

Explaining American Politics Again: The Health of Democracy

Jerry Krase (March 25, 2010)



It is difficult to explain why, in reference to the passage of HR3962 "The Affordable Health Care for America Act," so many people who will actually benefit from it protested against it (and continue to do so). Attempts like this one are doomed to failure but I least I can say "I tried." (Ci ho provato)

Not everything is easily translated from English to Italian and vice versa. In linguistics, cognates are words that have a common etymological origins and Italian cognates give me agita. Case in point; when Italians demonstrate (dimostrano) or protest (protestano) against something they don't go to demonstrations (dimostrazioni) they go to manifestazioni (demonstrations) instead.



Similarly difficult to understand are the sad sights of people protesting against their own best interests (contro i loro propri interessi) as in the photo above taken while I was (hands free - a mani libere) driving out of a shopping mall where half of the stores are shuttered and wannabee drug pushers walk their mixed breed pit bulls because they aren't making enough money to buy a real one.

Anyhow, not far on Main Street in the proud but semi-depressed Connecticut downtown one can find a public health center, social service offices, a Salvation Army store, and lots of unhealthy unemployed men and women aimlessly cruising the streets or hangin' in the park. When Italians demonstrate at manifestazioni they go in piazza. In America they go where the traffic is, like this intersection where a number of ill-dressed men and women held up signs I am sure they didn't understand. In fact some probably were folks in need of employment being paid to hold up signs they didn't understand such as one about "Cap N Trade" which even oil company executives haven't a clue but they're against it anyhow because it sounds "green."

Anyhow, Sunday night my wife and I were watching a bit of TV (TiVù) as preparation for sleep (soporifero). All day long CNN and other droning 24/7/52 cable news stations were drooling with inane equivocative conversations about the United States House of un-Representatives' pseudo-debate on the latest version of President Barack Hussein Obama's campaign-promised "Health Care Reform." I went to bed early, preferring not to waste my sleep time with fuzz-faced Oscar-the-Grouch clone Wolf Blitzer and the next morning when I looked at the front pages of The New York Times, New York Daily News, New York Post, New York Newsday, and The World Street Journal after a not very brisk two mile quasi-run with my friend Michael-the-Lawyer, almost all of the headlines announced something "Historic" had happened during my Dreamtime (Altjira).

When I got back to the house and opened my e-mail while eating breakfast, I saw this message from my good friends Ottorino and Letizia:

"Dear friends and colleagues,

A few minutes ago the House passed the Health Care Reform Bill.

It shouldn't escape notice that this historic event takes place in large part thanks to the joint effort of the first African-American President and the first Italian-American Woman Speaker of the House.

We would like to collect your feelings for i-Italy: anything from 3 to 10 lines would do.

Would you take your time and send us a short email message?"

Which I did, but now feel the need to expand on said few lines which went as follows:

"When I asked my wife Suzanne for comment on Nancy Pelosi's 'victory' over a recalcitrant House of un-Representatives she said 'Go girl!.' Having been surrounded virtually all my adult life by Italian American women I was certain that only someone like Nancy Pelosi could get the job done in our dysfunctional legislative family dominated by males with government funded very expensive health care. For example, in my wife's all Italian American family, as well as my own half-Sicilian one, the women were the "generals" whose untiring efforts and constant strategizing led the family through thick and thin. My wife and daughters have been pushing for health care reform for ages (preferring a single payer system but willing to take almost anything at this point). As I wrote some time ago in i-italy '[Nancy for President and Other Proposals](#) [2]'



'Which brings me back to Nancy Pelosi; Italian American, bright, beautiful, articulately liberal Democrat who has the courage to go head to head with both enemies and friends to do the best for her country...If I weren't already married to a similarly endowed woman, I'd be chasing her all over the place. Since I can't propose marriage, I will simply propose Nancy Pelosi for President.'

[Wikipedia](#) [3] [says](#) [3] that "What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America (2004) is a book written by American journalist and historian Thomas Frank, which explores the rise of conservative populism in the United States through the lens of his native state of Kansas. Once a hotbed of the left-wing Populist movement of the late nineteenth century, it has become overwhelmingly conservative in recent decades. The book was published in the United Kingdom and Australia as What's the Matter with America?"

Two things for me to note here. One, I read the book and it is great, and scary as it iterates and reiterates redundantly how easy it seems to be for people to vote for other people who constantly sc(r)ew(er) them. And, two, Frank writes one of the only reliable columns that remain in The Wall Street Journal and, to prove the point, sometimes shares the same page with liable nemesises Karl Rove and Rush Limbaugh.

Finally as to convincing people that they shouldn't be protesting against their own interests, it isn't an easy task. One must remember that 50% of the human population is below average intelligence and, in my estimation; half of what's left is clearly uninformed. The right wing in America has done a very effective job in dis- and mis-informing people. Those who get their information from Fox News, The New York Post or Tea Party forums where savants (scienziati) like Sarah Palin keep their store of knowledge on the palm of their hand (and I believe it was on only one of them) are hardly educable and now that our once esteemed Supreme Court, on which 'loose lips' Sam Alito sits and childishly fidgets like a naughty boy in a grade school classroom, has lifted the remaining restrictions on corporate politicking, I think it will only get more difficult to convince people that human evolution (sviluppo umano) and corporate greed (ingordigia corporativa) are facts of life. This, mental, health care crisis is one we need to quickly address as it threatens the health of all Americans, with and without brains.

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