

The connection between voting abstention and the decline in wine consumption

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 13 Giugno 2024



Last weekend, the European elections were held, marking the highest abstention ever recorded in history, with just 49.67% of eligible voters turning up at the polls, and only 43.73% in the South and 37.31% in the Islands.

In 1979, at the first community elections, the abstainers were only 14.3%, but even in 2019, in the previous European consultations, the voter percentage had still reached 56.12%. This last election has led abstainers to become the absolute majority.

I don't want to play the role of a street-corner sociologist, though the reasons I'm reading these days in the newspapers do

not convince me at all, and I find it paradoxical that such abstention is considered a tenth-page news item for the majority of Italian newspapers.

From my point of view, it should be the opening headline of all media, the most important data to delve into, and instead, there is a preference to ignore it, highlighting only some people's victories and others' defeats.

Already in this last aspect, I believe there are similarities between citizens' disaffection towards politics and that of consumers towards **wine**.

It is becoming increasingly clear how the majority of the population, not only in Italy, does not feel represented by any political force, and at the same time, there are many, too many, who do not see wine as an attractive drink.

To get away with saying that those who abstain from voting are "fools who suffer the choices of others" or a consumer "immature who does not understand the great values of wine" is not only wrong but, in my opinion, also dangerous.

And if there is a hateful condition, it is that of feeling unconsidered or, even worse, of being "losers", "ignorant", incapable in short of making thoughtful, authentic choices, not dictated by mere fickleness or superficiality.

I know many people who have abstained from going to the polls for years, and I can guarantee that their choice is anything but easy; it is extremely painful.

Just as I have met many people in recent years, not only young ones although they were the majority, who feel little attracted to wine not by choice but because no one has ever tried to seriously approach them, with appropriate language, with a comprehensible proposal.

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Politics that does not appear propositional, nor capable of concretely interpreting the needs of the population or at least part of it, is like the communication of wine that speaks only to super experts, to so-called wine lovers who, as is clear, are certainly not the majority anywhere in the world.

It is clear that different languages and proposals in politics must coexist, just as there cannot be wine communication understandable to everyone.

The point is that for some time both politics and wine seem to speak only to themselves, they are increasingly “exclusive” and less and less “inclusive”.

In politics, exclusivity often turns into evanescence, into a feeling of emptiness and, perhaps in this, wine defends itself better, but not for this reason does it manage to have languages capable of intercepting the many different trends, expectations.

What can then change, improve such a situation?

As always, the answer lies in the people, in their competence, in their ability to concretely interpret the needs of society, to seriously represent the different consumer targets if we talk about **wine**.

Unfortunately, however, both politics and wine have chosen a single language that does not include “distinctions”, different personalities, and expectations.

At most, both politics and wine exploit the weapon of demagoguery, hoping that it can convince many of the goodness of a proposal.

However, the result is there for all to see and is decidedly ruthless with percentages of voting and consumption that are

disheartening.

But while I admit my total, absolute pessimism for politics, I am still full of hopes for wine because I feel that it would not take much to reverse the course.

Wine, indeed, has not disappointed expectations for decades, but has simply dozed off in a comfort zone that today unfortunately is not enough to guarantee its development.

It must therefore wake up, renew itself, get moving, managing to speak the sea of languages that it is capable of communicating because they are inherent in its values.

Just think of the extraordinary ability of wine to be one of the best ambassadors of lands and cultures.

The problem is that it is, but today it struggles to make many understand this, due to a mix of laziness coupled with dangerous presumption.

If we do not want to end up like politics, it is good to overcome laziness and presumption and finally become a democratic expression that does not mean pleasing everyone in the same way but simply no longer intimidating anyone.