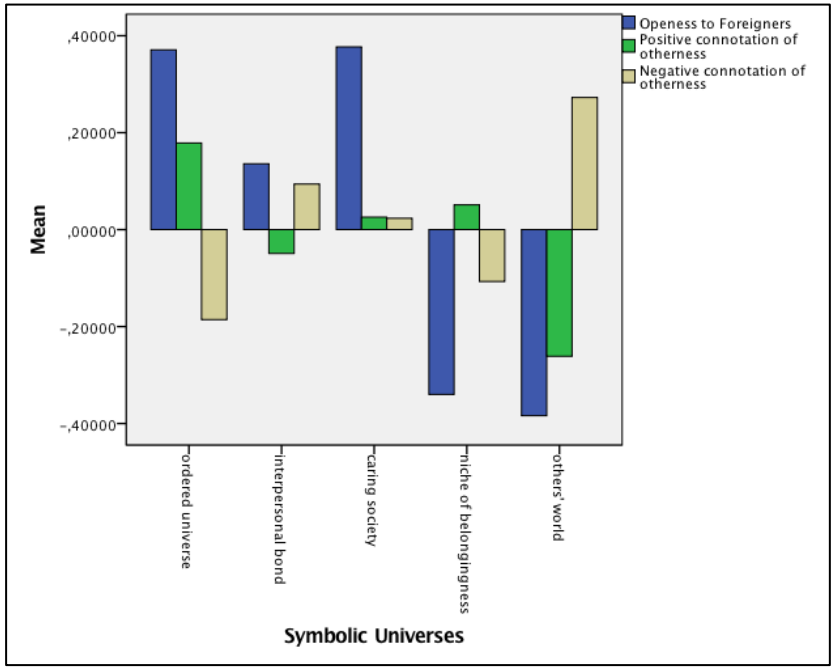
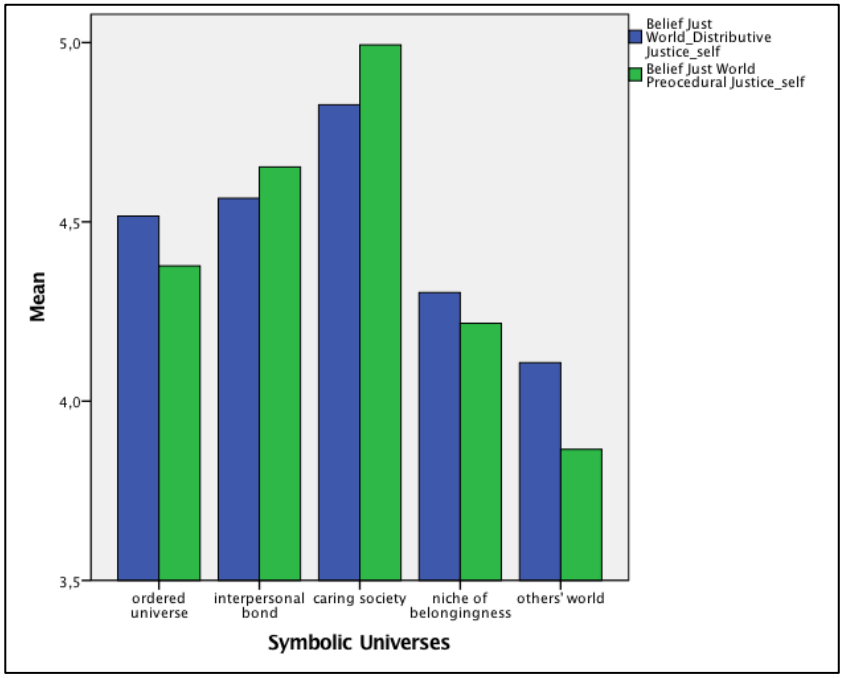


Prejudice Scale * symbolic universes



Belief Just World Scale * symbolic universes

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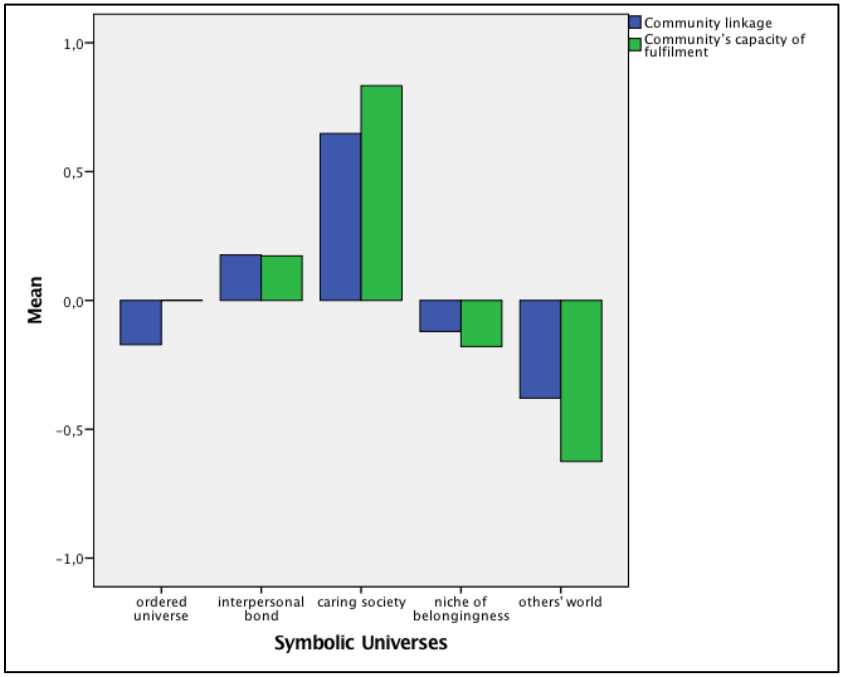
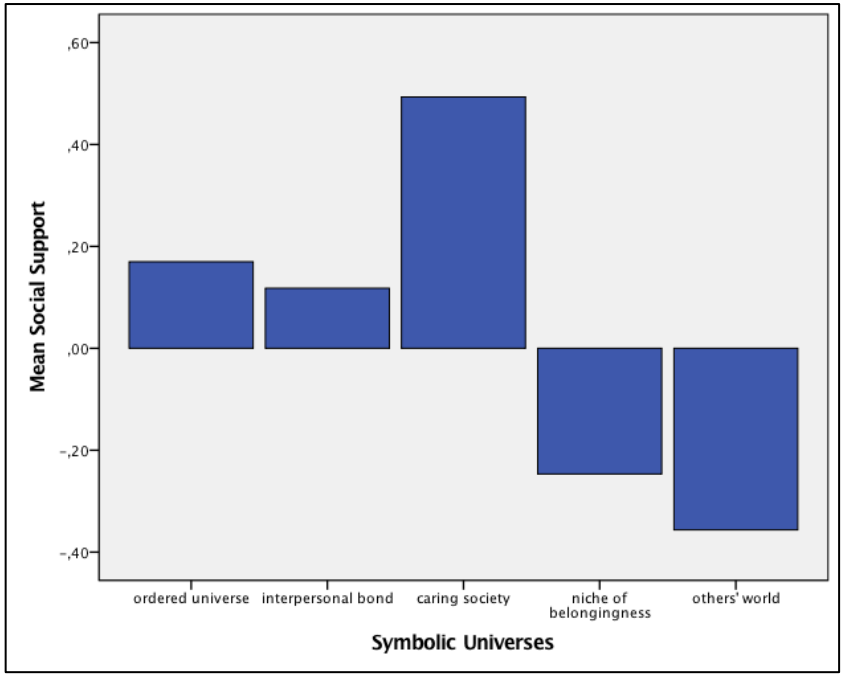


Sense of Community * symbolic universes



Scale of Perceived Social Support * symbolic universes

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The embodiment valence of symbolic universes

Symbolic universes are associated with different modes of attention distribution

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The micro-analysis of sense-making

- SAMPLE: 30 participants (15 W; 20-23 age)
- PROCEDURE: Participants were exposed (5 sec.) to an image containing political figures and symbols related to Denmark and the European Union. Participants wore SMI eye tracking system in order to have their eye movements mapped. Following the eye-tracking paradigm, participants filled out the Views of Context questionnaire (VOC, Short version, Danish language)

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Indexes

- *Activity.* The whole distance travelled by the eyes over the experimental session. This summary parameter is expected to be indicative of the level of individual activation, thus a potential indicator of the extent of engagement in the perceptual experience of the world. It is calculated as the mean of the instant distances, namely the distance between two contiguous Points of Regard. (Euclidean distance)
- *Exploration.* The variability of the trajectory of the eye movement during the experimental session over the field of view. This parameter is expected to be indicative of seeking attitude/openness towards the variability of experience, thus a potential indicator of an explorative approach to the perceptual field. For each participant, it was calculated as the complement of the 95th percentile of the distribution of Points of Regards over the field of view. To this end the field of view was divided into 16 quadrants, crossing the X axis and Y axis segmentations in quartiles (the latter defined in relation to the whole sample's set of Point of Regards). Then, for each individual, the relative frequency of Points of Regards over the 16 quadrants was calculated. Accordingly, the 95th percentile of this distribution estimates the proportion of attention that the participant uses in correspondence with his/her most focalized quadrant; thus the complement of it is a way for measuring the attention left for the exploration of other areas of the field of view.

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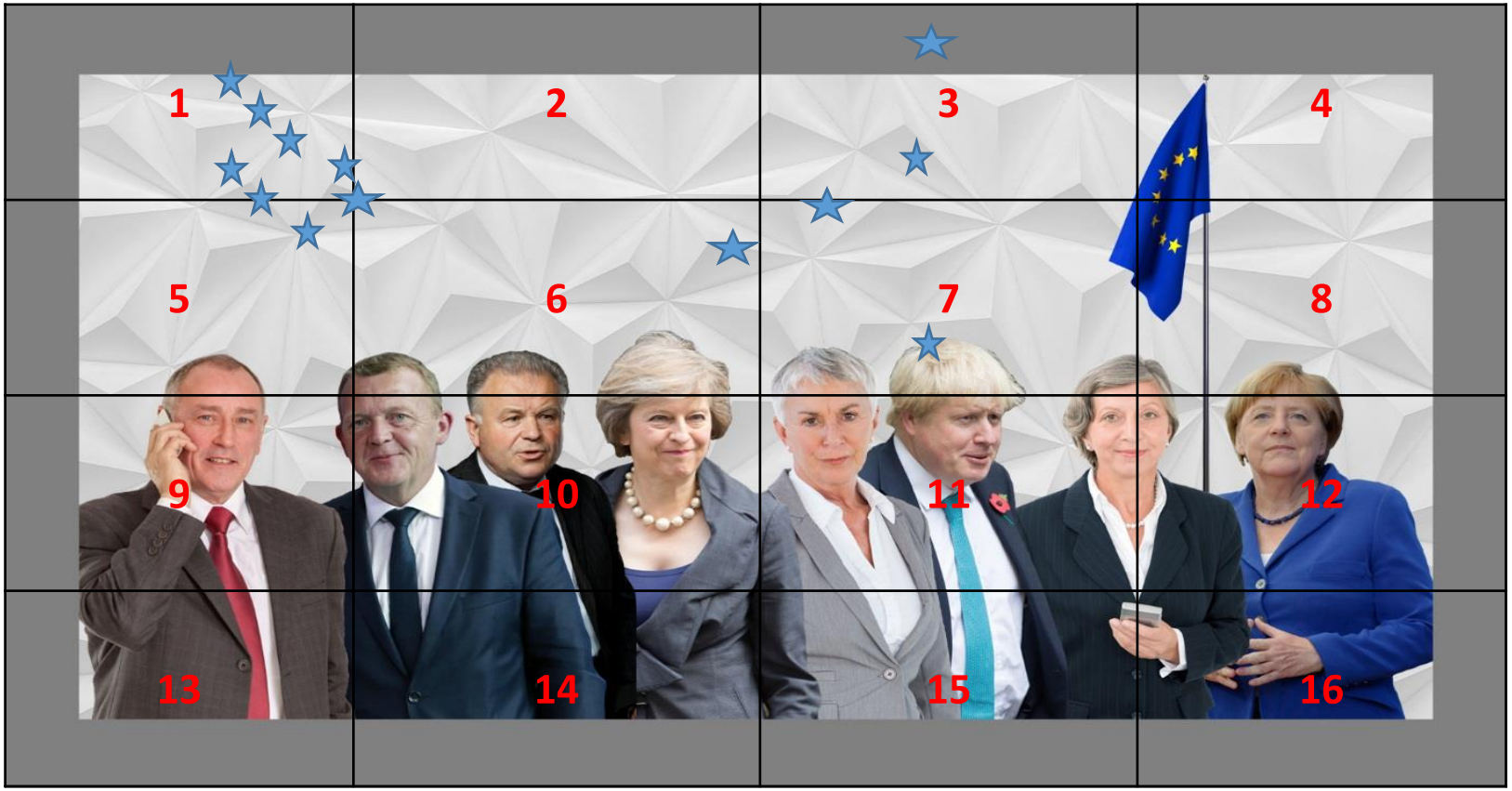

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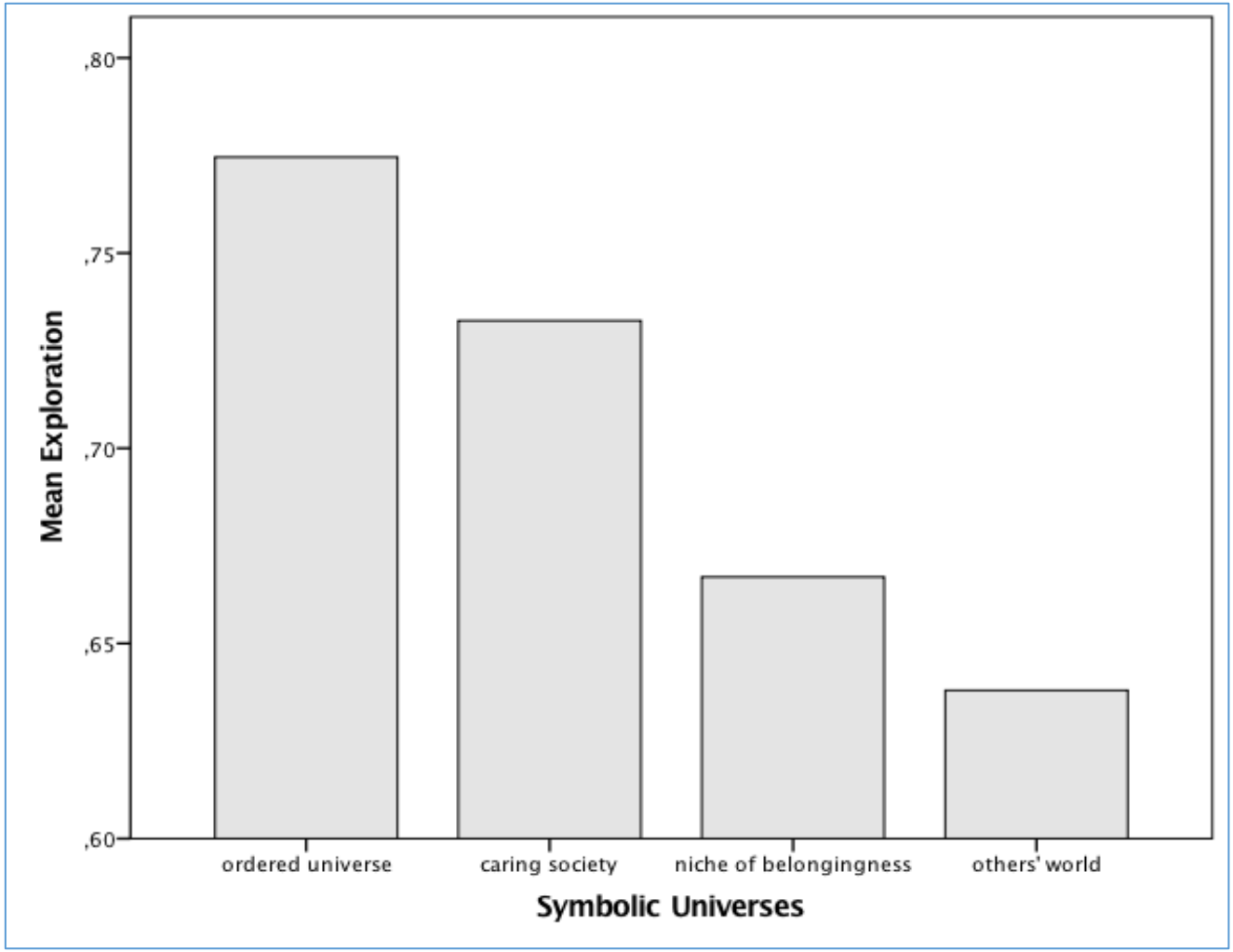

Level of exploration of the field of view* symbolic universes

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Political choice and symbolic universes

Symbolic universes discriminates between Leave and Remain UK areas at the recent Brexit referendum

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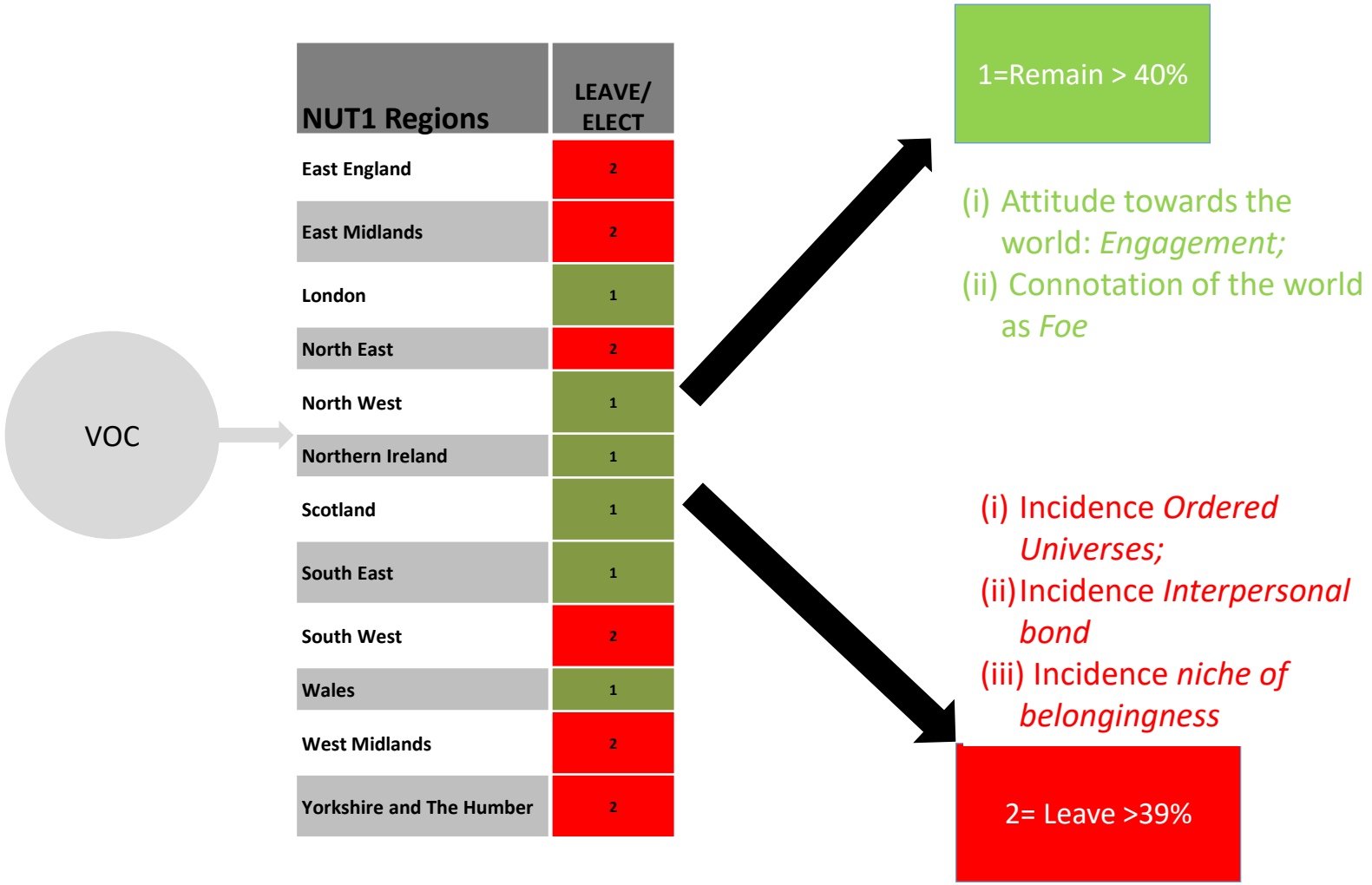

Brexit vote in terms of identity enactment rather than as expression of anomy.
See the role played by the incidence of *interpersonal bond* and *niche of belongingness* – i.e. the two symbolic universes characterized by the relevance of the identity network as well as the association Remain with Foe and Engagement with Remain areas.

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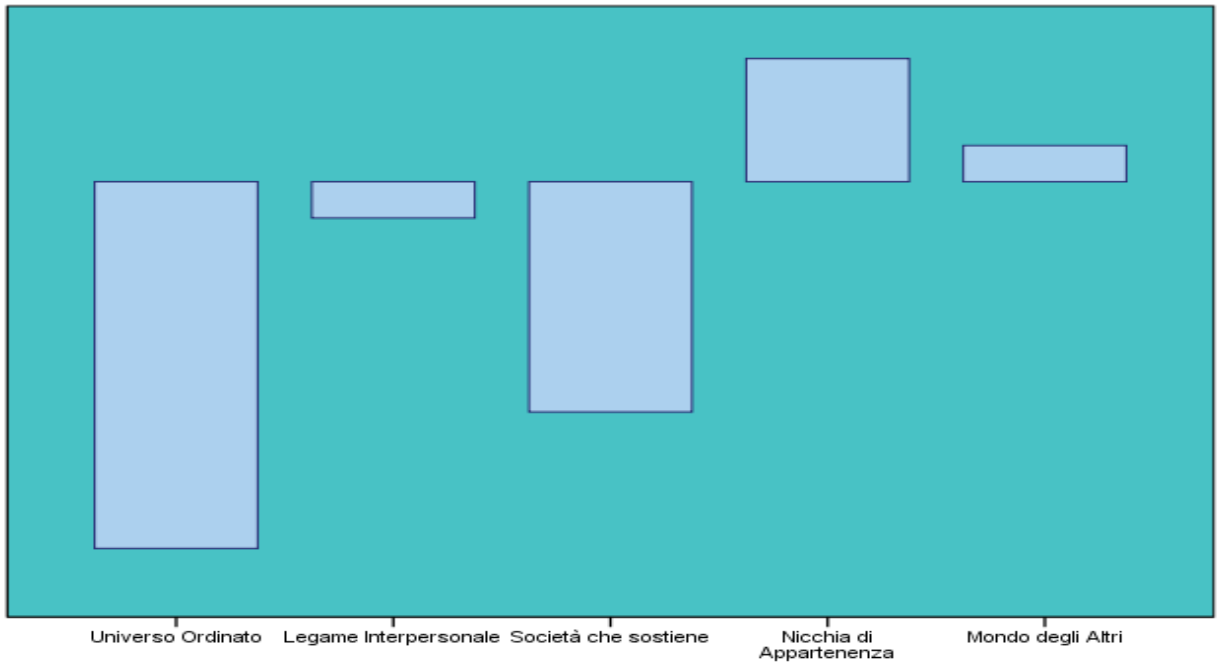
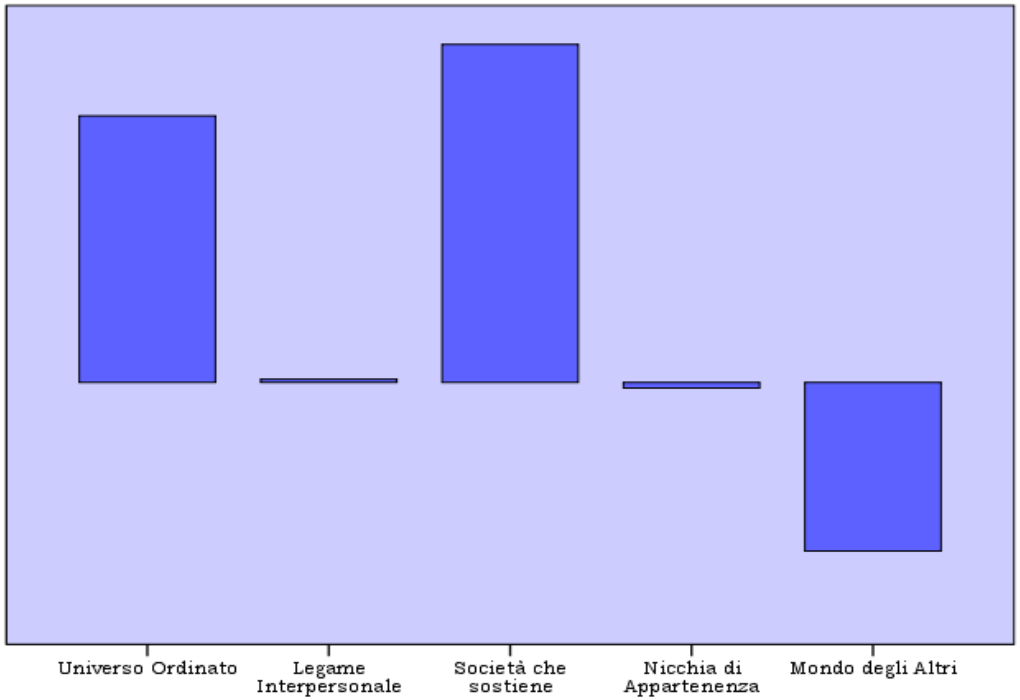
Ethnic Identity

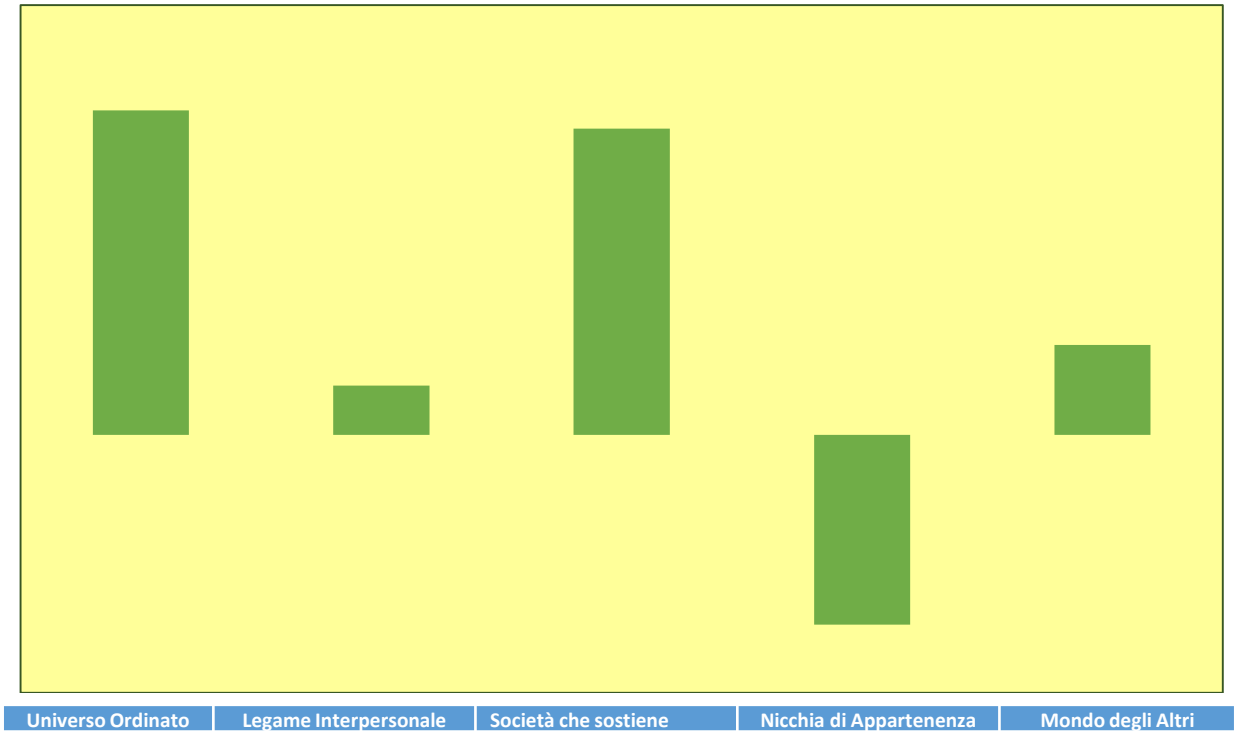


Respect for diversity

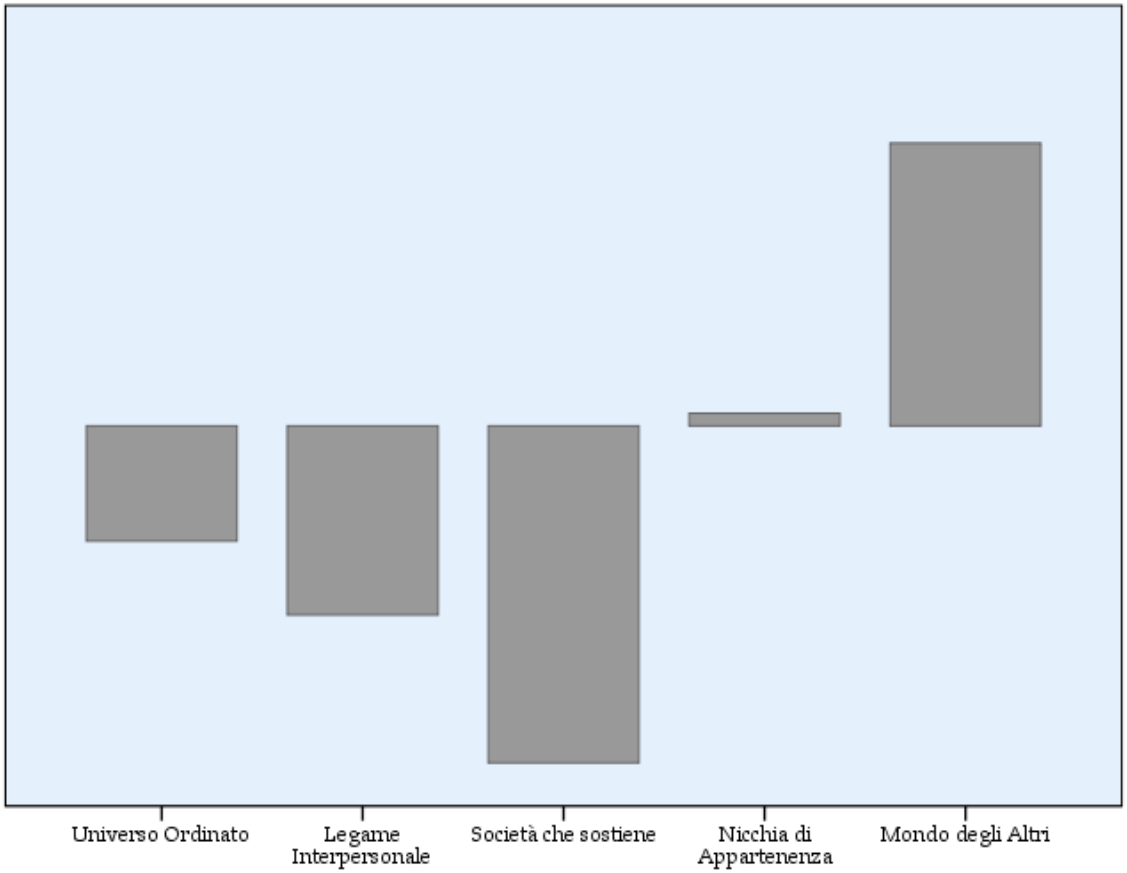


I like that in my community there are people form different culture; I am able to put in the shoes of others, regardless their nationality

Civism


Universo Ordinato
Legame Interpersonale
Società che sostiene
Nicchia di Appartenenza
Mondo degli Altri

Populism


Universo Ordinato
Legame Interpersonale
Società che sostiene
Nicchia di Appartenenza
Mondo degli Altri

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY-MAKING

Two levels of policy

- *Policy through culture*. The cultural context is both a constraint and a key resource for policies. Indeed, the cultural elements (e.g. values, beliefs, social scripts, discursive practices – more in general: symbolic universes) that mediate the relation between policy and target population can work as drivers of the interventions as well as their limits (cf. the tenet of interpretative autonomy). Accordingly, **the policy has to adopt an active attitude toward the cultural milieu,** aimed at: a) recognizing and adjusting to the cultural constraints; b) identifying and valorising the cultural resources.
- *Policy of cultural development.* At this level of intervention, the policy does not take the cultural milieu for granted, but sees as **its own specific, strategic purpose**. This level is particularly relevant when the cultural milieu is in critical shape, thus becoming a problem in itself, namely when it works as a constraint on policy, rather than a resource.

Policy through
How to take culture into account.

- Cultural segmentation
- Demand at the core of policy
- Target population's otherness
- Flexibility to cultural pluralism
- Interpretative agency
- Dynamicity
- Backward regulation
- Agreement through constraint
- Prosumership
- Intersubjective density

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Segmentation

- Segmentation is largely used in policy-making. On the other hand, usually it is based on socio-demographic factors (e.g. age, gender, income, geographical position); what the Re.Cri.Re. findings suggest is that cultural differences within the population are a major source of variability that has to be taken into account in designing and implementing policies, because the way of reacting to policy may largely depend upon it
- Accordingly, the different symbolic universes within the cultural milieu can be used for differentiating the population, in order to identify sub-sets of people, each of them characterized by a particular system of meanings.

Demand at the core of policy

- Demand is not the need
- Demand is the way the target interprets the policy
- The value that the target population attributes to the policy as well as the level of commitment and cooperation depends on the demand.
- *To put the demand at the core of the policy means recognizing that goals and actions have to be defined not only in terms of the state of affairs identified by the policy-makers (i.e. needs) but also by taking into account the meaning that people attribute to them*.
- This makes the criterion of **appropriateness** (to the target's project) relevant.

Target's otherness

- The centrality of the demand implies that it must also be recognized that one cannot take it for granted that the **target population interprets the policy in the same way as the policy-makers, or at any rate in a way consistent with their view**

Flexibility to cultural pluralism

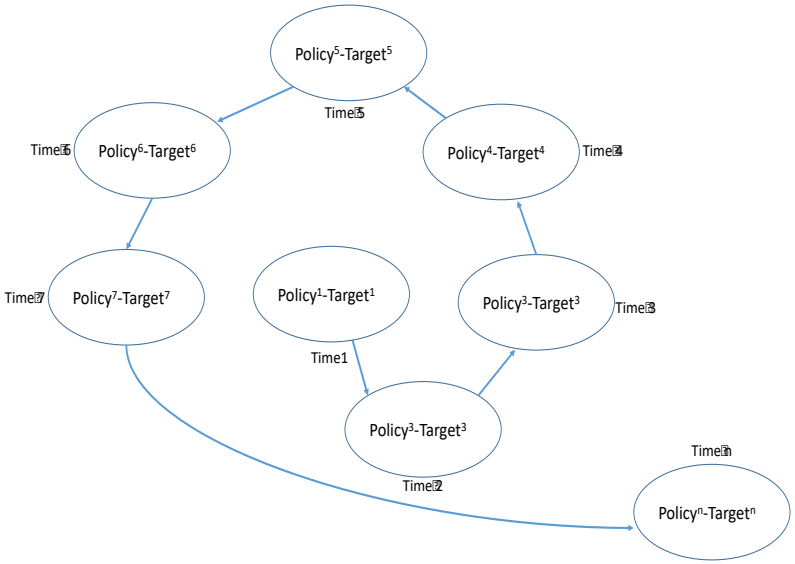
- The target population is culturally plural: people vary in their way of feeling, thinking and acting, because each sensemaker interprets the reality in accordance to one of the several symbolic universes that are active in the cultural milieu. Therefore, the policy has to be designed in ways that allow the flexibility required for taking into account the cultural dimension of differences in the target population, as well as other dimensions (e.g. socio-demographic, linguistic, and so forth).

Interpretative agency

- The policy is not meaningful in itself for the target population. Rather, people make meaningful the (engagement with) policy *through the very process of interpreting it*. This means that, in order to promote the target population's commitment and cooperation, the policy has to leave room for – even trigger - the population's active interpretation and negotiation of meanings. In other words, actors can be "assimilated" by the policy only if and insofar as they can assimilate the policy.
- it means designing and implementing *ad hoc* institutional and organizational settings that allow the demand to be expressed in compatible ways, then negotiated.

Dinamicity

policy has to be conceived in dynamic terms, namely as a socio-technical system that evolves over time as a result of the progressive development of the relation with the target population. According to this conception, both the policy drivers and the target are viewed as endowed with the **capacity to evolve**.



the dynamicity consists of the idea that the match between the policy and its targets is not a pre-condition, but a dialectical process that – starting from a minimal initial common ground - evolves over time, in terms of the recursive development of both subjects, resulting from their reciprocal commitment

Backward regulation

- In most cases policies are conceived as decisions that, once made, have to be acted upon. Here it is suggested to expand this schema with the complementary sequence: *first action, then decision*. This means designing devices, organizational settings and drivers that allow to regulate the policy reactively, through step by step adjustment to the target population's response.

Agreement through constraint

- the mutual engagement between policy and target population starts with a minimal shared cooperative framework, enabled by the resources (i.e. rules, goals set, levels of trust, willingness to cooperate, commitment) the policy can find within the target population's cultural milieu. This minimal framework is used as the starting point to be developed through marginal adjustment (cf. *Dynamicity* and *Backward regulation*)
- In order to develop it, the minimal initial framework has to be defined in quite a generalized, polysemic encompassing way, so as to leave room for the co-existence of both the policy framework and the target population's demands. This means that the minimal framework does not consist of a definite agreement between participants, but of a not-steady condition where, due to the genericity and polysemy of the framework, each participant can assume the other's cooperation as given because there are no major signals disconfirming such an assumption.
- In other words, in the minimal cooperative framework, it is the absence of signals of disagreement, rather than the presence of signal of agreement that enables the mutual engagement. The more the mutual engagement goes on, the more it enables the cooperative framework to develop.
- Cf Muddling through (Lindblom)

Prosumership

- the policy-target relation is considered a component of the intervention, namely a factor of production. In other words, the client is not only the target of the intervention but is involved in the intervention as a co-driver. In the language of service management, the client becomes a pro-sumer: both *pro*ducer and consu*mer.*
- The literature on service management underlines that the tenet of prosumership makes the relation with the client the key point of the provider's success, given that the very construction of the service depends on the dynamic, co-constructive integration of the client within the boundaries of the productive process of the service.
- In the context of policy, prosumership is to be seen mainly as a strategic and organizational device that puts mutual engagement at the core of interventions. In so doing, it favours the mobilisation of the target's desire, working as a catalyst to increase the intersubjective intensity of the interventions.

Intersubjective density

- The policy (aims, actions, rules) has to be internalized by the target individuals. Internalization is the psychosocial process through which people make the content and the aim of the policy something meaningful and vital, part and parcel of their domain of life.
- Internalization occurs through intersubjective processes. Indeed, in intersubjective contexts people experience the policy in terms of concrete interpersonal patterns of feeling, thinking and acting, in so doing making it psychologically salient.
- It follows that it is useful to design interventions endowed with high intersubjective density. A policy that has high intersubjective density policy is an intervention that is implemented through actions involving interpersonal social exchanges as one of their major components.

Policy upon culture. How to change culture

The need of policy upon culture

- Taken as a whole, the Re.Cri.Re. analyses of the cultural milieu have highlighted two important issues. First, European societies **lack semiotic capital**

Semiotic capital

- Semiotic capital denotes the set of symbolic resources (e.g. meanings, cognitive schemas, values, social representations, attitudes, behavioural scripts, etc.) that enables individuals to **interiorize** the collective, supra-interpersonal dimension of life, namely to experience the systemic regulative framework as a vital dimension, a concrete fact impacting on the way of thinking and acting- namely, to valorise the otherness as a constitutive and regulative dimension of the social exchange.

- Semiotic capital consists of affect-laden, pre-reflective, generalized, embodied meanings (Stein, 1991) that leads to feel the system as a matter of fact – something that simply is

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- Second, the cultural milieu of the European societies appears to be significantly characterized (about 40% of the population of the 11 sampled countries, though with differences among countries) by a cultural form we defined **paranoid belongingness**.
- People identifying with this worldview look at the external world as if it were full of threats which might disrupt their living spaces. This worldview has been defined “paranoid” in order to highlight how it personifies the external world as an active threat, an enemy with a destructive will from which one has to defend oneself.
- The **enemization of the other** fed by paranoid belongingness works as a powerful device of identity construction, providing people with the possibility of recognizing themselves as unified by the shared threat, regardless any cultural, social or economic difference.

Irradiation of the identity bond

- Thus, it can be observed that paranoid belongingness is the outcome of a process of **irradiation of the identity bond.**
- Irradiation here refers to the tendency to define the *we* in terms of dematerialized, mythical symbolic objects - weakened in their anchorage to/confinement within places, practices, interests, social positions - therefore capable of extending themselves in an unlimited and asymptotical way, despite social, cultural and economic differences.
- Populism is the paradigmatic form of this homogenizing process of irradiation. Grounded on such a definition, the *we* evoked by populism is a mythic entity endowed with an organic and unitary will, with indefinite and indefinable borders. In the rhetoric of populism, the people are not an aggregate of individuals grouped on the basis of an inclusion criterion (for example, those who possess the nationality of a certain state); on the contrary, who and what constitutes a people is tautologically defined: the entirety of those who participate in the common ground shared by the population, *because of their being against whose who are outside*.

Identity as resource, as a problem

- Paranoid belongingness has to be considered the way in which the community bond changes shape to defend itself from the systemic dynamics: membership is freed from its roots within the vital territorial bond, and takes as its reference point a mythical generalized entity (the people, the nation, the values of Western society), which has as its foundation and its vital source in the enemization of otherness.
- This shift **makes belongingness, no longer the solution, but the fundamental problem of contemporary European societies**.
- This conclusion is irrespective of ethical or axiological reasons: the paranoid drift undermines society and institutions because it conveys a hyper-simplified interpretation of the world, as such incapable of generating projectuality to cope with the challenges raised by the current systemic dynamics.

- This leads us to recognize the strategic need for *policies addressing the European societies' cultural milieu with the purpose of promoting the development of semiotic capital.*

How to promote semiotic capital Methodological criteria

- Performativity
- Semiotization
- Weak boundaries
- Systemic effect

Performativity

- The tenet of performativeness highlights how the cultural generalized meanings are reproduced over time and within the social group through the very fact of being enacted – namely, used as assumptions grounding beliefs, actions, and choices. In other words, the dynamics of generalized cultural meanings is not a matter of explicit negotiation; rather, the cultural generalized meanings are reproduced – and they may develop – because of (and in the terms of) their being embedded within sensemaking, as the grounds of the social practices comprising sensemaking. In short, while on the one hand the generalized meaning enables social practices, on the other hand, social practices convey the meanings they are grounded on.

Semiotization

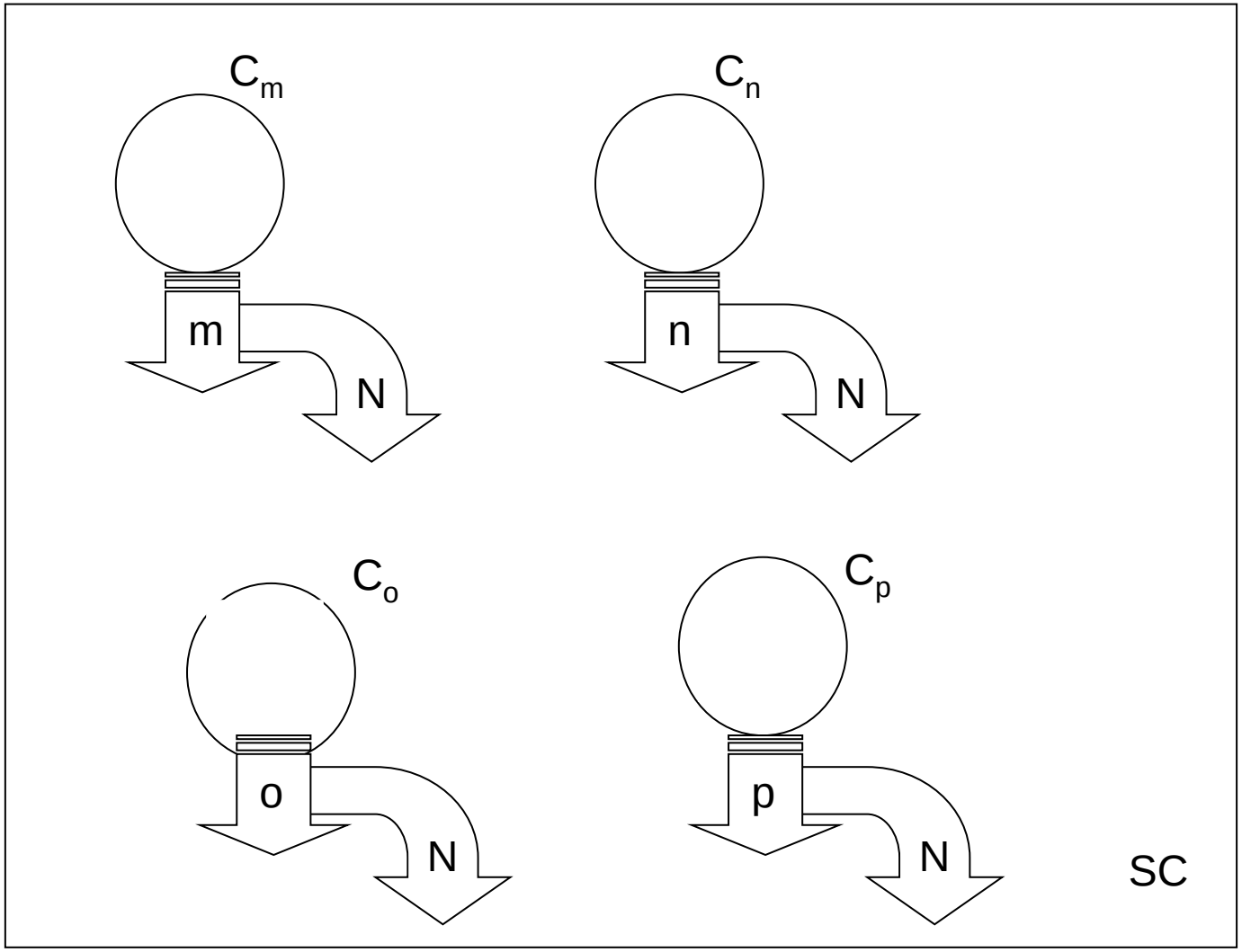
- in order to promote the development of the paranoid interpretation of experience, people have to be enabled to represent and make sense of the processes and mechanisms mediating the relation between local spheres of life and systemic dynamics.
- The development of the ability to make sense of the systemic dynamics meets some major obstacles – on the one hand, the opacity of the latter; on the other hand the scarcity of semiotic resources (explicative models, narratives, metaphors, contexts and practices)
- Accordingly, at the very centre of policies upon culture there must be the creation of conditions that enable people to semiotize the systemic dynamics.
- This means, on the one hand, working on reducing the opacity and, on the other hand, promoting the social conditions and semiotic resources that serve as scaffolding to people's ability to understand the world in which they are embedded

Weak boundaries

- This means promoting multiple belongingness and introducing integrative elements of universalism within the process of development of the community bond, in order to weaken the community boundaries and promote the capacity of belongingness to valorise what is outside it. A way to implement this methodological tenet is to work on the community-to-community exchange in the perspective of promoting *communities of communities.*

Systemic effect

- It states that each specific content has to be considered in terms of the fact that it interacts with other contents because of its latent generalized worldview. Accordingly, semantic contents always have a potentially contagious effect – they are not to be considered in themselves only, but for their capacity to prime/trigger/reproduce the worldview they convey across the cultural milieu.
- This can be expressed as follows. Consider the social practices A, B, C, D, each of them behind a specific content – say content *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*. Despite the difference between them, these contents convey the same generalized meaning, the same worldview – say M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Instances of action

Few examples of interventions are presented below. Taken as a whole, interventions such as the ones outlined below are means for pursuing two main purposes: on the one hand, to define social practices that promote the vital positive experience of institutions and more in general of the systemic rule; on the other hand, to introduce constrains on the opacification of the system, in order to reduce the deficit of sense it feeds.

These policies are not the only ways of addressing the lack of semiotic capital - other interventions can be designed to complement, or even as an alternative to, the policies proposed herein. These were selected in accordance with the criterion of valorising socio-political dynamics that are already active in the current socio-political scenario. This was made on the grounds of the general view that policy upon culture may not invent new forms of interventions *ex nihilo*, but that it has to be thought of as an effort to promote the foregrounding of potentially convergent lines of socio-political development, in order to generate virtuous systemic effects.

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A new institutional deal

- Though it is a controversial matter, several authors believe that the economic crisis provided the chance of an enforcement of EU institutional integrations, with the displacement of strategic dimensions of policy – first of all in economic and financial areas - at supranational level.
- On the other hand, as Re.Cri.Re. analysis showed, people perceive the institutions as part of the problem or however as being unable to provide protection from the turmoil to which they are subjected. Accordingly, a new institutional deal is greatly needed, in order to stop and invert this cultural drift. The following lines of intervention are framed by the idea that in the current context of socio-political crisis, characterized by critical cultural conditions, the institutional empowerment is not only a matter of technical, political and administrative enforcement, but also, and above all, of the capacity of the institutions to be attuned to the people's way of feeling and thinking.

Examples of policies:

- Supranational, national and regional institutions have to regain and enforce their capacity of strategic governance of systemic dynamics
- Promotion of the perception of supranational and national institutions as supporting interlocutors of local institutions and communities
- Reinforcement of intermediate bodies
- A new, demand-centred, administrative culture

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Vital Welfare

- Welfare is the domain where people experience the institutional-political system in the context of the satisfaction of basic social and political needs and demands. For this reason, welfare policies and organizational models play a central role in shaping how people perceive, feel, trust and commit themselves to the institutional and political system. Accordingly, the indications proposed below are designed for promoting the people's experience of the welfare services as meaningful, vital exchanges with a systemic subject committed to the demand of the user.

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Examples of policies:

- The promotion of semiotic capital requires a strategic investment in education, school system, and life-long learning.
- Efforts should be made in order to integrate the welfare services so as to enable them to address consistently the unity of the user's demand. Indeed, the institutional, organizational, functional and logistic segmentation of services do not correspond to the inner organization of the demand– on the contrary, it is the rule that the processes required to address a demand cross several welfare subsystems (e.g. school, health care, social security). The more such subsystems work in an integrated way, the more effective the intervention, and, above all, the more the users experience involvement with a systemic subject endowed with a unitary, meaningful intentionality to work as a resource for him/her
- Though welfare services usually concern individual user's needs, however they can – and should - foreground collective and systemic purposes. Accordingly, the foregrounding of the systemic purpose requires a balance with the commitment on the individual user's services. Thanks to this balance, the individual user can experience the integration between the satisfaction of one's vital demand and the pursuit of super-ordered systemic aims.
- . It is highly worth designing organization and supply processes of welfare services in accordance to the criterion of the demand/production intertwinement (i.e. *prosumership*). This means weakening the boundaries that separate providers and users in order to involve the user in the supply process.
- From the previous point, it follows that the organization of welfare services needs to be designed consistently with the aim of making the user's participation a meaningful experience of reciprocity.

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Meaningful economy

- The Re.Cri.Re. aim and focus are not the economic factors of crisis per se, but their interplay with cultural dynamics. Accordingly, the lines of intervention outlined below are not meant to address the economic problems but to reflect two main aims: a) to develop protective institutions from the overwhelming, disruptive impact of global dynamics; b) to promote innovative social practices fostering a constructive vision of otherness.

Examples of policies:

- Devices and normativ frameworks should be designed to reduce the opacity of the economic global dynamics and increase the capacity of collective representation and accountability of diseconomies associated with financial and productive activities
- Relational economy [i.e. forms of economic activities framed by social and ethical criteria rather than profit maximisation]represents a potentially relevant source of social and cultural development. Indeed, this kind of practice may drive innovative meanings regarding the relation between needs, social exchange and systemic frames.
- Investments on relational goods, quality of life and social infrastructures should be promoted at both supranational and national level
- Resources and goods that are at the grounds of the individual and collective life (e.g. water, biodiversity, air, climate) have to become the core of an institutional action of de-commodification, aimed at putting constraints upon the market's tendency to expand its domain asymptotically.

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CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, the previous discussion has highlighted in very different ways that the crisis requires a deep cultural innovation in policies and politics – a kind of anthropological drift is occurring before our eyes, in the way people think of themselves and the world.

To counteract such a drift, institutions have to restore their function of designing and guiding societies towards possible worlds.

Institutions have to re-introduce the future as the core parameter of policy making; only viewed in the long term can the current dramatic turmoil be addressed and creative synthesis among current conflictive interests, demands and dynamics be envisaged.

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