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**TRANSFORMACIÓN DIGITAL Y E-GOBIERNO.
PARA UNA AGENDA DE INVESTIGACIÓN
SOBRE LA REGIÓN DE LIGURIA**

**DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND EGOVERNMENT.
FOR A RESEARCH AGENDA ON THE LIGURIA REGION**

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Resumen

El artículo analiza los efectos de la transformación digital, ofrece una evaluación crítica de las políticas de gobierno electrónico en Europa y en Italia, y presenta una agenda de investigación centrada en la región de Liguria. El artículo parte de la necesidad de llevar a cabo una inves-

tigación destinada a analizar el cambio en las relaciones entre sujeto e institución en las sociedades occidentales contemporáneas.

El artículo, que se centra en documentos oficiales, explora las estrategias de transformación digital adoptadas por la UE. Liguria es un caso de estudio de interés porque, a partir del Programa Estratégico Digital 2016-2018, ha adoptado un fuerte enfoque en los principios de Open Government y una decisión explícita de invertir en servicios digitales específicos para ciudadanos y empresas.

Palabras clave: Administración Pública; Transformación digital; Agenda Digital; Liguria; Open Government.

Abstract

The contribution analysis the effects of digital transformation, provides a critical assessment of the policies on e-government in Europe and in Italy, and draft a research agenda focused on Liguria Region. The article moves from the need to conduct research aimed at analyzing the change in the relations between subject and institution in contemporary western societies. The article, focusing on official documents, explores the strategies of digital transformation adopted by the EU. Liguria is a case study of interest because, starting from the 2016-2018 Digital Strategic Program, has adopted a strong focus on the principles of Open Government and an explicit decision to invest in specific digital services for citizens and businesses.

Keywords: Public Administration; Digital Transformation; Digital Agenda; Europe; Liguria; Open Government;

INTRODUCTION. THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Contemporary society presents multiple cases of transformation, differing in kind and taking place at different speeds. The synthesis of these dynamics, with their unique properties and contexts, is extremely difficult. Politics, responsible for taking the strategic decisions regarding the problems that these phenomena pose, shows growing uncertainty – clearly perceived by the electorate – between the adoption of wide ranging policies and measures of immediate impact.

One of the main tasks of sociology is to provide insight to reduce complexity of having a broader perspective (Thompson 2018), of adapting theoretical knowledge to concrete situations (Dasgupta and Driskell 2007; Steele and Price 2003), to be a stimulus to public dialogue (Buravoy 2005) and to produce the concrete forms of knowledge for making crucial decisions and

implementing them for the benefit of the community, acting as a bridge between past and present but also between present and future (SMP 2010).

In line with this interpretation, the present article moves from the need to conduct research aimed at analyzing the change in the relations between individuals and institutions in contemporary western societies (Pirni and Raffini 2016); the theoretical framework for which is summarized below.

For several decades, “individualisation” – that is the process of progressive emancipation of the individual from traditional and consolidated models of self-definition (Beck 1992) – has been a constant element in the debate on European society (Genov 2014). The de-standardization and the diversification of life paths that derives from it, profoundly impacts on the redefinition of the relationship between individuals, collective spheres and institutions. This macro-process takes on yet greater importance since it is, simultaneously, a source of both opportunities and risks. On the one hand, it generates new and promising opportunities at all levels such as, for example, political involvement through the web (Vromen et al. 2014), the sharing economy (Pais and Provasi 2015), the levelling of relations (Pirni and Raffini 2018). However, on the other hand, it feeds new risk profiles through growing mistrust towards the political sphere and institutions (Norris 1999), the isolation of the individual in the private sphere and the growth of inequalities, vulnerabilities and social exclusion (Castel 2015).

This process has been developing in Italy, influenced by the particular features that have characterized our society since the Second World War, in particular in the relationship between individual and institution. In the years of reconstruction this relationship was distinguished by the authoritative role recognized as belonging to the institutions in guiding Italy out of the devastation of war through the directive capacity of the latter in the reconstruction processes. The enormous “integrational” capacity of the institutions, both economically and politically, was based on their function as guides and the consequent ability to direct citizens in structured and standardized collective paths. The pivotal historical moment that marked a discontinuity with this process can be traced to the movements of nineteen Sixty-eight which loudly expressed the rejection of the model of society that had been pursued until then. It is here that the breakdown of the balance between the dimension of individual action and institutional regulation originates, in close connection with the emergence of “post-materialist” values based on the rejection of hierarchy and verticality and on the celebration of autonomy and independence. It is a value orientation that shapes the “new spirit of capitalism” (Boltanski and Chiapello 2014) or the transition from a rigid and hierarchical system to a social experience based on a flexible network of projects.

Here, the very idea of society is redefined in terms of its being the result of a public connection of autonomous subjects (Rainie and Welmann 2013): a model that can be applied equally to the working sphere as to the political one – ever less founded on the traditional forms of “belonging” and ever more splintered, self-interested and transient –. In more recent years, the collapse of the “first republic” party system has further added to the breakdown of a political system linked to a sort of institutional autonomy from the rules, opening a complex political period. On the economic front, the financial crisis which has been ongoing since 2007 has struck the “real” economy with profound and painful consequences. Today Italy – not alone among the Mediterranean countries – finds itself, facing a cultural transformation marked by frequent impasses both on the economic and political level, one which seems to herald an imminent paradigm shift.

The change which is taking place seems to proceed through a dynamic of “de-institutionalization” or a “dissolution of the mechanisms of belonging to groups and institutions capable of stabilizing their internal cohesion and managing their transformations” (Touraine 2004). This dynamic is closely connected to individualization, understood in its most problematic manifestations. Do-it-yourself biographies replace standard ones (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002), since the traditional institutional markers regulating paths to transition are replaced by personal markers (Woodman and Wyn 2015). In summary, in Italy, the growing tension between institutional and individual action exacerbates the discontinuity between individuals and institutions.

On the one hand, institutions increasingly manifest organizational and operational criticalities that see their socializing / integrating function compromised. On the other hand, individuals recognize ever less authority, and place ever less faith, in institutions to the point of making highly “personalized” demands. This has a profound impact on democratic culture (Bettin Lattes 2001) and willingness to participate (Pirni 2013). Empirical research shows that democratic legitimacy based on electoral procedures is ever less effective and increasingly accompanied by other variegated forms of political action that lead to talk about hybridization of representative democracy (Diamanti 2014). Against this, the affirmation of new political actors and youth protagonists have introduced a striking break between “old” and “new” politics whose characters has begun to be studied (Hutter et al. 2018; Morlino and Raniolo 2017) but still needs to be investigated.

Within this sphere of reference, we have chosen to focus our attention on the Public Administration as the preferred context: the PA in Europe, in fact, for several decades – in Italy since the 1990s – has adopted methods that redefine the relationship between private and public in terms of hybridization as well as between individual and institution in terms of the levelling of

relationships. New Public Management, governance processes, deliberative procedures and, more recently, the attention paid to commons and open government have now definitively overcome the traditional bureaucratic model of public administration, towards a new paradigm of shared administration (Bobbio 2007; Arena and Iaione 2015)

The cultural context of the PA revolution is defined by the basic features of the so-called “information society” – and its other variants – (Touraine 1971; Bell 1973; Beck 1992; Giddens 1990): access to information, relations of work, the role of knowledge, new risk profiles, spatio-temporal dissociation of relationships, social reflexivity, the centrality of the acting subject. A further stimulus in this direction is undoubtedly the economic crisis that for more than ten years has now been demanding an efficiency shift from the PA.

The objective of this paper is to focus on the progressive adjustments to the direction that has been taken in guiding the digital transition in Europe in order to identify the most significant features of the current change. Within the context outlined, the article intends to open a research agenda on the Italian case and, in particular, on the Liguria region, applying the socio-political perspective of the study of the effects of digitalization on the relationship between individuals and institutions.

METHODOLOGY

Before exploring the path of digital transformation launched by the European institutions, it is necessary to provide a quick clarification of terminology: “digitization”, “digitalization” and “digital transformation” are phenomena that intertwine and sometimes partially overlap but cannot be considered as synonymous. The meaning attributed to them here is explained below.

The term “digitization” refers to something extremely specific and delimited or “the action or process of digitizing; the conversion of analogue data (in later use images, video, and text) into digital form” (Stolterman and Fors 2004). Digitization focuses on how to transform the object from its analog or physical state into a digital format. Most studies on digitization are related to information technology.

Instead, “digitalization” focuses on the structures, processes, actors – as well as their relationships – that supports the existence, production, storage, transformation and transmission of that which is in a digital format. We can consider digitization as the input to digitalization as it creates a resource that may require more or less significant process re-engineering with all that that entails, for example, of organizational models or operators’ skills.

On the other hand, we can also consider digitalization as an autonomous phenomenon that drags digitization with it when the data considered are produced directly in digital format or rather without the need to convert them from analogue or to analogue. When an environment is configured based on native digital data, digitalization has a much greater impact. Most digitalization studies consider it at the organizational and business process level (Parviainen et al. 2017). In a broad sense it is possible to refer to the concept of digitalization as “the way in which many domains of social life are restructured” (Brennen and Kreiss 2014) but the term is mainly used in the literature to move towards business models where digital information is central. More recently, the expression has been used to refer to journalism and education. Digitization goes beyond the mere function of converting digital signals to analogue or vice versa and aims to integrate in the best way and to expand the overlap area between the analogical and physical spheres with the digital one, trying to optimize the management of information complexity through automatic, semi-automatic and manual operations.

Finally, “digital transformation” is the strategy adopted in orienting digitalization in a specific direction with equally specific objectives that impact socially by changing the type of interactions, reference structures, forms of work and influencing decision-making.

In light of this we propose to trace the path adopted by the EU in defining digital transformation within the societies that make up Union, focusing attention on changes of direction or, more properly, of adjustments to the course.

In the following analysis the main official documents of the European Union explicitly referable to the digital transformation have been considered. Of these, the reference political orientation is briefly mentioned. In the analysis the contextual factors that each document highlights and the reference principles that inspire the measures adopted were underlined. The concrete objectives to which each document aims were then collected. Finally, the documents considered were included within the macro objectives that are considered to be the main stages of the European Union’s digital strategy.

Wanting a brief but accurate picture of digital transformation in Europe it was necessary to start from the beginning of the new century selecting some of the main steps: the list below is only a selection of references – among the many documents produced in the last 15 years by the EU – but allows us to focus on the path that underlies the current digitalization of public administration and, above all, the challenges it generates. Naturally the following summary does not constitute the official position of the EU but rather is the interpretation of the authors.

The choice to start from official documents is motivated, on the one hand, by the need to understand the strategic intentions of the EU regarding digital

transformation and, on the other to identify the objectives towards which the funds for the realization of the foreseen objectives have been addressed.

RESULTS. THE STAGES OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN EUROPE

The basis of the EU's digital transformation is political in nature and revolves around the need for transparency of European political institutions in the face of a "democratic deficit" of which the Union was accused on several occasions towards the end of the last century (Grimm 1995; Moravsik 2004).

Ensuring European citizens greater access, in terms of visibility, to the decision-making processes could in this sense represent an opportunity and technology in the field of information and communications could render this possible. At the same time, an electronic voting trial was to have been launched which would have constituted a significant increase in the available information.

The context around which this idea matures is linked to the European Commission report on Union citizenship (COM (2001) 506 – 2001/2279 (COS)) chaired by the Italian Romano Prodi (Alliance for Liberals and Democrats for Europe) and forwarded to the Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs for its evaluation (C5-0656 / 2001): in the opinion that the Commission sent on 11 June 2002, a proposal was submitted to Parliament for resolution (B5-0115 / 2002 – the Motion for a European Parliament resolution on e-democracy and e-European citizenship). This proposal, recalling the articles of the Treaties concerning openness and transparency, as well as the provisions relating to the right of access to documents and reports of institutional meetings and considering that "e-democracy" – i.e. the application of digital technologies (i.e. Internet) to the democratic process – could encourage participation and the exercise of political and civil rights by European citizens, affirms that European citizenship should imply "the right of access" to all documents and all public meetings via the Internet; furthermore, calls for the Treaties to be amended so that all public meetings of EU institutions and their bodies are broadcast live (audio-video) and stored on the Internet; that every citizen can fully enjoy their European citizenship rights (for example with regard to the vote for the European Parliament, complaints to the European Ombudsman and Court of Justice, petitions to the EP) also through the Internet, according to systems of identification established in accordance with Community legislation; finally, it calls on EU institutions and Member States to promote electronic voting and in particular a draft vote in "supervised e-voting stations" for the 2004 European elections.

The start of the digitalization process in these terms stimulates an intense e-democracy development and monitoring activity that culminates at the be-

ginning of 2009 with the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to members states on e-democracy. We are at the end of the first of the two mandates of the Portuguese José Barroso (European People's Party) and the context evoked by the document signals the growth of political discontent and the disaffection of citizens towards institutions. That dynamic that would bring the traditional climate of "permissive consensus" on the part of citizens towards the integrative project, towards an increasingly explicit and noisy "constraining dissensus" (Hooghe and Marks 2009). What was sketched in outline in the seven-year resolution request is in this document elaborated in detail: from transparency to a much broader conceptualization of democracy as based on the information society. The area of overlap between these two components of European society highlights the need to focus on democratic institutions but also on democratic processes through the potential of ICT while bearing in mind both the opportunities and the risks. The document proposes a long list of points to allow the clear delimitation of e-democracy and, at the same time, the crucial but ancillary and controlled role of ICT.

Within the course of only a few months, the picture was set to change: at the end of 2009, the Malmö Declaration on eGovernment fully incorporates the impact of the economic crisis and shifts the focus of the EU digitalization strategy from political empowerment to focusing on "severe challenges" that the Union must address on the economic, social and environmental level. There is also a new synthesis between democracy and the information society that focuses on the centrality of users of public services. In essence, we move from the political to the administrative level, from citizenship and civil society to citizens and businesses. The conversion into concrete objectives focuses on the management of organizational processes and on the reduction of government expenditure, on the preparation of technical and legal aspects to take advantage of digital public services.

From eDemocracy the emphasis shifts to eGovernment for the digital society: this is one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy launched in 2010. The Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE) identifies the resources needed to cope with the economic crisis among the opportunities arising from the growth of the digital economy. The "smart growth", which inspires the DAE, developed around the growth of European living standards by using the potential of ICT in all fields of daily life: from business to work, from gaming to communication and, in particular, in the free expression of self. This requires the completion of the digital single market both in terms of infrastructure that allows ultra-fast connections throughout the Union and in terms of the trust and security of the systems in place; at the same time the digital skills of citizens must be strengthened and, last but not least, the inter-operability of the systems. Furthermore, this form of growth is based on the principles of a low carbon economy.

With the presidency of the Luxembourgier Jean-Claude Juncker (European People's Party) the orientation to the Digital Single Market became predominant: the profound transformation of society on the basis of new digital technology is established and the digital society demands the full realization of an equally digital single market. The 2015 communication on "A Digital Single Market" sets the objectives of better access for consumers and businesses to digital products and services throughout Europe, improving the conditions for the development of innovative services and maximizing the growth potential of the digital economy.

The 2017 Tallinn Declaration on eGovernment was in line with the above and underlined the central role of eGovernment in interpreting the transformations of society connected to digital progress but also to face the economic, social and environmental challenges mentioned. The centrality of the individual and the safeguarding of their fundamental freedoms (such as those of expression, privacy, the right to protection of personal data) is strengthened. This document translates these principles, in line with the aforementioned objectives, into actions aimed at strengthening digital interaction between citizens and businesses with the public administration, improving the quality of digital services, designing services starting from the need for protection of user privacy, to strengthen the use of electronic identities, to strengthen the possibilities of citizens and businesses in managing the data concerning them in the possession of the public administration.

The flurry of documents related to the digital strategies of the EU that characterized the first twenty years of the new century allows us to focus, first of all, on some of the main turning points of the development (tab. 1).

At the beginning of the 2000s, the original orientation at the base of the EU digitalization policy was constituted by an issue of a political nature – deriving from a political deficit – and was based on strengthening the possibilities of interaction between civil society and institutions European policies. Emphasis was placed on civil society – meaning both the citizen as an individual and organized forms and collective actors – as the recipient of additional tools, thanks to ICT, to control the institutions and to vote within the decision-making processes. Initially, the EU took on the conception of the information society in the new millennium in terms of eDemocracy.

It is a process that aims to strengthen existing democratic institutions and democratic processes by integrating them with the available digital tools. Attention and investments are directed towards eDemocracy processes, making the interactions that normally exist between civil society and institutions possible, also on a digital level. The strategy that looks at ICTs as tools for consultation, participation and deliberation is included within the framework outlined by the White Paper on governance.

Here it is stated that “Democratic institutions and the representatives of the people, at both national and European levels, can and must try to connect Europe with its citizens. This is the starting condition for more effective and relevant policies” (CE 2001). “The White Paper proposes opening up the policy-making process to get more people and organisations involved in shaping and delivering EU policy. It promotes greater openness, accountability and responsibility for all those involved”. In line with the shift from the government paradigm to the governance paradigm, European ICT strategies also seem to be moving towards an e-governance paradigm (Freschi 2004).

After almost a decade, we are witnessing the first turning point in the process of digitization that now moves from an instance of an economic nature – deriving from an economic deficit – which is based on the need to face the effects of the current crisis. The emphasis is on citizens – as individuals – and on companies or on those who pay the highest costs of the economic crisis so that the growing opportunities of the digital economy – which in the meantime has had the opportunity to consolidate hand in hand with technological progress – can give a structural response to the effects of the crisis. Secondly, the EU interprets the consolidation of the information society in terms of eCommerce. This is a process that aims to strengthen the free market within the Union by shifting the emphasis from the analog to the digital market, so to speak. Attention and investments are directed towards the centrality of the actors and towards enabling infrastructure, allowing new forms of interaction arising from the creativity of the actors involved.

From 2017, a further re-orientation of the digital strategy takes the form of an administrative issue – deriving from an administrative deficit – which is based on the need, on the one hand, to face the effects of the crisis and therefore the need to reduce public spending and, on the other, to strengthen the possibilities of interaction between the PA and citizens, businesses and other PAs. Emphasis is placed on users – citizens, businesses or other public administrations who are – have different interests depending on the specific experience they intend to launch or the task or role they have to fulfill. Thirdly, the EU elaborates in terms of eGovernment the adaptation that the information society – and the market – demands from the public administration. This is a process that aims to strengthen public administrations within the Union in terms of activating citizen and the companies participation in the administrative processes that concern them, with the consequent extension of their possibilities to manage the data that concerns them that are in the possession of the PA. Attention and investments are directed towards digital services that can be provided by the PA in search of a synthesis between quality standards and usability by the user.

Table 1: The stages of digital transformation in Europe

President Of the Commission	Year	Reference Document	Reference context factors	Reference Principles	Concrete objectives	Goal
R. Prodi (September 1999- November 2004) Alliance for Liberals and Democrats for Europe	2002	Motion for a European Parliament resolution on e-democracy and e-European citizenship	- European citizenship	- Transparency - Technology	- Access - Electronic voting	eDemocracy
J.M.D. Barroso (November 2004- October 2014)	2009	Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on e-democracy	- Political discontent and disaffection of citizens	- Democracy - Information Society	- Democratic Institutions and processes - ICT opportunities & risks	
European People's Party	2009	Malmö Declaration on eGovernment	- Economic, social & environmental challenges	- Customer focused public services (citizens and enterprises)	- Supporting citizens and enterprises - Mobility in the single market - Reduce administration expenses - Support organizational processes - Key enablers - Legal and technical pre-conditions	eCommerce
	2010	A Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE)	- Opportunities deriving from growth of digital economy to counter the economic crisis	- Smart growth - Increasing standards of life for Europeans - ICT potential for companies, work, play, communication and self expression	- A vibrant digital single market - Inter-operability and standards - Trust and security - Fast and ultra fast internet access - Research and innovation - Enhancing digital literacy, skills and inclusion - ICT-enabled benefits for EU society	
J.-C. Juncker (November 2014-October 2019)	2015	A Digital Single Market for Europe	- Digital transformation of society	- Digital Single Market	- Better access for consumers and businesses to digital goods and services across Europe - Creating the right conditions and a level playing field for digital networks and innovative services to flourish - Maximizing the growth potential of the digital economy	
European People's Party	2017	Tallinn Declaration on eGovernment	- Economic, social & environmental challenges - Digital transformation of society	- Central role of eGovernment - Fundamental individual freedoms (expression, privacy, protection of personal data)	- Ensure that European citizens and businesses may interact digitally with public administration - Ensure the consistent quality of user experience in digital public services - Ensure that information security and privacy needs are taken into consideration when designing public services and public administration ICT solutions - Increase the uptake of national eID schemes, - Possible for citizens and businesses to better manage their personal data held by public administrations - Work on national interoperability frameworks for cross-border digital public services	eGovernment

DISCUSSION. THE NEW CHALLENGES OF OPEN GOVERNMENT

The three “directions” of the digital transformation identified above do not take turns replacing one another but rather intertwine and combine together. On closer inspection it is possible to propose, for the purpose of analytical synthesis, a parallelism between the fundamental characteristics of modernity as we know it and the three focuses mentioned (tab. 2). Modern society can be summarized in three pillars: secularization, capitalism, the State (Pirni 2011).

Table 2: Modernity and Digital Modernity

Modernity	Digital Modernity
Secularization	Digitalization
Capitalism	Digital single market
State	eGovernment

Modernity is, above all, the epoch of secularization (Del Noce 1970): secularization indicates a process of weakening of the monopoly of religion in the “legitimate” definition of representations of society or in defining patterns of behavior. Modernity is born when the conviction is rooted that truth is based directly on *ratio* and not on *auctoritas* (Belohradsky 1989). The sacred, reified in the dogmas of religion, loses some of its immutability at every progress of science and, on the altar of positivism, the knot that held the process of change in cultural immobility is dissolved. The reflections on the human intellect of David Hume and Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth century anticipate the Weberian notion of rationality from which the two paradigmatic figures of modernity vigorously emerge: the entrepreneur, who personifies the efficiency, the cold and rational selection of best means to achieve an end, clearly formulated and isolated, and the bureaucrat, who embodies consistency, homogeneity of treatment for similar cases, attention to procedural regularity (Gellner 1983).

The primacy of reason generates a fragmentation of the space left by the universalism of religion; this fragmentation frees the individual as an individual, on the basis of the principle of autonomy, only to see him merge into different “layers” – the social classes – following the unequal distribution of symbolic and material goods that takes place in the new society.

Digitalization, following what was said above, shares many characteristics with secularization. First of all, it undermines the “monopoly” of the physical and analogical in defining interactional models and practices: reality no longer presents itself only in traditional – and physical – terms but also in its virtual or digital aspects. This, which initially consisted of a real “alternative” to reality and remained distinctly separated from it, now presents more and

more lines of continuity which overlap with the physical world. The entrepreneur and the bureaucrat are replaced today by the user or rather someone who not only uses the net but who transforms the environment around him by virtue of the centrality of their role that guides the construction of such environments. The digital emphasis significantly affects the individualization process and reinforces its reconfiguration in terms of actor and subject within the overlap between real and digital contexts.

Secularization embodies a drive to redefine the system of authority, including the political: this because of the increasingly inclusive tendency of the masses in the political sphere fueled by industrialization and urbanization, first by the better economic conditions and higher levels of education, which subsequently become substantive, and then – laboriously – in the establishment of universal suffrage. The progressive strengthening of state institutions operates in such a way as to separate the private sphere from the public sphere.

Digitalization also brings with it a reworking of the authority system. In this case the progressive strengthening of state institutions favors the growing overlap between the “real” and the “digital” sphere.

The second pillar of modern society is capitalism. It is a particular market-centered economic system; here the supply and demand of goods and services are met and competition plays out. Capitalism creates a self-regulated system of markets that tends to extend the catallactic logic – the science of exchanges through which the value of a commodity is established (Mill 1848) – to all production and distribution processes. The animating spirit, unprecedented with respect to other economic systems, is the will to acquire without limit understood as an act and not as a concrete possession of objects (Weber 1992). A self-propelled dynamism follows, a vocation to openness and transformation, a continuous revolution of the means of production, and therefore of the whole set of social relations (Marx and Engels 1969).

The exact opposite of the autarkic or natural economy based on the principle of the correspondence between production and consumption and linked to the domestic management of its own needs. Capitalism's unprecedented configuration of economic relations requires a monetary economy: only through it can the rational calculation of costs and revenues be possible. This calculation is based on a comparison between the monetary volume earned and the money invested: if the former is greater than the latter, the entrepreneur will have made a profit. Consumer freedom is essential for the functioning of capitalism as is the freedom of the entrepreneur: capitalism in its ideal form is an economic system that excludes the presence of a central authority that decides autonomously what must be produced and how wealth should be distributed among social classes (Pellicani 1992, 9-17). Capitalism implies the existence of a multiplicity of economic subjects in competition with each other whose purpose is the

maximization of profit. These subjects are enterprises, the basic institutions of capitalism, or subsystems organized internally on a hierarchical basis that technically and economically combine the productive means to obtain a commodity to be placed on the market; the entrepreneur is the main actor, the one who takes the initiative and the risk of guiding the means of production into new channels (Schumpeter 1934). The Digital Single Market is, naturally, fully in line with the principles of capitalism. Innovation remains a central factor but the added value of the digital sphere of the market is given by the possibility of witnessing a double hybridization: on the one hand, the consumer also becomes a producer of the service; on the other, there is a self-sufficient component in the correspondence between production and consumption: profit is generated where, also, the consumer intervenes as a producer of the service. To indicate this new approach to consumption, which makes the user / customer an active part, the term “prosumer” is used. The term “prosumer”, was coined before the advent of digital media. The first person to use the term was, in 1980, Alvin Toffler, to indicate a tendency to overcome the paradigm of mass communication, based on marked uni-directionality. This dynamic has found full affirmation with the advent of the web and, above all, of web 2.0 and its subsequent evolutions. Web 2.0 and Social Networks, in particular, are based, in fact, on User Generated Content, and, due to its interactive structure, it also transforms the content produced by institutions and traditional media. The interactive and participatory potential inherent in ICT has nourished the paradigm of electronic democracy: a democracy based on the direct empowerment of citizens and which promotes and facilitates their interaction with representatives and institutions (De Blasio 2019).

Modern society embodies the culture and values underlying the active behavior that supports democracy: freedom and equality, by limiting each other, constitute its reference values rooted in the societies fabric.

They are the branches of the principle of autonomy of the individual which becomes the keystone. The emphasis placed on the individual and on the legitimacy of private interests is the key to the political and cultural project of modernity. Historically it is embodied in the emancipation of the individual actor from the obstacles posed by the traditional political and cultural authority and in the growth of human and institutional activity and freedom (Eisenstadt 2002) and finds in capitalism favorable conditions since, this last, stimulates the aspirations of a middle class of owners typically interested in education, autonomy, personal freedom, respect for the law and participation in government (Dahl 2000).

Democracy draws its power and relevance from the idea of self-determination, that is, from the idea that members of a political community – citizens – should be able to freely choose the terms of their association and their choices should represent the absolute legitimacy of the form and orientation of their

political community (Held 1995). Democracy, in its cultural foundations before it is implemented in institutions in the political structure of the modern state. An organization that controls the population occupying a given territory constitutes a State if, and because, it differs from other organizations that operate on the same territory, if it is autonomous, centralized and its component parts are formally coordinated with each other (Tilly 1975). A closer look at the expression Modern State “the adjective is pleonastic” because the elements that characterize it do not appear in other large political bodies besides those that began to form at the beginning of the modern era in Europe (Poggi 1992). The modern state is configured as a historically determined form of organization of power or structures of authority, characterized by the legitimate monopoly of the use of force (Weber 1978) and, more generally, of the “politician”. This monopoly is exercised through rational procedures and means to guarantee the legality of the political-democratic process: on the one hand, the law, which establishes abstract, general and impersonal rules to exclude any form of arbitration on the part of those who govern the institutions, from the other, bureaucracy, based on hierarchy and professionalism (Matteucci 1993).

eGovernment – born under the impulse of the idea of eDemocracy – incorporates this second aspect of the modern State or the administrative dimension which, in accordance with the introduction to the present paper, represents an enabling function of the central subject – and prosumer (Toffler 1980) – also in the provision of services to the citizen in the perspective of shared administration.

eGovernment, as envisioned by the European Union, means much more than just the ICT tools and systems to provide better public services to citizens and businesses; effective eGovernment also involves rethinking organizations and processes and changing behavior so that public services are delivered more efficiently to people who need to use them. Implemented well, eGovernment allows citizens, businesses and organizations to carry out their business more easily, more quickly and at lower cost. It can reduce administrative burdens on citizens and businesses by making their interactions with public authorities faster, more convenient and less costly, thereby spurring competitiveness and economic growth (EPRS 2015).

CONCLUSIONS. TOWARDS A NEW RESEARCH AGENDA: THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF LIGURIA

The outline above constitutes the theoretical framework within which to launch, starting from this contribution, a new research agenda focusing on the digital transformation of Italy and, specifically, of the Liguria region by adopting a sociopolitical perspective.

The European Commission has developed an articulated system for monitoring the digitization of the Member States based on five main indicators: 1) Connectivity – measures the development of broadband, its quality and the access made by the various stakeholders; 2) Human capital – measures the skills needed to take advantage of the possibilities offered by the digital society; 3) Use of the internet – measures the activities that citizens do thanks to the internet, connectivity and digital skills; 4) Integration of digital technologies – measures the digitization of businesses and the use of the online sales channel; 5) Digital public services – measures the digitalization of the PA, with a focus on eGovernment.

Altogether these indicators make up the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) which, although presenting some limitations, shows how Italy remains – consistently – in the lowest positions of the digitization of the Union companies and well below the European average.

This suggests the need to strengthen the tools to explore the causes and identify the obstacles resulting in this poor performance.

Furthermore, in September 2011 Italy joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP), committing itself to concretely pursue its objectives, through constant dialogue with civil society, until becoming one of the members of the partnership Steering Committee for the three-year period 2017-2020. Open Government is a model of public administration based on principles such as transparency, digital citizenship, civic participation, the fight against corruption, accountability and digital innovation (Dipartimento della funzione pubblica 2019). The Fourth National Action Plan for Open Government is being completed – on April 30, 2019 the public consultation phase ended –: this document will present the actions to be implemented by 2021.

It is believed that the launch of this document could constitute a significant impulse to the reconfiguration of digital transformation in Italy.

Liguria in 2018 was in eighth place among the Italian regions and autonomous provinces remaining above the average Italian figure. On the indicators monitored by DESI, Lombardy is the first for connectivity, Tuscany for the use of the internet, the Autonomous Province of Trento for digital public services, more generally the North-east for the integration of digital technologies and Liguria presents the best performance in relation to human capital (AgId).

Liguria is a case study of interest because, on the one hand, it presents the best endowment in Italy as regards human capital understood as widespread competence to maximize the outcomes of the eCommerce mentioned in the previous paragraph e, while on the other, it proposes a significant change in direction given to the digital transformation that can be seen in recent years (tab. 3). Starting from the 2016-2018 Digital Strategic Program, Liguria has adopted a strong focus on the principles of Open Government and an explicit

decision to invest in specific digital services for citizens and businesses.

Therefore, it is believed that undertaking a research agenda aimed at identifying the specificities of the Ligurian model of digital transformation within the national and European context could constitute fertile ground for developing a predictive look at the changing relationship between individuals and institutions in the digital age.

As a matter of fact, the model of Open Government has long since lost the character of simple technological enhancement in the management of public services: this is proposing a new form of relationship, even political, between citizens and Public Administration centered on effectiveness and transparency in public action, on participation in institutional processes, and on sustainability of public action through internal sharing processes within the PA. In this line, Liguria constitutes a case of considerable interest to deepen studies and to evaluate the first effects of the application of this model. The next step will be to elaborate appropriate methodological means to detect the change of relations between individuals and institutions.

Table 3 – Strategic goals

	2009-2011	2012-2014	2016-2018	2019-2021
Infra-structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Infrastructure to eliminate the regional territorial digital divide – Eliminate social and economic knowledge divide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Infrastructure to eliminate the regional territorial digital divide – Eliminate social and economic knowledge divide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Infrastructure to eliminate the regional territorial digital divide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Infrastructure to eliminate the regional territorial digital divide – Social inclusion and territorial cohesion
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop the changes to the digital Regional back office of the Integrated Information System and keep it in operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strengthening of the digital channel for service delivery – Virtualization of administrative processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Digital health – Greater attractiveness for companies – Increased information for citizens – Greater promotion of Ligurian excellence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Protection of regional environmental and territorial heritage – Protection of the population and assets from natural and anthropic calamities – Greater promotion of Ligurian excellence
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implementing policies of governance, monitoring, benchmarking and partnership in the development of the Information Society in Liguria 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Solidity and reliability of digital services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Effectiveness and transparency in public action – Participation in institutional processes – Sustainability of public action through internal sharing processes within the Ligurian PA

Source: Digital Strategic Programs of Liguria Region

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