

## Elections and the Big Society



It is not certain that local elections held on May 15th in Italy do really mark the beginning of the end of one of the longest political cycles in the recent history of European politics.

It is however even more interesting the message that the Italians have delivered in terms of the community they want to be part of: one that will be defined by a smaller politics and a bigger society. [...]

### The future of the Universities



On april 14th, Vision held in Perugia its 5th annual conference on Universities. Speakers' presentations, agenda and photos in the [project page](#).

### The Politics and Economics of Happiness: a new approach to existing problems

What should societies – and policy makers – look for? Is "progress" still a valid notion towards which science and economy should be oriented? Can happiness be an effective alternative to GDP when it comes to measuring quantity of well being and the fairness of its distribution? These are some of the basic questions at the basis of Vision's [project](#).

### Italy 150



Vision was in Naples for the 150th birthday of Italy, on March 17th, presenting the paper [The old lady syndrome](#) (in Italian). Speakers, agenda, photos and editorials from Bill Emmott and Francesco Grillo in the [project page](#).

### Next Issue

The next issue of Vision's web magazine will introduce the pair of conferences that Vision is going to hold in Rome and London on the twin questions of *what is right of the right?* and *what is left of the left?* and thus on the definitional and ideological transformations of two categories that have dominated the history of politics in the last one and half century.

### Vision in Facebook



Now you can join [VISION](#) on facebook and be constantly updated in real time on all projects and initiatives underway.

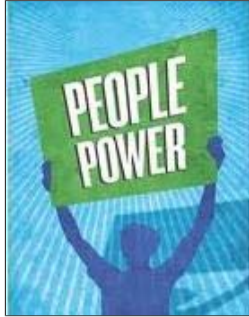
### Il Pensatoio dei Visionari



Follow the debate on our community page "[Il pensatoio dei Visionari](#)"

If you want to join Vision's projects or be author of Vision web magazine write to: [info@vision-forum.org](mailto:info@vision-forum.org).

## The end of the Leviathan and the rise of the Big Society? Conference in Rome



On May 13th, Vision was at the *British School at Rome* ([agenda](#) and [photos](#)), for the event "The end of the Leviathan and the Rise of the Big Society" ([position paper](#)) launching the project "European Social Innovation Index", to be conducted together with ResPublica, Espazio and other european partners. Following Vision [presentation](#), a Round Table chaired by John Hooper (correspondent from Italy for The Economist and The Guardian), where speakers discussed different paths toward Big Society taken by Italy and UK. Among the speakers: **Jessica Asato** from Fabian Society, **Max Wind-Cowie** from Demos, **Caroline Julian** from ResPublica, **Linda Lanzilotta** (MP and president of Glocus) and **Paolo Reboani** (president of Italia Lavoro).

Interacting intensively with the audience, the speakers provided contributions about questions that are replacing in the more advanced countries the debate on the Public Sector reforms: **what are the differences between David Cameron's idea and New Labour's communitarianism?** What are the similarities and differences with the several forms of **associationism which are an historical feature of some Italian regions?** Who should choose the new social entrepreneurs, how to connect **pay to performance?** What are the implications on taxation and representation (democracy)? **How does the Big Society change the very approach to fiscal federalism and devolution**, and how to design an institutional model more flexible, so that the powers and resources are transferred to the most efficient subjects?

In April Vision was in **Perugia** for the event "[The future of Universities in the global market of Ideas: Internationalization and new competitors](#)" ([photos](#)). Our 5th annual conference was held on **April 14th**, at University for Foreign Students ([AGENDA](#)). At the conference Vision released the paper "[The Internationalization Imperative](#)", the ranking of "[the most international italian universities](#)"(in italian) and the results of the pilot "[market research on international students motivations](#)". Vision project is to imagine (and design) the universities on the future focusing on issues like: the **marketing** and the **internationalization**; the methodologies for **ranking** universities; the impact of the **Internet**; the **new segments** of students. The objective will be pursued by an international network of deans, experts, journalists who have been participating to Vision initiatives.

### The Art of Skinning Cats: On Social Innovation and Evidence

by Asheem Singh



When Welshman John Toshack was head coach at Real Madrid Football Club his post-match conferences became the stuff of folklore. Not because they were particularly feisty or insightful; rather because he had the habit of transliterating obscure British phrases into Spanish and thus wildly reinventing for better or for worse his adopted language. [...]

### Heritage Management and the "Big Society" between UK and Italy: Tensions and Opportunities

by Christopher Smith



The relationship between voluntary organisations and professional heritage management constitutes an interesting case study in the potential and the limitations of non-governmental activity. Founded in 1895, the National Trust is a flagship of voluntary support for a nation's heritage. [...]

### Social Innovation: some definitions

by Andrea Bassi



The term, Social Innovation, is currently riding the waves of success in the social sciences, particularly in Economics, Sociology, and Political Science; so much

so that in recent years research centers, think tanks, journals, and foundations have been created in order to support the phenomenon. [...]

### The time for the Big Society

by Ylenia Berardi



Even those who haven't an idyllic relationship with new technologies, can not deny that the Internet has made possible if not all, almost everything. If your phone suddenly goes off, just Googling the name of the model and the problem presented for advice on how unlucky you. ([article in Italian](#)) [...]

### What happened to subsidiarity and federalism?

by Gianfilippo Emma



The role of civil society, services from public to private: widely shared concepts (mostly in words) made more urgent by the crisis. They live the paradox of being able to agree all regardless of political affiliation, but they are struggling to find concrete achievements, because good intentions never follow concrete commitments. ([article in Italian](#)) [...]

### Local governance and the transformation of public processes

by Iliia Gaglio



The involvement of multiple actors - both internal and external governance structures - in the framing and implementation of public policies today responds to different needs. First, it allows more direct forms of communication from local subjects to those responsible for its administration. ([article in Italian](#)) [...]

### The end of the Leviathan and the rise of the Big Society

VISION Position Paper



The crisis of rising public debt and the increasing demand for social protection will expose the states to a challenge that may be fatal. The idea of the "big society" is an opportunity to start up a process that will challenge sleeping "dinosaurs" and create opportunities: new business models and investment banking practices, a new political discourse, and a different approach to change management within the public sector. [...]

### What is the Big Society?

by Max Wind-Cowie



The Big Society is a concept that has captured the imaginations of many within the British political class whilst simultaneously appearing to fall on deaf ears with voters. It is the 'mission' of our Prime Minister and yet is frequently mocked and dismissed. It is attacked from the Right as 'naïve' and from the Left as 'cynical'. But what is it? And can it really serve as the overarching conceptual framework for reform? My answer to the latter would be an emphatic and enthusiastic 'yes'. [...]

### The 'Big Society' is here to stay – but we must be patient with its intentions

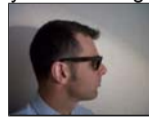
by Caroline Julian



To build a 'Big Society' we require first a shift in culture. In Britain, more communities are becoming fragmented, more people are living alone and trust between individuals has plummeted – all within the past fifty years. Further, too few people are supporting those left behind by the state – only 31% of UK citizens contribute 90% of all volunteer hours – and volunteering itself has recently been on the decline. But blame should not be weighted on certain individuals [...]

### Big Society: four merits and four defects

by Gianluca Sguero



The The Big Society project reveals an intuition not so bright as originality is concerned, however worthy of attention, especially for the practical aspects that characterize it. The liberal theory on the re-distribution of portions of decision-making power from the state to the market - and in our case the citizens of local communities - has been developed several times by national executives, including the Italian one, with different outcomes. ([article in Italian](#)) [...]

Would you agree to allow citizens to choose the percentage of taxes to be given to charities that would replace the states in delivering public services?

yes  
 no  
 depends