

Adopting Antonio Gramsci's Conceptual Elaboration of Passive Revolution to Interpret Economic Development and Education in the History of a Unified Italy

Joseph Gravina

University of Malta

joseph.gravina@um.edu.mt

Abstract: Antonio Gramsci adopted concepts from others only to develop them further and not necessarily along the same path as in their original context. 'Passive revolution' assisted Vincenzo Cuoco to explain the short-lived top down democratisation of the Neapolitan State in 1799. Gramsci generalised it to explain the Italian Risorgimento and the bourgeois state it bore. He denoted it as 'revolution without a revolution' in contrast with post-1789 France. Besides state formation, Gramsci enriched passive revolution by associating it with the political subterfuges of 'transformism' and 'technicisation'. He experimented with the term further by expanding its historical limits to embrace the Fascist regime and, economically, Fordist inroads from across the Atlantic. This paper focuses on these (and other) fundamental stages in the narrative of the Italian political state and economic development accompanying it. Therein, the concept of hegemony - arguably Gramsci's most evocative - is added in order to meaningfully contextualise the social formation and social relations within. In this case, a 'negative' reading of passive revolution portrays it as a failure of hegemonic strategy; the people are not successfully educated and absorbed within bourgeois universal values. Consequently, besides broad socio-pedagogic dynamics, the formal education institution and private institutions double their effort to educate hegemonic leadership in political and socio-economic terms. This role as expressed by the main legislative acts created by the Piedmontese, the Fascists, the Christian Democrats and one of Berlusconi's governments is analysed in order to indicate the deliberate links set between formal education and the economy through the identification of specific goals promoted by these institutions, and, throughout, how passive revolution can assist in meaningfully explaining such developments.

Keywords: Antonio Gramsci, Passive Revolution, Education, Economic Development, Italy

Introduction

The paper explores linkages between industrial economy and formal education provision since the formation of the Italian state in the second half of the nineteenth century. It also explores whether Gramsci's elaborations on the concept of passive revolution assist in explaining meaningfully such linkages. A number of cases considered central in the process of state formation in Italy provide focus and context. The first part of the paper revisits Gramsci's insights on passive revolution, a useful conceptual tool according to him, to interpret epochs with complex transformations (*Quaderno* 15: 62; henceforth Q). State formation following the Risorgimento, and the rise of Fascism in the inter-war period are selected for the purpose. The second part extends the process of state formation into the period of post-WWII industrial mass production in the Italian north-west (NW) accompanied by the spread of a national market. This is a period of economic, political and social transformation stretching from the immediate post-war to the early 1970s. The paper adopts the suggestion made by Gramsci to understand the early twentieth century expansion of Fordist mass production industry as a case of passive revolution. This assists in testing the same interpretation for the post-war mass production period. There is also reference to the crisis of mass production and concurrent growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in industrial districts (IDs) in the Italian north-east (NE) as a purportedly alternative, territorially-rooted post-Fordist development. However, even this internationally-acclaimed industrial manufacturing 'alternative' suffered from a protracted economic crisis in an increasingly globalised economy.

Gramsci's insistence on equating Fordism with Americanism suggests that the industrial work regime was meaningfully explained in combination with a new and complementary way of life (Q4: 52, 489). In relation to this and the methodological need to connect education with the economy in general, and industry in particular, the third part of the paper takes into consideration two understandings of education. One refers to formal schooling provision. During the critical times leading to the setting up of the formal state and the Fascist takeover, both, it is argued here, examples of passive revolution, the Piedmontese state in 1859 and the Fascist regime in 1923 formulated and implemented legislative tools for formal education provision. Following WWII, the growth of a mass production economy was accompanied by an education system reform in 1962 introducing mass secondary school provision. At the turn of the century, a critical period during which industrial manufacturing suffered an unrelenting economic crisis and an unstable labour market, the 2003 Moratti Reform introduced a higher education programme with higher vocational courses answering calls for a higher skills and knowledge basis. This was aligned with policies issued by the European Union (EU), the main sponsor of training schemes in Italy. The Moratti

Reform was a case of direct association between economic and educational agendas as Italy, encouraged by the EU, turned to workfarist policies in order to form an employable workforce and compete in attracting investments. Besides formal education provision, the other understanding of education defines it in broad social terms focusing on socio-pedagogic processes in the social formation. This understanding is a re-iteration of Gramsci's elaborations on hegemonic relations and his premonition that all such relations are in a general sense pedagogic (Q10: 44). In other words, these relations cannot be "restricted to the field of strictly 'scholastic' relationships" (Borg, Buttigieg and Mayo, 2002, p.9). In this case, in line with the affirmation by Marx, the field is "the ideological terrain" of juridical, political, religious, artistic and philosophical forms, on which "men become conscious" of their social relations. It is on the same terrain that the paper seeks to relate this socio-pedagogic element in hegemonic practice to formal education provision (Q4: 37).

Contextualising passive revolution and education: The Risorgimento and Fascism

Gramsci adopted the concept of passive revolution from Vincenzo Cuoco's reading of the 1799 Neapolitan revolution. In his *Saggio storico sulla rivoluzione napoletana del 1799* (1801), Cuoco argued the revolution failed because it did not reflect the Neapolitan reality and the democratisation process it promoted was enforced by a foreign imperial power. Gramsci endorsed this and pointed out the alienation of the popular masses in the absence of a revolutionary bottom-up process (Q3: 40). Instead, as a top-down revolution it pitted the people and their needs against those of the rulers; consequently, it was always going to be difficult to gain hegemonic leadership. In the ensuing century, Piedmontese initiative in the Risorgimento similarly lacked the intellectual and hegemonic leadership to attract a national-popular mass support across the peninsula (Q15: 59). Consequently, the formation of the Italian state turned out to be a case of territorial assimilation imposed by the Piedmontese. Once again, as in the case of 1799, this was a "revolution from above" (Morton, 2013, p.38), incomplete and without widespread popular support, in which the revolutionary agent was the dominant state not a dynamic social class on the rise. Hegemonic leadership, by contrast, recalled Machiavelli's point about the need for power-holders to be accepted by the rest rather than merely be satisfied with having acquired and imposed their dominance over others.

The distinction between passive revolution as imposed domination on one side, and hegemonic leadership on the other, is not to be exaggerated. Whilst leadership associated with bottom-up, educational practice in consensus-building remains analytically distinct from a top-down coercive approach, at the same time, in concrete political practice, rule characterised by leadership

resorts to coercion whilst domineering regimes are difficult to sustain in the long term without hegemonic leadership. For Gramsci, the two were related in terms of distinction rather than opposition (Q8: 48, 86). He expressed this in two concepts of the state, one as educator and the other as coercer. Ideologically different from the caste character of aristocratic rule, bourgeois social relations reflected a revolutionary transformation in the legal framework and consequently the formal state. This became an 'educator', intent on culturally absorbing and assimilating the social formation. Conversely, when they faced crises that exposed contradictions in their attempts at hegemonic leadership, bourgeois rulers were forced to resort to coercion. However, along with coercion, they still presented an agenda of 'modernising' reform carefully maintaining initiative and power. This required support from intellectuals. Thus, fascist rule was not exhausted by coercive measures. Besides Gentile's direct support, Mussolini's regime received support from independent intellectuals such as Croce who, in Gramsci's words, was "the most powerful machine" for "conformism" (in Garin, 1997, p.43), and who did not hesitate to defend Gentile and condone Fascist violence (ibid. p.147, n. 6).

Violence, as that perpetrated by the fascists, was not novel even in the Italian state's short history. The May 1898 events when the Extraordinary Commissioner Bava Beccaris violently put down demonstrations in Milan were not isolated cases. However, as far as conformism was concerned, the Piedmontese rulers who had overseen the political unification process conjured up their own measures. Within a context of passive revolution, weak hegemonic leadership required certain measures to block antagonistic social forces. Gramsci argued how, faced with the challenge of subaltern classes, the bourgeois class passed from "ethical and paedagogical renovation" to transforming the state "into a maze of trenches impeding access to a now defensive citadel" (Thomas, 2009, p.148). Defence included technicisation and transformism: the former de-politicised political debate and representation, the latter was the process of absorption of leading figures from the subaltern classes and social movements into the state and civil society. Both contributed to passive revolution's instances of "*reformist corrosion*" that blocked change inimical to the ruling sectors (Q10: 9, p.1227). This associated passive revolution with a number of related notions including Quinet's revolution-restoration. In the context of the French translation of Cuoco's passive revolution, revolution-restoration referred to reforms that dialectically related change with conservation. Historically, what in France had been an active revolution leading to ruptural transformation, in Italy turned out to be change brought about in small doses, legally, through reforms. This made it possible to conserve a working relation, reciprocally beneficial for old and new ruling sectors that conserved the economic and political status of the old dominant classes besides avoiding agrarian change and the French Jacobinism of 1831 and 1848 (Q10: 9). In Buci-Glucksmann's words, as the

ruptural transformation antithesis was absorbed by the conservation thesis, the result was a straightjacket on history, a “blocked dialectic” (1980, p. 315). Gramsci further qualified this with ‘revolution without a revolution’, i.e., a process “through which systemic transformations are achieved by non-revolutionary means” (Callinicos, 2010, p.492). It confirms the observation that the force of passive revolution steadfastly rests on ‘passive’.

Extending the blocked dialectic or revolution-without-revolution to the Fascist period promotes the translatability of passive revolution elsewhere, away from its Risorgimento baseline. The attribution of the concept to events beyond the formation of bourgeois states such as that achieved by the Risorgimento was challenged by Callinicos (ibid.). Morton agreed with passive revolution’s association with state formation and “the creation of state power and an institutional framework consonant with capitalist property relations” (2007, p.66). Piedmont’s initiative in the Risorgimento pushed its ruling class to take up the task of modernisation and to set the conditions necessary for capitalist development. Morton, however, went further and argued for the concept’s usefulness “in generating additional insights relative to alternative historical and contemporary contexts” (ibid. p.79; also, Green, 2011). Gramsci himself opted for the conceptual transferability of theory developed in one context and adopted in another. This paper follows Gramsci in this regard. The concept of passive revolution describes the Fascists who, instead of the promised revolutionary transformation of the corrupt liberal regime, conserved power circles through state legislation and a planned economy, guaranteeing continued capitalist appropriation. Corporativism not only integrated restive labour in power hierarchies but was popular amongst wage-earning middle class sectors because it protected them from what Gramsci described, in a letter to Tatiana, as precarious employment and long term unemployment (Gramsci, 2013, p.275). Gramsci queried such continuity of the bourgeois state, and the role of the Fascists therein, in terms of two principles from Marx’s ‘Preface’ to *A Contribution towards the Critique of Political Economy* (1894): “No social formation disappears as long as the productive forces which have developed in it still find room for further forward movement” and besides, “does not set itself tasks for whose solution the necessary conditions have not already been incubated” (Q15: 17). Whilst the ‘old’ dominant agrarian class struggled to control peasant rebellion, the new industrial bourgeoisie was still struggling to establish the necessary conditions for its hegemonic leadership and, consequently, allied with a coercive political regime to suffocate inimical incubation.

Gramsci mapped out a basic condition for bourgeois hegemony as he recalled both the concept of the bourgeois state as ‘educator’ and the need to maintain balance between coercive practice and modernising reforms: “Each social group has its own type of school, intended to perpetuate a specific traditional

function, ruling or subordinate” (in Buttigieg, 2002, p.130). When the Moderate Party in Piedmont adopted and intensified the parliamentary strategy of transformism to stabilise and guarantee continuity for its rule, the need was felt to devise other strategies at state institutional level to prop modernisation and educational conditions for the establishment and social reproduction of a bourgeois society. In 1859, legislation for formal education provision in Piedmont anticipated political unification. Known as the Casati Law, it became the first nation-wide Education Act to form the king’s new subjects. The elementary school, Gramsci pointed out, was to fight ignorance and superstition, and to teach natural law basic for the understanding, adaptation to, and control of the natural world. Supported by faith in academic standards and examinations – later to be defined as traditional schooling (Entwistle, 1979) – Gramsci argued in its support. For him, amongst others, it imparted the perception of social and state law made by man and therefore potentially unmade by man. Overall, just as the bourgeois state was necessary to break away from feudal economic shackles, similarly, this education law was required to assist in emancipation from folklore. Considering folklore as something bizarre, strange, ridiculous or picturesque did not assist (Q1: 89). It was better viewed as a conception of the world held by certain sectors of society, neither elaborate nor systematised, but rather a multiplicity of fragments from conceptions of the world pertaining to the past. It could not be ignored. For Gramsci, formal education had to face folklore in order to overcome it and realign modern and popular culture cleansed from folkloristic rituals, witchcraft, etc. He retorted against pseudo-scientific approaches such as De Man’s that suggested over-riding positivist science in order to conserve folklore. Whilst the Sardinian promoted the study of popular psychology, this was intended to educate and transform not conserve (Q3: 48).

The next major education reform was carried out under Fascist rule. The Fascist Party presented itself as a revolutionary organisation prepared to use coercion to impose order on rebellious workers. At the same time, as with the Piedmontese, the Fascists were aware that rule required more than, in their case, the physical methods of factory council break-ups or *squadristi* treatment of political opposition. Whilst Mussolini (1979, p.227) in his 1923 article ‘Force and Consensus’ wrote that physical and armed force were permanent requirements for any government (including a Liberal one), Bottai, Fascist minister of Corporations and Education, Governor of Rome and Addis Ababa, wrote about the need to control violence and illegality in order to gain consensus and construct a leading group without the party duplicating State institutions (Cassese, 1971). The more Fascists resorted to coercion, and imposed domination, the less they could boast of leadership. In 1923, during his twenty months as Mussolini’s minister of instruction, Gentile elaborated a Reform of Education in which the secondary school was deliberately set up to prepare future leaders. This was separated from a lower status school for the

commoners. Gramsci criticised the social class bias of the new school system also for its overtly vocational concerns and especially the early age students entered such schools. The child of a traditionally intellectual family “has numerous advantages over his comrades, and is already in possession of attitudes learnt from his family environment” (in Borg, Buttigieg and Mayo, 2002, p.11). The division between classical and vocational schools would conserve and consolidate the social class divide. As for political leadership, this was eventually transformed with the fascistisation of the state, society and culture. In 1931, state university professors were forced to sign an oath in favour of the regime. This was not ready to tolerate alternative, and even less antagonistic, intellectual leadership; the Church and the Socialist Party recommended their men to sign up.

If the Casati Law was not less supportive of a social class divide than Gentile’s Reform, the Fascists had other things on their mind. Gramsci criticised curricular change in the Gentile Reform. Although it was projected as progressive for removing dogmatism in teaching science and in learning by heart concrete facts, Gramsci disagreed with Gentile’s decision. Giroux emphasised Gramsci’s distinction between “learning facts that enlarged one’s perception of the larger social order and simply gathering information” (2002, p.49). In this case, the Sardinian considered such dogmatism as indispensable to fight folklore. Furthermore, when eventually the Fascists integrated religious knowledge in the Reform, paradoxically it ended up incorporating dogmatism ‘par excellence’. To Gramsci, this dogmatism meant abandoning education. By the time religion was incorporated in 1929 in the secondary school, against Gentile’s protestations, even Liberal Democracy was abandoned. The Fascist regime, in spite of its strong anti-clerical roots, had emboldened the role of religion in state schools over that sanctioned by the Casati Law. Similarly, as mentioned above, it went back on its promise to revolutionise politics from the corrupt ways of the Liberals (and their passive revolution).

Following this brief explanation of Gramsci’s conceptual elaboration of passive revolution in relation to the Risorgimento state formation and the Fascist regime, both associated with establishing major schooling legislation here understood in terms of hegemonic instruments, the next section introduces the post-war context, in Gramsci’s words, by means of a sequence of static photographs illustrating in broad terms industrial development (Q7: 24).

The industrial context in the second half of the twentieth century in Italy’s north-west and north-east

In the early post-WWII decades, Italy was “a striking example” of a less-developed economy achieving “remarkable” growth (Dunlop and Greco,

2006, p.5). During the war it lost 85% of its merchant navy, one-third of its railways, and approximately one-fifth of its industrial plant and equipment (Eichengreen, 2007, p.54). However, whilst there was extensive damage, it could quickly be repaired. Besides, Italian industry opportunistically turned to profit the US Marshall Aid Plan that paid for new machinery and other requirements. It was able to exploit the transition to post-war market openings within an international economy that had to shift from war to peace. This included war-inspired technological development transformed to serve commercial and civilian purposes. Post-war mass production industry was, in part, a follow-up of the dismemberment and restructuring of war industries. The state contributed by assisting both the large exporting industry and internal demand with direct investments in infrastructure and setting up conditions for a national market. Large mass production companies received support for their investment from the banking system including Banca Commerciale, Credito Italiano, and their off-shoot Mediobanca, controlled by the state through IRI, the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction. State-owned companies, including IRI, but also ENI, the National Hydrocarbons Agency, and ENEL, the Italian National Agency for Electric Energy contributed heavily to post-war industrial reconstruction. The territory of the Italian NW hosted the leading capitalist families that promoted and thrived from this industrial restructuring and growth.

Earlier on, immediately following the Liberation, FIAT, Pirelli, Falck, Montecatini and Marzotto owners and managers were unavailable, still in hiding. Special commissioners took over. However, Communist Party leader Togliatti ruled out taking over the factories and favoured a policy of national unity: the factory was not to be the context of class conflict. This was accompanied by the restoration of the bourgeois *padroni*, owners and managers of industry. When they were restored, government exited the labour-capital relations scene and that, in practice, translated into a policy of non-interference in capital's control. Whilst Fascist corporativism was dismantled, and the new practice of shop-floor relations ranged from threatening workers to German-like co-determination (Magnani, 1997), eventually the representatives of big capital began to adopt a tougher stance in labour-capital relations giving enterprises a monarchic regime under which consultation was useless and property rights unassailable. Restoration of bourgeois dominance amidst change not only reflected passive revolution's basic dynamic, it also reflected "the survival and re-organisation of state identity through which social relations are reproduced in new forms consonant with capitalist property relations" (Morton, 2007, p.68). These relations were assisted by the abundance of labour supply from war-to-peace reconversion, the South, and wage-dependent peasantry, the *braccianti*. This permitted a substantial stagnation of wage levels. Although, German and northern European industry lured Italian labour following European Community membership, profits for native capital remained high as the

wealth from the so-called miraculous growth decades was unequally distributed. During the 1950s (1949-58) there was no nation-wide strike. By then, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) was a political actor and not a class war institution; integrated in the liberal politics of representation, it manoeuvred for electoral success.

Hirst and Zeitlin (1997) defined their ideal type model of mass production as the “manufacture of standardized products in high volumes using special-purpose machinery and predominantly unskilled labor” (p.221). At the same time, it was more than production and shop-floor relations. Mass production was accompanied by a *vision* that promoted economic, political and cultural paths necessary to follow for the host social formation requiring a broad educational effort. Gramsci had anticipated this argument in what he called Americanism – a parallel way of life to Fordist mass production industry. It led the Sardinian to face a question of socio-pedagogic relevance in terms of the reciprocal correspondence between economic needs and general culture’s response to them (Q4: 52). Whilst in a letter to Tatiana (Gramsci, 2013, pp.58-60) he explained how Ford’s inspectors assured employees’ readiness to work by controlling their private lives in terms of food, bed, volume of rooms, hours of rest, the sexual question, and complementing these with higher salaries and demographic rationalisation, in terms of the rest of society, this can also be illustrated by observing the role carried out by the media in post-war Italy. Intellectuals representing the industrial *alta borghesia* (upper bourgeoisie) of the Italian NW formed another sector amongst the *borghesi*; besides leaders of political parties and administrators of the central state, these included intellectuals working within the dominant mass media. In this way, the metropolitan industrial *borghesi* of the NW built links with intellectuals in civil society. RAI, the Italian state television, centralised power to form public opinion and impose a political agenda at the national scale, and at the same time, sustain consumer society.

By the 1970s, however, the leading mass production sector in the NW was in crisis and underwent change. The three regions of the NW – Lombardy, Piedmont and Liguria – were the most industrialised regions in the pre- and post-war periods but only the first two registered strong industrial growth throughout the earlier post-war decades. By the 1980s, industrial decline spread in both regions. Nonetheless, indications of a mass production crisis in the NW were accompanied by the protracted presence of leading industrial companies. Based on 1993 data collected by Consob, the National Commission for Companies and Stock Exchange, Barca et al. (1997) concluded that Pirelli, Falck and Fiat, founded at the end of the previous century, continued to feature as dominant or relevant players at the beginning of the 1990s. At the same time, although the industrial *alta borghesia* of the NW represented by the industrialists’ association of Confindustria boasted a dominant status, it was unable to overcome investment difficulties,

and was forced to follow the dictates of EU rules of competition, and turn to market capital shares. In the major companies, a tripolar structure of power evolved consisting of founding family, management, and the novel presence of banks and insurance companies. Another social sector had found a place in the sun. At the top of still dominant industrial capital in Italy, the notion of concurrent change and conservation in the social relations of capital was illustrated by this alliance as an adaptation to change in the capital base.

As the decline of mass production organisation in the NW continued, the large companies restructured in an attempt to boost their resilience by increasing the number of small and medium-small firms controlled through scission, acquisition and start-ups. In the 1970s, either through direct investment or subcontracting, production was transferred from the metropolitan centres to the surrounding provinces, but also along the Alpine foothills and the Po to the neighbouring NE with its industrial district (ID) model populated by artisans and a skilled workforce. Industrial manufacturing in the Italian NE especially that associated with the ID organisation was not all subordinated to or controlled by the NW. From 1970 to 1995, according to Anastasia & Coro` (1996, in Odella, 2002), gross manufacturing product in the Veneto region in the NE grew 200% whereas the national growth rate was 75%. This success was the result of exports in footwear, textiles, clothing, household appliances, etc. and related machinery. With noteworthy global shares in their niche sectors, district SMEs matched the industrial output of Piedmont and Lombardy. The CNEL (National Council for the Economy and Work) 2002 report *Italia Multinazionale 2000* indicated that during the 1990s, SMEs not only “offset the difficulties and sometimes the backwardness of the large firms”, they also started investing abroad especially in countries of central and eastern Europe (pp.3-4).

The industrialisation of the NE was described as a bottom-up, culturally-embedded, productive outgrowth (Brusco, 1986; Belussi, 1999). Was it a case of petty bourgeois anti-passive revolution? The story of the modern Veneto in the NE and its irruption on the national stage has not been written yet, argued *Corriere della Sera* journalist Di Vico, and if not perhaps a revolution, for him it was a discontinuity. When eventually it is narrated, he wrote, “It will be possible to better see and understand the breadth and length of the discontinuity that, from the Veneto, gave rise to the Nordest” (2012, p.5). This absent narrative structured within Gramsci’s conceptual passages in collective political consciousness meant that the economic and political interests of the NE were not successfully imposed at the national scale. This would have been the stage when each member of the social class not only became aware of corporate interests, but also how these must “transcend the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups too” (Q13: 17). Di Vico wrote about an “establishment” that was still missing in the NE (2012, p.6) and how this

meant fragmentation and the projection of various visions from the same territory. There was an explanation. Ultimately, as Dunford (2006) observed, the increased concentration on Milan reflected the restructuring of industry in the shape of value adding specialised service companies providing immaterial, knowledge-based products, consultancy, media and communication services with their headquarters in this metropolitan city. Whilst it left an impact on the productive world, the growth of a tertiarised economy in Milan, visible in sites of consumption, transport systems, centres of innovation, knowledge production and transmission, as well as the re-use of deserted factories, turned it into *citta` infinita*, a city without limits (Aldo Bonomi, 2008).

Broadening the spatial scale, Dunford observed how the regional system in Italy formed part of “an inter-regional and international division of labour in the sector” (2006, p.2). His studies on textile and clothing industries (TCI) exposed how the district unit was part of a system inter-connecting different spatial scales, including the Italian NE and NW, thus identifying these as more than mere territorial neighbours. Worse than a passive revolution, for the petty bourgeois productive sectors of the NE, this would turn out a failed one; the dominant social sector remained the bourgeoisie. The 2005 edition of the *Multinational Italy* report (Mariotti and Mutinelli, 2005) reconfirmed how, in terms of exports and employment, IDs were able to sustain their success. However, the report remarked about limits in their size, management, finances, and access to information about and experience of international capital markets. It suggested the way forward was in medium-sized firms. These already formed part of IDs, as attested by their inclusion in the acronym SME, however, the ones pointed out in the report - Mapei, Socotherm, Cementir and CF Gomma - were multinational enterprises (MNEs), each leading a group of companies rather than an ID. These could compete in foreign investment markets. In his March 06, 2004 article ‘The Parabola of the North East’, political scientist Ilvo Diamanti concisely interpreted Montezemolo’s victory over Tognana in the race for the 2004 presidency of Confindustria as “a sign of the decline or at least the eclipse” of the autonomous Veneto ID model. Montezemolo represented the interests of large industry in the NW, Tognana represented those of the upstart SMEs, especially those from the Veneto. With the NE declared in crisis when compared with its growth period, representatives of large capital in the NW conserved and consolidated their hold on Confindustria, the institutional representation of dominant industrial capital in Italy, whilst embracing the bourgeois and petty bourgeois from the NE.

Passive revolution and education

Gramsci wrote about national variants in Fordist development (Q22: 2). At the same time, as can be illustrated in the post-war decades, in spite of

“specific national circumstances”, variants Aglietta argued, “cannot cast doubt on the fundamental fact that all Western countries benefited from a common growth regime” (1998, p. 57, fn. 12). Commonality was also expressed in the active role of the political state. The support of the political state in Italy (just as much as the post-Risorgimento Piedmontese and the inter-war Fascist regimes) was already pointed out above. It was a continuation of the political response to a call to modernise and what Gramsci had defined as the need to rationalise society (Q1: 61). It underscored the assumption singled out by Entwistle that runs throughout this paper of Gramsci’s understanding “a theory of education to be integral to political theory” (1979, p. 1).

... every State is ethical as long as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a specific cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the requirements for developing the forces of production, and therefore to the interests of the dominant classes. (Q8: 179)

In a period of complex social class transformation in post-war Italy, this became strategically sensitive for hegemonic purposes. If the aristocratic ruling class was a ‘closed’ class blocking social mobility, according to Gramsci, “the bourgeois class poses itself as an organism in continuous movement, capable of absorbing the entire society, assimilating it to its own cultural and economic level” and this, as mentioned above, transformed the role of the bourgeois state into one of “educator” (Q8: 2). This thought serves as backdrop, in the section that follows, to understand the 1962 Education Reform and, in the next section, to eventually review that of 2003, with the political state reacting to transformations in the social formation especially in the face of opposition and/or economic restructuring.

Formal education provision of 1962

Contextualising the 1962 and 2003 Education Reforms (just as much as 1859 and 1923) into a passive revolution reading assists in unearthing a basic commonality in what otherwise might be interpreted as a disconnected sequence of events. With passive revolution understood as embracing revolution-without-revolution strategies via the state to counter actual or potential popular activism within a context of complex transformation, it is possible to suggest a pattern embracing these events. If 1859 followed the Piedmontese political leadership’s role in state formation vis-a-vis the challenge of the radical liberal and nationalist supporters from the Risorgimento wars and uprisings; and, 1923 was the Fascist state’s response to the social unrest following WWI and the impact of the Russian revolution on the working class in Italy; in 1962, the Christian Democrat (DC) leadership was replying to WWII destruction, political state restructuring, and the strong

communist challenge. However, besides the top-down aspect of passive revolution in which opposition is engaged (absorbed or destroyed), there is also the need for a long-term strategy that thrives towards setting up a hegemonic regime and catering for its social reproduction in which dominance is transformed into leadership as it attracts active support. The formal education system has a role in this.

The immediate circumstance for the DC school initiative was a PCI earlier draft bill of a secondary school for all along the same lines as those of the eventual DC document. Concurrently, the Christian Democrats had to overcome an internal challenge by assuring the party's right-wing that although the state would have authority over teaching, the Church and other private organisations were constitutionally guaranteed the freedom to set up their schools. So, preceded by a Senate initiative dated 21st January 1959 by the communist senators Ambrogio Donini and Cesare Luporini that intended to promote an education geared towards the civil and political goal of a participative citizenship, and, propped by the Socialists who formed part of the government coalition (especially their deputy Codignola), the Christian Democrats acquiesced and Secondary School for All became law in 1962. It made attendance obligatory up to the age of fourteen. It doubled the student population and implemented the right to free schooling for all sanctioned by article 34 of the Italian Constitution.

In social class terms, the 1859 Casati Law led to a mere 0.1% of the population actually following what ultimately amounted to either an elite humanist path that led to university or a middle and technical school/institute path. Implementation was disappointing and besides, the state left the pre-Elementary age-group to private provision. The 1923 Gentile Reform, as has been discussed above, effectively consolidated the class divide. In the post-war liberal democracy, the 1962 Act promoted an egalitarian ideology (even if the elite kept their education options open). This answered specific moral and cultural requirements. Urbanisation and lifestyles determined by mass industrialisation and a novel national market required a mass society. When Bowles and Gintis (2002) revised their 1976 *Schooling in capitalist America* claiming it gave "insufficient attention to the contradictory pressures operating on schools, particularly those that emanate from the labor market, which we stressed, and from the democratic polity, which we should have emphasized more" (ibid. p.15), they were pointing out a contradiction that in their earlier classic had under-emphasised "future roles as citizens, family members, and the like" (ibid. p.13). In Italy, and in relation to socialisation processes promoted by the 1962 Act, this created difference between the generation that provided ample streams of unschooled rural labour in immediate post-war industrial development and that of their children socialised within the new state-supported education system in increasingly affluent societies, associated with rising expectations. In 1969, Codignola's

law – Tristano Codignola the son of Ernesto, Gentile’s major collaborator in the promulgation of the 1923 law – appeased the social pressure raised by students in alliance with workers: the doors of the university were opened for the generation that had benefitted from the 1962 reform. Nonetheless, the contradiction pointed out by Bowles & Gintis does not eliminate the consideration of limits and dependence of education provision in relation to the labour market and how this, in turn, related to what ultimately remained a class-divided social formation on one side and democratic polity on the other (Colombo et al. 2006); another aspect of concurrent change and conservation.

Turn-of-century education provision

State welfare had accompanied post-war economic recovery and growth in advanced industrial nations. It sustained social integration and reproduction. State welfare was not exclusively a matter of money contributions but also included, amongst others, provision of the socially enabling right to a state-supported school system. The European Commission’s Eurydice study, *Two Decades of Reform in Higher Education in Europe: 1980 Onwards* (2000) observed that “across all European countries, in the latter half of the 20th century, the dawning realisation [was] that a high level of education had become a prerequisite for the cultural, social and economic welfare of democratic societies”. This was the period of the Secondary School for All Education Act of 1962. In the final decades of the century, faced with the need to establish the conditions that sustained capitalist continuity in the midst of the crisis faced by metropolitan mass production, the political state replied with another revolution-without-revolution transition; it did not shrivel or disappear, as some assumed, but changed from social welfare to workfare business-benefitting concerns (Jessop, 2006). Different from the immediate post-war education curriculum of a nation-wide, citizenship-based defascistisation project, Moratti’s turn-of-century ministerial decisions promoted vocationalism and upgrading of technical and apprenticeship provision on a regional basis.

Besides curriculum change, there was organisational restructuring; it was the strategic option adopted in industry but also in public administration and formal education. Industrial capital opted for a more deconcentrated organisational restructuring through scission and decentralisation. In the latter decades of the century it took the guise of the organisational structure of the group of companies. Barca et al. (1997) described its pyramidal structure as consisting of “juridically autonomous firms” which, “starting from a common apex were linked in cascades by relations of control that separated one from another” (p.155). This structure was useful because decisions were made autonomously at different levels by the various units without affecting the core capital at the top of the group. Public

administration was similarly decentralised following the reform formulated in Law 59/97 with its deliberations on control powers and decentralisation, standard-setting and autonomy. Administrative provisions redistributed power amongst state, region, metropolitan city, province and local government as set by the October 18, 2001 *Legge Tre* amendment of the Constitution's Chapter V following a referendum in August of the same year (Isfol, 2008, pp.26, 245). Significantly, just as mass education had followed in the footsteps of mass production, a decentralised structure of education followed both industrial and public administration decentralisation. Change and conservation dynamics, features associated with passive revolution, were witnessed in the Reform which, in line with public administration reform Law 59/97, restructured the Ministry of Education. It led to the decentralised *Uffici Scolastici Regionali* (USR), responsible to carry out ministerial functions at the regional scale. Change was more formal than substantive. Centralised bureaucratic control was conserved and redistribution of powers not carried out. Law 53/03 and Presidential Decree 319/03, in passive revolution jargon, restructured but ultimately restored centrism, or what Ribolzi (2006) defined as neo-centrism. Although regions successfully challenged the central state in the constitutional court on conflicting interpretations of legislative decrees in education, the final say was still left with central authority.

Not only did education restructuring develop alongside a resilient old establishment, but within regional economic flourishing, central politicians such as Bossi, Casini, and Buttiglione gave orders to local followers: "the result was an unending to-and-fro by the entire political class in the directions of Rome and Milan" (Mazzaro, 2012, pp.50-1). Similarly, the Unification legacy of economic unevenness across the peninsula was consolidated. Education and training statistics following the Moratti 2003 Education and Training Reform confirmed the North-South divide, a birthmark of the nation. The subnational scales of regions, provinces and municipalities purportedly increased their say in social and public policies but it was bourgeois sectors already influential at the local and regional scale that increased their powers over the public sector expected to be more responsive. Significantly, Lombard and Veneto protagonists profited most and they already had a strong say at the national scale with the northern alliance of Forza Italia and the Lega Nord in power.

Taking advantage of the regional prerogative to establish training programmes, a distinctive trait of the Moratti 2003 Reform, and propped by decentralisation, Lombard and Veneto regional governments prepared workfarist courses directly profitable in the labour market. They opted to chase where the economic interests of leading bourgeois sectors in the two regions lay - capacity-building professional formation in industry and services. In the increased attraction of vocational and education training, the North-South divide re-emerged as the North hosted twice as many courses

and attracted three times as many participants as the rest (Isfol, 2008). Apprenticeship figures confirmed: 10.2% in the South, 9.1% in the Centre, 17.6% in the NW and, significantly, 28.9% in the NE (ibid.). Data showed a dynamic, efficiently administered North; an intermediate Centre; and a dysfunctional South facing immobility and a host of other difficulties. Thirty years after Bagnasco (1978) published his Three Italies Model (NW; NE and Central; South), the NE had closed in on the NW but the divisions were substantially conserved. The transformation of the NE was reflected in education: from the territory with one of the highest absentee records at the national scale in the 1960s, it became a frontrunner along with the NW in participation statistics of formal higher technical and apprenticeship courses promoted by the Moratti Reform; these courses contended with those from university and were attributed equivalent status.

The convergence of the Veneto with Lombardy in supply-side measures in education, it is argued here, is the activity that reflects more clearly the leadership of the NW over the NE. Transformation at the regional scale represented by education statistics is meaningfully understood by contextualising it in the discourse of economic social relations and accumulation processes where the 'old' survives and the 'new' finds it difficult to emerge. For Brenner & Glick, the Fordist "rise of scientific management or Taylorism-Fordism" had been "a moment of discontinuity" in terms of "mechanization, deskilling and capitalist control over the labour process", and "sufficiently sharp to mark - indeed partially to bring about - the transition from one regime of accumulation to the next" (Brenner and Glick, 1991, pp.57-8). Amin wrote of a "loose" recall of rules of management and mass production intensive accumulation processes from the 1920s and 1930s - when Gramsci contributed to Fordism's conceptual elaboration - to the stable post-war growth that stretched until the 1970s (2003, p.9).

The transition from Fordism to the post-1970s flexible specialisation alternative (such as the ID) did not represent a "transition from one to another regime of capital accumulation" but "a further phase of an ongoing, though hardly continuous, evolution" envisioned as "radically undermining" the "bastions of skilled workers' control" (Brenner and Glick, 1991, pp.58-9). Mechanisation and deskilling had undermined the traditional artisan from the Italian NE category as survival meant reaching out to the national market and exports. Furthermore, if during the Italian post-war 'miracle', labour was subordinated to managerial leadership as a fundamental condition supporting capital accumulation, in the latter decades of the century, the small petty bourgeois producers suffered a similar experience of subordination to powerful bourgeois sectors (Arrighetti and Seravalli, 1997). The large number of small firms in the tanning, textile, sport shoes, knitwear or furniture districts did not indicate an absence of capitalist accumulation but rather the concentration of control in the hands of a few powerful

families. Thus, whilst education statistics indicated change in the Veneto, accumulation processes were conserved. Compared with those in other regions, Veneto industry, including that in district territory, had higher levels of capital accumulation processes and technical progress (Becattini, 2001).

Conservation was also observed in terms of the social formation. Based on Marco Biagi's work on the labour market (shot dead before the employment law nicknamed after him saw the light), the Moratti Reform followed the premise that education has a fundamental role in social change and in social mobility. It had been the same in the 1960s. Statistical results were nevertheless disappointing and proved the argument made at other points in the paper of conservation in the midst of mostly purported change. An official 2009 report by the regional government of the Veneto quoted data indicating that social mobility in Italy was failing; where it did occur, mobility depended on parental social class background and related level of education. Records showed 30% moved but the children of working-class parents, followed by those from a wage-dependent middle-class background were relatively less mobile. Social class membership was conserved in a society in which, since the post-war, transformations had led from rural to industrial, and then to openings in middle class employment. By the end of the century, mobility became more difficult and created the inter-generational relations crisis of an older generation having gained mobility via economic change without the possibility of guaranteeing the same to the younger generation. The report also pointed out the "elite nature" of the university despite reforms, and sardonically concluded, "Higher education has still not managed to provide a direct route for social improvement" (Regione Veneto, 2009, p.10).

The continental scale

The Moratti Reform's promotion of a vocationalist drive for higher skills was in line with similar goals concurrently promoted by the EU. It also fell in line with historical antecedents narrated above that led to developments in Italy characterised by the impact of developments abroad. Thus, relations between Austria and France, and the decline of Spanish influence affected the Risorgimento and assisted the Piedmontese to form a bourgeois state over an uneven but preponderantly provincial and agricultural geo-economic reality. The Russian revolution and the activities of colonial powers affected the rise of Fascism as this took on the role of protector defending industrial bourgeois property through state-imposed order on rebellious labour. The post-war Christian Democrats governed the restructuring of a defeated dictatorial state transformed into a liberal democratic nation that integrated labour within its folds but principally assisting dominant Fordist capital by providing broad investments via the State. Whilst Gramsci had already discussed US-led Fordist expansion in Europe, the post-war sequel consolidated the role of the

US in Europe; it answered to political, economic and military needs of the US. This blocked inter-capitalist warfare but also oiled the “growth of global aggregate demand” (Gill, 1994, p. 96). Summarising Gill, if one is to search for the origins these are to be traced back to the “outward expansion of emerging (American) social forces” as they internationalised the principles and forms of the New Deal, in terms of a “Fordist capital-intensive, mass consumption accumulation” (ibid.).

At the end of the century, an increased presence of mobile capital accompanied the crisis of mass production industry in the metropolitan centres of advanced industrial economies. The Single European Act of 1987 constituted “an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured”. The Maastricht Treaty that set up the EU constituted a heavy institutional armature fundamentally protecting and promoting the mobility of capital and was bound to impact on, rather than open-endedly intertwine with, national and subnational scales. One notes significant differences that affected the working class when comparing the world that bred Maastricht with the one that bred the Treaty of Rome. At the time of the Rome Treaty, employment policies were bound to the national scale, where state welfare policies were adopted. Conversely, wrote Jessop (2008, p. 213), the Maastricht convergence criteria made it harder for member-states to break out of neo-liberal assumptions in an ideological climate constructed over Reagan in the US and Thatcher in the UK, along with the collapse of Soviet communism. Maastricht and the Growth and Stability Pact, combined, required the political state to go ahead with “public spending cuts or constraints, social security and welfare reforms, and more or less significant privatization of state-owned enterprises and commercialization of public services” (ibid.).

Moratti’s education reform not only followed a historic pattern characterised by the impact of developments abroad on Italian affairs, it also reflected a new phase observed across Europe in terms of education priorities. Increasingly, policy affirmed an economic thrust. The Eurydice study mentioned above sensed a shift in higher education to a provision “rooted in economic causes”, highlighting “competitiveness and responsiveness to the changing demands of economic life and the workplace by focusing education and research on required new skills and technologies” (European Commission, 2000). From an earlier post-war attention to social and cultural welfare in education, a shift of focus was observed to concerns directly related to work. The EU Commission’s Lisbon Memorandum of 2000 (the ‘Strategy’) expressed the master narrative of the continent “becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world”. It propped the member-states to outperform others in global competitiveness especially the challenge from North American, SE Asian and BRIC economies. To achieve this goal, the EU steadfastly promoted workfarist

goals in education. The assumption was that 'knowledge' had the potential to generate economic growth, prosperity and employment. Starting from the crisis of the 1970s, workfarism insisted on supply-side policies to boost national competitiveness on the basis of over-riding business-benefitting measures (Jessop, 2003). The modernising Casati Law, the consensus-building Gentile Reform, and the DC's Secondary School Reform accompanying 'national' industry and market were to be followed by the higher skill and knowledge basis of a continent in competition with the rest of the world.

Studying social science discourse in EU research programmes, Kuhn (2006) highlighted how a technology-driven information society had become a learning society biased toward economic issues as endorsed by the highest political authorities. In turn, learning society turned into a knowledge-based society (KBS) as it became a strategic aim and guiding principle for EU research, general policy-making, and educational research programmes. The vague and so promising concept of a learning society became 'economic' when combined with KBS. The latter's ubiquity in all key policy areas and research programmes was equalled by its conceptual indefiniteness. The European Commission's discourse regarding KBS and economy did not identify the choice of knowledge, leading Kuhn to conclude that KBS was an "ideological title" (ibid. p. 5) for ambitious global companies and their profit-chasing activities based on a number of factors that included knowledge. A knowledge-based society became a synonym for economic competitiveness. It remains a top-down ideology that "has never been a subject for any bottom up decision process in which the citizens were involved. Rather the opposite is the case" (ibid. p. 6). It punishes the unemployed workers with a precarious life as they suffer from political and economic decision-taking more than from knowledge factors.

Moratti's 2003 Reform was a sign of the convergence of Northern Italy with such continent-wide goals within the EU's broad policy-making practice. Education policy has increasingly incorporated the Bologna Process on Higher Education, part of the internationalisation process in which an inter-governmental quality control process provides recognition of degrees and thus an integrated university scenario and facilitation of work mobility and employability. Also significant was the Copenhagen Process for Vocational Education and Training. Performativity is framed within international comparative tables such as with PISA. This involves education measurements of students' performance in reading, mathematics and science. It ties what the Maastricht Treaty defined as autonomous activity at state level – such as the determination of content and its 'weight' in education curricula and syllabuses – to outcome measures and international performance standards. The EU open method of consultation was designed on consensus, and articles 149 and 150 of the Treaty on education and training limited EU responsibility to coordinate, supplement, and support individual member-states. The latter

remain autonomous in determining content, organisation, and diversity issues. However, it was hard to deny that by the 1990s, not only did the continent remain a determining factor in economic development, it was also in education and training provision. The tradition of Cuoco's passive revolution was at work; hegemonic economies were powerful enough to send their ideologies to peripheral outreaches. Furthermore, the 2008 Isfol report concluded that Structural Fund money did not complement but rather substitute state financial support in Italy.

Conclusion

There is a general consensus that the concept of passive revolution fundamentally refers to ruptural conditions of modern bourgeois state formation. Gramsci adopted it in his discussion of the nineteenth century Risorgimento that led to the unification of separate territories under the rule of the Piedmontese in the guise of the Italian nation-state. However, he also used the concept for phases subsequent to state formation especially in relation to strategies intent on conserving the bourgeois state during critical times when capital and/or the political state restructured and a weakened political leadership was challenged. If leadership strategies failed, other more drastic measures would follow, including suspension of democracy or austerity. This is what Gramsci must have thought when personally suffering the Fascist regime he considered a case of passive revolution. Just as the Italian state born from the Risorgimento was a case of passive revolution compared to what followed the 1789 French Revolution, one could argue the same for the Fascist regime when compared to developments following the Russian revolution.

In 1946, the political state in Italy was restructured and transformed from a dictatorship to a liberal democracy; similarly the economy from war to peace. It was a broad industrialisation process that consolidated the upper classes but wrought change in the proletarian social class structure. With the protection of the Allies, members of the industrial *alta borghesia* that had collaborated with and served Mussolini in the war effort were restored to power. In its preparatory work for the Constituency Assembly in 1947, the Demaria economic commission from the Ministry of the Constituency consulted economic agents on their prospects. The study recorded the names of industrial companies in the north listed in the stock market at the time. Comparing such names with those enlisted in the 1993 data collected by Consob, as already mentioned above, confirmed Pirelli, Falck and Fiat as dominant or relevant players at the end of the twentieth century. In spite of crisis, capital accumulation processes of these three Groups were successful. Leading capitalists were not the only ones to be restored; Fascists returned to the police force and state administration. The DC began its uninterrupted decades of political rule with widespread political corruption, organised

militarised crime, and administrative inefficiency (Anderson, 2009, pp.278-351) but conserving the bourgeois political state that, amongst others, meant no alternation in government.

In the post-DC era, Dunford and Greco (2006) reported major achievements of Berlusconi's Forza Italia and Bossi's Lega Nord political alliance. Representing the Italian North as it experienced industrial difficulties, the alliance successfully attracted public money away from the south. The *Cassa del Mezzogiorno* was a public entity set up in 1950 intent on development in the south through public works and infrastructural projects, as well as assistance to investments. When its time limit ended, politicians extended assistance to southern development through its follow-up, the *Agenzia del Mezzogiorno*. However, the implementation of another revised follow-up system of that extension which stretched up to 1993, failed. A radical change in approach ensued. Laws 488/1992, 341/1995 and 662/1996 began to follow a nation-wide approach to identifying economically depressed areas instead of the previous focus restricted to the south. Viesti claimed the Berlusconi government sanctioned this transformation in order to satisfy northern and central lobbies (1996, in Dunford and Greco, 2006, p.117), redirecting public money to northern areas in crisis even if these were better off than those in the south. Having secured that central and northern regions were now eligible, the Tremonti Law 549/1995 provided investments and incentives for SMEs in regions eligible for state assistance. The change profited the North, conserving and consolidating in the process, the South's subordination.

Berlusconi revolutionised popular culture but the populist forces in the governments he headed, including the Lega Nord as the major political representative force in the NE, and the "absence of a clear political project", suggested to Dunford and Greco that "elements of continuity remain as a result in part of the resilience of the old hegemonic bloc and the interests it represented" (2006, p.127). Meanwhile, as the Veneto suffered industrial slowdown (Revelli, 2016; esp. Chap.3), the political triumph of the alliance turned to sober considerations of paralysing crisis as the legal woes of the Lega Nord and Forza Italia leadership meant the two political parties were in trouble, struggling to keep their political profile alive. By the second decade of the new century, Berlusconi's hold broke when, without a vote against, he was forced to resign. Berlusconi's fourth government fell to a new technocratic government led, significantly, by former EU Commissioner Mario Monti and constituted by unelected academics. Besides technocracy, another feature Gramsci associated with passive revolution was transformism. This was adopted and turned into an art by the political sector both pre- and post-Berlusconi described by Stella and Rizzo (2007) as the caste, *la Casta*. Hardly accountable to the electorate, political representatives changed colours regularly in order to join the victors who could grant them roles and placements in different institutions of political society. One was

hard-pressed to point out significant change in political strategy from the days of the Moderate Party, a sign for Gramsci of passive revolution.

The case for a sequence of passive revolutions in the history of the Italian state does not exclude resistance; it enforces it further. Recalling resistance to the dominant capitalist class that challenged its political and hegemonic leadership limits the fatalism that accompanies such an interpretation of events. With Gramsci, passive revolution becomes a tool for analysis rather than a political programme (Q15: 62). Conversely, when adopted as a political programme, besides being Eurocentric and reformist, economic frameworks simplify a complex dominance-consensus framework that ignores the subordinate are actively involved in their subordination and not helplessly subservient (Landy, 1994, p.40). These political programmes ignore the need for the education of workers to move from a class in itself to a class for itself (S. Hall in *ibid.* p.41). Gramsci referred to intellectuals' inability to understand and sympathise with dynamic mass movements pushing for change. He was actively involved in correcting this inability and was bitter when he concluded that institutions clamouring they were promoting working class interests (trade unions, political parties) were doing otherwise.

Gramsci's elaboration of the concept of passive revolution has been adopted in this paper to examine not only state formation following the Risorgimento and the Fascist period but also the second half of the twentieth century as a period during which economic and political hierarchies attempted to conserve power in times of complex transformation characterised by crisis and capital restructuring. These attempts included passive revolutionary strategies such as transformism and technicisation but also reformist policy such as educational legislation setting favourable conditions for social reproduction and hegemonic stability. In the initial stages of their political rule, the Piedmontese, Fascists and Christian Democrats delivered three education acts. These have been interpreted as attempts to turn passive revolution phases of change and conservation into stable hegemonic ones. In the 1970s, as the post-war reconstruction boom became a fading memory and the days of mass production companies' high and stable growth rates were apparently relegated to the past, the rise of the ID organisation of production in the NE was rapid and impressive. However, its traditional SMEs were subordinated by MNEs, protagonists in the context of freely mobile capital. As the new bourgeois MNE leadership from the Italian NE established its status alongside that of the traditional *alta borghesia* of the NW, together they called for higher skills and knowledge instruction which the Moratti 2003 Reform attempted to deliver in line with continental policy-making.

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