

CONSUMATORI DIFETTOSI (DEFECTIVE CONSUMERS)

By Michele Buono and Piero Riccardi

MILENA GABANELLI IN TELEVISION STUDIO

What measures the wealth of our economy? There's only one indicator, speed...

ALESSANDRO MARESCOTTI – PRESIDENT, PEACELINK ASSOCIATION

This cheese is a local pecorino cheese and it's unlawful; it contains three times the quantities of dioxin and polychlorinated biphenyls allowed by law. Should we grate this cheese over the ground, we would have to later reclaim it.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

Industrial activities produce dioxin. While economy grows, some goods are simultaneously destroyed.

PIERO MOTTOLESE – FORMER FACTORY WORKER, ILVA TARANTO

Look, look, look over there, look at those steelworks, that exit on the right is the blast furnace, that's the culprit, a cocktail of all the pollutants produced by factories.

MICHELE BUONO

At what price?

PIERO MOTTOLESE – FORMER FACTORY WORKER, ILVA TARANTO

There isn't a family that hasn't had at least one relative who died from cancer.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

Some people have to sacrifice themselves for the economy. The economy must grow; in order to grow, lots of commodities have to be produced and used.

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN - SOCIOLOGIST

We are a society of consumers. Only fifty years ago we were a society of producers. It's changed. Our identity now is second to our role as consumers. When an economic crisis hits, our leaders inform us that the only way to emerge from depression is thanks to our activities as consumers. Citizens are no longer expected to contribute towards the drafting of laws. Now they expect us to find solutions in the shops.

MICHELE BUONO

And what about those who cannot afford to expend more and more?

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN - SOCIOLOGIST

A line is drawn – that of relative poverty – the moment in which people can no longer perform their duties. And that's when they become defective consumers!

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

Going from citizens to consumers and even defective ones; just like these workers, who are consumers first and foremost, and have been in turn converted into merchandise whose prices have been slashed. It's impossible to sell all the goods that have been produced,

economy has to grow somehow, so salaries are compressed. Social cohesion is shattered. Another good is destroyed. And so between economy on the rise and goods that are shattered, how can a country tally up its balance and find out how wealthy it is? This is how we see it: it's like a running automobile. Its increasing speed is the growing economy, the level of petrol that goes down represents all the parts of nature destroyed by economic growth. The oil level that goes down is the people at stake, those who have to sacrifice themselves for the economy. But not the nations, they see things differently, they measure their wealth this way: all they take into consideration is the speed, that has to go faster and faster all the time. How can you know whether you're running out of gas or your engine is melting down? That simple! Just get rid of the oil indicator! Get rid of the petrol indicator! That way the car can go on running forever without anyone being able to stop it, ever!

MILENA GABANELLI IN TELEVISION STUDIO

The GDP is neither good nor bad; its limitation is that it only measures the speed of the growth rate in our economy's wealth. It doesn't offer any forecast of what is going to happen, at this rate, fifty years from now. Marx, not Karl but Groucho, said: "Why should I care about posterity? What's posterity ever done for me?" So let's imagine living in a place we like, inside a comfortable home with nice furniture, full of modern conveniences, where one family member pees under the table, another one does in a corner of the living-room, a third family member always has the television on full-blast and no one ever empties out the trash in the kitchen. This house built to offer well-being ultimately becomes a hellish place simply because everyone runs loose. Michele Buono and Piero Riccardi.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

If everything is on here and in here, why does everything get separated when wealth has to be measured? Our lives on one side, the resources of the planet on the other and the goods that we produce to their own on another side.

SERGE LATOUCHE - ECONOMIST

I believe that even a five-year-old would understand that this is impossible! Namely that infinite growth is compatible with a finite planet. The problem is that economists have built up their own universe without considering that economic life takes place on earth. Allow me to explain: you cannot burn petrol in your vehicle and believe that there's going to be the same amount the following day. The resources of our planet are limited, we cannot consume beyond the regeneration capacities of the biosphere.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

London. New Economics Foundation. This is where the "Overshoot Day" was conceived, namely the day in which our planet begins to live on credit. Natural resources are the capital and the concept is calculating annual consumption compared to the planet's capacity to regenerate itself. During the year 2010, we exceeded our capital on August 21st. We've been living on credit since then. During the year 2008, the debt began in September; it began in October 2006; while twenty years earlier we managed to reach the end of December.

ANDREW SIMMS – ECONOMIST, NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION

And as this date moves up every year, that means we're putting greater pressure on our ecosystem; the longer we continue this way, the higher the risk that the vital systems we depend upon for survival be subjected to stress and reach the verge of collapse.

MICHELE BUONO

Is the moment in which we begin to tally up an ecological debt like the time in which a country begins to print more money?

ANDREW SIMMS – ECONOMIST, NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION

The only difference is that when the debt is with nature, there is no country that can print more money. If we cause the downfall of ecosystems that our lives depend upon, there is no other place we can turn to. If you administer a company without having an exact idea of its economic flow, of your assets or their degree of depreciation, then you should not be surprised if your business went bankrupt.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

Istat. National Statistics Institute. Calculations of the gross domestic product are made inside this building, counting our wealth year after year.

MICHELE BUONO

Does the GDP calculate the natural assets destroyed by production?

ENRICO GIOVANNINI – PRESIDENT, ISTAT

No, the GDP doesn't.

MICHELE BUONO

Isn't the fact that this figure goes uncalculated against all basic accounting principles?

ENRICO GIOVANNINI – PRESIDENT, ISTAT

Only concentrating on flows, such as the GDP, is wrong since it does not allow us to grasp the risks we are running.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

The risk of believing that one single number can explain everything. That number only envisages flows, namely the money that flows (for example) when pouring cement over farmlands without any sort of planning. Therefore on one hand there are those who earn from speculation, on the other hand only those who have to purchase cars and gas for transportation purposes because the city has been expanded.

ENRICO GIOVANNINI – PRESIDENT, ISTAT

Of course that goes into the gross domestic product.

MICHELE BUONO

As a positive element?

ENRICO GIOVANNINI – PRESIDENT, ISTAT

Just like rents eventually paid for that built-up area.

MICHELE BUONO

As a positive element?

ENRICO GIOVANNINI – PRESIDENT, ISTAT

As a positive element.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

Therefore national accounting considers disorderly land erosion as wealth since the monetary value has grown. Automobiles and petrol are things that are always sold, so they represent wealth. What about traffic and pollution?

ANDREA MOLOCCHI – ECONOMIST, AMICI DELLA TERRA

The GDP only interprets our defensive expenses, namely how we defend ourselves when facing damages. The thing that GDP is not able to interpret are the damages generated by activities.

MICHELE BUONO

So are these defensive costs interpreted as wealth production?

ANDREA MOLOCCHI – ECONOMIST, AMICI DELLA TERRA

As a production of wealth.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

The more medicine is sold, the higher the GDP. The fact that the quality of air has been affected and the ailments of people – namely that well-being has suffered – are not calculated because they represent a capital, a stock and not a flow, meaning money moving around. Let's have a look at those who gain and those who lose from this situation.

MICHELE BUONO

Have farmland proprietors, whose lands have been turned into building areas, benefited from all of this?

ANDREA MOLOCCHI – ECONOMIST, AMICI DELLA TERRA

Yes, I would say so, they have benefited from this.

MICHELE BUONO

And what about the people who built upon these lands?

ANDREA MOLOCCHI – ECONOMIST, AMICI DELLA TERRA

Naturally those who built there have earned money.

MICHELE BUONO

So has money flow been generated?

ANDREA MOLOCCHI – ECONOMIST, AMICI DELLA TERRA

Money flow has been generated. Obviously the losers are the people who go to live in those areas because, by way of example, it might mean a two hour drive on a daily basis for them.

MICHELE BUONO

What about citizens who have to buy cars, those who have to have treatment, have to waste their time, etc. – are those positive costs?

ANDREA MOLOCCHI – ECONOMIST, AMICI DELLA TERRA

Those are considered positive costs by the GDP, of course.

MICHELE BUONO

And is everything just lumped up together in the end?

ANDREA MOLOCCHI – ECONOMIST, AMICI DELLA TERRA

Yes. So we actually then have...

MICHELE BUONO

Then everything is divided per capita, isn't it?

ANDREA MOLOCCHI – ECONOMIST, AMICI DELLA TERRA

Yes, it is.

MICHELE BUONO

And so ultimately we are all equally rich.

ANDREA MOLOCCHI – ECONOMIST, AMICI DELLA TERRA

Yes and obviously this is the paradox...

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

So much so that if we flank the GDP with other indicators, such as the QuARS, the ones that register the quality of life in the regions, then Italy changes its setup. If the quality of life is good, then the region expands; otherwise it grows smaller and smaller although the GDP is high.

GIULIO MARCON – ECONOMIST, SBILANCIAMOCI ASSOCIATION

We have taken 14 indicators relative to different areas and different sectors into consideration: from health to the environment, from employment to participation and equal opportunities... indicators that in some way must provide better reports on the quality of life in Italy and the degree of well-being in this country. We have carried out this survey region by region. This regards Trentino Alto Adige: for

its environmental policies, this region is a very successful one and we might define Trentino as being particularly virtuous.

MICHELE BUONO

The Lombardia region has been subjected to a crunch, it has shrunken, but what does the Lombardia income amount to?

GIULIO MARCON – ECONOMIST, SBILANCIAMOCI ASSOCIATION

It's the leader in Italy.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

But if Lombardia has shrunken so much, that means that there isn't any direct relationship between GDP production and wealth. Number of pollutants in province capitals: 8 is the national average, 13 in the city of Brescia, 15 the number of pollutants in Milan.

GIUSEPPE LANDONIO – PHYSICIAN AND TOWN COUNCILLOR, MILAN

A report drafted by the Milan ASL local health authority claims there have been 300-400 deaths that can be attributed to pollution in the city of Milan. To date, surveys have simply presented probability forecasts and have not documented negative effects on the health of citizens.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

When travelling from south-west towards Milan, we notice that the towns have become linked together with one another. When continuing north-east, the urbanization rate in Brianza is between 76% to 87%. Urbanization limits are fixed at 55% to 60% at the

most. Pedestrian areas are measured in square metres for 100 inhabitants: the national average is equal to 33.9, whereas this amounts to 13.7 in the province of Lecco and 3.3 in the province of Bergamo.

FABRIZIO BOTTINI – TOWN PLANNER, MILAN POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

As you can see, sidewalks have completely disappeared and so have pedestrians. Pedestrians are no longer citizens, they are no longer lords of the urban space, but have become a sort of parasite, something that is needed to get the urban machine going.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

And when an area is vacated in Bergamo from its old railway facilities, this is the immediate solution. But should we observe the area from another standpoint, we would notice that there is a stream and things could be done differently.

FABRIZIO BOTTINI – TOWN PLANNER, MILAN POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Let's imagine that this water system and the nature system that accompanies it become founding elements, offering people an immediate opportunity for getting in touch with the natural environment.

EDOARDO SALZANO – TOWN PLANNER

Building land has an intrinsic value even when nothing is built; mortgages can be obtained, loans can be granted. Therefore its revenue offers financial investment with a gain that is enormously greater than anything else. And unfortunately this has been grasped

by Italian industry as a whole. When factories shut down, it mostly depends on a decision to invest in building speculations (let's call it that way) instead of investing in the production of the factory itself. If I step out of the world of competition, I earn money without running any risk.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

But even the Bergamo setting is expanding: town boundaries are advancing, only to become one single area and shopping centres are binding together new territories. Like on the Pontida lawns.

FABRIZIO BOTTINI – TOWN PLANNER, MILAN POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

I believe that an area like this one is an excellent metaphor for the passage from citizen to consumer. This area has been organized around an automobile, the automobile contains me, I am the carrier of a credit card. The pedestrian is absolutely confined to the outskirts, this place has purely been conceived for automobiles.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

And on the boundaries between the provinces of Bergamo and Brescia stands a shopping centre that floats in the void. You can only get there by car. The expansion of the Milan-Brescia highway will dismember these farmlands, so the consequent voids have to be filled in with more buildings. Does the GDP measure this?

MICHELE BUONO

Is the depletion of the territory measured by the GDP? What about the destruction of lands?

GIULIO MARCON – ECONOMIST, SBILANCIAMOCI ASSOCIATION

No, no, those are all things that the GDP does not measure.

MICHELE BUONO

Is the Lombardia region the only one that has shrunken?

GIULIO MARCON – ECONOMIST, SBILANCIAMOCI ASSOCIATION

No, it's not the only one.

MICHELE BUONO

Even the Veneto Region has gotten smaller.

GIULIO MARCON – ECONOMIST, SBILANCIAMOCI ASSOCIATION

Veneto...

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

The cementification process is continuing from Lombardia towards Veneto. A widespread city stands here as well, continuing on and on, province after province, as if it were just one single construction that measures 560 km. Soil no longer absorbs any water and the streams that lack outlets have submitted their bill. Damages equal to one-billion Euros. The gross domestic product grows this way: money for cementification plus money for repairing the damages. The total is divided into equal parts, per capita, and that's how you get a GDP per capita.

GIULIO MARCON – ECONOMIST, SBILANCIAMOCI ASSOCIATION

The GDP also measures activities that can be defined as reparative, namely stepping in when certain economic or human activities produce negative consequences.

MICHELE BUONO

We're two times as rich.

GIULIO MARCON – ECONOMIST, SBILANCIAMOCI ASSOCIATION

But that's not the true picture.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

Since the main indicator is the GDP, policies are only organized around this figure alone. Every three months, year after year, we all wait for that number to grow, hoping that in the end there will be wealth for all and a decrease in unemployment.

TG1 ARCHIVE FOOTAGE

Negative growth, increase in unemployment.

TG2 ARCHIVE FOOTAGE

There is some growth, but unemployment is on the rise.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

And ultimately whether the GDP increases or not, unemployment remains the same.

MAURIZIO PALLANTE - ESSAYIST

Since growth takes place in a context of national and international competition, this obliges the adoption of technologies reducing the number of working staff according to production. In 1969 the gross domestic product had a certain value (scarcely important), the Italian population was made up of 47-million citizens and those employed were 20,200,000. In 1999 the gross domestic product had increased compared to 1960 by 360% with constant prices. The population rose from 47 to 58-million inhabitants while those employed were 20,400,000. In absolute figures these had not increased, but since the population grew by 11-million inhabitants, then the figure had fallen as a percentage. Therefore growth does not produce employment.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

And when things get rough for us here, we usually try to hang on to some other country that's on the rise.

TG2 ARCHIVE FOOTAGE

During the second trimester of this year, Germany is in the lead with its GDP increased by 2.2%.

TG2 ARCHIVE FOOTAGE

Germany is once again the locomotive. Germany is therefore the locomotive of Europe. The German locomotive is running full-speed ahead.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

And another 0.7% during the following trimester, with the hope that the locomotive might take everyone on board, perhaps us as well. Berlin.

MICHELE BUONO

Do you believe that economic growth will translate into better working conditions?

WOMAN

No. More or less, there's always been economic growth in Germany; yet simultaneously employment has become increasingly precarious. Only short-term jobs are on the rise, those that generally last a few days.

MICHELE BUONO

But newspapers seem to be optimistic.

WOMAN

Newspapers can write all they want, but we are the ones who have to bear the brunt of it. Lots of people can't get by on the money they earn.

MICHELE BUONO

What do you do?

WOMAN

I work as a technician for a science lab.

MICHELE BUONO

Now that the GDP is on the rise again in Germany, do you think you'll be earning more money?

MAN

I don't think so.

MICHELE BUONO

Don't you think that the quality of life might grow together with the economy?

MAN

It hasn't over the last few years and it certainly won't improve now.

MICHELE BUONO

Why do you say that?

MAN

Managers, certainly not workers, are the ones who end up earning more money.

MICHELE BUONO

What do you do?

MAN

I'm an employee.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

Berlin. Freie Universität, Economics and Social Policy Institute.

GIACOMO CORNEO – ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL POLICY, FREIE UNIVERSITAT, BERLIN

Economic growth in Germany is growingly based on the export sector. The German government has indirectly helped exporting companies to limit their labour costs.

MICHELE BUONO

How can they limit their labour costs? In which way?

GIACOMO CORNEO - ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL POLICY, FREIE UNIVERSITAT, BERLIN

Some reforms have been launched, which on one hand have made the labour market more flexible, while at the same time substantially reducing support for the unemployed. This has made unemployment a greater threat, thus making it easier to persuade workers to accept lower wages.

MICHELE BUONO

So what is this miracle all about?

GIACOMO CORNEO - ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL POLICY, FREIE UNIVERSITAT, BERLIN

The miracle essentially has been increased income for stockholders and managers; charts reporting on national income statistics demonstrate that wages have been “on hold” for at least a decade, whereas profits and private income are on the rise.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

Italy. Our growth rates are scarce or hardly exist. What if that’s the most we can get out of growth? Our automobile market is already

saturated and it would be impossible to replace cars at a faster pace. So workers are told that their factory is going to be shut down. Those who are left working three shifts a day – Saturdays included – will be getting shorter breaks and flexibility. And what if the salaries are low? They can only be increased according to the growth of the product, according to Sergio Marchionne - Chief Executive Officer. But how can we emerge from this stalemate with the markets already stocked full of products?

SERGE LATOUCHE - ECONOMIST

Labour is an adjustable variable, businesses must make profits, stock value has to grow constantly; if costs keep businesses from making profits, then wages are compressed more and more in order to foster profits. But how can people spend more when their salaries are slashed? Therefore a kind of perverted growth begins in addition to a paradox, cuts are made to wages and simultaneously the product continues to increase. At this point an enormous development of inequality begins; for example regarding the distribution of gross domestic product, approximately 10% shifts from wages to companies and shareholders. And in order to fuel this growth, a remarkable development begins in credit, with people being pushed into debt so they can expend. This is a fictitious growth, linked to speculation. And well-being, in terms of quality of life for the population, no longer increases.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

United Kingdom, the streets of Yorkshire. "Liquid modernity" is the term used by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman to define this condition. Due to the fact that growth, which by definition should

never stop, has also absorbed human relations within its mechanism and has turned them into liquid.

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN - SOCIOLOGIST

In societies that I define as solid modernity, employees and employers used to depend upon one another. Employees used to depend upon their employers for their means of sustenance. But employers used to depend upon their employees for their work. And therefore mutual dependence took place. And when there's mutual dependence, none of the two parties can exist without the other. That was a good situation for negotiations, satisfactory for both parties. There might have been fights and clashes, but at the end they always reached an agreement because they knew they would have met each other day after day. That's why they were obliged to elaborate a sort of life in common. Then the situation changed, deregulation came into the picture and so did the possibility of shifting capitals into other countries very quickly by pressing a key on the computer. And that's how capital owners ceased to be dependent upon local workers. Now dependence is unilateral. Capital can be easily shifted from one place to the other, wherever the conditions are more favourable for producing profits. But that does not hold true for workers. Therefore this mutual dependence has been shattered. Together with the possibility of communicating.

MILENA GABANELLI IN TELEVISION STUDIO

It seems that it no longer works, the GDP was adopted as a technical measure following the 1929 economic crisis. Times have changed yet the indicator has remained the same. So, for example, how can you know how tall you are when you only use the scales? Everyone is puzzled about the matter, even the UN, but to change the parameters

it is necessary to build a global political project with a view on how to redistribute wealth. Sarkozy has been the first one in Europe to wonder why it is that even when the GDP is at +2 or +3, this does not mean that all French citizens have a perception of greater well-being. So he gathered together the best experts and asked them for some brain-storming. And that's what they did.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

"If the market were always right, we would not be here speaking about crisis". This was stated by the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy. He summoned two Nobel Prize laureates, Joseph Stiglitz and Amartya Sen, along with the economist Jean Paul Fitoussi. The economists reached the conclusion that the GDP alone is not enough to measure the dimensions of wealth.

JEAN PAUL FITOUSSI – INSTITUT D'ETUDES POLITIQUES DE PARIS, LUISS UNIVERSITY OF ROME

It's like a family with two children. We believe that caring for one child to the detriment of the other is not fair. Just like caring for the GDP to the detriment of well-being is not fair...

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

And in the report delivered to President Sarkozy, economists recommended (above all) that environmental damage be subtracted from the GDP growth rate. In France this means (for example) an operation that sounds something like this: a nuclear power plant, calculating the wealth generated; an accident, subtracting the damage. The result: less wealth.

TV ARCHIVE FOOTAGE

A serious accident has occurred at the Tricastin Nuclear Power Centre in Bollene, involving a 300 kg. uranium leak that seeped into a nearby canal.

JEAN PAUL FITOUSSI – INSTITUT D’ETUDES POLITIQUES DE PARIS, LUISS UNIVERSITY OF ROME

When speaking about the environment, when speaking about nature, we are what are called global public goods and these global public goods cannot be administered in a setting of fiscal and social competition between countries. They should be administered at a cooperative level, one that is at least European, but this does not exist.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

Therefore one country alone does not change its bookkeeping unless the other countries do so as well; no one takes the first step and a continental dimension is necessary to play a different tune. Brussels. The European Commission. Even President Barroso is willing to admit that there is something definitely wrong with simply using the GDP to regulate our lives. And so he proposed: "...there is a need to go beyond the GDP". Beyond GDP is precisely the name of the action plan developed by the European Commission.

MICHELE BUONO

But could it be in line with the Treaties of the Union which speak about GDP and markets being in competition?

OLIVER ZWIRNER – POLICY OFFICER, EUROPEAN COMMISSION INDICATORS AND STATISTICS

There's no need to change the treaties. The Treaty of Lisbon envisages a list of European Union objectives: economic growth, price stability, high employment rates, competitiveness, social cohesion and less negative pressures on the environment.

MICHELE BUONO

How can one decrease pressures on the environment when everything is competing against each other?

OLIVER ZWIRNER – POLICY OFFICER, EUROPEAN COMMISSION INDICATORS AND STATISTICS

You are speaking to me as an expert in indicators and statistics. We provide the best statistical indicators to those, such as the media or politicians, who in turn will have to inform and make decisions.

MICHELE BUONO

Fine. Politicians have to make their decisions. But what decisions will they make, for instance, regarding the improper use of fertilizers in farming? Fertilizers do increase production, but they damage the soil and the environment.

OLIVER ZWIRNER – POLICY OFFICER, EUROPEAN COMMISSION INDICATORS AND STATISTICS

Soil is a good example for illustrating that natural capital, our wealth, should be measured in its entirety: namely what is produced and simultaneously what is destroyed. Economy, the environment and people are one thing alone. And that's nothing new. What is new is that today this is an important factor. This is the sense of the action plan.

MICHELE BUONO

Certainly. But how will politicians of the EU nations act subsequently to what you have just stated?

OLIVER ZWIRNER – POLICY OFFICER, EUROPEAN COMMISSION INDICATORS AND STATISTICS

As I have already mentioned, I am speaking to you as an expert in indicators. For this reason I would rather refrain from answering political questions.

MICHELE BUONO

Can a European well-being indicator coexist with the GDP?

FRANCO RUSSO – JURIST, EUROPEAN SOCIAL FORUM

That's impossible because new economic indicators are not available, namely new parameters for evaluating production activities, when business and the market remain paramount. And that is naturally because business and the market focus on profits, business and the market focus on competition.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

In fact within the Treaty of Lisbon, which we may consider as the Constitution of Europe, article 119 states "the principle of an open market economy with free competition". And this is the first time that these words have been written in a Constitution.

FRANCO RUSSO – JURIST, EUROPEAN SOCIAL FORUM

Rights are at the centre of Constitutions; on the basis of these rights, social life itself is organized. Well with this Constitution, the so-called European Constitution, we have a market primacy that completely

overturns the conquests and especially the fundamental principles of constitutionalism following World War II.

ROB HOPKINS – TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES

So I think we should set the ball rolling. Let's get together and create some strength for the place in which we live.

CRISTIANO BOTTONE – TRANSITION TOWN MONTEVEGLIO (BO)

We might concentrate on what some, some economists, begin to call "prosperity without growth".

FIONA WARD – TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES

At the time being, there are 25 active groups in this neighbourhood. Each group contains eight families.

NICOLAS DENIS – BINARIO ETICO

The better our work proceeds, the less the GDP grows.

ROBERT VINT – TOWN COUNCILLOR, TOTNES

The quality of life is improving and we are reducing our dependence upon the economy.

MAN

We believe economy is simply a consequence of the fact that we have attained our objectives.

YOUNG MAN, GOATEE AND GREEN SHIRT

Man as being paramount, along with his expectations and necessities.

NELMUTH RITZER – CHIEF, TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS, DAIMLER

We are learning to understand what it means to go from being producer to supplier of services.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

These people have never met, they live in different countries, yet they have proposed the same challenge: finding another development model.

MILENA GABANELLI IN TELEVISION STUDIO

In the history of Constitutions, the rights of people have always been the most important factor. The European Constitution, that refers to the Treaty of Lisbon, sets off from the fact that Europe is a union of markets, therefore the market is a common denominator and we find this word written in a constitution for the first time. Barroso and Sarkozy both say that we must go beyond the GDP, while remaining within a model where all the members are in competition – therefore it will be necessary to sacrifice someone and something. But the models are not stable and nothing is eternal. Some good intuitions are coming to light in various places. We'll be back after the break.

COMMERCIALS

MILENA GABANELLI IN TELEVISION STUDIO

As we were saying, the market is a good indicator but it cannot be the only benchmark. The subject is being discussed, conferences and conventions are being organized, books are being written, we have produced a television programme on the topic. Discussions concentrate on the fact that should the only thing of value be the

exchange of money, then we'll never escape this model; whereas should we begin to take into consideration what is not measurable, like the community, the exchange of goods and services, then something should begin to shift. Even an automobile company thought it necessary to begin somewhere without cutting jobs.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Germany, Baden Wurttemberg. The city of Ulm, not far from Stuttgart. An automobile company has come up with an idea: keeping production, employment, environment and resources together.

NELMUTH RITZER – CHIEF, TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS, DAIMLER

Our experience as automobile manufacturers has demonstrated that this model of mobility, namely that of the private car, is struggling to grow. The markets are bursting at the seams.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

And so the automobile company made a proposal to the Municipal Administration: "...let's embark on car-pooling. We'll put in the cars, and we'll also put in the administration and organization. You won't have to buy a thing, all you have to do is give us permits and parking spaces." Was it easy to convince them?

NELMUTH RITZER – CHIEF, TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS, DAIMLER

We didn't have to convince anybody. The product filled the mobility gap that couldn't be covered by the public transportation system.

MICHELE BUONO

How many customers do you have?

NELMUTH RITZER – CHIEF, TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS, DAIMLER

There are 170,000 inhabitants in Ulm; 20,000 of them are our customers, practically 20% of those who have a driver's licence. We supply them with 200 cars, which we plan to increase to 300 units by the end of the year.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Since 200 automobiles are enough for 20,000 individuals in this city, that means that a lower amount has been sold. But this hasn't caused slashes in employment. These workers organize mobility in the city of Ulm.

NELMUTH RITZER – CHIEF, TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS, DAIMLER

We are learning what it means to go from being producers to service suppliers.

MICHELE BUONO

How often do you use this service?

MAN - SUNGLASSES AND BLUE SHIRT

From a minimum of two, to a maximum of four times a week. I usually have to drive two or three times a day, for about ten minutes in all.

MICHELE BUONO

How much does the whole thing cost?

MAN - SUNGLASSES AND BLUE SHIRT

Between €30 and €50.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

People have saved some money on transportation and wages last longer. The city isn't congested with traffic, air pollution is reduced and there's a small contribution towards consuming less oil. In the south of England, the county of Devon. They think about oil in the city of Totnes, but only of the day in which one-fourth of today's oil will be available. And so Totnes citizens act accordingly so that they will not be caught unawares. They have defined themselves as a transition town towards an era with little oil and less consumption. A true "transition-town".

ROB HOPKINS – TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES

We often say that, as individuals, we'll never be able to make it. Let the government try, but they probably don't know what to do and it probably would be too late. So then I say, let's do it ourselves. Let's get together and create a ground swell for the place in which we live. We can do it, sure we can.

MICHELE BUONO - FUORI CAMPO

That's exactly what Rob Hopkins said to his students in Kinsale, Ireland. It was the year 2003 and it was only an exercise. How would a city get reorganized in a world with little oil? The exercise ended, but people continued to act in earnest. Then the idea got out by word of mouth and a movement was created from the ground up, from city to city, one neighbourhood after the next.

ROB HOPKINS – TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES

Street by street. There's a project here in Totnes that we call "Transition Streets". Street by street, we understand what changes must be made beginning from individuals themselves.

FIONA WARD – TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES

The Government Department of Energy and Climate Change has instructed us to see how a community might contribute to reducing carbon dioxide thanks to its own behaviour, without anything being imposed by the top echelons.

MICHELE BUONO

How many are you?

FIONA WARD – TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES

At the time being there are 25 active groups in this neighbourhood, with eight families in each group. A fundamental aspect of the programme is that it begins with people, the foundations of the community.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Mr. Watson edits documentary films for television. He had simply edited the stories involving agriculture that devours oil and wears out the soil. Some transition towns are close to his office, then there's an elderly woman with a garden and a nice vegetable patch. So he joined her.

MR. WATSON

We grow fruit trees, apples, plums, raspberries, vegetables, potatoes, different varieties of beans and red beets.

MICHELE BUONO

How many are you?

MAN

Two of us do the gardening. The woman gives us her garden, we do the work and then we share the produce in an equal way.

WOMAN

Well, I'm old now and I don't have enough strength to take care of all of this. It would have been a shame to leave everything to rot.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Money is not exchanged in this activity and therefore there isn't any GDP. On the contrary, it is considered a sort of impoverishment. The fact is that these people do not spend any money on products that perhaps have to travel a long way, are grown using a lot of fertilizers that impoverish the soil. The fact that these people have become good friends and a solid community has been created means nothing at all for the wealth of a nation.

WOMAN

The three of us are British, only the hens back there are French.

CHRIS BIRD – TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES

In this area we are studying how to make houses more sustainable. The house behind us here belongs to Jim and Kate and it's got straw walls that are this thick. It's been insulated using sheepskin and

during the winter months it costs them about £80 pounds in heating bills – which is quite inexpensive for a climate such as ours.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Local material is strictly used for building purposes. And the picture is complete with a form of local currency that fosters local barterers.

YOUNG MAN

The Totnes Pound is a first experiment for the sustenance of local economy, creating a relationship between local producers, shop-owners and customers.

MICHELE BUONO

Do many people use this currency?

WOMAN

Yes, of course, many people spend Totnes pounds. It is an excellent initiative; it offers benefits to producers in the area and even to ourselves as we sell their products.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

What are the end results? There's less oil in these goods. Mr. Langmaid is the Director of the Totnes Museum. He came up with the idea that should one alone not have the means to buy a solar power plant, maybe things would be different if many people joined together.

ALAN LANGMAID – TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES

We are about to set off on this project and all the citizens of Totnes will have the chance of buying shares in this company and therefore

earning dividends. Each stockholder will have the right to one vote, regardless of the shares he or she possesses. That is the only way that the rights of citizens can be best represented.

ROBERT VINT – TOWN COUNCILLOR, TOTNES

We can count on long-term supplies of food and energy; we are becoming less dependent upon international market fluctuations. This is leading to the region's greater economic stability.

CHRIS BIRD – TRANSITION TOWN TOTNES

The "Transition Street" projects are involving hundreds of families. When people notice what their neighbours are doing, they say "This is a good idea. It makes sense". And so it moves forward, one street after the other.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Germany, Lower Saxony. Bielefeld.

GERD WESSLING – TRANSITION TOWN BIELEFELD

We founded the "Transition Town Bielefeld" about one year ago, bringing the concept of transition from Totnes to Bielefeld.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

New ideas are added one town after the next.

MICHELE BUONO

What's this?

MAN

It's an alternative way to produce electricity. A plastic bin is cut in two, then it's placed on a generator and activated by the wind. This is an old record-player, its motor is the generator, producing from 3 to 400 watts. Small appliances can be used such as the telephone, computer, radio and light.

GERD WESSLING – TRANSITION TOWN BIELEFELD

We've set up a community kitchen, where everyone brings in something; those who want to come in for a meal can enjoy local products at cheap prices. The idea is that of increasing the consumption of local products and slashing any waste. When grocery shopping is done on a big scale, the costs are lower and it's so much fun to eat all together.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Berlin. Kreuzberg Quarter.

YOUNG WOMAN

I am an opera singer.

YOUNG WOMAN

I am a film producer.

ANDREAS TEUCHERT – TRANSITION TOWN KREUTZBERG BERLIN

I work as a custodian.

YOUNG MAN

I am studying aerospace engineering.

MICHELE BUONO

What do we have here?

WOMAN

Non-commercial wheat grown organically.

**ANDREAS TEUCHERT – TRANSITION TOWN KREUTZBERG
BERLIN**

We bake about 100, 150 loaves of bread depending on the demand. This bread is given in exchange for an offer, or even free of charge. We have in turn received these cereals free of charge. It is a non-commercial sort of economy, focusing on contributions. You give and you receive something in turn.

YOUNG WOMAN

We provide local organic vegetables to about 40 people. We call it solidarity economy, in the sense that a monthly contribution is paid and the farmer delivers his produce to us.

MICHELE BUONO

What are you doing here?

YOUNG MAN

I'm trying to convince the neighbours to choose renewable energy sources.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

And again from Berlin to Monteveglio, a town close to Bologna. A motion by the entire municipal administration to become Transition Town, with a resolution.

DANIELE RUSCINO – MAYOR, MONTEVEGLIO (BO)

Through this resolution we intend to gain awareness and prepare our community to face what comes next.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

This entails: buildings with low energy consumption; a halt to new urbanization plans; and should a school be built, one thing is sure, it must not destroy other assets.

DANIELE RUSCINO – MAYOR, MONTEVEGLIO (BO)

Our plan is to have a building that is not only independent from municipal funds in terms of bills, but one that does not use up anything at all.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

And in Monteveglio, one single idea is going from one plot of land to the next, from balconies to gardens, to bungalows: vegetable patches must be in synergy.

WOMAN

This bed was made in spring; I planted parsley, borage and red onions. Plants and soil help each other out.

CRISTIANO BOTTONE – TRANSITION TOWN MONTEVEGLIO (BO)

Industrial agriculture needs bigger and larger machinery, greater expanses of fields, more and more fertilizers. The results are that we no longer have naturally fertile soil. We are searching for something very similar to what is obtained by natural systems when they are given the chance to function naturally.

DAVIDE BOCHICCHIO – TRANSITION TOWN MONTEVEGLIO (BO)

Bringing in organic substances through mulching. Keeping the ground covered. When walking through woods, you do not see any barren ground. The earth is always covered by a thick layer of dry leaves.

CRISTIANO BOTTONE – TRANSITION TOWN MONTEVEGLIO (BO)

We eat food that is substantially of better quality and at the end of the process the soil is richer than what we originally had at hand.

MARIO PIANTA – ECONOMIC POLICIES, UNIVERSITY OF URBINO

Clearly shifting to an economic model of this kind opens up important opportunities for improving not only the quality of products (therefore not measurable by economic variables), but also the creation of new jobs (let's say) that are more useful from a social standpoint and are more sustainable. Market prices must begin to mirror more and more not so much the balance between supply and demand, but the social-environmental quality of the goods we produce. This should lead to removing items of low social-environmental quality from the GDP and replacing them with others.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

But this new model is nonexistent. In the meanwhile, an indicator for the wealth or poverty of a person lies simply within his capacity as a consumer; if he does not spend beyond a certain limit, then he's poor, nearly poor or relatively poor.

LINDA LAURA SABBADINI – DIRECTOR, ISTAT HEADQUARTERS

When a family with two members cannot spend what one person spends on an average, then that family is considered poor. And the average expenditure per inhabitant is equal to €983, which represents the poverty threshold for two-member families. For example, the expenditure for a three-member family is equal to €1307.

MICHELE BUONO - OFF SCREEN

Luca and Paola are both teachers from Mestre; their family is made up of five individuals.

LUCA RUSI – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

We manage to limit our expenses to an average of approximately €800-900.

MICHELE BUONO

Do you feel relatively poor?

PAOLA RUSI – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

Absolutely not, we don't feel poor in the sense that we have many things to enjoy.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Everything began in 1993 from an idea conceived by a working priest from Mestre, Father Gianni Fazzini: "We are consumers and not masters of the market". But Father Gianni was not thinking about saving money, all he wanted to do was shatter a mechanism: one works only to be able to use up consumer goods.

FATHER GIANNI FAZZINI – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

I believe that each family is a business concern with its income, products and expenses. So this is my idea: let's take small steps and work on the overall family budget.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

He called them justice budgets and thousands of families from all over Italy answered his call and began to keep a balance book, month after month. To the left they jotted down their usual expenses and to the right the expenses that had been shifted according to justice.

PAOLA RUSI – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

Justice for the working conditions of people who produce merchandise is a question of justice also for the environment.

MAN

We have worked extensively on energy, especially gas. At the close of 2006, we reportedly used up 1760 square metres; while in 2008 the figure was equal to 264 square metres.

MICHELE BUONO

How did you do that?

MAN

By insulating the whole house. We have installed a photovoltaic roof and a couple of panels for solar thermal energy used in water heating.

PAOLA RUSI – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

We used to purchase mineral water. Then we decided to eliminate that expense.

LUCA RUSI – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

And the savings ultimately amounted to approximately (the Lira used to be the official currency then) Lit. 500,000 per annum.

MAN

We switched from a gas-driven car to an LPG one strictly for ecological reasons. And this ultimately represents cash savings.

MICHELE BUONO

This says "Nomadi concert".

STEFANO CAGNIN – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

The money we save on one hand is invested in other things that give us... let's say, a bit of happiness, well, not a bit of happiness but rather the happiness of human beings. That's it.

FATHER GIANNI FAZZINI – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

When families think things over, they decrease their expenses on one hand while on the other they increase the money they spend on culture and entertainment. That means that the quality of life is truly improving.

STEFANIA SCANDAGLIATO – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

We used the money that was left over on sponsorships. We consider it a gift that we have given ourselves, the fact that we can help out some children... and this has obviously influenced our well-being very much.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

At this point people begin to wonder: if we can even save some money, what's the use of working so hard?

MICHELE BUONO

How many hours do you work at present?

STEFANO CAGNIN – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

On an average, eleven hours less.

MICHELE BUONO

How far has your salary been slashed?

STEFANO CAGNIN – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

It's been cut by 30%.

MICHELE BUONO

Should two more people do the same thing...

STEFANO CAGNIN – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

Well, an extra job would be the outcome.

PAOLA RUSI – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

We have chosen to give up a series of things obviously because our income has been reduced; but we earn a lot on various other fronts because now I'm the one who takes care of the children, and that's no small matter.

STEFANO CAGNIN – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

Allow me to introduce my mother.

MICHELE BUONO

Do they ever leave you alone?

MOTHER OF STEFANO CAGNIN

No.

STEFANO CAGNIN – BILANCI DI GIUSTIZIA CAMPAIGN

The fact is that I have more opportunities to spend some time with them, have a meal together and in any case, when we're in the mood, there's even time for some cuddles.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

But for statistics, which only measure consumer capacities, the relative rate of poverty for families has grown over the past decade in Italy.

MAURIZIO POLLANTE - ESSAYIST

One is poor from a relative point-of-view, namely when your income is less than half of the average family income in the country you live in. Should the gross domestic product grow, then the average income grows in turn and therefore the poverty level shifts higher up. There's always more money, yet you continue to be poor.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

These computers are headed for the dumping ground and dumping grounds for electronic material are very dangerous for the environment. These people intercept them just in time and stretch their lives.

NICOLAS DENIS – BINARIO ETICO

Our job entails recovering these objects that, commercially speaking, usually have a life span equal to three years; but they could easily last, monitors in particular, for at least fifteen years. By using the parts from a dozen portable computers, we can manage to put together two or three functioning ones.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Then they download a free operating system, the ones that practically cost peanuts. That's another decrease for the GDP.

PAOLO SCHETTINI – BINARIO ETICO

More and more sophisticated software is produced. To use the software you've got to have computers with a greater capacity and all of this only goes to spur the sales of software and hardware. Whereas there's an opposite procedure for free software, namely the software adapts itself to the specific demands of the computer.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Exactly the contrary to the rules of market society.

MAURO BONAIUTI – ECONOMIST, UNIVERSITY OF TURIN

In order to function smoothly, the market society does not need any social connection; on the contrary, in a certain sense, these hinder the progressive extension of the market system.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Hence banks do not give these fellows the time of day, nor do they loan them any money. And that's because should they not pay up an instalment, they haven't got any collateral or merchandise to back up their loan. So when there isn't a bank, someone else comes up with the money in this inverted world.

CINZIA CIMINI – PRESIDENT, MAG MUTUAAUTOGESTIONE, ROME

We haven't asked them, but we never ask anyone, for traditional bank guarantees. What we do ask is that the project be surrounded by a network of trust, a network of relations, of subjects, of other organizations which, just like us and just like those who are proposing the project to be financed, are interested in its good outcome, in the existence of an initiative of the kind.

PIETRO URSELLA - MAG MUTUAAUTOGESTIONE, ROME

The problem isn't money. It's the use of money. By way of example: many of our partners deposit their money in MAG because they want to make sure that their money isn't used for inhumane practices like, for example, the purchase of weapons.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

And what about those who go to the extent of offering their services free of charge?

ENRICO GIOVANNINI – PRESIDENT, ISTAT

Should it be volunteer work or activities purely envisaging entertainment... even though these activities have a social worth, they would not go directly into the GDP.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Like these youngsters, computer technicians and telecommunications engineers, who are convinced that the Internet is a common good; this leads them to create software, install antennas and hook these up to the network free of charge for people they've never met.

SAVERIO PROTO – NINUX.ORG

We believe that everyone has the right to access the network, everyone has the right to communicate in a computerized way. Therefore we set up these free network infrastructures that can be accessed by everyone and where everyone can participate.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

It's called "Informatici senza frontiere" (Computer Technicians Without Borders) and officially they do not produce any wealth. They offer their expertise to African hospitals without asking for anything in return.

CLAUDIO TANCINI – INFORMATICI SENZA FRONTIERE

We install computer instruments on the spot, which are used to collect samples or everything that's needed to make a diagnosis.

Then this data is broadcast via satellite to Italy and this group of pathologists takes turns to examine the data, confer with their colleagues and then return the reports. This would have otherwise been impossible.

MAURIZIO BERTOLDI – INFORMATICI SENZA FRONTIERE

They have technological problems that are greater than the technological problems we meet on a daily basis. Therefore, the greater the difficulties, the greater the necessity for experts and the greater the professional growth.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Ideas have been produced, relationships have been established, the social worth has increased. And although there has been no exchange of money, these activities have nevertheless fed into the production world, whose value increases when the value of people increases. So much so that if they ceased suddenly...

ANDREA FUMAGALLI – ECONOMIST, UNIVERSITY OF PAVIA

...the economic system would suffer serious repercussions in its quantitative capacity itself of measuring the GDP, since GDP measurement is the last piece of a process that began beforehand. It's the tip of the iceberg; but, as we all know, the largest part of the iceberg is the one that's underwater and invisible. In this case the submerged part is social cooperation on one hand, and on the other hand it would have effects blocking innovation.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

And since we all relate to each other, exchanging ideas and producing value...

ANDREA FUMAGALLI – ECONOMIST, UNIVERSITY OF PAVIA

The concept of basic income becomes a tool for recognizing a productive service and therefore payment of the same. It is an instrument for the distribution of income, not of assistance.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

That should also hold true for the redistribution of air, water and environment that production employs for its processes and which belong to all of us.

MICHELE BUONO

Where should the resources needed be taken in order to pay basic incomes?

ANDREA FUMAGALLI – ECONOMIST, UNIVERSITY OF PAVIA

From a sector of general taxation and this should keep workers from being subjected to conditions of pressure or strong blackmail when they fear losing their jobs and have to choose between surrendering some of their rights in exchange for a job that represents income.

MICHELE BUONO

Can all of this go to their heads, once these citizens become citizens once again?

ANDREA FUMAGALLI – ECONOMIST, UNIVERSITY OF PAVIA

Perhaps they might expect a few things.

MICHELE BUONO

What might they expect?

ANDREA FUMAGALLI – ECONOMIST, UNIVERSITY OF PAVIA

They might expect participation in decision-making, they might undermine the economic hierarchy, who decides what...

MICHELE BUONO

At this point the cyclical nature of crisis would be best, putting the question of employment in the forefront.

ANDREA FUMAGALLI – ECONOMIST, UNIVERSITY OF PAVIA

From a capitalistic standpoint, a good businessman is the one who gives up a share of profit in order to maintain a bit of unemployment. Because unemployment is one of the instruments that controls workforces.

MILENA GABANELLI IN TELEVISION STUDIO

Even while you're watching this programme sprawled out on the couch, you're actually participating in a productive process simply by looking at commercials which in turn determine consumer choices and ultimately the budget for this programme. So even the unemployed run the economy. Namely work goes beyond working hours, but wages are not envisaged for this sector. Discussions are focused on this emptiness considered full. In the meanwhile, someone and something has to bear the brunt of running the economy. For example those who live in places where everything is concentrated.

PAOLO MASTRONARINO

I am one of the many fathers of children who have become sick, over the last few years, with cancer. In particular, my son is suffering

from leukaemia. I wonder what caused it. I thought of everything, everything except pollution. It's just part of the landscape for people who live here. There's the Mar Piccolo bay, then there's the city of Taranto and then there's the entire industrial area including Ilva, Cemetir, Eni and then there's the Mar Grande bay. Here you can see the immensity of the entire industrial area compared to the city of Taranto. Particulates and heavy metal particles settle over everything. They pollute as much as ten-thousand incinerators. This data was released by Arpa (Regional Agency for Prevention and the Environment).

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

This is Taranto. There's no use denying it: when industrial plants began to rise in the middle of the inhabited areas in 1961, there was general satisfaction. Employment, higher wages compared to farming and the smog made you physically touch progress. But then, year after year, carbon dioxide and other pollutants began to be touched.

VINCENZO PIGNATELLI – FORMER FACTORY WORKER, ITALSIDER

Had I only known this would have been the outcome, I would have chosen to sell artichokes for a living. I have suffered from acute M4 myelogenous leukaemia, three colleagues of mine have been stricken by the same disease... all three of them are dead.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

The Tamburi district. The citizens, swamped with mineral dust and suffocated by gas emissions in the industrial area, have placed a plaque nearly 50 years later and curse their fate.

MAN

It seemed like a miracle for the economy...

MICHELE BUONO

Did this miracle take place?

MAN

It did at the beginning, but pollution was not taken into consideration.

MAN

The stench in this area is horrible, it's enough to make you vomit. Air is fundamental for the lives of people.

WOMAN

We cannot breathe. We've got mineral dust inside our homes.

WOMAN

When we step out onto our balconies, everything is covered with black dirt.

WOMAN

We have to stay here.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Do you recall the pecorino cheese we mentioned at the beginning, which was full of dioxin?

ALESSANDRO MARESCOTTI – PRESIDENT, PEACELINK ASSOCIATION

When we went to pick up this piece of cheese from the shepherd, we noticed that he was on a wheelchair. When we returned, we were told that he died of cancer: he had a brain tumour. He usually ate the pecorino cheese he produced. Our territory can no longer be used for grazing.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

After the cheese was analyzed and the death of the shepherd, they have banned grazing within a radius of 20 km. in Taranto and some livestock has been slaughtered.

MICHELE BUONO

Is there anything else?

VINCENZO FORNARO

There is nothing else. They've taken everything away from us.

MICHELE BUONO

How many were there?

VINCENZO FORNARO

There were 1,200 heads of sheep in this area. We used to work hard around here. Many families earned a living right here.

MICHELE BUONO

What is the situation at present?

VINCENZO FORNARO

We've been gazing at the stars for the past three years.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

This is what happened to the sheep. And what about maternal milk? In order to get a clear picture of the situation, the citizens of Taranto paid for some tests to be run – out of their own pockets.

FABIO MATAACCHIERA – FONDO ANTIDIOSSINA, TARANTO

Thanks to the University of Venice and a group of specialists, tests have been run on the fats contained in the maternal milk of women in Taranto. Some results have already arrived. A particular test reports approximately 40 picograms of dioxin PCB per gram of fat. Should we wish to make a comparison between cow's milk and the milk that we drink.

MICHELE BUONO

What are the parameters?

FABIO MATAACCHIERA

The threshold is six. Milk that tests beyond that limit has to be destroyed.

ANNAMARIA MOSCHETTI – ASS. CULTURALE PEDIATRI PUGLIA E BASILICATA (Association of Pediatricians)

These substances can cause damage, when transported by gametes, to the embryo, damage to the child. Geno-toxic damage does exist and therefore one may be more inclined to subsequently contract cancer because of a poor immune system.

MICHELE BUONO

Can this genetic modification be subsequently still transmitted to later generations?

ANNAMARIA MOSCHETTI – ASS. CULTURALE PEDIATRI PUGLIA E BASILICATA (Association of Pediatricians)

Yes, it can be trans-generational.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

It is not only a matter of dioxin in Taranto. Combustion in the industrial area also emits another substance: benzopyrene.

FEDERICO VALERIO – ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMIST

A substance that has been recognized as cancerous for humans. This has definitely been affirmed by the Cancer Research Agency in Lyon. At the molecular level, one single molecule can alter the DNA and therefore start up a mechanism that later develops into cancer. A threshold has not been identified below which the risk is equal to zero.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

However, the emission limit is equal to 1 nanogram per m³ a year, but Taranto has gone beyond this limit.

GIORGIO ASSENNATO – DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ARPA, PUGLIA

Over the past two years, namely during the 2009-2008 period, the concentration has been in the area of 1.3 nanograms per m³. This year we have been observing an upward trend.

MICHELE BUONO

Who do you consider responsible for this? Cementir, Agip and Ilva plants are all located in Taranto.

GIORGIO ASSENNATO – DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ARPA, PUGLIA

As far as benzopyrene is concerned, there are no doubts. Carbon coke plants most certainly represent the main source of the benzopyrene pumped into the air.

MICHELE BUONO

Since benzopyrene is also produced by cigarettes, how many cigarettes a day do children who are exposed to the emission of benzopyrene smoke?

FEDERICO VALERIO – ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMIST

It's as if they smoked a couple of cigarettes a day.

MICHELE BUONO

Therefore about a thousand cigarettes per year.

FEDERICO VALERIO – ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMIST

Yes.

ALESSANDRO MARESCOTTI – PRESIDENT, PEACELINK ASSOCIATION

If we then calculate the other poly-aromatic hydrocarbons that accompany benzopyrene, we can say that a child living in the Tamburi neighbourhood smokes something in the range of 2,500-2,800 cigarettes per year.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

The effects of benzopyrene could have been mitigated. But thanks to a government decree that was passed in August 2010, the government postponed emission limitations. The topic will be discussed once again only at the end of 2012.

PIERO MOTTOLESE – FORMER FACTORY WORKER, ILVA TARANTO

We cannot wait for benzopyrene to reach safe limits in 2012. Sick people are angry, patients are...

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

In the meanwhile children continue to smoke cigarettes and the other pollutants will continue to settle on the ground and into the sea, causing the destruction of land and water day after day, one piece at a time. The Puglia Region Agency for Environment Protection.

MICHELE BUONO

How much sea has gone lost?

MASSIMO BLONDA – SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ARPA PUGLIA

The Mar Piccolo bay area has been subjected to many aggressions.

MICHELE BUONO

Can it be recovered?

MASSIMO BLONDA – SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ARPA PUGLIA

I'm afraid not.

MICHELE BUONO

Why not?

MASSIMO BLONDA – SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ARPA PUGLIA

Because the magnitude of pollution, the type of polluted surfaces and the sediments make it very difficult to carry out reclamation operations.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

The decree that postpones interventions regarding benzopyrene emissions to 2013 refers to “measures that do not entail disproportionate costs”. Does that mean that if the interventions are too expensive then nothing will be done about it?

MASSIMO BLONDA – SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ARPA PUGLIA

This concept is included in all the Community and international environment regulations, with sustainable costs. You will always find this definition. With sustainable costs, with assessable costs.

MICHELE BUONO

For whom? Sustainable for whom?

MASSIMO BLONDA – SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ARPA PUGLIA

Clearly for those who have to follow through, for those who have to comply with the limitations.

MICHELE BUONO

Compared to a number of people dying, coming down with disease, etc.

MASSIMO BLONDA

What sort of questions are you asking me... We are part of a culture, how can I put it, part of a way of thinking that views capitalism as the only possible, let me put it this way, the only possible social-economic organization.

MICHELE BUONO

No, because...

MASSIMO BLONDA – SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ARPA PUGLIA

I don't see why the economic criterion should not be of relevance.

MICHELE BUONO

To understand the advantages and disadvantages. I mean, for example, have you ever seen a business investing its money in reclamation?

MASSIMO BLONDA – SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ARPA PUGLIA

Generally, we find ourselves reclaiming what has been subjected to pollution twenty, thirty years ago. And those responsible for that pollution are no longer around.

MICHELE BUONO

Therefore the negative manifestations of industrial activities...

MASSIMO BLONDA – SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ARPA PUGLIA

Unfortunately usually fall back on the public.

MICHELE BUONO

The business must have had its profits.

MASSIMO BLONDA – SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ARPA PUGLIA

Sure, but that money must have already been invested in villas and apartments...

MICHELE BUONO

But, in the meanwhile, what about all the people who are breathing in benzopyrene? They become part of the statistics.

MASSIMO BLONDA – SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, ARPA PUGLIA

They become part of the statistics.

MAN

The man who lived in this building here died of cancer. My father-in-law used to live in this house and he died of cancer. And the entire family that used to live here has died from cancer.

MICHELE BUONO – OFF SCREEN

Either within or without the system – nothing changes in the end. Because, according to Professor Bauman, our existential condition swings between Big Brother Phase 1 and Big Brother Phase 2.

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN - SOCIOLOGIST

Big Brother used to exercise his surveillance in order to make people stay in their place. The purpose was to keep them from moving around, to keep them from playing jokes or surprising their masters. You have to stay inside a system and you are not allowed to get out of it. The greatest concern of the new Big Brother, No. 2, is to keep unwanted people outside.

TV ARCHIVE FOOTAGE

The person to be evicted from the Big Brother house is... Nicola.

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN - SOCIOLOGIST

We ultimately always tell the same story: that nobody, except for the winner, is truly indispensable; that a human being is of some use to other human beings only when he is exploited to their benefit. That the trash bin, the final destination of those excluded, is a natural prospect for those who no longer fit in.

You can only go from the sphere of a Big Brother to the kingdom of the other. The choice between staying in line and being rejected. On the threshold of a new century, the big question is whether the game of inclusion/exclusion is the only form that can be assumed by our world.

MILENA GABANELLI IN TELEVISION STUDIO

Since we are a part of history, not necessarily do we have to stay inside or outside of the system. We have noticed many signals that resume the human adventure instead of heading towards the only alternative. An only alternative that instead is the one according to the Riva Group that purchased the Ilva plant in Taranto fifteen years ago: "We are struggling to protect the jobs of our 11,000 employees, their safety and their well-being. Ilva represents 75% of the Taranto GDP and it pours out more than €250-million per year in wages. Perhaps it is not the well-being mentioned by Latouche and Bauman, but it is real and concrete well-being". Alberto Cattaneo – a Riva Group bulletin.